

## 24<sup>th</sup> August 2025 – Morning Service

### Quencher of Thirst

Rev Andrew Sankey

#### Call to Worship

The Spirit and the bride says “Come!” And let the one who hears say, “Come!” Let the one who is thirsty come; and let the one who wishes take the free gift of the water of life. (Revelation 22: 17)

#### StF 248 – I heard the voice of Jesus say

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| 1) I heard the voice of Jesus say:<br>'Come unto me and rest;<br>Lay down, O weary one,<br>lay down<br>Your head upon my breast.'<br>I came to Jesus as I was,<br>Weary and worn and sad,<br>I found in him a resting-place,<br>And he has made me glad. | 2) I heard the voice of Jesus say:<br>'Behold, I freely give<br>The living water; thirsty one,<br>Stoop down and drink and live.'<br>I came to Jesus, and I drank<br>Of that life-giving stream;<br>My thirst was quenched,<br>my soul revived,<br>And now I live in him. | 3) I heard the voice of Jesus say:<br>'I am this dark world's Light;<br>Look unto me, your morn<br>shall rise,<br>And all your day be bright.'<br>I looked to Jesus, and I found<br>In him my star, my sun;<br>And in that light of life I'll walk,<br>Till travelling days are done. |
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*Horatius N Bonar*

#### Prayer

Thank you, Jesus, for your call upon our lives, thank you that you know everything about us yet still call us to be on your team, thank you that you not only forgive us our sins, but pour an abundance of your grace, your love into our lives. Thank you for your life-giving water given to us to bless others. **Amen.**

#### Reading: John 7: 25-52 (NIV)

At that point some of the people of Jerusalem began to ask, “Isn’t this the man they are trying to kill? Here he is, speaking publicly, and they are not saying a word to him. Have the authorities really concluded that he is the Messiah? But we know where this man is from; when the Messiah comes, no one will know where he is from.”

Then Jesus, still teaching in the temple courts, cried out, “Yes, you know me, and you know where I am from. I am not here on my own authority, but he who sent me is true. You do not know him, but I know him because I am from him and he sent me.”

At this they tried to seize him, but no one laid a hand on him, because his hour had not yet come. Still, many in the crowd believed in him. They said, “When the Messiah comes, will he perform more signs than this man?”

The Pharisees heard the crowd whispering such things about him. Then the chief priests and the Pharisees sent temple guards to arrest him.

Jesus said, “I am with you for only a short time, and then I am going to the one who sent me. You will look for me, but you will not find me; and where I am, you cannot come.”

The Jews said to one another, “Where does this man intend to go that we cannot find him? Will he go where our people live scattered among the Greeks, and teach the Greeks? What did he mean when he said, ‘You will look for me, but you will not find me,’ and ‘Where I am, you cannot come’?”

On the last and greatest day of the festival, Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, “Let anyone who is thirsty come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as Scripture has said, rivers of living water will flow from

within them.” By this he meant the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were later to receive. Up to that time the Spirit had not been given, since Jesus had not yet been glorified.

On hearing his words, some of the people said, “Surely this man is the Prophet.”

Others said, “He is the Messiah.”

Still others asked, “How can the Messiah come from Galilee? Does not Scripture say that the Messiah will come from David’s descendants and from Bethlehem, the town where David lived?” Thus the people were divided because of Jesus. Some wanted to seize him, but no one laid a hand on him.

#### Unbelief of the Jewish Leaders

Finally the temple guards went back to the chief priests and the Pharisees, who asked them, “Why didn’t you bring him in?”

“No one ever spoke the way this man does,” the guards replied.

“You mean he has deceived you also?” the Pharisees retorted. “Have any of the rulers or of the Pharisees believed in him? No! But this mob that knows nothing of the law—there is a curse on them.”

Nicodemus, who had gone to Jesus earlier and who was one of their own number, asked, “Does our law condemn a man without first hearing him to find out what he has been doing?”

