



Opening Sentence

Our God set his people free and made an eternal covenant with them. Holy and mighty is our God! (Psalm 111 v.9)

Hymn: StF 48 Indescribable

Watch on YouTube : <https://youtu.be/eK4NqGgmVt8>

From the highest of heights to the depths of the sea,
creation's revealing your majesty.

From the colours of fall to the fragrance of spring,
every creature unique in the song that it sings,

all exclaiming:

Indescribable, uncontainable,
you placed the stars in the sky and you know them by name.
You are amazing, God,
all powerful, untameable.
Awestruck we fall to our knees as we humbly proclaim,
you are amazing, God.

Who has told every lightning bolt where it should go
or seen heavenly storehouses laden with snow?

Who imagined the sun and gives source to its light
yet conceals it to bring us the coolness of night?

None can fathom.

Indescribable, uncontainable,
you placed the stars in the sky and you know them by name.
You are amazing, God,
incomparable, unchangeable.
You see the depths of my heart and you love me the same;
you are amazing, God.

Laura Story and Jesse Reeves

Prayers.

Generous God, we praise you, for the beauty and diversity of your creation – each of us placed here with a purpose – each of us called to love and care – each of us welcomed to share in your bountiful goodness. We thank you for each new day and the opportunities we must worship, to learn and care, to serve and to witness – help us to know how to share the good news of Jesus with our families, our friends and our neighbours.

We confess that there have been times in the past week when we have not lived up to the challenge of being a disciple – may the assurance of your forgiveness give us the wisdom and strength to know the right words and actions to use to reflect your love out into the world for everyone to see. Amen.

Bible Readings

Deuteronomy 18: 15-20

Mark 1: 21-28

Reflection:

My daughter Emma and I have been going out for our morning walks recently, it is still dark at 6am as we set out and we have been layering up against the cold and during the last week the temperatures have plummeted, but even so, I believe that our walks do both of us a power of good, even though we have arrived home with freezing hands despite wearing thermal gloves. Next week looks to be even more challenging with storms forecast and as I write this sermon, a popup has just appeared on my screen

warning me of a severe weather warning in our area, which is quite disturbing. I find myself getting increasingly concerned these days, there was a time when I would have just shrugged everything off and got on with life. I am shocked at the lunacy of this, but I can remember a time when I used to deliberately go out driving in the snow just for the fun of it when I was a teenager without a care in the world.

There is so much today that makes me feel uncomfortable, worried, and even scared. The prospect of Donald Trump serving another term of office in the White house, the wars in Ukraine and Gaza, the refugee crisis, the NHS, the fuel crisis, Climate change... the list goes on and on and doesn't just stop with global issues, I worry about the Church, my own life and the lives of the members of my family and there are more days than I care to remember when I feel overwhelmed by all the things I can't control.

I find so much comfort from the words of scripture and as a Christian, I still hold firm to biblical teaching while still being amazed at the continual discoveries made in our modern scientific world. I still believe that God is behind the whole of creation and even though scientists have proved that the world evolved over a much greater period of time and our history goes way back, further than when our forefathers believed, I can still see God's hand at work. I also cling firm to the belief that God so loved the world that he came to walk by our side in human form in the body of Jesus Christ.

God promises his people way back in the Old Testament times that he will raise up another prophet and God will guide his people through the voice of the prophet. I can only guess that the Israelite nation long ago felt that life was overwhelming, and they needed something or someone much bigger than themselves to make sense of what was happening. As Christians, we believe that when the time was right, God intervened in the shape of Jesus and our reading from the beginning of the Gospel according to saint Mark reminds us that even when people hurled abuse at him, condemned him, and threatened him, Jesus rebuked them, showing that God was stronger than all the forces of nature.

I have to keep on reminding myself that while human beings continue to tear one another apart, and while we stand overwhelmed, trying to understand which the correct way is to proceed, God is in control, not us, our task is not to resolve all the problems of the world, but to listen to the word of God, seek his direction and walk in his way.

Reflect:

- *What are the things that are happening in the world today that cause you to feel uncomfortable?*
- *Do you feel overwhelmed and out of your depth?*
- *List the five issues that concern you the most today, actually write them down, reflect on each issue and pray for those involved every day this week.*

Hymn StF 161 – Speak O Lord **Watch on YouTube :**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ubRIJj8xkds>

Speak, O Lord, as we come to You
To receive the food of Your Holy Word.
Take Your truth, plant it deep in us;
Shape and fashion us in Your likeness,
That the light of Christ might be seen today
In our acts of love and our deeds of faith.
Speak, O Lord, and fulfil in us
All Your purposes for Your glory.

Cause our faith to rise; cause our eyes to see
Your majestic love and authority.
Words of pow'r that can never fail—
Let their truth prevail over unbelief.

Teach us, Lord, full obedience,
Holy reverence, true humility;
Test our thoughts and our attitudes
In the radiance of Your purity.

Speak, O Lord, and renew our minds;
Help us grasp the heights of Your plans for us—
Truths unchanged from the dawn of time
That will echo down through eternity.
And by grace we'll stand on Your promises,
And by faith we'll walk as You walk with us.
Speak, O Lord, till Your church is built
And the earth is filled with Your glory.

Intercessions

We pray for the world and ask that we can better care for and share its riches so that all people and nature can flourish. We pray for all health workers, carers and everyone providing vital goods and services we depend upon. We pray for our leaders to have care for lives and livelihoods so that everyone is valued for who they are. I especially want to pray for

We pray for the Church to have the boldness to speak and act for peace and justice. Through Jesus Christ our Saviour and our Friend. Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

Hymn StF 251- Jesus Christ is waiting Watch on YouTube : <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O6ilgzTu9P4>

Jesus Christ is waiting,
waiting in the streets;
no one is his neighbour,
all alone he eats.
Listen, Lord Jesus,
I am lonely too:
make me, friend or stranger,
fit to wait on you.

Jesus Christ is healing,
healing in the streets,
curing those who suffer,
touching those he greets.
Listen, Lord Jesus,
I have pity too:
let my care be active,
healing, just like you.

Jesus Christ is calling,
calling in the streets,
'Who will join my journey?
I will guide their feet.'
Listen, Lord Jesus,
let my fears be few:
walk one step before me;
I will follow you.

Jesus Christ is raging,
raging in the streets,
where injustice spirals
and real hope retreats.
Listen, Lord Jesus,
I am angry too:
in the Kingdom's causes
let me rage with you.

Jesus Christ is dancing,
dancing in the streets,
where each sign of hatred
he, with love, defeats.
Listen, Lord Jesus,
I should triumph too:
where good conquers evil
let me dance with you.

John L. Bell (b. 1949) and Graham Maule (b. 1958)

A prayer of blessing

May Jesus Christ, who by his birth brought together heaven and earth, fill our lives with light and joy and peace. Amen