

## 27<sup>th</sup> July 2025 – Morning Service

Lord, teach us to pray

Rev Peter Bradley

### Call to Worship

The Lord is faithful in all his words and gracious in all his deeds. The Lord is just in all his ways and kind in all his doings.

### StF 34 – O worship the Lord

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| 1) O worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness,<br>Bow down before him, his glory proclaim –<br>With gold of obedience and incense of lowliness,<br>Kneel and adore him: the Lord is his name.              | 4) These, though we bring them in trembling<br>and fearfulness,<br>He will accept for the name that is dear;<br>Mornings of joy give for evenings<br>of tearfulness,<br>Trust for our trembling, and hope for our fear. |
| 2) Low at his feet lay your burden of carefulness,<br>High on his heart he will bear it for you,<br>Comfort your sorrows,<br>and answer your prayerfulness,<br>Showing the pathway your feet should pursue.  | 5) O worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness,<br>Bow down before him, his glory proclaim;<br>With gold of obedience and incense<br>of lowliness,<br>Kneel and adore him: the Lord is his name.                       |
| 3) Fear not to enter his courts in the slenderness<br>Of the poor wealth you would count as your own.<br>Truth in its beauty, and love in its tenderness,<br>These are the offerings to bring to his throne. |   |

*John Samuel Bewley Monsell*

### Prayers of Adoration and Confession

Everlasting God, creator of the ends of the earth, you do not faint or grow tired; you give power to the weary and strengthen the powerless. You heal the broken-hearted and bind up their wounds. Your understanding is unsearchable; your steadfast love endures for ever. You are worthy of nobler worship than we can offer, yet you do not despise the lowly. How good it is to sing your praise; for you are great and gracious. To you we ascribe all honour and glory; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Holy God, we confess with shame our share in the sin of humankind that crucified the Lord of glory. In him you have given us life and joy and you call us in Christ to be lights for the world, but we hide your light from others. Forgive all that is wrong in our lives and remake us in your image and likeness; for the sake of him who died and rose again for us, our Saviour, Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

### StF 693 – Beauty for brokenness

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| 1) Beauty for brokenness, hope for despair,<br>Lord, in Your suffering world, this is our prayer.<br>Bread for the children, justice, joy, peace,<br>Sunrise to sunset Your kingdom increase.                    | 3) Refuge from cruel wars, havens from fear,<br>Cities for sanctuary freedoms to share.<br>Peace to the killing fields, scorched<br>earth to green,<br>Christ for the bitterness, His cross for the pain. |
| 2) Shelter for fragile lives, cures for their ills,<br>Work for all people, trade for their skills.<br>Land for the dispossessed, rights for the weak,<br>Voices to plead the cause of those who can't<br>speak. | 4) Rest for the ravaged earth, oceans and streams,<br>Plundered and poisoned, our future,<br>our dreams.<br>Lord, end our madness, carelessness, greed,<br>Make us content with the things that we need.  |

*Ch) God of the poor, friend of the weak,  
Give us compassion we pray,  
Melt our cold hearts, let tears fall like rain,  
Come change our love from a spark  
To a flame*

*Graham Kendrick © 1993 Make Way Music*

5) Lighten our darkness, breathe on this flame  
Until Your justice burns brightly again;  
Until the nations learn of Your ways,  
Seek Your salvation and bring You their praise.

## **Reading: Colossians 2: 6-15**

So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live your lives in him, rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness.

See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the elemental spiritual forces of this world rather than on Christ.

For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form, and in Christ you have been brought to fullness. He is the head over every power and authority. In him you were also circumcised with a circumcision not performed by human hands. Your whole self ruled by the flesh was put off when you were circumcised by Christ, having been buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through your faith in the working of God, who raised him from the dead.

When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made you alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins, having cancelled the charge of our legal indebtedness, which stood against us and condemned us; he has taken it away, nailing it to the cross. And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross.

## **StF 519 – Father I place into your hands**

1) Father, I place into Your hands  
The things I cannot do.  
Father, I place into Your hands  
The things that I've been through.  
Father, I place into Your hands  
The way that I should go,  
For I know I always can trust You.

2) Father, I place into Your hands  
My friends and family.  
Father, I place into Your hands  
The things that trouble me.  
Father, I place into Your hands  
The person I would be,  
For I know I always can trust You.

3) Father, we love to see Your face,  
We love to hear Your voice,  
Father, we love to sing Your praise  
And in Your name rejoice,  
Father, we love to walk with You  
And in Your presence rest,  
For we know we always can trust You.

4) Father, I want to be with You  
And do the things You do.  
Father, I want to speak the words  
That You are speaking too.  
Father, I want to love the ones  
That You will draw to You,  
For I know that I am one with You.

