

6th April 2025 – Morning Service

Rev Chris Watson

Call to Worship

The Psalmist says: “How clearly the sky reveals God's glory! How plainly it shows what he has done! Each day announces it to the following day; each night repeats it to the next. No speech or words are used, no sound is heard; yet their message goes out to all the world and is heard to the ends of the earth.”

StF 30 – Jesus stand among us

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| 1) Jesus stand among us
At the meeting of our lives,
Be our sweet agreement
At the meeting of our eyes; | <i>Ch) O, Jesus, we love You,
So we gather here,
Join our hearts in unity
And take away our fear.</i> | 2) So to You we're gathering
Out of each and every land,
Christ the love between us
At the joining of our hands; |
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Opening Prayers

May the words that we use in our worship be formed by God, focused on Jesus and filled with the Spirit. God the Father, we stand in awe of you, the one who spoke and brought the world into being, who shaped our bodies and breathed into us the gift of life. Majestic, awesome and wonderful, yet at the same time, tender, loving and kind.

God the Son, we stand in awe of you, who became incarnate to live on this planet alongside us. You showed us how life should be lived, and paid the price in full on the cross.

God the Spirit, we stand in awe of you, the one alongside the Father at creation; you inspired and strengthened his Son on earth, and came in your fullness to be our companion, to lead and inspire your people today.

Creative God, by your word comes life. Forgiving Son, by your word comes love. Empowering Spirit, by your word comes liberation. Speak your word to us now and our lives shall proclaim your glory. **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.**

StF 350 – I cannot tell

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| 1) I cannot tell why he, whom angels worship,
Should set his love upon us, now or then,
Or why, as Shepherd, he should seek
the wanderers,
To bring them back, they know not how or when.
But this I know, that he was born of Mary
When Bethlem's manger was his only home,
And that he lived at Nazareth and laboured,
And so the Saviour, Saviour of the world, is come. | 2) I cannot tell how silently he suffered,
As with his peace he graced this place of tears,
Or how his heart upon the cross was broken,
The crown of pain to three-and-thirty years.
But this I know, he heals the broken-hearted,
And stays our sin, and calms our lurking fear,
And lifts the burden from the heavy-laden,
For yet the Saviour, Saviour of the world, is here. |
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3) I cannot tell how he will win the nations,
How he will claim his earthly heritage,
How satisfy the needs and aspirations
Of east and west, of sinner and of sage.
But this I know, all flesh shall see his glory,
And he shall reap the harvest he has sown,
And some glad day his sun shall shine
in splendour,
When he the Saviour, Saviour of the world,
is known.

William Young Fullerton

Reading: Isaiah 55:1-12

‘Come, all you who are thirsty, come to the waters; and you who have no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without cost. Why spend money on what is not bread, and your labour on what does not satisfy? Listen, listen to me, and eat what is good, and you will delight in the richest of fare. Give ear and come to me; listen, that you may live. I will make an everlasting covenant with you, my faithful love promised to David. See, I have made him a witness to the peoples, a ruler and commander of the peoples. Surely you will summon nations you know not, and nations you do not know will come running to you, because of the Lord your God, the Holy One of Israel, for he has endowed you with splendour.’

Seek the Lord while he may be found; call on him while he is near. Let the wicked forsake their ways and the unrighteous their thoughts. Let them turn to the Lord, and he will have mercy on them, and to our God, for he will freely pardon. ‘For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways,’ declares the Lord. ‘As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts. As the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return to it without watering the earth and making it bud and flourish, so that it yields seed for the sower and bread for the eater, so is my word that goes out from my mouth: it will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it. You will go out in joy and be led forth in peace; the mountains and hills will burst into song before you, and all the trees of the field will clap their hands.’

H&P 769 – God is working his purposes out

1) God is working his purpose out,
as year succeeds to year;
God is working his purpose out,
and the time is drawing near;
Nearer and nearer draws the time,
the time that shall surely be,
When the earth shall be filled with the glory of
God, as the waters cover the sea.

2) What can we do to work God's work,
to prosper and increase
The harmony of all the world,
the reign of the Prince of Peace?
What can we do to hasten the time,
the time that shall surely be,
When the earth shall be filled with the glory of
God, as the waters cover the sea?

Arthur Campbell Ainger

4) I cannot tell how all the lands shall worship,
When at his bidding every storm is stilled,
Or who can say how great the jubilation
When every human heart with love is filled.
But this I know, the skies will thrill with rapture,
And myriad, myriad human voices sing,
And earth to heav'n, and heav'n to earth,
will answer:
'At last the Saviour, Saviour of the world, is King!'

Reflection

I have some exciting news for you today, an exciting announcement that I would like you to pass on to family and friends after this service. Are you excited? Will you pass on what I am about to tell you? We have a great God! A God who does everything in an abundant way, there's no stinginess, no just enough, but everything is done in an overflowing way. Again in Psalms, my cup runs over, it is so full, there is so much that the cup can't hold it all.

