



Call : Great is the Lord and most worthy of praise. Praise him, all his angels; all his heavenly hosts.

Sing and exalt Him for ever and forever, for He is worthy!

Hymn : STF 39 Angel voices ever singing

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dRI1XlsFXoM>

Angel voices ever singing
round Thy throne of light,
angel harps, forever ringing,
rest not day nor night;
thousands only live to bless Thee
and confess thee Lord of might.

Thou who art beyond the farthest
mortal eye can scan,
can it be that Thou regardest
songs of sinful man?
Can we feel that Thou art near us
and wilt hear us? Yea, we can.

Yea, we know Thy love rejoices
o'er each work of Thine;
Thou didst ears and hands and voices

for Thy praise combine;
craftsman's art and music's measure
for Thy pleasure didst design.

Here, great God, today we offer
of Thine own to Thee;
and for Thine acceptance proffer,
all unworthily,
hearts and minds and hands and voices
in our choicest melody.

Honor, glory, might, and merit
Thine shall ever be,
Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,
blessed Trinity:
of the best that Thou hast given
earth and heaven render Thee.

Prayer

Holy and gracious God, It's so good to be together again today. Thank you for the fellowship that we share. We come today to worship you. For you alone are worthy of all praise, honour, and glory. You are the Creator of heaven and earth, the source of all life, and the giver of every good gift. Your mercy is new every morning, and your faithfulness endures through every generation. Your love never fails. It never runs dry. You never leave us. You never forsake us. You walk with us, guiding us and leading us. And you are utterly trustworthy. Lord, we worship you today.

And once again we ask for your mercy and your grace, For we so often fail to live as you want us to. For the times that we have been selfish, arrogant and unkind, we are truly sorry. For the times we have failed to recognise your presence with us, have mercy. When we have been distracted by our own concerns, slow to trust your promises, and reluctant to follow where you lead, have mercy. Forgive us for the times we have failed to love you with our whole heart and to love our neighbours as ourselves.

(In the silence I want to encourage us to take the opportunity to speak honestly with God, confessing anything that weighs heavy on our hearts, trusting that He is always willing to forgive those who are truly sorry)

We hear then the words of grace, our sins are forgiven. Thanks be to God! Yes, thank you Lord for your forgiveness! Thank you for your love and thank you for the hope you give us, the strength you provide for each new day, and the assurance that nothing can separate us from your care. Such compassion, such kindness, such graciousness!

We cannot thank you enough. We really cannot! In Jesus name – Amen.

The 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 into temptation; but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

Bible reading : Psalm 46 - God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble. Therefore, we will not fear, though the earth give way and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea, though its waters roar and foam and the mountains quake with their surging. There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God, the holy place where the Most High dwells. God is within her; she will not fall; God will help her at break of day. Nations are in uproar, kingdoms fall; he lifts his voice, the earth melts. The Lord Almighty is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress. Come and see what the Lord has done, the desolations he has brought on the earth. He makes wars cease to the ends of the earth. He breaks the bow and shatters the spear; he burns the shields with fire. He says, "Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth." The Lord Almighty is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress.

Hymn STF18 Be still and know that I am God

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=av1mjPadO_Y

Be still and know that I am God.	I am the Lord who saves and heals.	In you, Lord God, I put my trust.
Be still and know that I am God.	I am the Lord who saves and heals.	In you, Lord God, I put my trust.
Be still and know that I am God.	I am the Lord who saves and heals.	In you, Lord God, I put my trust.

Bible reading : Genesis 28:10-19 - Jacob left Beersheba and set out for Harran. When he reached a certain place, he stopped for the night because the sun had set. Taking one of the stones there, he put it under his head and lay down to sleep. He had a dream in which he saw a stairway resting on the earth, with its top reaching to heaven, and the angels of God were ascending and descending on it. There above it stood the Lord, and he said: "I am the Lord, the God of your father Abraham and the God of Isaac. I will give you and your descendants the land on which you are lying. Your descendants will be like the dust of the earth, and you will spread out to the west and to the east, to the north and to the south. All peoples on earth will be blessed through you and your offspring. I am with you and will watch over you wherever you go, and I will bring you back to this land. I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you." When Jacob awoke from his sleep, he thought, "Surely the Lord is in this place, and I was not aware of it." He was afraid and said, "How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God; this is the gate of heaven." Early the next morning Jacob took the stone he had placed under his head and set it up as a pillar and poured oil on top of it. He called that place Bethel,[c]though the city used to be called Luz.