They replied, “Are you from Galilee, too? Look into it, and you will find that a prophet does not come out of Galilee.”

#### StF 377 – Down the mountain

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| 1) Down the mountain the river flows,<br>And it brings refreshing, wherever it goes.<br>Through the valleys and over the fields,<br>The river is rushing and the river is here.                         | 2) The river of God is teeming with life,<br>And all who touch it can be revived;<br>And all who linger on this river's shore<br>Will come back thirsting for more of the Lord. |
| Ch) <i>The river of God sets our feet to dancing,<br/>The river of God fills our hearts with cheer.<br/>The river of God fills our mouths with laughter,<br/>And we rejoice, for the river is here.</i> | 3) Up to the mountain we love to go,<br>To find the presence of the Lord;<br>Along the banks of the river we run,<br>We dance with laughter, giving praise to the Son.          |

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#### Reflection

This summer has had four heat waves. Much advice has been given. If you travel take water with you. Keep the house cooler by keeping the curtains drawn. People in the time of Jesus knew extreme heat and dryness, they knew what it was to be thirsty. When I visited Israel/Palestine on sabbatical, I went to Beersheba and through the Negev desert on the way to the Dead Sea. I got out of the car and walked around the ruins, the ground was so hot, there was no shade, there was no water and no stores. I had followed advice and was carrying water and also glad that when I got back in the car it was air conditioned. In the UK most of the time we take water for granted. You can turn on a tap and clean, cool, fresh water comes out. In the Holy land in the time of Jesus, water had to be drawn from a well or a stream. In Zimbabwe all the water at Mission station where we lived for 3 years without electricity was pumped from a bore hole by a diesel engine. Near the last town we lived in a massive lake had been created by a dam. It was built to supply irrigation to the sugar cane estates of the Lowveld. When we arrived in Zimbabwe in 1982, the lake was 100% full and overflowing the spillway. By 1991 as we were returning to UK, the dry season had gone on for 9 months, instead of 6 months and the reservoir was down to 0.7% (or 99.3% empty!) and crops had failed again. The cane sugar estates produced no sugar. In 1992 I did a preaching

tour in UK and in Yorkshire stayed with an engineer at Yorkshire Water who was complaining that his reservoirs were down to 70% full – 100 times more than the Zimbabwe reservoir. We in the UK barely know what it is to be thirsty.

Our reading has Jesus at a festival in Jerusalem. During festival times the population of Jerusalem sometimes quadrupled, and water and food supplies could be difficult. At this festival the ministry of Jesus was under question, some were trying to kill him, there was whispering a plotting, there were those who were eager to find out more and others incredulous that such a prophet could have come from Galilee. Particularly as some of them knew the Scriptures saying that the Messiah would come from David's descendant, and David's hometown was Bethlehem, very close to Jerusalem. We know that Jesus was in fact born in Bethlehem, but that was 33 years earlier and it had only been a matter of weeks they were in Bethlehem before his parents fled to Egypt for a few years and then returning Nazareth and Galilee. His story would not have been known by most people (Matthew and Luke's gospels had not been written).

Jesus often used illustrations close at hand and speaks of those who are thirsty coming to him to drink. They all will have experienced real thirst, and Jesus didn't offer a glass of water, but a river of water flowing from within them. John goes on to explain this meant the Holy Spirit, coming not as a one-off event, but as a river flowing from within us to make a difference to the community around us. A river doesn't just fill our need but is available to others. In places of low rainfall, the countryside can become dry and if you fly over it it looks brown. A river flowing through this area will produce a ribbon of green following the path of the river – there is life, and people and animals can come and drink of this water.

The call to worship from Revelation (above) invites those who are thirsty to "Come" and drink of the live giving water, not a trickle nor a stagnant pond but an abundant supply of living water that will not only satisfy us, give us purpose and meaning but become channels of life for others.

