

# 5<sup>th</sup> October 2025 – Morning Service

Rev Chris Watson

## Call to Worship

We meet in the presence, of God, Almighty who knows our strengths and weaknesses, and fills us with eagerness and energy, and who inspires us to draw close as we worship.

## StF 364 – O for a thousand tongues to sing

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| 1) O for a thousand tongues to sing<br>My great Redeemer's praise,<br>The glories of my God and King,<br>The triumphs of his grace!                 | 5) He speaks; and, listening to his voice,<br>New life the dead receive;<br>The mournful, broken hearts rejoice.<br>The humble poor believe.     |
| 2) My gracious Master and my God,<br>Assist me to proclaim,<br>To spread through all the earth abroad<br>The honours of your name.                  | 6) See all your sins on Jesus laid:<br>The Lamb of God was slain;<br>His soul was once an offering made<br>That all may heaven gain.             |
| 3) Jesus - the name that charms our fears,<br>That bids our sorrows cease;<br>'Tis music in the sinner's ears,<br>'Tis life, and health, and peace. | 7) In Christ, our Head, you then shall know,<br>Shall feel, your sins forgiven,<br>Anticipate your heaven below,<br>And own that love is heaven. |
| 4) He breaks the power of cancelled sin,<br>He sets the prisoner free;<br>His blood can make the foulest clean,<br>His blood availed for me.        |  |

*Charles Wesley*

## Prayer

We draw close to you, Eternal Trinity, and praise you for your great love. You give us all we need, you allow us to puzzle over your word and deeds, you inspire us to work out faith in action. For this we praise you. For this we thank you. Yet there are times when we have doubted your love, trusted in other things, journeyed other ways, and followed other gods, believing you punish, not love, us. We have demanded faith yet not used the seeds you gave us. We have doubted what you can achieve through us. We have behaved as if we are living in exile; despising the world as it is and dreaming it could be remade in our image. Forgive us, Lord, and reclothe us in a rightful mind and let us return to you, that we may sing your songs in strange and familiar lands, find the faith you have given sufficient for the work you call us to, that we may not forget you are our highest joy; our life itself. **Amen.**

## StF 495 – Dear Lord and Father of mankind

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| 1) Dear Lord and Father of mankind,<br>Forgive our foolish ways;<br>Reclothe us in our rightful mind;<br>In purer lives thy service find,<br>In deeper reverence, praise. | 4) With that deep hush subduing all<br>Our words and works that drown<br>The tender whisper of thy call,<br>As noiseless let thy blessing fall<br>As fell thy manna down.            |
| 2) In simple trust like theirs who heard<br>Beside the Syrian sea<br>The gracious calling of the Lord,<br>Let us, like them, without a word<br>Rise up and follow thee.   | 5) Drop thy still dews of quietness,<br>Till all our strivings cease;<br>Take from our souls the strain and stress,<br>And let our ordered lives confess<br>The beauty of thy peace. |

3) O sabbath rest by Galilee!  
O calm of hills above,  
Where Jesus knelt to share with thee  
The silence of eternity,  
Interpreted by love!

*John Greenleaf Whittier*

### **Reading: Lamentations 1: 1-6 (NIV)**

“How deserted lies the city,  
once so full of people!  
How like a widow is she,  
who once was great among the nations!  
She who was queen among the provinces  
has now become a slave.

Bitterly she weeps at night,  
tears are on her cheeks.  
Among all her lovers  
there is no one to comfort her.  
All her friends have betrayed her;  
they have become her enemies.

After affliction and harsh labour,  
Judah has gone into exile.  
She dwells among the nations;  
she finds no resting place.  
All who pursue her have overtaken her  
in the midst of her distress.

### **Reading: Psalm 137 (NIV)**

By the rivers of Babylon we sat and wept  
when we remembered Zion.  
There on the poplars  
we hung our harps,  
for there our captors asked us for songs,  
our tormentors demanded songs of joy;  
they said, ‘Sing us one of the songs of Zion!’

How can we sing the songs of the Lord  
while in a foreign land?  
If I forget you, Jerusalem,  
may my right hand forget its skill.  
May my tongue cling to the roof of my mouth  
if I do not remember you,  
if I do not consider Jerusalem  
my highest joy.

