

Our Faithful Servant Queen

Call to worship For me to live is Christ and to die is gain. *Philippians 1:21*

Hymn StF 455 All my hope on God is founded https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YaP7CNrqF_k

All my hope on God is founded ;
he doth still my trust renew.
Me through change and chance he guideth,
only good and only true.
God unknown, he alone
calls my heart to be his own.

Human pride and earthly glory,
sword and crown betray our trust ;
what with care and toil we fashion,
tower and temple, fall to dust.
But God's power, hour by hour,
is my temple and my tower.

God's great goodness aye endureth,
deep his wisdom passing thought ;
splendour, light, and life attend him,
beauty springeth out of nought.

Evermore from his store
new-born worlds rise and adore.

Daily doth the almighty giver
bounteous gifts on us bestow ;
his desire our soul delighteth,
pleasure leads us where we go.
Love doth stand at his hand ;
joy doth wait on his command.

Still from earth to God eternal
sacrifice of praise be done,
high above all praises praising
for the gift of Christ his Son.
Christ doth call one and all
ye who follow shall not fall.

*Robert Bridges (1844–1930) (alt.)
based on Joachim Neander (1650–1680)*

Prayer Father we thank you for Elizabeth our Queen, thank you that she was committed first to you and then to serve everyone in this nation and in the commonwealth. Thank you for her faithfulness in all she has done. May she have heard that well deserved words, “Well done Thou good and faithful servant, enter into your rest” May we be inspired by her love and commitment. Amen

Gospel **Romans 14:7-12 Living and dying for Christ**

Reflection

September 8th has been a significant date in our family as it is the date of my eldest sister’s birthday and this year she has reached the milestone of 75 years. From now on I expect we will always remember it as the day our Queen died. It is the end of an era, the Elizabethan era. The year of the Queen’s birth was also significant in our family as my mother-in-law was born just 7 weeks before Queen Elizabeth, so we always knew the Queen’s age.

Her death came as a bit of a shock, but mercifully it was not preceded by a prolonged period of suffering. She had done significant work 2 days before dying – including the appointment of a new prime minister. She had completed the allotted tasks for her as Monarch. Immediately Charles became King and the work of governance continues uninterrupted. Her life and her reign were so long that even with continuous media coverage we are only scratching the surface of the things she accomplished in her lifetime and I have certainly learnt more than I knew.

What was the secret of the constancy of character we see evidenced in her life. In 2002 she said “I know just how much I rely on my faith to guide me through the good times and the bad. Each day is a new beginning. I know that the only way to live my life is to try to do what is right and take the long view, to give of my best in all that the day brings and to put my trust in God. I draw strength from the message of hope in the Christian gospel.

Most of us have only known the Queen as our Monarch. She became Queen when I was 10 weeks old, so I have known nothing else. I think there was almost a feeling that she was immortal and would never die – we couldn’t see the world without her – but life goes on. For the first time I have now sung “God save the King.” I had to concentrate not to slip up and use the wrong pronouns “She” instead of “He” but we will quickly correct to the right words – life moves on.

Our Queen knew the words of Paul to the Philippians, “For me to live is Christ and to die is gain” and his words to the Romans “If we live, we live for the Lord. If we die we die to the Lord”. The country feels the loss of our Queen, but for her it is gain. Living or dying for believers are both for the Lord – and somehow, the mystery of death is an entrance into a more glorious future, and even closer relationship with King Jesus.

I believe the Queen was ready to go to heaven: she had reigned for 75 years; she had lived through huge changes; she brought changes in the structures of the monarchy; she appointed her 15th Prime-minister; her beloved husband had died; she was not afraid of death as it is the gateway to heaven; her son Charles has been an apprentice long enough as we have evidenced in his moving and heartfelt address to the nation 24 hours after her death. She let go of clinging on to life on earth, to be welcomed by Jesus, saying “well done thou good and faithful servant”. The significant date isn’t just the day she died, but the day this servant Queen went to live with the King she served her whole life.

For your reflection.

- 1) Where is your hope and trust placed? I am 100% certain that Elizabeth is with Jesus in the Kingdom of heaven. How certain are you that this is true for you? What can we learn about life from reflecting on the life of our Queen?
- 2) Will you commit to pray for King Charles III and Liz Truss our Prime Minister and the whole government? 1 Timothy 2:1-7

Prayers

Lord God, as part of a nation in mourning, we bring you our sorrow at the death of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II; our sincere and profound sense of loss. But we bring you also, and especially, our thanksgiving for her extraordinary life and inspirational example.

We thank you for the innumerable qualities that marked her out as someone special: her wisdom, integrity, faith, and humility; her unfailing sense of duty; her exemplary service to this country over so many years.

We thank you that she was such a person that even opponents of the monarchy regarded her with respect and affection; that she bore the heavy responsibilities of queenship with courage, honesty, cheerfulness, and unflagging commitment.

We thank you for all she has meant not just here, but throughout the Commonwealth, and across the world; for the way she has captured the hearts and earned the

admiration of people everywhere, irrespective of creed, colour or culture.

And we thank you also for everything she has meant to her family and friends, those closest and dearest to her – those with whom she could relax and for a moment be herself, untrammelled by matters of state.

Comfort & support them at this time: children, grandchildren, great-grandchildren, and wider family, and especially Charles as he takes on the daunting mantle of kingship.

Comfort and support *us*, as we come to terms with the passing not just of a queen, but of someone who has represented continuity and stability, in a sea of change.

Comfort and support all who grieve at the loss of a unique woman, a model public figure, an unforgettable monarch, a much-loved ruler who will be part of our history for ever, and for whom, truly, we are thankful. **Amen**

Hymn StF 564 O Thou who camest <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IJ6pmSEzJ5A>

O thou who camest from above
the pure celestial fire to impart,
kindle a flame of sacred love
on the mean altar of my heart !

There let it for thy glory burn
with inextinguishable blaze,
and trembling to its source return,
in humble prayer and fervent praise.

Jesus, confirm my heart's desire
to work, and speak, and think for thee ;
still let me guard the holy fire,
and still stir up thy gift in me —
Ready for all thy perfect will,
my acts of faith and love repeat,
till death thy endless mercies seal,
and make the sacrifice complete.

Charles Wesley (1707–1788) StF 564

Blessing May Almighty God, you inspire us and King Charles III to follow the example of Christ and of your servant Elizabeth to make a difference in this world, by walking with you in humility and doing your perfect will. **Amen**