



Call to Worship - NRSV)

Hymn - STF – 446 I will offer up my life Watch on YouTube <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kQKzHwz2eLE>

1 I will offer up my life
in spirit and truth,
pouring out the oil of love
as my worship to you.
In surrender I must give my every part;
Lord, receive the sacrifice
of a broken heart.
*Jesus, what can I give, what can I bring
to so faithful a friend, to so loving a King?
Saviour, what can be said, what can be sung
as a praise of your name
for the things you have done?
O, my words could not tell, not even in part,*

of the debt of love that is owed by this thankful heart.

2 You deserve my every breath
for you've paid the great cost;
giving up your life to death,
even death on a cross.
You took all my shame away,
there defeated my sin,
opened up the gates of heaven,
and have beckoned me in.

Matt Redman (b. 1974)

Prayer

Creator God,
along with the church universal, on earth and in heaven,
along with the angels and archangels,
along with your creation in all its struggle,
we gather today to worship and adore you –
Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
In your dealings with the world, you have shown
yourself to be a mighty God who knows the goodness
of creation and life, an eternal God who travels
faithfully with your people throughout the ages, a
gracious God who bestows mercy and peace, a
righteous God who calls the world to account for the
way in which we live with one another, with creation
and with the one whom we profess to be 'our God' –
Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
As we approach this time, this place, to worship you,
our God, with a faithful trust that we are your people,
invited by you to share in the new covenant of grace,
mercy and love.
So, gather with us, O God. Receive our worship and

praise, and may we leave with a full and certain
knowledge that your covenant love is within us, written
on our hearts.

A prayer of confession

Gracious God,
in coming to worship, we know you welcome us,
yet we come to you, uncertain of our identity as your
people, but sure of our sins.
We come to you unworthy of the grace we have
received in your Son, Jesus Christ.
We come to you unreliably as we fail in our promises
to listen to or faithfully follow your call.
We come to you ungrateful for the gifts of love,
forgiveness and life we have received time without
measure.
Thanks be to you, for you are our God, the Lord, the
giver of life, calling us as one people under one
baptism into one faith, who offers merciful forgiveness
and restores us into life-giving relationships with you,
all creation and one another. **Amen.**

Scripture: St John's Gospel Chapter 12 verses 20 – 33.

Reflection

In his short story "The Capital of the World," Ernest Hemingway tells the story of a Spanish father and his teenage son. The relationship between this father and son became strained and eventually shattered. When the rebellious son—whose name was Paco, a common Spanish name—ran away from home, his father began a long and arduous search to find him. As a last resort, the exhausted father placed an ad in a Madrid newspaper, hoping that his son would see the ad and respond to it. The ad read,

Dear Paco,
Please meet me in front of the newspaper office at noon. All is forgiven.
Love,
Father

As Hemingway tells the story, the next day at noon, in front of the newspaper office, there were 800 Pacos, all seeking forgiveness from their fathers. (From "The Capital of the World" from *The Short Stories*, Ernest Hemingway, Scribner, 1995.)
Are you like one of those Pacos? Carrying around a load of guilt, wanting forgiveness, but not knowing where to find it? Your Father in heaven, who loves you very much, has made the first move. Just as Paco's father ran an ad in the paper, so God sent his son to die on a Roman cross.
"If I am lifted up," Jesus said, talking about the cross, "I will draw all people to myself" (John 12:32).
And along with all those Pacos who showed up at the newspaper office, you're invited to come as well. Here you will find a new – personal – relationship with God which will renew your minds. But for that

to happen the grain of wheat must leave the stalk, it's death a certainty to enable its rebirth to begin. For the disciples this is the critical moment. It will be a model for them the rest of their lives. Are they willing to follow Jesus and serve as he has done? Whoever serves me must follow me, Jesus said, and where I am, my servant will also be. And that is the challenge we all face – are we prepared to serve others? I believe that to be the secret of a spiritually alive church. It is serving He who served me. John Wesley wrote to his people called Methodists the following Rule of Conduct:

*Do all the good you can,
By all the means you can,
In all the ways you can,*

Prayers of Intercession

We pray...

Jesus said: 'Unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains a single grain'.

Help us, Lord, to understand this saying and to be one of those who bear much fruit in your name.

Jesus said: 'Those who love their life, lose it'.

Help us, Lord, to understand this saying and to be willing to give up all we have in your service.

Jesus said: 'When I am lifted up from the earth, I will draw all people to myself'

Help us, Lord, to understand this saying and to be part of your mission to bring good news to our neighbours and to all humankind.

And so we pray for the world – all leaders involved, armed forces and civilians on all sides who are suffering, for families and friends who have lost loved ones in the conflicts, for doctors, nurses, technicians & pastors who take care of those injured physically, mentally or emotionally.

*In all the places you can,
At all the times you can,
To all the people you can,
As long as ever you can.*

This is the meaning of the Passion. The crucifixion of Jesus is God's conduct toward us; it is the rule for our conduct toward one another as lives as long as we shall live.

We will soon start to think of the last week of Jesus' life, which is called the Passion for this reason. God weeps for the sins of the world. And in his broken body our lives are made whole. **Amen**

We pray for your body the Church throughout the world, that it may bring the light of the Gospel to those living in darkness, the hope of the Gospel to those living in despair, the healing of the Gospel to the lonely, the disadvantaged, the marginalised and the peace of the Gospel to a divided world.

Finally Lord we pray for ourselves - we remember that people came to the disciples saying 'we wish to see Jesus'. And sometimes we, too, long to be able to see him and hear him and to know exactly what he would say in response to our current concerns. But we also remember that in the Gospel story in his answer to the disciples he said that the hour has come.

As, over the next 2 weeks, we remember the final events of Jesus' life, help us to understand the meaning of these events; help us to know that through them the awful news of sin and judgement will become the good news of salvation, for us and for all who seek him. **Amen.**

Our Father, who art in heaven

Hymn – STF 361 – Man of sorrows! What a name watch on YouTube <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G2mVy2Vklhs>

- 1 Man of Sorrows ! What a name
for the Son of God, who came
ruined sinners to reclaim !
Alleluia ! What a Saviour !
- 2 Bearing shame and scoffing rude,
in my place condemned he stood ;
sealed my pardon with his blood :
Alleluia ! What a Saviour !
- 3 Guilty, vile, and helpless we ;
spotless Lamb of God was he :

full atonement, can it be ?
Alleluia ! What a Saviour !

- 4 Lifted up was he to die ;
'It is finished !' was his cry ;
now in heaven exalted high :
Alleluia ! What a Saviour !
- 5 When he comes, our glorious King,
all his ransomed home to bring,
then anew this song we'll sing :
Alleluia ! What a Saviour !

Philipp Paul Bliss (1838–1876)

Blessing

The blessing of Almighty God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit be with you and those you love, this day and for ever more. **Amen**