

19th October 2025 – Morning Service

A Heart For God

Rev Jem Hawkins

Call to Worship: Psalm 67

God, be merciful to us and bless us; look on us with kindness,
so that the whole world may know your will; so that all nations may know your salvation.
May the peoples praise you, O God; may all the peoples praise you!
May the nations be glad and sing for joy, because you judge the peoples with justice and guide every nation on earth.
May the peoples praise you, O God; may all the peoples praise you!
The land has produced its harvest; God, our God, has blessed us.
God has blessed us; may all people everywhere honour him.

Welcome

Welcome to all who worship with us. We come with our joys, hopes and burdens – and God knows all we carry. We come as people of God, joining with our brothers, our sisters, our siblings around the world and through the ages in our praise and worship of God. The One who loves us unconditionally, who made us in their image, that we might be made whole in God through Jesus the Christ, who breathes His Spirit into our hearts.

StF 65 – Sing of the Lord's goodness

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

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Prayer

Loving God, you are from everlasting to everlasting. You made all that is, all of creation is birthed through your Word. We praise and worship you for all that you are and all that you do. We know you love us and hold us in our joys and our sorrows. Help us to know you are with us as we travel the path of life. Open our eyes to see your light, open our ears to hear your call, and open our hearts that we grow in Your Spirit, and follow Your Way.

Forgive us when we are close minded, and thoughtless to the needs of others. Forgive us when we stray from The Way of Jesus. Forgive and renew us and lead us in the path we should go... as we follow Jesus, our Saviour and our friend. In His name, we pray. **Amen.**

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come; thy will be done; on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory for ever and ever. **Amen.**

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and for ever. **Amen.**

Introduction to the Psalm

We are made in the image of God to be in good relationship with God and each other. Yet we, as human beings, have often gone against the way that God would have us be. God gave the 10 commandments to Moses to show us how to respect God, our family and those around us (this became a basis for The Law)... and so many times, in so many places, people acted against them – and our relationship with God was damaged until God felt far away – or unknown – or uncaring... yet there was the Law to show the way to live. Such that in Psalm 119, the psalmist writes:

Reading: Psalm 119: 1-2, 103-105

Blessed are those whose ways are blameless, who walk according to the law of the Lord.
Blessed are those who keep his statutes and seek him with all their heart –

How sweet are your words to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth!
Through your precepts I get understanding; therefore I hate every false way.
Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.

Introduction to the reading

Yet God reached out through the prophets such that even in the most difficult of times, God offered renewal and hope. The following reading is usually read at our covenant services when we re-commit to our relationship with God. It is spoken through the prophet Jeremiah:

Reading: Jeremiah 31: 31-34

"The days are coming," declares the Lord, "when I will make a new covenant with the people of Israel and with the people of Judah. It will not be like the covenant I made with their ancestors when I took them by the hand to lead them out of Egypt, because they broke my covenant, though I was a husband to them," declares the Lord. "This is the covenant I will make with the people of Israel after that time," declares the Lord. "I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people. No longer will they teach their neighbour, or say to one another, 'Know the Lord,' because they will all know me, from the least of them to the greatest," declares the Lord. "For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more."

Reflection

What a promise!
"I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people!"

This promise has been fulfilled through Jesus the Christ who is the living embodiment of God on Earth (John 1:1-14). Who shows us The Way to live and breathed His Spirit into our hearts (John 20:22).

We come, before Jesus as we are. Imperfect, but loved. We pray that God breathes on us so that we can live in God.

StF 370 – Breathe on me, Breath of God

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| 1) Breathe on me, Breath of God;
Fill me with life anew,
That I may love what thou dost love,
And do what thou wouldst do. | 3) Breathe on me, Breath of God,
Till I am wholly thine,
Until this earthly part of me
Glows with thy fire divine. |
| 2) Breathe on me, Breath of God,
Until my heart is pure,
Until with thee I will one will,
To do and to endure. | 4) Breathe on me, Breath of God;
So shall I never die,
But live with thee the perfect life
Of thine eternity. |

Edwin Hatch

Reflection

God's Spirit enables us to live as God's children as best we can – but we need to work at it, practice the presence of God – to live more and more each day as God wants us to live, to **be** the best we can be.

God's promise is not transactional, but gracious, embodying the essence of God who made us in their image. Who loves us for who we are. Who became flesh and blood to be alongside us... and shows us The True and Living Way of Jesus.

The reading from Jeremiah looks forward to a new covenant with a renewed relationship between people and God; where something of God is in our hearts and made known through how we live our lives. It is God being with us on our journey of life, and we seeking to follow the way that God guides us.

