

## A service for Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> June 2020

**Bible Reading:** Psalm 116: 1-2, 12-19

**Hymn:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KlcMA9B4oh8>

1. Sing of the Lord's goodness,  
Father of all wisdom,  
come to him and bless his name.  
Mercy he has shown us,  
his love is for ever,  
faithful to the end of days.  
*Come, then, all you nations,  
sing of your Lord's goodness,  
melodies of praise and thanks to God.  
Ring out the Lord's glory,  
praise him with your music,  
worship him and bless his name.*
2. Power he has wielded, honour is his garment,  
risen from the snares of death.  
His word he has spoken,  
one bread he has broken,  
new life he now gives to all.  
*Come, then, all you nations,  
sing of your Lord's goodness,  
melodies of praise and thanks to God.  
Ring out the Lord's glory,  
praise him with your music,  
worship him and bless his name.*
3. Courage in our darkness,  
comfort in our sorrow,  
Spirit of our God most high;  
solace for the weary,  
pardon for the sinner,  
splendour of the living God.  
*Come, then, all you nations,  
sing of your Lord's goodness,  
melodies of praise and thanks to God.  
Ring out the Lord's glory,  
praise him with your music,  
worship him and bless his name.*
4. Praise him with your singing,  
praise him with the trumpet,  
praise God with the lute and harp;  
praise him with the cymbals,  
praise him with your dancing,  
praise God till the end of days.  
*Come, then, all you nations,  
sing of your Lord's goodness,  
melodies of praise and thanks to God.  
Ring out the Lord's glory,  
praise him with your music,  
worship him and bless his name.  
Ernest Sands (b1949)*

### **Prayers**

Living Lord, we gather together across time and space to worship you; united by the words we read; united by our love for you. We celebrate your awesome majesty, your holiness, and your amazing love. We acknowledge you as Lord of our lives. We sing your praise and we bless your name. Living Lord, we give thanks for all that you have done in our lives and pray that we will continue to be open to your work in us in Jesus' name. Amen.

### **Old Testament            Genesis 18: 1-15**

#### **Is anything too wonderful for the lord?**

My uncle Richard owned a corner shop in Bradford and for many years he and my Auntie Hilda never took a holiday for fear that while they were away, their regular customers would be forced to buy their produce elsewhere and switch allegiance. Today is the thirteenth consecutive Sunday when I have now attended worship and marks the longest period of time in my life when I have not done so, which only a few months ago would have been beyond my comprehension. I get concerned, does this mean that people who used to attend Church won't want to come back, will have found alternative ways of worshipping God and switch their allegiance, or even worse, find better things to do with their Sundays.

The remarkable thing has been that more people are worshipping God in different ways, I find myself joining congregations across the country and around the world through the power of the internet and worshipping God in different ways, learning more from other cultures and traditions and I find my faith deepening through this experience.

I've had several conversations over the last couple of weeks about two questions I posed on Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> May asking about the changes in Church you have seen in your lifetime and what changes you would like to see. Abraham and Sarah have given up on having children and Gods promise sounds folly, but we are reminded that the God we worship is a God of the impossible and unbelievable.

Consider:

- *Given the background of the tragic death of George Floyd what changes would you like to see in the world today?*
- *Dot down some words that represent your answers*
- *Do you truly believe that these things can happen in your lifetime?*
- *Pray over your list and ask God to make his way possible and known.*

Hymn: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=siChWmQCxak>

*This hymn is unfamiliar to me, but I like the words and feel that it fits well with the thoughts we've just been sharing.*

1. I don't know how God hangs the world on  
nothing  
or how he keeps the planets each in place  
I cannot count the sands upon the seashore  
nor can I count the stars that float in space.  
*But God can do what seems impossible  
God controls eternity.  
My mind can never comprehend it,  
but God in heaven cares for me.*
2. I don't know how the Lord can save a sinner  
or by his grace can cleanse and set him free  
I can't explain the mystery of Calvary  
to think that Jesus died for even me.  
*But God can do what seems impossible*
3. I don't know all the meaning of forever  
or just how long its been since time began  
I can't explain how Christ who is eternal  
could come to earth and die for sinful man.  
*But God can do what seems impossible  
God controls eternity.  
My mind can never comprehend it,  
but God in heaven cares for me.  
My mind can never comprehend it,  
but God in heaven cares for me.*

*Frank and Flora Jean Garlock*

**Epistle: Romans 5: 1-8**

*Therefore, since we are justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have obtained access to this grace in which we stand; and we boast in our hope of sharing the glory of God.*

Many years ago, while on holiday, we visited the Shrine of Our Lady of Walsingham in north Norfolk and as a young man at the time I felt the amazing presence of God in that place. I have been back since and not had the same experience, but on that day back in the 1970's the feeling was overwhelming. I can think of many times in my life that I have felt that same closeness of God in my life.

I think that it is worth repeating these words of St Pauls above, because I believe that he is saying that somehow there is an incredible link between us and God the Father. I feel inadequate to verbalise exactly what I mean, but at moments like the one I mention while in the chapel in Walsingham I think that somehow we share in fellowship with the Holy Spirit, which extends the Grace of Jesus Christ and helps us to feel the love of God, which surrounds us every moment of our lives, but in a profound way in that particular moment.

