



**The Gathering** We meet this morning, each of us bringing that which is of God within us. Jesus said, 'where two or three meet in my name, I am there among them'.

**Collect** : Oh God, our lover and our friend, join us in our worship this morning, filling our hearts with love and your life-giving hope. **Amen**

**Hymn StF547** Beyond these walls of worship  
<https://youtu.be/A2eIEBTNsic?feature=shared>

Beyond these walls of worship  
In the stress and joy of life,  
Can we offer you our bodies  
As a living sacrifice?  
Will we keep you at the centre  
Far beyond the Sunday call?  
Will return to you,  
Be transformed by you;  
Still declare you God of all?

Beyond these walls of worship,  
In the times of work and rest,  
Will we display your love for all  
When are faith's put to the test?  
When the people that surround us

Deny that you are there,  
Will we display our faith in you  
In life, in praise, in prayer?

Beyond the walls of worship  
may your spirit strengthen us  
To make the whole of life our worship  
As we witness to your love.  
From this hour in your presence  
Send us out now to proclaim  
That will live our life as a sacrifice  
To the glory of your name

*Ian Worsfold and Paul Wood*

### ***Where is God in all this?***

The trees and houses are falling, and a desert of ash now stands where the forest once grew, and houses stood.

### ***Where is God in all this?***

The Massacre of innocents (Matthew 2:16–18). God is in labour, panting and groaning, giving birth to creation. And she puts into our hands the fragile earth to nurse.

### ***Where is God in all this?***

### **Prayers of Confession**

#### **Why do we cry, where is God in all this?**

When it is so often our selfishness, our apathy or fear of being made to look a fool that makes us collude in the suffering of the world?

**We are sorry God, for all that we have done, or not done. Open our ears that we may hear your voice in the burning Bush and fill us with the Spirit of your presence, that we may boldly live in the light of your love and serve you with joy in our hearts. Amen. Exodus 3.1-15**

## ***A prayer for peace***

### ***Dear Lord Jesus,***

We come before you with heavy hearts, seeking your intervention in the conflict between Israel and Palestine. We pray for hope and healing and for an end to this conflict that has caused so much pain and suffering for generations. Please grant wisdom and compassion to leaders, guiding them towards reconciliation, justice and mercy. Fill the hearts of all people in the region with your love and compassion, so they may find a path to peace and coexistence. Heal the wounds of the past and inspire hope for a harmonious future. Thank you for the many charities responding on the front line. Please give them the resources, knowledge and expertise to bring practical help and gospel hope to those who need it. May your divine light break through, bringing unity, tranquillity, and a lasting peace, in Jesus' name. ***Amen.***

### **A meditation on hymn 783 *Ubi caritas et amor, ubi caritas, Deus ibi est.***

(Where there is charity and love, God is there.) Taizé

[https://youtu.be/Vvfr\\_2eulFo?si=8BiOuj3Pk-bimD6o](https://youtu.be/Vvfr_2eulFo?si=8BiOuj3Pk-bimD6o)

### **Reading and reflection on Psalm 90.1-6;13-16**

“Lord, you have been our dwelling-place in all generations. Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever you had formed the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting you are God. You turn us back to dust, and say, ‘Turn back, you mortals.’ For a thousand years in your sight are like yesterday when it is past, or like a watch in the night.

You sweep them away; they are like a dream, like grass that is renewed in the morning; in the morning it flourishes and is renewed; in the evening it fades and withers. Turn, O Lord! How long? Have compassion on your servants! Satisfy us in the morning with your steadfast love, so that we may rejoice and be glad all our days. Make us glad for as many days as you have afflicted us, and for as many years as we have seen evil. Let your work be manifest to your servants, and your glorious power to their children”. Psalm 90.1-6;13-16

### **Where is God in all this?**

This Psalm reflects on the fleetingness of human life. This can of course be a tragedy, like the situation we find ourselves in now with the war between Palestine and Israel, lest we forget Ukraine, Russia, Afghanistan, Yemen, Sudan and many more which no longer make our news. But at times, the passage can also be a blessing. Good and bad, all is temporary. Yet through everything God is faithful.

Like many, Psalm 90 manages to hold both the vastness of eternity (“from everlasting to everlasting”, v2), with our everyday needs even in the midst of uncertainty, (“satisfy us in the morning”, v14). It can contemplate the biggest questions, yet also bring things down to earth.

Another way to put it is that Psalm 90 bridges the gap between human time and God's time. Human time is short, obsessed with what is happening right here and now. But God exists in a totally different understanding of time: “For a thousand years in your sight are like yesterday when it is past” (v4). Yet both come together in the psalm.