StF 465 – Guide me O thou great Jehovah

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| 1) Guide me, O thou great Jehovah,
Pilgrim through this barren land;
I am weak, but thou art mighty;
Hold me with thy powerful hand:
Bread of heaven, Bread of heaven,
Feed me now and evermore.
Feed me now and evermore. | 3) When I tread the verge of Jordan,
Bid my anxious fears subside;
Death of death, and hell's destruction,
Land me safe on Canaan's side:
Songs of praises, Songs of praises
I will ever give to thee.
I will ever give to thee. |
| 2) Open thou the crystal fountain,
Whence the healing stream shall flow;
Let the fiery, cloudy pillar
Lead me all my journey through:
Strong Deliverer, Strong Deliverer,
Be thou still my strength and shield.
Be thou still my strength and shield. | |

William Williams

Introduction to the reading

This requires developing faith and trust on our part as we seek to follow God's Way into the unknown future. To talk to God and listen to God and practise the presence of God in prayer.

Jesus emphasised the need to be persistent in prayer as he told this parable to his disciples:

Reading: Luke 18: 1-8

Then Jesus told his disciples a parable to teach them that they should always pray and never become discouraged. "In a certain town there was a judge who neither feared God nor respected people. And there was a widow in that same town who kept coming to him and pleading for her rights, saying, 'Help me against my opponent!' For a long time the judge refused to act, but at last he said to himself, 'Even though I don't fear God or respect people, yet because of all the trouble this widow is giving me, I will see to it that she gets her rights. If I don't, she will keep on coming and finally wear me out!'" And the Lord continued, "Listen to what that corrupt judge said. Now, will God not judge in favour of his own people who cry to him day and night for help? Will he be slow to help them? I tell you, he will judge in their favour and do it quickly. But will the Son of Man find faith on earth when he comes?"

Reflection

Throughout life, we seek God's will and Way; God's forgiveness and peace.

As Jesus prayed, so should we.

As Jesus lived, so ought we.

As Jesus welcomed, so should we.

As Jesus loved, so ought we.

We join with the hymn as a focus for our prayers:

StF 719 – We pray for peace

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| 1) We pray for peace,
but not the easy peace
built on complacency
and not the truth of God;
we pray for real peace,
the peace God's love alone can seal. | 4) We pray for peace:
holy communion
with Christ our risen Lord
and every living thing;
God's will fulfilled on earth,
and all creation reconciled. |
| 2) We pray for peace,
but not the cruel peace
leaving God's poor bereft
and dying in distress;
we pray for real peace,
enriching all the human race. | 5) We pray for peace,
and, for the sake of peace,
look to the risen Christ,
who gives the grace we need
to serve the cause of peace
and make our own self-sacrifice. |
| 3) We pray for peace,
and not the evil peace
defending unjust laws
and nursing prejudice,
but for the real peace
of justice, mercy, truth and love. | 6) God, give us peace;
if you withdraw your love
there is no peace for us,
nor any hope of it.
with you to lead us on,
through death or tumult, peace will come. |

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Prayers of Intercession

We share the prayers of intercession from the covenant service:

Loving God, hear us as we pray for your holy catholic Church:

make us all one, that the world may believe.

Inspire and lead all who govern and hold authority in the nations of the world:

establish justice and peace among all people.

Have compassion on all who suffer from any sickness, grief or trouble:

deliver them from their distress.

We praise you for all your saints who have entered your eternal glory:

bring us all to share in your heavenly kingdom.

Let us pray in silence for our own needs and for those of others...

Lord our God, you have helped us by your grace to make these prayers, and you have promised through Christ our Lord that when two or three agree in his name you will grant what they ask. Answer now your servants' prayers according to their needs; in this world grant that we may truly know you, and in the world to come graciously give us eternal life; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

We recall the words of the psalmist who reminds us where to look for help.

Reading: Psalm 121: 1-8

I look to the mountains; where will my help come from?

My help will come from the Lord, who made heaven and earth.

He will not let you fall; your protector is always awake.

The protector of Israel never dozes or sleeps.

The Lord will guard you; he is by your side to protect you.

The sun will not hurt you during the day, nor the moon during the night.

The Lord will protect you from all danger; he will keep you safe.

He will protect you as you come and go now and forever.

StF 563 – O Jesus I have promised

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| 1) O Jesus, I have promised
To serve you to the end;
Lord, be for ever near me,
My master and my friend;
I shall not fear the battle
If you are by my side,
Nor wander from the pathway
If you will be my guide. | 3) O let me hear you speaking
In accents clear and still,
Above the storms of passion,
The murmurs of self-will;
O speak to reassure me,
To hasten or control.
Lord, speak, and make me listen,
O guardian of my soul. |
| 2) O let me feel you near me;
The world is ever near;
I see the sights that dazzle,
The tempting sounds I hear;
My foes are ever near me,
Around me and within;
But, Jesus, now draw nearer,
And shield my soul from sin. | 4) O Jesus, you have promised
To all who follow you,
That where you are in glory
Your servant shall be too;
And, Jesus, I have promised
To serve you to the end;
O give me grace to follow
My master and my friend! |

John Ernest Bode

Blessing

May the God of Light shine on us, the Way of Christ lead us and the Spirit of Love shine through us to bring wholeness and peace in our world in Jesus. **Amen.**

The Grace

May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all, now and evermore. **Amen.**