Reflection

Billy Graham, in his book "Angels" tells the most amazing true story of something that happened back in 1859 on one of the New Hebrides Islands (now Vanuatu) in the South Pacific.

The tribe's folk had surrounded the house, the mission, and were bent on killing all the inhabitants; John Paton, a Scottish missionary, his wife Margaret, and their young children. And so, John and Margaret prayed. They prayed throughout that terror filled night, "Oh God deliver us!" In the morning, they were amazed to see their attackers leaving. And so, they thanked God for His deliverance.

A year later the chief of the tribe who had surrounded the Paton family that night was converted to Christ. Remembering what had happened, John asked the chief what had kept him from burning down the house and killing them all. The chief was surprised by the question and replied: "Well... we couldn't attack because of the hundreds of men who were surrounding your house." John Paton was shocked because he knew they were alone that night. The chief then said he was afraid to attack because all the warriors were much bigger than his men, and were wearing shining garments and carrying swords and spears. The chief apologised to the missionary, and added he and was glad John had organised the shining warriors to protect his family.

What an incredible story. May it remind us that we are never alone God is always with us, even when it doesn't feel like it!

Jacob discovered this truth one night as he stopped to try to get some rest. He was running away. Home was Beersheba but it wasn't safe. He had deceived his father Isaac and stolen his brother Esau's blessing. That blessing included Esau's inheritance and his place of importance within the family. Furious, Esau was intent on murder.

And so, Jacob found himself fleeing, hoping to find sanctuary approximately 500 miles away at his uncles. 500 miles. That's a long journey! It's like walking from Ipswich to Inverness! The sun having set, Jacob decided it was safe to stop and rest. And so, he found himself a rock on which to rest his head. A rock of all things!

But to be honest it summed up his position! After all he found himself in a very hard place, both spiritually and emotionally. Jacob was in a difficult position. He was alone, weary, and facing the consequences of deceiving his father and brother. Could it be that the stone represents this low, uncomfortable point in his life?

How he fell to sleep I'll never know. But he did. And it was then that he learnt that God was certainly with him.

So, my friends, what is in here for us today? Well firstly lets never forget God is with us!

There will certainly be times in life when we find ourselves on our own. There will be times when we are afraid, unsure of what to do next or indeed, not sure of what's coming next. But we must never forget that we are not alone for God is with us!

Jesus promised Matthew 28:20 "And surely I am with you always to the end of the age" and can I just add Jesus never lied!

On March the 2nd 1791 John Welsey lay on his death bed surrounded by family and friends. Apparently, the founder of Methodism summoned his remaining strength to shout a phrase twice in holy triumph, and that phrase was, "The best of all, God is with us".

There may be time when we feel lonely, but we are never alone!

And then secondly,

If we are wise, we'll keep our eyes open, for frankly God can turn up wherever He chooses!

In the supermarket. At the doctors, In the kitchen, On the bus, In the school, In the garden, On the walk, In the shed, In the car! (be careful when you are driving!!), Absolutely anywhere he chooses! He will not be confined by bricks and mortar!

But not only that, he can speak to us in any way He chooses!

In a dream, Through a song on the radio, Whilst reading a book, While sitting quietly in your favourite spot, During a conversation with a friend, Absolutely anywhere! If we are wise, we'll be listening! (Can I just add, the wise person also tests what they think they have heard God saying! We test it against scripture and maybe have a chat with a Christian friend just to see what they think.)

So, there we have it, Alone we may be, but never alone. The God we serve is with us wherever we go!

As the Psalmist said, Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence? If I go up to the heavens, you are there; if I make my bed in the depths, you are there. If I rise on the wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea, even there your hand will guide me, your right hand will hold me fast. - Psalm 139 7 – 10

He will never leave us nor forsake us. And if we are genuinely open to His voice, we may even hear Him in the most unexpected places.

