

# Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup> September 2024

## Getting to the heart of things

**Call to worship:** And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works. Not neglecting to meet together as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another and all the more as you see the day drawing nearer." (Hebrews 10:24-25)

### Hymn StF 317 At the name Jesus

At the name of Jesus every knee shall bow,  
every tongue confess him King of Glory now.  
'Tis the Father's pleasure we should call him Lord,  
who from the beginning was the mighty Word.

Humbled for a season, to receive a name  
from the lips of sinners unto whom he came,  
faithfully he bore it spotless to the last,  
brought it back victorious when from death he passed :

Bore it up triumphant with its human light,  
through all ranks of creatures to the central height,  
to the throne of Godhead, to the Father's breast ;  
filled it with the glory of that perfect rest.

In your hearts enthrone him ;  
there let him subdue  
all that is not holy, all that is not true ;  
crown him as your captain  
in temptation's hour :  
let his will enfold you  
in its light and power.

For this same Lord Jesus  
shall return again, with his Father's  
glory, with his angel train ;  
all the wreaths of empire meet upon his  
brow, and our hearts confess him  
King of Glory now.

*Caroline Maria Noel (1817-1877)*

### Prayer Creator God, accept our praise.

Creator God, immortal, intimate and  
imaginative,  
your breath brings life to all creation,  
your spark of love is at the heart of each atom:  
**With all of creation we offer you our praise.**

From the moment before time began  
you have loved and known each person here  
You have been concerned with our thoughts,  
words, and actions:

**With all of creation we offer you our praise.**

There is not an hour when you abandon us,  
You are constant: loving, protecting and  
guiding us. You are wise beyond our knowing:  
**With all of creation we offer you our praise.**

To you the darkness and light are the same.  
You see, love and understand your children  
night and day.  
we are painstakingly and wonderfully made:  
**With all of creation we offer you our praise.**  
**Amen**

### Reading Philippians 2:1-11 Imitating Christ's humility

Therefore if you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any common sharing in the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, <sup>2</sup> then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and of one mind. <sup>3</sup> Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, <sup>4</sup> not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others.

- <sup>5</sup> In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus:
- <sup>6</sup> who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness.
- <sup>8</sup> And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death – even death on a cross!
- <sup>9</sup> Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name,
- <sup>10</sup> that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth,
- <sup>11</sup> and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

### Hymn StF 327 Jesus is King

Jesus is King, and I will extol him,  
give him the glory, and honour his name ;  
he reigns on high, enthroned in the heavens —  
Word of the Father, exalted for us.

We have a hope that is steadfast and certain,  
gone through the curtain and touching the  
throne ;  
we have a priest who is there interceding,  
pouring his grace on our lives day by day.

We come to him, our Priest and Apostle,  
clothed in his glory and bearing his name,  
laying our lives with gladness before him —  
filled with his Spirit we worship the King :

‘O Holy One, our hearts do adore you ;  
thrilled with your goodness we give you our  
praise !’

Angels in light with worship surround him,  
Jesus, our Saviour, for ever the same.

*Wendy Churchill* © 1982 Authentic Publishing,

### Message

What are the values by which you live? A Christian organisation I worked closely with had 4 values: they are Collaborative, Generosity, Creative and Joyful. These are basic Christian values.

Why is **collaboration** important? Collaboration improves the way a team works together, and problem solves. This leads to more innovation, efficient processes, increased success, and improved communication. Through listening to and learning from each other, we can help each other reach our goals.

We have a **generous** God. John wrote “God so loved the world that he **gave** his only Son that whosoever believes in Him will not perish but have eternal life”. God loves us while we were still sinners – he offers forgiveness, he offers abundant life, he offers us his presence. When you look at his creation you see abundance. Paul wrote to the Corinthians encouraging cheerful giving. It’s not just about finance – acts of kindness shown to someone, brings blessing both to the one receiving the blessing, but also the giver of that blessing and potentially anyone observing that blessing- it is a win, win, win, situation!

We have a creator God who made us in his image! If we are in his image, we too are made to be **creative**. The ability to transcend traditional ideas, rules, patterns, relationships, or the like, and to create meaningful new ideas, forms, methods, interpretations. We have imaginative creative ideas in so many areas. And teams working collaboratively can be even more creative.