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## Reading: Luke 11: 1-13

One day Jesus was praying in a certain place. When he finished, one of his disciples said to him, “Lord, teach us to pray, just 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.  
Forgive us our sins,  
for we also forgive everyone who sins against us.  
And lead us not into temptation.’”

Then Jesus said to them, “Suppose you have a friend, and you go to him at midnight and say, ‘Friend, lend me three loaves of bread; a friend of mine on a journey has come to me, and I have no food to offer him.’ And suppose the one inside answers, ‘Don’t bother me. The door is already locked, and my children and I are in bed. I can’t get up and give you anything.’ I tell you, even though he will not get up and give you the bread because of friendship, yet because of your shameless audacity he will surely get up and give you as much as you need.

“So I say to you: Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; the one who seeks finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened.

“Which of you fathers, if your son asks for a fish, will give him a snake instead? Or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion? If you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!”

## Sermon – “Lord, teach us to pray” (Luke 11:1)

Has anyone been to Rome? If so, did you visit the catacombs? The catacombs are a series of tunnels and underground rooms that were used as burial chambers, principally by Christians and Jews, from 1<sup>st</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup> Centuries AD. They are important because of the artwork painted on the walls, which give us a great deal of information about the lifestyle of the early Christians. For example, there are frescoes of people praying. They show a person standing upright, elbows tucked into the body, with the lower arms and hands outstretched.

This was the physical pose adopted by many ancient peoples as they said their prayers, not just Christians. It’s a far cry from “hands together, eyes closed” isn’t it?

So when Jesus, according to Luke, had finished praying, it would have been obvious to his disciples that that was what he had been doing. But when you think about it a bit more, there is a slight puzzle in the story. The disciples said to Jesus, *Lord, **teach us to pray***. But they knew what prayer was, didn’t they? They were Jews who had attended the synagogue where prayer was offered on a regular basis. What they presumably meant was *teach us a **special** prayer*. They wanted their own prayer; a distinctive prayer that would encapsulate all that Jesus was teaching them. We all know what Jesus replied!

Actually, there are two versions of his response: the one from Luke is the shortest, which has five petitions. Matthew extends it, adding two more, although it is Matthew’s version which is closest to the one that we traditionally use. Matthew sets his version in what we call The Sermon on the Mount, but Luke describes an informal chat between Jesus and the twelve. He starts his account with what must have been one of Jesus’ jokes: “*When you were lads, if you were hungry and asked your dad for an egg, would he have given*

*you a scorpion?” And as they laughed at the idea, Jesus added, “So if you ask our heavenly father, won’t he give you good things?”*

Jesus is teaching about prayer – that relationship with God expressed in thought and word. He gives the disciples an outline prayer, but each of the petitions is brief and to the point. This is the first lesson to be learned from Jesus: that prayer need not be long. Indeed, Matthew introduces the prayer with Jesus saying that in our prayers we must not *go babbling on like the pagans, who imagine that the more they say the more likely they are to be heard*. So in the Lord’s Prayer, Jesus’ petitions are few and crisply expressed.

The problem for us is that we know the prayer so well that we rattle it off without really thinking about it. Perhaps we need to look at each of the petitions a little more carefully!

We are to begin by addressing God as *Father*. God is Jesus’ father, and ours. In this first petition, then, we pray *May your name be hallowed* – that is, be recognised as holy, unique, and untouched by evil. We should also note that Jesus used the Aramaic word “Abba”, which means Father, but it carries with it a sense of intimacy, of closeness and of profound respect. Some have suggested that it was equivalent to our “Daddy”, but I think that takes us in a completely wrong direction. “Abba” certainly implies that God is in a relationship with us that is akin to the relationship of a father with his beloved child, but it does not imply childishness. Childlike? Maybe. Childish – no.

The second petition is *Your Kingdom come* – this comes as no surprise as there are many references in the Gospels to God’s kingdom coming in Jesus, and many of Jesus’ stories are about this kingdom: it’s a pearl of great price, a magnificent banquet, a wedding breakfast, and so on. Even when the kingdom is not specifically mentioned, there is an expectation that everyone will behave well and have good relations with others.

Matthew elaborated this petition, explaining what *Your Kingdom come* means: *Your will be done, on earth as in heaven*. We earnestly pray therefore, that the kingdom we see in the person and life of Jesus will come in all its completeness; that all people will accept God’s sovereignty, and heaven will be known here on earth.

Luke follows these two petitions, which focus on God and God’s kingdom, with three petitions for ourselves: give us bread; forgive our sins; and do not test us. The first of those is fairly direct, and does not require an explanation – except perhaps we wonder why “day” is repeated? *Give us this day our daily bread*. Surely, *give us this day our bread* would suffice?

