

# 14<sup>th</sup> March 2021 – Morning Service

## Mothering Sunday

Megan Ashmore

### Call to Worship - Psalm 95: 1 - 7

Come, let us sing for joy to the Lord; let us shout aloud to the Rock of our salvation. Let us come before him with thanksgiving and extol him with music and song. For the Lord is the great God, the great King above all gods. In his hand are the depths of the earth, and the mountain peaks belong to him. The sea is his, for he made it, and his hands formed the dry land. Come, let us bow down in worship, let us kneel before the Lord our Maker; for he is our God and we are the people of his pasture, the flock under his care.

### StF 22 – Come all you People

Come all you people,	Come all you people,
Come and praise your Maker;	Come and praise your Maker;
Come all you people,	Come now and worship the Lord.
Come and praise your Maker;	

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### Prayer of Adoration & Confession

L: Come now and worship the Lord **R: Faithful God, we come**

We come in praise. We praise you for giving us life; for knowing us inside and out and providing for our every need. We praise you that though we wander from the path, your faithfulness and eternal love bring us back into the fold, to the warm embrace of the shepherd's arms and the fellowship of the flock.

L: Come now and worship the Lord **R: Faithful God, we come**

We come in grateful thanks. We thank you for your mother-like love for us: a tender, compassionate love; a forgiving and unconditional love; a comforting and understanding love. On this Mothering Sunday, we give thanks to you for the gift of mothers, and the mother-like nurture that many people show to others in their lives. We thank you too, for the blessing of your mother church; for the acceptance, nurturing, love and care it provides to all who seek.

L: Come now and worship the Lord **R: Faithful God, we come**

We come in repentance. We are sorry for the times when we fail to live our lives in accordance with your will; when our self-centredness leaves no room for others; and our pride and stubbornness damages our relationships. Help us to notice those areas of our own lives needing care and attention in order that we might reflect your love and bring glory to you.

L: Come now and worship the Lord **R: Faithful God, we come. Amen**

### StF 51 – Great is thy faithfulness

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| 1) Great is thy faithfulness, O God my Father,<br>There is no shadow of turning with thee;<br>Thou changest not, thy compassions<br>they fail not;<br>As thou hast been thou for ever wilt be.                                    | 2) Summer and winter, and springtime<br>and harvest,<br>Sun, moon and stars in their courses above,<br>Join with all nature in manifold witness<br>To thy great faithfulness, mercy and love.          |
| Ch) <i>Great is thy faithfulness!</i><br><i>Great is thy faithfulness!</i><br><i>Morning by morning new mercies I see;</i><br><i>All I have needed thy hand has provided,</i><br><i>Great is thy faithfulness, Lord, unto me!</i> | 3) Pardon for sin and a peace that endureth,<br>Thine own dear presence to cheer and to guide;<br>Strength for today and bright hope for<br>tomorrow,<br>Blessings all mine, with ten thousand beside! |

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## Reflection

At Brierley Hill Church they have a mug that has an image of a mum on it. In the middle stands Mum and around the image are labels pointing to parts of the body:

**Head:** special wisdom

**Eyes:** looking out for me

**Ears:** sympathetic ears

**Nose:** detects dirty washing

**Shoulders:** to cry on

**Hands:** to help me

**Feet:** to run round after me

**Heart:** pure gold

Mums are special. They know things; they detect things; they understand things; they remember things. They are always on

hand to help out. In our reading today we hear about a Mum who was able to help her son in his time of worry.



## Reading: Daniel 5:1-12

King Belshazzar gave a great banquet for a thousand of his nobles and drank wine with them. While Belshazzar was drinking his wine, he gave orders to bring in the gold and silver goblets that Nebuchadnezzar his father had taken from the temple in Jerusalem, so that the king and his nobles, his wives and his concubines might drink from them. So they brought in the gold goblets that had been taken from the temple of God in Jerusalem, and the king and his nobles, his wives and his concubines drank from them. As they drank the wine, they praised the gods of gold and silver, of bronze, iron, wood and stone. Suddenly the fingers of a human hand appeared and wrote on the plaster of the wall, near the lampstand in the royal palace. The king watched the hand as it wrote. His face turned pale and he was so frightened that his legs became weak and his knees were knocking.

The king summoned the enchanters, astrologers and diviners. Then he said to these wise men of Babylon, "Whoever reads this writing and tells me what it means will be clothed in purple and have a gold chain placed around his neck, and he will be made the third highest ruler in the kingdom."

Then all the king's wise men came in, but they could not read the writing or tell the king what it meant. So King Belshazzar became even more terrified and his face grew more pale. His nobles were baffled.

