



Call: Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty, the whole earth is full of his glory.

Let us pray: Holy God, we gather to worship you in all your glory. Fill this place with your Holy Spirit and help us to see more of who you really are. Come, meet us here and prepare us to respond to your call and to do your will. AMEN

Hymn: Holy holy holy STF 11 Watch on YouTube : https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zzM9P_Gqw-s

Holy, holy, holy! Lord God Almighty!
early in the morning our song shall rise to thee;
only thou art holy, merciful and mighty,
God in three persons, blessed Trinity!

Holy, holy, holy! though the darkness hide thee,
though the sinful mortal eye thy glory may not see,
only thou art holy, there is none beside thee
perfect in power, in love, and purity.

Holy, holy, holy! all the saints adore thee,
casting down their golden crowns around the glassy sea;
cherubim and seraphim falling down before thee,
which were, and are, and evermore shalt be.

Holy, holy, holy! Lord God almighty!
all thy works shall praise thy name in earth and sky and sea;
holy, holy, holy! merciful and mighty!
God in three Persons, blessed Trinity.

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Prayers of adoration: Almighty Father, we come before you to bring you adoration and praise for you are a holy God, worthy of all our praise. You shower us with blessings beyond our expectations, and your kindness and grace knows no bounds. Thank you that you meet us in expected and unexpected places. We can encounter you in the extraordinary and the mundane. You are present in the majesty and magnificence of your creation, but also in the ordinariness of our everyday lives. We are in awe of all you have done, are doing and will do, and give praise that you are always with us. AMEN

Reading: Isaiah 6:1-8

Talk 1 “Unclean lips”

Has your face ever burned with shame? Have you ever said something and as soon as the words have left your lips you wish you could “unsay” them? Many of us doubt our ability to speak up when faced with injustice against ourselves or even against others. Or perhaps we find a whole host of excuses why we cannot deliver a tough message, particularly if the recipient doesn’t want to listen.

Isaiah had found himself in the presence of the Lord. This in itself was a sin, punishable by death. No-one but the high priest was permitted to come before God in the holiest of holy places. And he was living amongst a people who believed they were God’s chosen people but who had continued to disobey God. The message that Isaiah was tasked with delivering was a tough one. God was going to destroy them because of their disobedience.

This was not a task for the timid, or unskilled orator. Isaiah recognises the holiness and power of God, and listens to the praises of the angels and then sees that even they have to cover their eyes before God. Isaiah realised that in the presence of such greatness and holiness, he had no hope of measuring up to God’s standard of holiness.

Who was he, then, to be called to deliver such a momentous message to such a rebellious people?
Yet God is in control, he recognised that Isaiah was indeed such a man for the job.

But first, Isaiah acknowledged that he had said and done sinful things, he was not worthy of the task. But God had different ideas. The angel takes a hot coal from the altar and presses it to Isaiah’s lips.

Now, I’ve never picked up a hot coal with my fingers, let alone pressed it to my mouth – not something to be tried at home! However I have been present during surgical operations. Caustery is an essential tool in any surgeons repertoire. It stops bleeding and allows a wound to be safely closed up, and for healing to take place.

Cautery has been used for 100s if not 1000s of years to help prevent patients bleeding to death. It also burns away any dirt and foreign material. Ships' surgeons would have used cautery when dealing with severe wounds. It cleans and seals the wounds, but it's painful, (unless, of course, you have the benefit of anaesthetic).

Here we see God at work in Isaiah, cleansing and purifying him, removing the sin in his life. His guilt is taken away and his sin is atoned for. What are the things in your life that you would rather unsay? When have you avoided speaking out against injustice? If we come before God he atones for all our wrongdoings and failings, through the death of Christ his Son. We don't have to endure the pain, because Jesus endured it for us.

What is your response to God's call of "whom shall I send?" Here I am send me?

Prayer of confession:

Holy God, we have so often said things we want to unsay, we have done things that were sinful. We come before you now and ask for your forgiveness. Cleanse us and purify us. Forgive us for all the wrong things in our lives and remake us, once more, in your image and likeness, for the sake of your Son Jesus Christ who died for all our sins and rose again so that we might be made clean. AMEN

Hymn: I the Lord of sea and sky STF 663 Watch on YouTube <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2zr9SMm1gll>

I, the Lord of sea and sky
I have heard my people cry.
All who dwell in dark and sin
my hand will save.
I, who made the stars at night,
I will make their darkness bright.
Who will bear my light to them?
Whom shall I send?