### **For your reflection**

- 1) Can you remember a time when you were really thirsty? How was that thirst quenched? What did it feel like when you were able to drink?
- 2) Have you ever felt life was purposeless and without meaning? Have you ever doubted that God loves you and has a purpose for your life? Has someone helped you overcome that doubt, but then you have found the doubts returning? You are in good company, some of Jesus's disciples and the Psalm writers, the woman at the well (John 4). Go on trusting, share with a friend or contact me.
- 3) What would it be like to have a river flowing from within you that blesses other people? Who would you like to introduce to the life-giving, thirst-quenching Jesus. Imagine them knowing Jesus and drinking that life giving water and the transformation that it brings.

### **StF 706 – Longing for light**

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| 1) Longing for light, we wait in darkness.<br>Longing for truth, we turn to you.<br>Make us your own, your holy people,<br>Light for the world to see.   | 3) Longing for food, many are hungry.<br>Longing for water, many still thirst.<br>Make us your bread, broken for others,<br>Shared until all are fed.        |
| Ch) <i>Christ, be our light! Shine in our hearts.<br/>Shine through the darkness.<br/>Christ, be our light!<br/>Shine in your Church gathered today.</i> | 4) Longing for shelter, many are homeless.<br>Longing for warmth, many are cold.<br>Make us your building, sheltering others,<br>Walls made of living stone. |
| 2) Longing for peace, our world is troubled.<br>Longing for hope, many despair.<br>Your word alone has power to save us.<br>Make us your living voice.   | 5) Many the gifts, many the people,<br>Many the hearts that yearn to belong.<br>Let us be servants to one another,<br>Making your kingdom come.              |

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## Prayers

Loving God, we pray for those who are weary – exhausted in body, mind and soul Lord of life, **renew their strength and refresh their spirits.**

We think of those whose daily work hangs heavy upon them – those in dull, soul-destroying employment, in stressful and pressurised careers, in labour that is heavy and exhausting, or in jobs involving long unsociable hours. Lord of life, **renew their strength and refresh their spirits.**

We think of those who have no job; deprived of a sense of self-respect, unable to provide for their loved ones as they would like, their life seeming empty, frustrating Lord of life, **renew their strength and refresh their spirits.**

We pray for those who are suffering; battling against illness, wrestling with infirmity, crushed by physical disability or enduring physical or emotional pain Lord of life, **renew their strength and refresh their spirits.**

We pray for those who have lost their enthusiasm for life; the depressed and downhearted, those with fragile mental health, the sad and disillusioned, the frightened and anxious, all those for whom just getting through another day has become an effort. Lord of life, **renew their strength and refresh their spirits.**

We think of those who have nothing to sustain their hope; those whose dreams have been crushed, who struggle with doubt and uncertainty, whose faith in you and the future has been battered beyond repair, their ability to bounce back finally exhausted. Lord of life, **renew their strength and refresh their spirits.**

Loving God, draw near to all through Christ. Grant the peace of your presence the healing of your touch, the blessing of your guidance and the refreshing of your Living water, so that all who are weary may walk in hope and look forward in faith. Lord of life, **renew their strength and refresh their spirits. 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.**

## Song - Let your living waters

1) Let your living water flow over my soul.  
Let your Holy Spirit come and take control  
Of every situation that has troubled my mind.  
All my cares and burdens onto you I roll.

Ch) *Jesus, Jesus, Jesus.*  
*Father, Father, Father.*  
*Spirit, Spirit, Spirit.*

2) Come now, Holy Spirit, and take control.  
Hold me in your loving arms and make me whole.  
Wipe away all doubt and fear and take my pride,  
Draw me to your love and keep me by your side.

3) Give your life to Jesus, let him fill your soul.  
Let him take you in his arms and make you whole.  
As you give your life to him he'll set you free.  
You will live and reign with him eternally.

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## Blessing

May rivers of living water flow (the Holy Spirit) from within you transforming the world around you.  
**Thanks be to God. Amen.**