

### Opening Prayer

God of power and majesty, in the silence and stillness of the time I give to you, be with me as I worship you. If I am weak in my faith, let me cling to the awesomeness of you and lead me to complete trust in you again. If I am faith filled, let me not take this season for granted and help me to grow deeper in love with you. Come, in Jesus' name. Amen.

### Hymn: StF 20 Be still for the presence of the Lord.

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y5S\\_-zhHfDA](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y5S_-zhHfDA)

Be still, for the presence of the Lord,  
the Holy One, is here;  
come bow before him now  
with reverence and fear:  
in him no sin is found --  
we stand on holy ground.  
Be still, for the presence of the Lord,  
the Holy One, is here.

Be still, for the glory of the Lord  
is shining all around;  
he burns with holy fire,  
with splendour he is crowned:

how awesome is the sight --  
our radiant King of light!  
Be still, for the glory of the Lord  
is shining all around.

Be still, for the power of the Lord  
is moving in this place;  
he comes to cleanse and heal,  
to minister his grace:  
no work too hard for him --  
in faith receive from him.  
Be still, for the power of the Lord  
is moving in this place.

*David J. Evans (b. 1957)*

### Let us pray together:

God of power and majesty, we adore you!  
We adore you for who you are: faithful, holy, loving, powerful.  
You are precious, gracious, merciful, and life-giving.  
Forgive us when we have taken our relationship with you for granted and have hurt you and hurt others. Hear us in a moment of quiet as we say sorry to you.  
God of mercy, if we are sincere, you forgive us our sins and we thank you for that glorious gift of forgiveness.

**OT Reading: 1 Samuel 17: 1a, 4-11, 19-23**

### Reflection:

*It is almost impossible to read this passage of scripture without knowing the eventual outcome. This reading today stops at a tantalizing point in the story. We can never be absolutely certain of the historical accuracy of Old Testament stories, according to Google a cubit is approximately one foot six inches, and a span of my hand is eight inches, so to my reckoning Goliath was about nine feet eight inches tall. According to the Guinness Book of Records the tallest man was American Robert Wadlow at eight feet eleven inches tall, a record that has stood to my knowledge since I was a lad. One thing is for certain, Goliath was a big bloke!*

*We often feel intimidated when we stand against someone bigger, stronger, wiser, more powerful or with greater authority than us. In honesty, I tend to be more fearful of small dogs with an attitude than big dogs, that look at me, then ignore me.*

Consider

- *When do you feel most intimidated? What kinds of people and situations threaten you?*
- *Do you believe that God protects you when you feel at your most vulnerable?*
- *Can you think of situations in your own life story when you have been fearful, and God has carried you through? Maybe you want to offer a prayer of thanks for these experiences.*

## Hymn StF 117 Sing praise to God who reigns above

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4OUf09cxZpU>

Sing praise to God who reigns above,  
The God of all creation,  
The God of power, the God of love,  
The God of our salvation.  
With healing balm my soul is filled  
And every faithless murmur stilled:  
To God all praise and glory.

What God's almighty power hath made  
His gracious mercy keepeth,  
By morning glow or evening shade  
His watchful eye ne'er sleepeth;  
Within the kingdom of His might,  
Lo! all is just and all is right:  
To God all praise and glory.

The Lord is never far away,  
But through all grief distressing,  
An ever present help and stay,  
Our peace and joy and blessing.  
As with a mother's tender hand,  
God gently leads the chosen band:  
To God all praise and glory.

Let all who name Christ's holy name  
Give God all praise and glory;  
Let all who own His power proclaim  
Aloud the wondrous story!  
Cast each false idol from its throne,  
For Christ is Lord, and Christ alone:  
To God all praise and glory.

## Gospel Reading from Mark 4:35-41

### Reflection:

*This is another very familiar story. I am always fascinated by St Mark's Gospel; I can almost imagine Mark excitedly babbling out his gospel story as though there isn't a minute to spare. So far, the story has centred very much on healing miracles, parables and teaching, the disciples are no doubt recognising by this point in the story that they are alongside somebody with very special powers, but there was nothing that could have prepared them for what they were about to witness. As locals, they would have known that the Sea of Galilee could be a treacherous place and they maybe knew people who had lost their lives in Squalls like the one they were experiencing.*

*In this moment, the disciples witness the full extent of the authority Jesus had over even the elements of nature, maybe the things they feared the most, it is in this moment that they wonder just who this man is.*

Consider:

- *The Bible clearly tells us repeatedly that God has power over all things, that even at times when we are fearful, he is bigger. How do you think this works in times of pandemic with all that we have experienced during the last fifteen months?*
- *How do we react when we pray hard for the outcome we want, yet we find our lives being destroyed by the things we experience, do we blame God? How do we respond to a god of love when we are hurting?*
- *There are times when the Bible almost suggests that God is the eternal fixer The parting of the sea, the calming of the storm, the raising of Lazarus. How do we see God? How does our faith work during the difficult times as well as the glorious?*

### A time of prayer

We come to the part of our worship now as we pray for others and ourselves. As we do so, I invite you to think about each specific focus in turn and end with "The Lord hears our prayer". "Thanks be to God".

We pray for God's world.

As we pray for God's world, we are mindful that we have not been wise, loving stewards of it. We have been greedy and selfish, rather than focusing on the beauty and wonder, and encouraging flourishing.

We pray for world rulers, that they would rule with truth and justice, mercy and grace and that they would remember that all authority in heaven and on earth belongs to Jesus Christ.

Take a moment in silent prayer to pray for God's world and world rulers.

*"The Lord hears our prayer". "Thanks be to God".*

We pray for God's church.

We pray for the church worldwide, that we would unite in the common goal to worship and serve God together in a spirit of unity and holiness.

We pray for the church where we are and in a moment of quiet, we offer up to God our prayers for our church.

*“The Lord hears our prayer”. “Thanks be to God”.*

We take time now to pray for those who are known to us. We pray for those who are known to us that are going through times of trial that they would know God’s peace and comfort. We pray for those going through times of joy, that they would know your love and not take this time for granted.

We pray also for ourselves, and I invite you to spend some time in prayer to God for yourself.

*“The Lord hears our prayer”. “Thanks be to God”.*

### **The Lord’s Prayer**

*Our Father....*

### **Hymn 645 StF Will your anchor hold**

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

Will you anchor hold in the storms of life,  
when the clouds unfold their wings of strife?  
When the strong tides lift, and the cables strain,  
will your anchor drift, or firm remain?

*We have an anchor that keeps the soul  
steadfast and sure while the billows roll;  
fastened to the Rock which cannot move,  
grounded firm and deep in the Saviour’s love.*

Will your anchor hold in the straits of fear,  
when the breakers roar and the reef is near?  
While the surges rave, and the wild winds blow,  
shall the angry waves then your barque o’erflow

*We have an anchor that keeps the soul  
steadfast and sure while the billows roll;  
fastened to the Rock which cannot move,  
grounded firm and deep in the Saviour’s love.*

Will your eyes behold through the morning light  
the city of gold and the harbour bright?  
Will you anchor safe by the heavenly shore,  
when life’s storms are past for evermore?

*We have an anchor that keeps the soul  
steadfast and sure while the billows roll;  
fastened to the Rock which cannot move,  
grounded firm and deep in the Saviour’s love.*

### **A prayer of blessing**

As this time of worship ends, we ponder the words of the grace:

May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with us all, evermore. Amen.