The prophet Isaiah calls attention to the abundance in God's creation: everything is his free gift. At this time of year, it is easier to see God's abundance as we see new life, new plants coming into life. We can see all the different shades of green in the grass as it grows, we can see the buds opening as they respond to the warmth of the sun. Isn't it amazing how nature works, how creation is planned? When you think how our planet is situated at exactly the right distance from the sun so that we don't freeze or burn in its radiance. Nature itself is planned, food chains in place, each creature with its place and role in the bigger picture. Everywhere we look we can see the wonder of creation, the abundance of creation. And it all points to the originator, the Creator whose ways and thoughts are so beyond our capabilities.

In the letter to the Romans, written by Paul, we are told that since the beginning of time the clues about God, his existence, his majesty have been clear to see in the creation. The creation points to the Creator. (Romans 1:20). Ever since the creation of the world God's eternal power and divine nature, invisible though they are, have been understood and seen through the things he has made. Paul goes on to berate human beings for focussing on and worshipping creation rather than the Creator. We have been guilty of misreading creation and worshipping what we can see, making idols and images of mortal human beings, or birds or four-footed animals or reptiles rather than worshipping the Creator behind it all.

In Paul's view we have rejected the invite that we can see in the writings of Isaiah. God's abundance of love and care are likened to a feast; elsewhere in the Bible the Kingdom of Heaven is likened to a banquet. Chapter 55 opens with an invitation to feast on God's amazing love. Israel's gracious God has opened wide the door of the banquet hall and is insisting that all who thirst are invited. The food is not only free, but 'good' and 'rich,' because it is capable of sustaining life and hope. There is no entrance fee, all are invited, there is no shortages of love or welcome.

So why does he go on to ask whether we search after things that do not and cannot satisfy us; why do we turn away from all this abundance and chase after things that don't matter, that don't satisfy? Paul, again in Romans says that chasing after other things, relying on them, turns them into idols that we can end up worshipping, that we can replace God with things like security, money, lovers and friends, making them our priority rather than God. Security, money, friends, etc are not inherently bad but it is how we view them, how we use them. Do we rely on them not God?

In the parable of the rich fool, the farmer is not berated for having money, for having accumulated wealth but rather for his focus on that rather than his spiritual life. He had tried to satisfy his physical needs and desires but had neglected his spiritual life.

We don't need to search for other things, food that doesn't satisfy, because God's abundance satisfies our basic human needs for food and water but also our spiritual needs. He has given us the means to have a relationship with him, he promises us a covenant, a promise of a long term lasting relationship, a relationship that will provide for all our needs both physical and spiritual. Why then would we look elsewhere?

Offertory Prayer

God of every good gift, we thank You for Your extravagant generosity to us, and pray You teach us to give without counting the cost. Bless all that is given to our church, the time, the talents and the treasure, that we may use these gifts wisely in Your service, **Amen.**

StF 254 – Seek ye first

- 1) Seek ye first the kingdom of God,
And his righteousness,
And all these things shall be added unto you;
Allelu-, Alleluia:
- 2) Ask, and it shall be given unto you;
Seek, and ye shall find;
Knock and the door shall be opened unto you;
Allelu-, Alleluia:
- Ch) *Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia,*
Allelu-, Alleluia!
- 3) We shall not live by bread alone,
But by every word
That proceeds from the mouth of the Lord;
Allelu-, Alleluia:

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Prayers of Concern

O Lord your Word contains truth for each new generation. Thank you for fresh and exciting reminders of the power and glory of your sovereign love. Help us to seek the wisdom to use your words wisely to pray for who cannot speak or who are inarticulate, who depend on others to speak for them

Thank you for your word which reminds us of your concern for justice for the poor and oppressed. Help us to announce your good news; to proclaim your liberty to those held captive; to work and pray for a better world.

Thank you for your word which reminds us of the ways in which you want us to live. Help us to share the hope we have in you; to proclaim your love for every individual; to work and pray for new life for humankind.

Thank you for your word which reminds us of our calling as members of Christ's body. Help us to be united in love and respect for one another; to proclaim your salvation to the world; to work and pray under the guidance of your Spirit. **Amen**

H&P 770 – Go forth and tell

- 1) Go forth and tell! O church of God, awake!
God's saving news to all the nations take.
Proclaim Christ Jesus, Saviour, Lord, and King,
That all the world his worthy praise may sing.
- 2) Go forth and tell! God's love embraces all:
He will in grace respond to all who call.
How shall they call if they have never heard
The gracious invitation of his word?
- 3) Go forth and tell! Some still in darkness lie:
In wealth or want, in sin they live and die.
Give us, O Lord, concern of heart and mind,
A love like yours which cares for all mankind.
- 4) Go forth and tell! The doors are open wide:
Share God's good gifts with people long denied.
Live out your life as Christ, your Lord, shall choose,
Your ransomed powers for his sole glory use.

J E Seddon

Blessing and Dismissal

Go forth and tell this exciting news. The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, the fellowship of the Holy Spirit is with us! Hallelujah! **Amen**