*Here I am, Lord. Is it I, Lord?
I have heard you calling in the night.
I will go, Lord, If you lead me.
I will hold your people in my heart.*

I, the Lord of snow and rain,
I have borne my people's pain;

I have wept for love of them.
They turn away.
I will break their hearts of stone,
Give them hearts for love alone.
I will speak my word to them.
Whom shall I send?

I, the Lord of wind and flame,
I will tend the poor and lame.
I will set a feast for them.
My hand will save.
Finest bread I will provide
Til their hearts are satisfied.
I will give my life to them.
Whom shall I send?

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Reading: 1 Corinthians 15: 1-11

Talk 2 "Past life"

What skeletons do you have in your cupboard? We've probably all got things in our past for which we are ashamed. There may be decisions we made that were wrong, that led us down dark and dangerous paths.

Paul, on the surface of it, did not have the credentials of a great Christian. He'd been a pious and zealous Pharisee. He had stood and watched as Stephen, the first of the Christian martyrs was stoned to death. In fact he had actively pursued and persecuted these early Christians, so he was hardly the person one would expect to be preaching the Good News of the gospel. Yet nearly half of the New Testament is taken up with the teaching of Paul.

If you've ever had experience of someone who has made a major change in their life, turning away from one "bad habit", poacher turned gamekeeper, they can certainly be overzealous in their opinions. The previous chain smoker who gives up cigarettes forever, the fitness fanatic who was previously a coach potato. Paul, on the contrary, is not self-righteous, but full of humility. He is only too aware of his unworthiness, of his past life, yet that does not stop him in speaking of God's grace to him, the worst of sinners.

He has the deeply held belief that it is not through his own strength and hard work, but through the grace of God, that he is able to preach the gospel of Good News. He was a persecutor of Christians, yet Jesus appeared to even him. (It's interesting that Jesus appeared to two of the men who had hurt him the most – Peter whose denial had played it's part in Jesus death, and now Saul or Paul, the renowned persecutor of the followers of Jesus).

It was only through the grace and kindness of God that he had been enabled to carry out the work that Jesus asked him to do. Yes, he had to work hard, possibly harder than many others. He had to prove himself to his former colleagues and critics. He was starting from a low base.

Yet God had a plan and a purpose for him all along. When we think that God cannot possibly use us, or that we are undeserving and unworthy of his love, then we can think back to how God, through his grace and kindness could use Paul, who had been the cruellest of men to bring others to Christ.

Whatever the skeletons in your cupboard, whatever you might have said or done in the past, remember God's grace, through the death and resurrection of Christ, enables us to new life through him.

Hymn: Have you heard God's voice STF662 Watch on YouTube <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JzJr9T5JYRU>

Have you heard God's voice; has your heart been stirred?
Are you still prepared to follow?
Have you made a choice to remain and serve,
Though the way be rough and narrow?

*Will you walk the path that will cost you much
And embrace the pain and sorrow?
Will you trust in One who entrusts to you
The disciples of tomorrow?*

Will you use your voice; will you not sit down
When the multitudes are silent?
Will you make a choice to stand your ground
When the crowds are turning violent?

In your city streets will you be God's heart?
Will you listen to the voiceless?
Will you stop and eat, and when friendships start,
Will you share your faith with the faithless?

Will you watch the news with the eyes of faith
And believe it could be different?
Will you share your views using words of grace?
Will you leave a thoughtful imprint?

*We will walk the path that will cost us much
And embrace the pain and sorrow.
We will trust in One who entrusts to us
The disciples of tomorrow.*

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Reading: Luke 5:1-11

Talk 3 "Inadequate"

How often have you heard, "that won't work, we've tried it before?" It might be some project in your church, or some project at home or at work. Peter thought this when Jesus took advantage of the fishing boats on the shore of Lake Gennesaret. Simon, as he was then known, was an experienced fisherman, it was his livelihood, he knew everything there was to know about boats and about fishing. He and the other boats had been out all night and caught nothing.

When Jesus suggests they set out again, and this time in daylight, Simon is sceptical. If there were no fish at night, they certainly won't catch them during the day.

However, it's interesting that Simon also says, "because you say so, I will go out and let down my nets." He trusted this man who was no fisherman, he was a carpenter by trade. Despite his scepticism, Simon Peter does go out in his boat. He tries again. He tries, even when he'd given up hope.