Consider:

- *Can you think of time in your own life when you have felt a particular closeness to God?*
- *In what ways have you felt a particular closeness to God in the last few weeks as our nation has experienced lockdown?*
- *How do you create a worshipful space in your own home, where you can be in relationship with God the Father, through Jesus Christ and in the power of the Spirit?*

**A time of prayer**

Our Father in heaven we lift our world to you today, knowing that you have called us to do so and knowing that you care about even the smallest detail of that world.

We lift to you all who suffer today at the hands of others, through war, greed, the abuse of power, or the abuse of words. May they find you standing with them, giving them strength. May they find your people upholding them and

giving them a voice, that your love may be seen and known.

We lift to you all those who find themselves in positions of authority today, whether it be by choice, or because their skills have been recognized and needed, or because there is no one else available. May they seek wisdom in the right places and have the humility to know when they need help.

We lift to you all who suffer today as a result of this pandemic; through sickness, through the loss of loved ones, or through the exhausting workload of caring for others. May they know comfort, healing, reassurance and hope.

And we lift to you all those known to us personally who are in need today ... *(name them)* ... May they find grace, healing, and blessing.

We bring all these prayers in the name of Jesus who taught us when we pray to say ...

### **The Lord's Prayer**

**Hymn:** I offer you two alternatives for the hymn "Come let us sing of a wonderful love" the first is the traditional tune <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3BzfXTCUbr8> the second is different tune, which I think sounds lovely <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4fJ2hiATs2s> see what you think.

1. Come, let us sing of a wonderful love,  
Tender and true, tender and true,  
Out of the heart of the Father above,  
Streaming to me and to you:  
Wonderful love, wonderful love,  
Dwells in the heart of the Father above.
2. Jesus the Saviour this Gospel to tell  
Joyfully came, joyfully came,  
Came with the helpless and hopeless to  
dwell,  
Sharing their sorrow and shame:  
Seeking the lost, seeking the lost,  
Saving, redeeming at measureless cost.
3. Jesus is seeking the wanderers yet;  
Why do they roam? Why do they roam?  
Love only waits to forgive and forget;  
Home, weary wanderer, home!  
Wonderful love, wonderful love,  
Dwells in the heart of the Father above.
4. Come to my heart, O thou wonderful love!  
Come and abide, come and abide,  
Lifting my life till it rises above  
Envy and falsehood and pride:  
Seeking to be, seeking to be,  
Lowly and humble, a learner of thee.

*Robert Walmsley (1831-1905)*

### **Gospel: Matthew 9: 35 – 10:8**

I often find the governments guidance on what we can and can't do, quite confusing and in my role it is quite important that I understand, because I find people looking to me for guidance. I have received several suggestions about worshipping outside and it is starting to look as though that might be an option to consider, so long as God plays the game and doesn't decide to deluge us with rain.

Jesus sends his disciples out in the reading, some of us are looking forward to the opportunity to go out again, others are fearful of doing so now and we face a dilemma, but I think that maybe the Church has faced that dilemma for years

#### *Consider*

- *How do you feel about going out? Our Methodist tradition in the early days when our preachers weren't welcome in the established Church was to go out into market places, farmers field and beauty spots and preach the word, in this country, how would you feel about outside worship?*
- *Would it feel the same worshipping God in an open space as it would in Church?*
- *Thinking of my experience at Walsingham, what would make an outside space feel like a place of worship?*

*I don't claim to know any of the answers to these questions myself and I am not leading you in a particular direction, but I think that we need to accept that Church might look different for a season. I have been delighted to have telephone conversations with people over the last few weeks who are wanting to share ideas, please feel free to contact me and talk things over. Derek*

**Hymn:**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JGGcqhKShQ8>

1. Love divine, all loves excelling,  
Joy of heaven to earth come down,  
Fix in us thy humble dwelling,  
All thy faithful mercies crown.  
Jesu, thou art all compassion,  
Pure, unbounded love thou art;  
Visit us with thy salvation,  
Enter every trembling heart.
2. Breathe, O breathe thy loving Spirit  
Into every troubled breast,  
Let us all in thee inherit,  
Let us find that second rest.  
Take away the love of sinning,  
Alpha and Omega be;  
End of faith, as its beginning,  
Sets our hearts at liberty.
3. Come almighty to deliver,  
Let us all thy life receive;  
Suddenly return and never,  
Never more thy temples leave.  
Thee we would be always blessing,  
Serve thee as thy hosts above,  
Pray, and praise thee without ceasing,  
Glory in thy perfect love.
4. Finish then thy new creation,  
Pure and spotless let us be;  
Let us see thy great salvation,  
Perfectly restored in thee;  
Changed from glory into glory,  
Till in heaven we take our place,  
Till we cast our crowns before thee,  
Lost in wonder, love and Praise.

*Charles Wesley (1707-1788)*

**A prayer of blessing**

May the One who makes all things new fill us with grace, hope, peace and joy that together we may live and work to God's praise and glory in our world. Amen.