Paul urged his readers to “Rejoice in the Lord always”. We can all think of moments where we have experienced **joy**: in the birth of a child, a beautiful sunset, a gift of a wonderful present. James writing to Christians takes it to a higher level wrote “Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds.” (*James 1:2*).

It is about knowing that our lives are in God’s hands, and we are secure there, even though outward circumstances may not be favourable. We know that God is with us and can use these circumstances for our benefit and his glory.

Looking at our reading today from Philippians 2, we see collaboration involved in our “encouragement from being united” (v1) and “common sharing” (v1), in “our relationship with one another” (v5) in our “being like -minded” (v2). We see the generosity of God in sending his Son, Jesus, to be one of us (v6-8). We see the creativeness again in his Son (v5-8), and in the “comfort of his love” and the “tenderness and compassion” inspired in us (v2). We see the Joy in Paul as he reflects on his relationships with the Philippians (v2) and in God in his exaltation of Jesus (v9-11)

### **For your reflection.**

- 1) How can you collaborate more effectively?
- 2) What might prevent you from collaborating well?
- 3) How can you show more generosity than you already do?
- 4) How can you creatively encourage others?
- 5) What can the church do creatively?
- 6) Where is the joy?
- 7) Do you need to cultivate a culture of joy?.

### **Hymn StF 15 The splendour of the King**

The splendour of the King,  
clothed in majesty ;  
let all the earth rejoice,  
let all the earth rejoice.  
He wraps himself in light  
and darkness tries to hide,  
and trembles at his voice,  
and trembles at his voice.

*How great is our God, sing with me,  
how great is our God, and all will see  
how great, how great is our God.*

And age to age he stands,  
and time is in his hands ;  
beginning and the end,  
beginning and the end.  
The Godhead, Three in One,  
Father, Spirit, Son,  
the Lion and the Lamb,  
the Lion and the Lamb.

*How great is our God, sing with me,  
how great is our God, and all will see  
how great, how great is our God.*

Name above all names,  
worthy of all praise ;  
my heart will sing :  
how great is our God.  
Name above all names,  
worthy of all praise ;  
my heart will sing :  
how great is our God.

*How great is our God, sing with me,  
how great is our God, and all will see  
how great, how great is our God.*

*Chris Tomlin, Ed Cash and Jesse Reeves  
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**Prayers** in the confidence of God's concern for the smallest details of human living, we offer our prayers for the world and ourselves.

We pray for those who find themselves in despair today:

People who have no sense of their own value,  
People who have no confidence in the future,  
People who suffer the effects and stigma of mental illness.

God of grace **Hear our prayer.**

We pray for those whose days are formed of fear and longing:

Parents who have no food for their children  
Children who live in war zones and places of conflict  
carers who long for a break and a rest

God of grace **Hear our prayer.**

### **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.**

### **Hymn StF 331 King of Kings, Majesty**

**KING OF KINGS, MAJESTY,**  
God of heaven living in me.  
Gentle Saviour, closest Friend,  
Strong Deliverer, Beginning and End:  
All within me falls at Your throne.

*Your majesty, I can but bow;  
I lay my all before You now.  
In royal robes I don't deserve,  
I live to serve Your majesty.*

We pray for those whose thoughts are too weighty to bear:

People living with guilt of a past action,  
People living with the shock of a difficult diagnosis,  
people living with the burden of grief.

God of grace **Hear our prayer.**

We pray for those in our churches and community who need comfort . . . . .  
. . . . .

God of grace **Hear our prayer.**

We pray for ourselves. Help us to remember that we are wonderfully made:  
teach us to rely on your presence and to see signs of your glory  
teach us to replace hate with love, and fear with knowledge  
teach us to care for others as you care for us

God of grace **Hear our prayer. 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.**

Earth and heaven worship You,  
Love eternal, faithful and true,  
Who bought the nations, ransomed souls,  
Brought this sinner near to Your throne:  
All within me cries out in praise.

*Your majesty, I can but bow;  
I lay my all before You now.  
In royal robes I don't deserve,  
I live to serve Your majesty.*

*Jarrold Cooper © 1996 Sovereign Lifestyle Music*

**Blessing** May God who knows you intimately, and cares for you passionately, Bless you and lead you in the way of everlasting life. **Amen.**