PRAYER

Almighty God, just as You met Jacob when he was alone, uncertain, and far from home, meet with each of us as we journey through this life. When we feel uncertain about the future, help us to trust that You go before us. Awaken our hearts to Your presence. Give us ears to hear Your voice, and grant that we may respond with reverence and humility. Teach us to recognize ordinary places as holy because You are there. When we feel alone, comfort us. When afraid, grant us your peace. When we are weary, renew our hope. Like Jacob, may every encounter with you lead to greater faith, deeper awe, and a renewed commitment to walk with You. Let our lives become a testimony that You are the God who keeps His promises and who walks by our side wherever we go. In Jesus's precious name we pray, Amen

Prayers of intercession

Loving God, You met Jacob on his journey and assured him of your presence. Be with all who are travelling through uncertain times today. Give courage to those facing change, comfort to those who are lonely, and hope to those who are afraid. Lord, in your mercy: **Hear our prayer.**

God of heaven and earth, We pray for your Church throughout the world. Help us to recognise your presence in our worship and in our daily lives, that we may be faithful witnesses to your love and grace. Lord, in your mercy: **Hear our prayer.**

We pray for the nations of the world, especially where there is conflict, injustice, or suffering. Guide leaders in the ways of wisdom and peace and strengthen all who work for reconciliation and justice. Lord, in your mercy: **Hear our prayer.**

We pray for our local community. Bless our homes, schools, workplaces, and neighbourhoods. Help us to see that every place can become holy ground when we walk with you and serve one another in love. Lord, in your mercy: **Hear our prayer.**

We remember those who are sick, grieving, or burdened in spirit. May they know your comforting presence and the assurance that you never leave or forsake your people. Lord, in your mercy: **Hear our prayer.**

We give thanks for all who have walked with you in faith and now rest in your eternal care. Keep us steadfast in hope until we share with them the fullness of your kingdom. Lord, in your mercy: **Hear our prayer.**

Merciful Father, accept these prayers for the sake of your Son, our Saviour, Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

Hymn STF693 Beauty for brokenness

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O5_TVy2gHRg

Beauty for brokenness	God of the poor	Rest for the ravaged earth
Hope for despair	Friend of the weak	Oceans and streams
Lord, in the suffering	Give us compassion we pray	Plundered and poisoned
This is our prayer	Melt our cold hearts	Our future, our dreams
Bread for the children	Let tears fall like rain	Lord, end our madness
Justice, joy, peace	Come, change our love	Carelessness, greed
Sunrise to sunset	From a spark to a flame	Make us content with
Your kingdom increase!	Refuge from cruel wars	The things that we need
Shelter for fragile lives	Havens from fear	Lighten our darkness
Cures for their ills	Cities for sanctuary	Breathe on this flame
Work for the craftsman	Freedoms to share	Until your justice
Trade for their skills	Peace to the killing-fields	Burns brightly again
Land for the dispossessed	Scorched earth to green	Until the nations
Rights for the weak	Christ for the bitterness	Learn of your ways
Voices to plead the cause	His cross for the pain	Seek your salvation
Of those who can't speak		And bring you their praise

Offering

Hymn STF465 Guide me, O thou great Jehovah

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K_U4v--Bc30

Guide me, O my great Redeemer, pilgrim through this barren land; I am weak, but you are mighty; hold me with your powerful hand. Bread of heaven, bread of heaven, feed me now and evermore, feed me now and evermore.	Open now the crystal fountain, where the healing waters flow. Let the fire and cloudy pillar lead me all my journey through. Strong Deliverer, strong Deliverer, ever be my strength and shield, ever be my strength and shield.	When I tread the verge of Jordan, bid my anxious fears subside. Death of death, and hell's Destruction, land me safe on Canaan's side. Songs of praises, songs of praises I will ever sing to you, I will ever sing to you.
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Blessing : The Lord Bless you and Keep you. The Lord Make His face to shine upon you and the Lord give you His peace.
Amen.