### **Reflection**

It is interesting how many songs and hymns that we know and indeed are known outside of church circles have direct links to words or phrases in the Bible. Jerusalem, Zadok the Priest, Handel’s Messiah, You shall go out in joy, trees of the fields. I, the Lord of Sea and Sky echoes the experience of the boy Samuel and thanks to Bony M this Psalm, ‘By the rivers of Babylon’ is also well known. Like the reading from

6) Breathe through the heats of our desire  
Thy coolness and thy balm;  
Let sense be dumb, let flesh retire;  
Speak through the earthquake, wind, and fire,  
O still small voice of calm!

The roads to Zion mourn,  
for no one comes to her appointed festivals.  
All her gateways are desolate,  
her priests groan,  
her young women grieve,  
and she is in bitter anguish.

Her foes have become her masters;  
her enemies are at ease.  
The Lord has brought her grief  
because of her many sins.  
Her children have gone into exile,  
captive before the foe.

All the splendour has departed  
from Daughter Zion.  
Her princes are like deer  
that find no pasture;  
in weakness they have fled  
before the pursuer.

Remember, Lord, what the Edomites did  
on the day Jerusalem fell.  
‘Tear it down,’ they cried,  
‘tear it down to its foundations!’  
Daughter Babylon, doomed to destruction,  
happy is the one who repays you  
according to what you have done to us.  
Happy is the one who seizes your infants  
and dashes them against the rocks.

Lamentations, the focus of this Psalm is the misery of losing a homeland, of being displaced of being in exile. This situation came about because Nebuchadnezzar II's was successful in his siege of Jerusalem in 597BC, and some of the inhabitants of the Kingdom of Judah were deported to Babylonia. Think Daniel and friends, only the old, lame, and sick were left behind. The captivity lasted until after the fall of the Babylonian Empire. The rivers referred to are the Euphrates and the Tigris. The gold and precious articles in the Temple were carried away, and Jerusalem was left in ruins.

The Israelites were known for their singing, for their way of praising their God, but now, when their captors asked to hear their songs, they found they couldn't sing. They had lost everything and could find nothing to praise God about. They couldn't sing God's praises when they were in captivity in a strange land.

It's easy to sing God's praises when everything is ok in our lives, when we are in a good place. Praising God, worshipping God is about giving God his worth, it has little to do with our feelings and or circumstances but has everything to do with the fact that God is good and all the time God is good. He is good and worthy of our praise when life is good and when life is horrible, he is always the same and his love for each of us never lessens, it is the one constant that we can all rely on that we can have faith in.

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

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| 1) Father, I place into Your hands<br>The things I cannot do.<br>Father, I place into Your hands<br>The things that I've been through.<br>Father, I place into Your hands<br>The way that I should go,<br>For I know I always can trust You. | 3) Father, we love to see Your face,<br>We love to hear Your voice,<br>Father, we love to sing Your praise<br>And in Your name rejoice,<br>Father, we love to walk with You<br>And in Your presence rest,<br>For we know we always can trust You. |
| 2) Father, I place into Your hands<br>My friends and family.<br>Father, I place into Your hands<br>The things that trouble me.<br>Father, I place into Your hands<br>The person I would be,<br>For I know I always can trust You.            | 4) Father, I want to be with You<br>And do the things You do.<br>Father, I want to speak the words<br>That You are speaking too.<br>Father, I want to love the ones<br>That You will draw to You,<br>For I know that I am one with You.           |

*Jenny Hewer © 1975 Thankyou Music*

### **Reading: Luke 17: 5-10 (NIV)**

The apostles said to the Lord, 'Increase our faith!'

He replied, 'If you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mulberry tree, "Be uprooted and planted in the sea," and it will obey you.

'Suppose one of you has a servant ploughing or looking after the sheep. Will he say to the servant when he comes in from the field, "Come along now and sit down to eat"? Won't he rather say, "Prepare my supper, get yourself ready and wait on me while I eat and drink; after that you may eat and drink"? Will he thank the servant because he did what he was told to do? So you also, when you have done everything you were told to do, should say, "We are unworthy servants; we have only done our duty."'

### **Reflection**

In the passage from Luke's Gospel the disciples ask Jesus to increase their faith. No doubt we have all wished for more faith, especially in times when life seems really tough. Those times when we wonder how much more our faith can withstand. Jesus says that the size of our faith doesn't matter, even faith as small as a mustard seed is enough. Big faith doesn't mean big action or event. It isn't the size of our faith that matters, it's where we put that faith. According to Jesus a very small amount of faith is enough for

mountains to be moved. Faith isn't just about the big things – it is about the little things we do every day. Having faith does not mean that you never doubt – as theologian Paul Tillich states, 'doubt is not the opposite of faith; it is one element of faith'. Jesus asks us to put our faith, our hope and trust in him, to remember that we are not in charge and to remember that God is. We need to remember that God sees the bigger picture and that God loves each one of us and wants only that which will prosper us and not harm. Did the disciples need more faith for that? Do we?