The queen, hearing the voices of the king and his nobles, came into the banquet hall. "May the king live forever!" she said. "Don't be alarmed! Don't look so pale! There is a man in your kingdom who has the spirit of the holy gods in him. In the time of your father he was found to have insight and intelligence and wisdom like that of the gods. Your father, King Nebuchadnezzar, appointed him chief of the magicians, enchanters, astrologers and diviners. He did this because Daniel, whom the king called Belteshazzar, was found to have a keen mind and knowledge and understanding, and also the ability to interpret dreams, explain riddles and solve difficult problems. Call for Daniel, and he will tell you what the writing means."

## Reflection

Good old Mum. She remembered something that everyone else had forgotten – that Daniel could interpret dreams and unusual events. She had been there when Belshazzar's father had need of an interpreter and Daniel had been the man. She saw now how troubled her son was and sought to ease the situation for him. If you want to know if Daniel could help, read on to the end of the chapter.

Just like the mum on the mug is ready and equipped to look after others, so God looks after all of us. He listens when we talk to Him; He considers carefully what we need; and He steers us in the direction of comfort and support. We just need to remember to take our concerns to the Lord in prayer. As part of Praying for Kingswinford, new mums at Russell's Hall hospital, who have babies today or in the next few days will be given a goody bag from our church. In it there is shower gel, nail varnish and a nail file, chocolate, a hot chocolate sachet, a greetings card and a church postcard letting them know we are praying for them.

Mothering can be hard work. I don't mean the tidying up; the cooking; the taxi service to and from school, after school clubs, parties and so forth. I mean, having responsibility for someone else's life and future; making the right decisions on their behalf; giving the right guidance and setting the right example. Today as we remember our mums, let us pray for them; as children celebrate, let's give thanks for God's many blessings; and as we are blessed by the fellowship of our caring church family, let us praise God for the gift of love which surrounds us on all sides. In a moment of silence, we offer our own prayer to God.

Our next hymn is a new hymn, written by Ally Barrett especially for Mothering Sunday. It is sung to the tune of All things bright and beautiful and is called "All our blessings, all our joys."

### **Song – All our blessings**

*Ch) All our blessings, all our joys  
With thankful hearts we sing,  
Lord of life and Lord of love,  
Accept the praise we bring.*

1) For parents and for children,  
For husbands, wives, and friends,  
For those whose care enfolds us  
With love that never ends.

2) For fellowship and friendship  
We both receive and give  
For those who've shared our journey  
And taught us how to live.

3) For all who've shared our sorrow,  
Walked with us in our pain,  
Who've held our hand through darkness  
And showed us light again.

4) In sacrifice and service  
Your love is clearly shown,  
Your outstretched arms embrace us  
to bring us safely home.

Ally Barrett    © Ally Barrett    CCL No. 515642

### **Reflection**

Susanna Wesley was born in 1669, the youngest of 25 children! When she was 19 she married Samuel, and had 19 children of her own. We know her as the mother of Charles and John Wesley – John Wesley being the founder of Methodism, and Charles being the writer of over 6,500 hymns. Susanna was a remarkable woman. However, and maybe unsurprisingly, she wasn't blessed with an easy life. Of those 19 children just 10 survived. Her husband often disappeared for long periods. People who disagreed with things her husband had preached, frequently attacked their home – in fact it was set ablaze on more than one occasion. Despite all this Susanna's faith was a constant. Having realised that her family commitments did not allow her as much time as she would like to spend in devotion to God, Susanna came up with an ingenious solution. She instructed her young children that if ever they found her with her apron over her head they were not to disturb her as this meant she was praying. As well as allowing herself quiet time with God, she set a truly wonderful example to her children of the need to keep in touch with God.

Jesus recognised the need and importance of constant communication with God through prayer, and often took himself off to a quiet place to pray. Early on in the first chapter of Mark's gospel, we read, "Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed."

In our daily lives it isn't always easy to find time to be quiet with God for prayer. Maybe we could be like Jesus and get up early once or twice a week. But even then children might still be up before us! Gone are the days of long aprons; so perhaps we need to be like Daniel, who was not afraid to pray in front of others. After all, what better witness could there be than offering up a prayer in the middle of the supermarket; or while walking along the canal; gardening or waiting for the bus.

