



**Call to Worship - Psalm 89:1**

I will sing of the Lord's great love for ever; with my mouth I will make your faithfulness known through all generations.

**Hymn - 166 - Sing afresh in all creation (Psalms for the common era) (Abbot's Leigh)**

**Tune on YouTube <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MaFeTZPkJb8>**

Sing afresh in all creation,  
sing the wonders of the Lord.  
He has shown his great salvation,  
bared his holy arm abroad.  
He revealed his righteous favour,  
everywhere the nations dwell,  
called to mind his truth, the saviour  
of the house of Israel.

Earth's remotest bounds have noted  
God's salvation, and his worth.  
Shout aloud with songs, devoted  
to the Lord of all the earth.  
With the lyre, the lyre and dancing,  
play before the Lord, and sing.

With a trumpet fanfare blasting,  
shout before the Lord, the King.

Let the sea in fullness thunder,  
all that lives across the earth.  
Rivers, clap your hands in wonder,  
mountains, cry aloud with mirth.  
For the Lord, in full ascendance,  
comes with righteousness unfurled.  
He will judge, with upright sentence,  
all the peoples of the world.

Adam Carlill (born 1966) based on *Psalm 98*  
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**Prayer**

Eternal God of all ages, With creation and people of the past We of the present come to worship you.  
We know of your love for us, You are with us, unseen God of the present, always in the moment.  
You have given us work to do, Put prayers into our mouths God who Calls, you value our usefulness.  
You show us things that might happen, You are ahead of us God of the future in whom we trust.  
God of yesterday, today and forever, We pause, reflect, We adore you.  
Accept our adoration and our worship, Speak to our noise and our silence Our God who reigns.  
We confess our sins too, We can be way off the mark, Not living and being our best.  
Despite call and vision, Forgetting blessings and love, We sometimes lose the plot.  
We repent and we pray, Forgive us Lord, and you say, I have; your sins are forgiven.  
May we be free from sin and its partner, guilt, Free to live, love and worship Really free.  
As we lift heart and voices May we believe what we say, For Jesus's sake, **Amen.**

**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 in to temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

**Introduction to theme - Sent by the Father**

In these post Pentecost days, we are keep coming back to things that have happened and things that could be. The Great Commission charges us to go to people everywhere. It promises us the never-ending support of Jesus and now we have the Spirit, we have the promise of the power of Creator and Saviour, enabling us to do and be the Church in the present world.

The world now is different from that of exiles in Babylon (see Jeremiah) and it is different from the world of the Apostles (see Matthew) as Jesus did practical things and from his actions shared life changing principles.

What sort of people are we and with what sort of attitude life as it is now?

Like me, you will have good days and bad days – they all are days of God!

## Reading - Jeremiah 28:5-9

Then the prophet Jeremiah replied to the prophet Hananiah before the priests and all the people who were standing in the house of the Lord. He said, 'Amen! May the Lord do so! May the Lord fulfil the words you have prophesied by bringing the articles of the Lord's house and all the exiles back to this place from Babylon. Nevertheless, listen to what I have to say in your hearing and in the hearing of all the people: from early times the prophets who preceded you and me have prophesied war, disaster and plague against many countries and great kingdoms. But the prophet who prophesies peace will be recognised as one truly sent by the Lord only if his prediction comes true.'

## Reading - Matthew 10:40-42

'Anyone who welcomes you welcomes me, and anyone who welcomes me welcomes the one who sent me. Whoever welcomes a prophet as a prophet will receive a prophet's reward, and whoever welcomes a righteous person as a righteous person will receive a righteous person's reward. And if anyone gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones who is my disciple, truly I tell you, that person will certainly not lose their reward.'

## Hymn – StF 157 - God has spoken by his prophets (Hyfrydol)

Watch on YouTube <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M8D-Uxbjf4g>

God has spoken-by his prophets,  
spoken his unchanging word;  
each from age to age proclaiming  
God, the one, the righteous Lord.  
'Mid the world's despair and turmoil  
one firm anchor holding fast:  
God eternal reigns forever,  
God the first, and God the last.

God has spoken-by Christ Jesus,  
Christ, the everlasting Son,  
brightness of the Father's glory,  
with the Father ever one;  
spoken by the Word incarnate,

God from God, ere time was born;  
light from light, to earth descending,  
Christ, revealing God to all

God is speaking-by the Spirit,  
speaking to our hearts again,  
in the age-long word expounding  
God's own message, now as then.  
Through the rise and fall of nations  
one sure faith is standing fast;  
God still speaks, the word unchanging,  
God the first, and God the last.

George W Briggs (1875-1959)

## Sermon - Cold Water (Matthew 10:42)

*And if anyone gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones who is my disciple, truly I tell you, that person will certainly not lose their reward.'*

If you have ever been in the situation of being really parched, or possibly told not to drink because of a forthcoming operation but you have a raging thirst this simple illustration of the power of giving a drink will mean a lot to you.

The words of Jesus here can be taken literally or they can be interpreted as being a metaphor for providing much needed relief for a basic need. In our own time we might look back on last winter and remember warm spaces; or indeed, reflect on the demand for food banks. And that is before we get close to other needs like those of refugees and asylum seekers.

There is an idiom which turns something that is life giving into something suffocating. One person has a great idea while other person undermines it and all enthusiasm and excitement are sapped away. In that case we may say the second person 'poured cold water' on the idea of the first. It has been dampened down, even drowned out.

Ironically, in Christian life, very practical people and those who worry about detail may be the ones who 'pour cold water' on good ideas for helping and supporting those who could do with 'even a cup of cold water'.