This Psalm writer talks about the difficulties they were facing then. It makes me reflect on how difficult it can be when God is dealing with our lives. Christian life is not always full of joy. The Holy Spirit can ask us to honestly look at things we would rather ignore. Being obedient to God in times of turmoil is hard, but that it is through difficulty that we grow in faith.

When considering this time, an analogy was made to the seasons, how winter turns to spring to allow seeds previously buried to grow. One participant in a Bible study class on Ps 90, drew a comparison to poppies, which can exist underground for 40 years. Only when the ground is disturbed do they then shoot up (hence why they grew so well on the WW1 battlefields). Likewise, it can be in the times of most disruption and pain that we experience the most growth.

The whole creation has been groaning in travail together until now; and not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the first fruit of the Spirit, grown inwardly as we wait for adoption as sons and daughters, the redemption of all our bodies.

God of tender compassion and mercy, whose Son is the morning star and the Son of righteousness, shine in the darkness and shadows of this world, that we may serve Him in freedom and peace, hand in hand with all our sisters and brothers, through Jesus Christ our Saviour **Amen.**

### **Litany for creation in travail... prayers for others.**

Waiting for God.

The sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed. **I saw a new heaven and a new earth for the former things had passed away.**

The creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the children of God.  
**I saw a new heaven and a new earth for the former things had passed away.**

The creation was subjected to futility, not of its own will, but by the will of Him who subjected it in hope.  
**I saw a new heaven and a new earth for the former things had passed away.**

The creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay and obtain the glorious liberty of the children of God.  
**I saw a new heaven and a new earth for the former things had passed away.**

*Silence..... we pray*

for people forced to travel - refugees, homeless, wayfarers: that they will know you with them on the road.  
**Lord, go with them.**

for people beset by danger, living in war zones, victims of crime, those working on the frontline: that you will bring them safe through all the troubles. **Lord, go with them.**

for people lacking direction; the confused, the listless, the despairing: that they will find their way with you. **Lord, go with them.**

for people whose way is hard: the grieving, the bereaved, the dying, the hungry, prisoners, the unemployed: that you will set them free and set their feet on the road.  
**Lord, go with them.**

for people who refuse to move, the smug, the contented, the satisfied, that you will give them the hunger for righteousness and longing for change. **Lord, be with them.**

for people who wander in darkness, the depressed: for people who walk alone, homeless, the isolated, the housebound: that you will be their companion on the way. **Lord, go with them.**

God of justice and peace, who asked us to be the voice of the voiceless, we call upon you for those who are suffering the injustices of war and conflict. From the depths of our being we cry to you, Lord. Hear our cries for: Palestine, Israel and Ukraine, and places whose names have slipped through our fingers. For those who are suffering this day from the loss of those they love.

**May their spirits not be broken by their bodies' pain. May they live in peace and hope.**

We pray for all your people as we journey - ourselves, families, our friends, and all your church: that we may move ever closer to you. **Lord, go with us.**

LORD, we pray that your promise of justice may become real to those for whom we pray. May they be released to live in freedom, peace and love.

**Hear our cry and listen to our praise for you are gracious, and the reason you that which is to be feared, that which forgives, that which strengthens, and that which comforts.**

**Final hymn StF713 Show me how to stand for justice**

<https://youtu.be/l8CIU66oFMQ?si=NkRFT4pJ8WJJcYvh>

Show me how to stand for justice  
How to work for what is right,  
How to challenge false assumptions,  
How to walk within the light.  
May I learn to share more freely  
In a world so full of greed,  
Showing your immense compassion  
By the life I choose to lead.

Teach my heart to treasure mercy,  
Whether given or received  
For my need has not diminished  
Since the day I first believed.

Let me seek no satisfaction  
Boasting of what I have done.  
But rejoice that I am pardoned  
And accepted in your Son.

Gladly I embrace a lifestyle  
Modelled on your living word,  
In humility submitting  
To the truth that I have heard;  
Make me conscious of your presence  
Every day in all I do:  
By your Spirit's gracious prompting  
May I learn to walk with you.

### **Blessing**

May the God in whose image we are all made,  
strengthen us in our struggle,  
embrace us in our weakness,  
and inspire us with hope for a different future:  
as we work, separately and together,  
for the freedom of the whole creation.  
Fill us with Your Holy Spirit and  
help us to be healers, menders to all we meet.

And may the blessing of God almighty, Father, Son,  
and Holy Spirit, remain with you/us all. **Amen!**

This service contains materials from 'The Church of Scotland, Ruth and Joy Everingham Music, Bible Oremus'.