Maybe Luke was reminding us of the story of manna from heaven, which fed the Israelites in the desert. They had to collect no more each day than would feed them **on that day**, as any left-over would go rotten. That is, we are not to be greedy, grabbing more each day than our stomachs need. It is, of course, a petition that can, and should, go much further than simply a reference to food.

But the second petition for ourselves has a built-in commitment. ***Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who have trespassed against us***. Perhaps we should try saying that second part of the petition slowly.

Finally, Luke’s third petition for ourselves is a request that God does not lead us into temptation. And if we find that hard to understand because we can’t imagine God ever leading us down this path, then we take comfort from the fact that from the earliest days of the church, this has puzzled the faithful. Perhaps the most common way of understanding this is that we are asking God to protect us from any test, trial or temptation which is beyond our strength to bear.

What gives this petition particular authority is that on the Mount of Olives when Jesus prayed that, if it was the Father’s will, the cup of suffering should be taken from him, he also told the disciples to pray *that you*

*may be spared the test.* Perhaps in those uncertain days, when the church was struggling to be established and the threat of persecution and martyrdom was a reality, this petition carried particular resonance of the suffering undergone by Jesus.

Perhaps Luke's climax of the Lord's Prayer, pointing us to Jesus' last hours, might discourage us from saying it like a times-table; to slow down and savour the words used by Jesus and his disciples – words which have been a building block of belief from the beginning, and which gave hope, comfort and a firm footing to our fathers and mothers in the faith, who first taught us to say: *Our Father...*

### **StF 550 – Forth in thy name**

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| 1) Forth in thy name, O Lord, I go,<br>My daily labour to pursue,<br>Thee, only thee, resolved to know<br>In all I think, or speak, or do.       | 4) Give me to bear thy easy yoke,<br>And every moment watch and pray,<br>And still to things eternal look,<br>And hasten to thy glorious day;           |
| 2) The task thy wisdom has assigned<br>O let me cheerfully fulfil,<br>In all my works thy presence find,<br>And prove thy good and perfect will. | 5) For thee delightfully employ<br>Whate'er thy bounteous grace has given,<br>And run my course with even joy,<br>And closely walk with thee to heaven. |
| 3) Thee may I set at my right hand,<br>Whose eyes my inmost substance see,<br>And labour on at thy command,<br>And offer all my works to thee.   |   |

*Charles Wesley*

### **Prayers of Intercession**

Holy God, open our ears to your call, our eyes to your presence, our hearts to your love. Give us the courage to say, "Here I am, Lord, send me." Strengthen our faith that we may be willing at all times to heed your call.

We pray for all who are called to proclaim your glory, all who seek out the lost, uplift the fallen, and comfort the wounded. We pray for the outreach of the Church to which we belong.  
Lord, as you have called us, **make us worthy of our calling.**

God, as you are gracious to us, make us sensitive to the needs of others. We remember before you the world's poor, nations that are in debt, hungry and homeless peoples. We pray for all who work for relief organisations, and for the emergency services, for all who give their lives in the care and service of others.  
Lord, as you have called us, **make us worthy of our calling.**

We give you thanks for all who have encouraged us and built up our confidence. We pray for the young, that they may not be discouraged. We pray for all families that are in difficulties at this time, for young people forced to leave home. We give thanks for our homes and all that you have called us to do.  
Lord, as you have called us, **make us worthy of our calling.**

Lord of all compassion, we pray for the lost and the dis-spirited; for all who have lost hope or vision, for those who have lost confidence in themselves, in others or in you. We pray for all who are anxious and fearful. We remember all whose lives are restricted by illness or circumstance.  
Lord, as you have called us, **make us worthy of our calling.**

Lord, you call us to share with you in the glory of your eternal kingdom. Make us worthy of our calling. We remember all who have served you faithfully and are now in life eternal with you.  
Lord, as you have called us, **make us worthy of our calling.**

These things we ask in and through the name of Jesus Christ our Saviour, who taught us, when we pray, to say...

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.**

### **StF 524 – Listening God, you hear us**

- 1) Listening God, you hear us  
when we cannot speak,  
when despair and turmoil  
leave us faint and weak.  
In love you call us back to you again  
and your grace reminds us  
how you feel our pain.
- 2) Searching God, you find us when we go astray,  
as self-centred living takes us from your way.  
In love you seek us, show us what we've lost,  
and your tears remind us what forgiveness cost.
- 3) Suffering God, you lift us from our deepest grief,  
when emotion blinds us to our own belief.  
In love you touch us with your nail-torn hand  
and your wounds remind us why you understand.
- 4) Risen God, you show us love  
too strong for death,  
evil deeds defeated by your living breath.  
In love you teach us never to despair,  
your new life reminds us, hope is always there.

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### **Blessing**

The God of love who calls you, guide you this day and always: his might uphold you, his love enfold you, his peace empower you.

And the blessing of God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, be with you all, this day and for evermore. **Amen.**