In Psalm 89 we read that God's love and faithfulness are things to shout about. 'I will tell people'. Jesus said that those who give relief to someone who needs it will be rewarded. Passing on relief is passing on God's love and faithfulness in a tangible way.

God can be outrageously generous and unconventional in how he prompts his followers to reach out to meet others' needs, but unfortunately, when he is outrageous and unconventional the temptation to caution can pour the biggest of volumes of cold water on the smallest of schemes.

The prophet Jeremiah saw the exile in Babylon as judgement for persistent sin with the double advantage of providing a warning to the neighbouring nations that God's judgement is real. A repeated theme in the history of the ups and downs of the relationship God's people had with God was of their pouring cold water on the good experiences of love and faithfulness in repaying those experiences by fickleness and disdain.

The same attitude led to a sense of doom and so early prophets foretold war, disaster and plague, prophecies that found their fulfilment in the Babylonia exile. They were credible words but the voice of Jeremiah cuts through them with his talk of restoration and return and of peace. He was realistic, knowing that it would only be when these happier thoughts came to fruition that people like Hananiah and he would be acknowledged as being from God.

If God's real desire is to be able to be faithful and loving to us, surely it follows that our messages should be of peace and restoration. 'Amen' said Jeremiah, restoration and return to home and worship in God's sanctuary.

The verse I have quoted comes from the wider context of Matthew 10. Apart from his own Ministry, Jesus prepares his disciples for mission. There are various strands to his teaching about mission one of which is the point that there will always be those who are glad to hear the gospel message and those who are not. Some will receive the bearers of the message and some will turn them away.

There is great work to be done in reaching out to people in need around us. It is God's work.

There is great work to be done in preaching reconciliation to God's faithfulness and love. It is God's work.

But the workers can grow weary.

This spring we received a tiny walnut tree plant in a pot. A neighbour was moving away and had grown several such specimens from the fruit of the walnut tree in his garden. We hope to be able to plant our tree in the garden before too long but it requires nurture first or it will either be eaten by the deer, withered by the wind or starved by drought. Every time I water the little tree it seems to smile!

I hope I will live to see my walnut tree well established and much taller than I am but for now I must treat it kindly, help it settle in and keep it watered.

In the need and noise of the world we can forget the missionaries and pastors among us who need a drink of cold water to help them grow their work. Cold water to revive them, not cold water to finish them off.

### **A Prayer**

God, you call us into all manner of work and mission. Sustain us to share your love and peace, to talk about restoration and return. May we be strengthened by your Spirit and supported by the sips of cold water from our co-workers, from those we meet and any who welcome your good news for the world.

We pray for Jesus' sake, empowered by his Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

### **Prayers of Intercession**

I saw you in the food bank queue

*This prayer by Matthew Prevett is published in the URC Prayer Handbook 2023*

I saw you in the food bank queue, waiting your turn.  
I saw you asleep in a doorway, a newspaper as a blanket.  
I saw you turn down the heating and put on another jumper.  
I saw you alone and weeping, hurt by loss and sorrow.

I want to serve you, to anoint your feet and head in oil, To live a life worthy of the calling you lay before me.  
And here are your feet, tired from the queue in the food bank; Here you are, dirty, cold, hungry and lonely –  
Everywhere I look – In need of food and warmth and love.

Servant God, who lives among us, Help me serve you wherever you are in the world.  
When I see one hurt or in pain, Give me the strength and courage to serve you,  
To share, to mend, to listen, to comfort, And also to shout about the systems that hurt,  
That limit flourishing and freedom.

May I better serve you where your need is greatest, Where your people are in pain and suffering,  
And the world needs love, And my neighbours silently cry for freedom.

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In the *Methodist Prayer Handbook* on day 2 we are invited to pray for The Gambia and Sierra Leone, which makes us think outside the needs of our own immediate circle and community.

God of all people everywhere, you see us in our world, you know what we need as well as what we want and you challenge us to be there for others who have greater needs than we do. It may be that we cannot see their needs because they are spiritual or emotional more than physical; thirst comes in many ways and cannot always be seen.

Help us to see over the sides of our box and as we try to imagine the people we pray for in The Gambia and in Sierra Leone, we realise we cannot know much; so we pause, imagining or looking at a map, or pictures...Holy Spirit, in our silence be the voice of our intercession for needs and our thanksgiving for blessings.

*Silence*

We pray in the same way for the people around us we may not understand, or even know or see.

*Silence*

Through dreams and visions, O God, you broaden the horizon and hope of your people,  
that they may discover the meaning of your covenant, even in the midst of trial and exile.  
Increase the number of those who believe in your word so that all people may joyfully respond to your call and share in your promises. **Amen.**

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**Hymn – StF 695 - Come, now, you blessed, eat at my table (O Quanta Qualia)**  
**Tune on YouTube <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RRD6LcyOXIE>**

'Come, now, you blessed eat at my table,'  
said the great judge to the righteous above.  
'When I was hungry, thirsty, and homeless,  
sick and in prison, you showed me your love.'

'When did we see you hungry or thirsty?  
When were you homeless, a stranger alone?  
When did we see you sick or in prison?  
What have we done that you call us your own?'

'When you gave bread to earth's hungry children,  
when you gave welcome to war's refugees,  
when you remembered those most forgotten,  
you cared for me in the smallest of these.'

Christ, when we meet you out on life's roadways,  
looking to us in the faces of need,  
them may we know you, welcome, and show you  
love that is faithful in word and in deed

Ruth C Duck (born 1947)  
© GIA Publications, Chicago

### **The Grace**

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