## **StF 696 – For the healing of the nations**

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| 1) For the healing of the nations,<br>Lord, we pray with one accord;<br>For a just and equal sharing<br>Of the things that earth affords.<br>To a life of love in action<br>Help us rise and pledge our word.            | 3) All that kills abundant living,<br>Let it from the earth be banned;<br>Pride of status, race, or schooling,<br>Dogmas that obscure your plan.<br>In our common quest for justice<br>May we hallow life's brief span. |
| 2) Lead us forward into freedom;<br>From despair your world release<br>That, redeemed from war and hatred,<br>All may come and go in peace.<br>Show us how through care and goodness<br>Fear will die and hope increase. | 4) You, Creator-God, have written<br>Your great name on humankind;<br>For our growing in your likeness<br>Bring the life of Christ to mind;<br>That by our response and service<br>Earth its destiny may find.          |

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## **Prayers**

As we sit weeping by the rivers of our world, we bring our petitions to God, knowing, through prayer, we are heard, loved, held, and inspired to change.

Eternal Majesty, you call us to be the Church in dangerous and difficult times, facing wars, famine, extremism, and intolerance all around us, and as we weep, we long for peace. We live in expensive times with prices rising faster than benefits, wages, and pensions, and as we weep, we long for stability. We live in changing times, with our climate producing more storms, rising sea levels, and extreme temperatures, and as we weep, we long for security.

We yearn for more faith, yet know, deep down, you have given all of us all we need; help us, Eternal One, to use the faith we've found. Jesus, you call us to be the Church in difficult times and dangerous times, asking us to believe despite a secular age, and as we weep we long for Your presence. We live in confusing times with the rise of artificial intelligence and cannot see if it is a help or hinderance to abundant life and as we weep, we long for clarity.

We live in frightening times with our borders becoming more like fortress gates, and hearts hardening against those fleeing war, poverty, persecution and climate change, and as we weep, we long for compassion. We yearn for more faith, yet know, deep down, you have given all us all we need; help us, Lord Jesus, to use the faith we've found.

Energising Spirit, you call us to be the Church in dangerous and difficult times, calling us to feed the hungry, befriend the lonely, and love the unlovely, and as we weep, we long for inspiration. We live in desperate times and see need in our world, and in the community around us, and puzzle about how best to respond, and as we weep, we long for vision.

Yet we also live in exciting times, with change, hope, and visions of a better world abounding, so dry our tears, as we long for the Kingdom to come. We yearn for more faith, yet know, deep down, you have given all us all we need; help us, Lord Jesus, to use the faith we've found.

And so, with dry eyes, we pray, as Jesus taught saying...

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 470 – Lord for the years**

- 1) Lord, for the years  
Your love has kept and guided,  
Urged and inspired us,  
Cheered us on our way,  
Sought us and saved us,  
Pardoned and provided,  
Lord of the years,  
We bring our thanks today.
- 2) Lord, for that Word,  
The Word of life which fires us,  
Speaks to our hearts  
And sets our souls ablaze.  
Teaches and trains,  
Rebukes us and inspires us,  
Lord of the Word,  
Receive Your people's praise.
- 3) Lord, for our land,  
In this our generation,  
Spirits oppressed by  
Pleasure, wealth and care;  
For young and old,  
For commonwealth and nation,  
Lord of our land,  
Be pleased to hear our prayer.

- 4) Lord, for our world,  
When we disown and doubt Him,  
Loveless in strength  
And comfortless in pain;  
Hungry and helpless,  
Lost indeed without Him,  
Lord of the world,  
We pray that Christ may reign.
- 5) Lord, for ourselves;  
In living power remake us,  
Self on the cross  
And Christ upon the throne.  
Past put behind us,  
For the future take us,  
Lord of our lives,  
To live for Christ alone.

*Timothy Dudley-Smith    © Timothy Dudley-Smith*

### **Blessing**

May the One who inspired songs in strange lands, the One who loved, taught us to love enemies, and the One who leads us in faith, inspire, teach, and lead you, that your faith will change the world! And the blessing of Almighty God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit is with us all evermore, **Amen.**