Simon could have argued that he knew better, after all he had years of experience. And what happened? They caught so much fish their nets were almost bursting, beyond expectation. How did they miss all these fish?

And Simon Peter's reaction is to fall at Jesus' feet. He recognised his own insignificance, despite his years of experience in the fishing trade, in comparison to Jesus' greatness. He recognised his own inadequacy in comparison to the power of Jesus to do things beyond our imaginings.

But Jesus sees beyond Simon Peter's feelings of inadequacy and unworthiness, and recognises in him great potential. Peter will go on not just catching fish to sell in the local market, but will go on to catch people for the kingdom of God. The term catch used here, is not about entrapment or oppression, but completely the opposite. It's about bringing about transformation and restoration, of bringing new life to people when they choose to follow Jesus.

The catch of fish was miraculous. Jesus promised Simon Peter that his life would be changed forever, and that he in turn would bring people to him. When you feel inadequate for the task, or have given up hope trying, remember how Jesus met Simon Peter in his every day job and brought about a miracle beyond all expectation. We may, at times feel ashamed of what we have said or done, we may feel that our past life makes us unworthy of God's love, we may doubt that miracles are possible, yet despite all these, God has chosen each one of us, and he calls us to put our trust in him and follow where he would lead us.

Three people, Isaiah, Paul and Peter each felt they were not the right people for the task, but all three responded, "*Here I am, send me!*" **What is your response?**

Hymn: Hear the call of the kingdom STF 407 Watch on YouTube <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rIPxUNOrTYU>

Hear the call of the kingdom, lift your eyes to the King;
let his song rise within you as a fragrant offering
of how God, rich in mercy, came in Christ to redeem
all who trust in his unfailing grace.

*King of heaven, we will answer the call.
We will follow, bringing hope to the world,
filled with passion, filled with power to proclaim
salvation in Jesus' name.*

Hear the call of the kingdom to be children of light,
with the mercy of heaven, the humility of Christ;
walking justly before him, loving all that is right,
that the life of Christ may shine through us.

Hear the call of the kingdom to reach out to the lost
with the Father's compassion in the wonder of the cross,
bringing peace and forgiveness, and a hope yet to come:
let the nations put their trust in him.

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Intercessions: Heavenly Father, we pray for all you have been called to be workers in your kingdom, searching for the lost and loving them wherever they are. We pray for the church and its leaders, that all may be examples of your love by word and by the way we live.

Here I am Lord: **ready for your service!**

We pray for those in authority, and in positions of power, that under their leadership there may be mutual respect, integrity and justice. We pray for discernment to see where there is injustice, and for the courage to speak out.

Here I am Lord: **ready for your service!**

We pray for those who are living in poverty or financial difficulties, and for those whose relationships are full of tension and disagreement. We pray those whose relationships are broken and where families are separated. We pray for a better awareness of how our behaviour affects those around us.

Here I am Lord: **ready for your service!**

We pray for those who are suffering pain or distress, for those awaiting results of medical tests or treatment. We pray for those who suffer from anxiety and feelings of hopelessness. We pray for those who feel inadequate and are perhaps resisting your call.

Here I am Lord: **ready for your service!**

We thank you for the way you show us ourselves and still accept us with love. AMEN

Hymn: Lord of all hopefulness STF 526 Watch on YouTube <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i6ztII8Hlbo>

Lord of all hopefulness, Lord of all joy,
Whose trust, ever child-like, no care could destroy,
Be there at our waking, and give us, we pray,
Your bliss in our hearts, Lord, at the break of the day.

Lord of all kindness, Lord of all grace,
Your hands swift to welcome, your arms to embrace,
Be there at our homing, and give us, we pray,
Your love in our hearts, Lord, at the eve of the day.

Lord of all eagerness, Lord of all faith,
Whose strong hands were skilled at the plane and the lathe,
Be there at our labours, and give us, we pray,
Your strength in our hearts, Lord, at the noon of the day.

Lord of all gentleness, Lord of all calm,
Whose voice is contentment, whose presence is balm,
Be there at our sleeping, and give us, we pray,
Your peace in our hearts, Lord, at the end of the day.

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Blessing: Almighty God, you have given us a glimpse of your glory and majesty. We are not worthy to walk with you, yet you continue to call us. Send us out in the power of your Holy Spirit to speak your words and to show your love. AMEN