The Lent liturgy for today focusses on the Holy Habit of Prayer, and the reading is Luke 11:1-4. The disciples saw how important prayer was to Jesus and John the Baptist. In hunger and humility, they ask Jesus to teach them how to pray. Luke records:

*He was praying in a certain place, and after he had finished, one of his disciples said to him, "Lord, teach us to pray, as John taught his disciples." He said to them, "When you pray, say: Father, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come. Give us each day our daily bread. And forgive us our sins, for we ourselves forgive everyone indebted to us. And do not bring us to the time of trial."*

In the Core Bible Exploration group at Kingswinford, we have recently followed a study guide about prayer. As part of the section on The Lord's Prayer, as it is known, we considered how even though it is usually said as a corporate prayer, it is in fact a very personal and intimate prayer reflecting the relationship between each one of us and God. We also unpacked the meaning of each phrase a little with the children in their worship lesson at the end of February. And this morning we are going to use it as a framework for our prayers of intercession.

## **Prayers of Intercession**

Lord, as we gather, we pray that you would teach us afresh how to pray and renew a passion for prayer within us.

### ***Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name ...***

Holy God, we pray for your children who acknowledge your power and authority but who don't recognise your love. We rejoice that through Jesus we can approach your throne of grace and pray that all may know you intimately and call you "ABBA", Father. We bring before you now those we know who have yet to meet you.....In you we are united with your children throughout the world. Help us to remember this in our daily living, so that we are conscious of the impact of our actions and words.

### ***Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven ...***

We look to the day when your kingdom shall be established throughout heaven and earth, when Jesus shall reign and we shall see him face to face. We thank you God for the promise of eternal life with you in glory where your reign means no sorrow, hurt, fear nor pain. May this promise be a comfort to those who mourn. In the meantime, Lord we pray that your kingdom values will be exemplified by us, so that those who are oppressed, homeless, lonely, ill or worried may experience a glimpse of your justice, understanding, friendship, healing and peace.

### ***Give us this day our daily bread ...***

One day at a time. Lord this pandemic has reminded us how precious life is. May we use each day in your service knowing that you will provide for our every need. The apostle Paul wrote that you said to him, "My grace is sufficient for you, my power is made perfect in your weakness". We pray for all those working to heal people of this virus and keep them safe: the hospital staff, scientists, those administering the vaccination and carrying out testing programmes, care home workers and outreach workers.

We pray for government leaders who are trying to handle the impact of COVID - 19. We pray for schools and colleges - pupils, students, staff and their families. We pray for the unemployed, for small businesses struggling to keep going and for larger companies seeking to keep staff safe.

Bless them all with your grace and strength that your presence will be more visible to them.

***And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us ...***

As the days of lockdown roll on we pray that you will forgive us when we lose hope. Work within us and turn our thoughts back to you. Forgive us when we take our frustration out on others. Give us the grace to apologise and seek their forgiveness. We pray for all those whom we have hurt through our thoughtlessness. Let us not hold a grudge against those who have hurt us recently or in the past but give us the opportunity and determination to set things aright, knowing that we do your will and that you will help us. Forgiving Lord, draw near to those weighed down with guilt. Comfort them and show them the freedom they can have through Jesus.

***And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil ...***

We see the sights that dazzle but we pray that we would keep our eyes fixed firmly on you and your way. We know that you will guide us along paths of righteousness - may our feet be willing to follow.

***For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory. Forever and ever. Amen.***

We bring all these prayers to you in the name of Jesus, your son and our saviour. **Amen.**

As we move through this Mothering Sunday, appreciating that for some it will be a difficult day, may we all know the love, comfort, peace and blessing of our Father.

**StF 65 – Sing of the Lord’s Goodness**

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| 1) Sing of the Lord’s goodness,<br>Father of all wisdom,<br>Come to him and bless his name.<br>Mercy he has shown us, his love is for ever,<br>Faithful to the end of days.                                           | 3) Courage in our darkness,<br>Comfort in our sorrow,<br>Spirit of our God most high;<br>Solace for the weary, pardon for the sinner,<br>Splendour of the living God.                                       |
| Ch) <i>Come then, all you nations,<br/>sing of your Lord’s goodness,<br/>melodies of praise and thanks to God.<br/>Ring out the Lord’s glory,<br/>praise him with your music,<br/>worship him and bless his name.</i> | 4) Praise him with your singing,<br>Praise him with the trumpet,<br>Praise God with the lute and harp;<br>Praise him with the cymbals,<br>Praise him with your dancing,<br>Praise God till the end of days. |
| 2) Power he has wielded, honour is his garment,<br>Risen from the snares of death.<br>His word he has spoken, One bread he has broken,<br>New life he now gives to all.                                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                             |

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**Blessing**

Let us go from here rejoicing that God loves us and welcomes us with open arms. As the children of God we take his love into the world that others may also rejoice and be part of his family. And may the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with us all, evermore.

**Amen**