

Sheffield United Reformed Churches
Team Ministry worship for individuals or families
Sunday 28th June 2020 at 10:30 am.

4th Sunday after Pentecost

Call to worship

I am the way, the truth and the life

Let us trust in the unfailing love of God.

Let our hearts rejoice in God's calling of us as we come to worship.

Opening Hymn R&S 586

All my hope on God is founded; he doth still my trust renew.

Me through change and chance he guideth, only good and only true.

God unknown, he alone calls my heart to be his own.

Human pride and earthly glory, sword and crown betray his trust;

what with care and toil he buildeth, tower and temple, fall to dust.

But God's power, hour by hour, is my temple and my tower.

God's great goodness aye endureth, deep his wisdom, passing thought:

splendour, light, and life attend him, beauty springeth out of naught.

Evermore from his store new-born worlds rise and adore.

Daily doth the Almighty giver bounteous gifts on us bestow;

his desire our soul delighteth, pleasure leads us where we go.

Love doth stand at his hand; joy doth wait on his command.

Opening Prayers

God of creation, we give you thanks and praise for this new day and we thank you for bringing us together, although we are apart.

Be present in our worship today. We lift our voice in thanksgiving that the restrictions are beginning to be lifted and we look forward to the time when we are able to be with our family again.

God of love we turn in thankfulness, to praise you for your trust in the choices we will make.

We are thankful for our freedom; the people who inspire us with the story of faith they tell; the gift of living as a fellowship offering love to the community

We are your creation, and in our turning to you, we trust you with our lives, believing that with your presence our world can be transformed to offer signs of the Kingdom of Heaven

Forgiving God, draw near, as our ears have not been open to the sound of your gentleness and your still small voice. Our eyes have not noticed the beauty of our surroundings as we have played our part in the changing pattern of creation, forgive us.

We wait to be reshaped by your hands, we wait to be set alight but the fire of your Holy Spirit and we wait to be forgiven by your undying love.

God's gift of eternal life has been given in Jesus Christ, who offers us forgiveness from our sins, and welcomes us to the way of holiness. Lord of love and hope establish here your kingdom. All these prayers we bring together in the saying the ...

The Lord's Prayer

Reading from Psalm 139:23 - O Lord, you have **searched me** and known **me**. You know when I sit down and when I rise up; you discern my thoughts from far away. You **search** out my path and my lying down, and are acquainted with all my ways.



Readings

Psalm 139: 23 (see above)

God knows us through and through...

Philippians 1:1-8

Paul's love and regard for the church in Philippi

Address (by Simon)

As you know by now, I love a good film, especially a good action film! An early memory is watching the film *Zulu* (which made a young Michael Caine famous). Maybe the film should not find as much favour today, especially in our current context, with all its colonialist overtones. In fact the script by Cy Enfield was considered ground-breaking with its sympathetic portrayal of the Zulu nation and anti-war sentiment (Enfield later got into trouble in America for his radical views).

His script is full of fantastic one-liners. In one scene the two British Officers, Bromhead and Chard (played by Caine and a young Stanley Baker), are discussing how they are going to defend a military hospital with only 100 able-bodied men against the onslaught over 4,000 Zulu warriors.

Bromhead is aghast at Chard's suggestion that they erect barricades rather than try to escape. "Is that your plan? Bromhead queries "to stand behind a barricade and wait for the attack?"

"Is that your plan?" - Bromhead thinks the seriousness of the situation demands something grander, something more elaborate, something more compelling. He was disappointed but in the end Chard pulls rank and his plan saves the mission station.

As we think of the state of our world with all its division, brokenness and hate, we might think that a grand, elaborate and compelling plan is called for. But God (our "commanding officer") has something else in mind: to use ordinary people from everyday walks of life to transform His world, as we also experience his transforming love and grace.

Sometimes we think we need to have a lot of knowledge, talent and ability to be effective in the Kingdom but this is not the case! If we know how to love then, really, we understand all we need to know about God - who is love. He will take our love, as we trust Him and seek to obey Him, to the next level, as we grow into His love which is infinitely broader, higher deeper and longer-lasting than ours.

In our Philippians reading Paul talks of this plan. Despite his undoubted talent and exemplary life of service and suffering, the Philippians are partners with Paul in the Gospel (verse 5) and this is a source of great joy and comfort. Paul reminds the Philippians that the plan is not dependent on their abilities, strength or staying power. God Himself, who "began the work" in them will keep working through them until His good work is carried on "to completion" (verse 6). And this is all by grace from beginning to end. He knows us and our ways from beginning to the end and will "Finish His new creation" (Psalm 139). That grace is not for a favoured few - we all share in it (verse 7).

Philippians is Paul's most pastoral and heart-felt Epistle. Why? Because he recognized how much the Church in Philippi were part of his work and he of theirs - and that work was all of God. Because we are all part of this great purpose of God, let us honour, value and revere one another with thankful and joyful prayer (verses 3 and 4), with heart-felt unity (verse 7) and with affection (verse 8). Let's share together around the Table of our Lord.

Preparation for the Lord's Supper

As Jesus invites us, as His friends, so we are confident to approach His table...

Here is grace. Here is refreshing. Here is the end of division. Here is the beginning of healing...

Communion Hymn R&S 447

I come with joy to meet my Lord, forgiven, loved and free,
In awe and wonder to recall His life laid down for me,

I come with Christians far and near to find, as all are fed,
Our true community of love in Christ's communion bread,

As Christ breaks bread for us to share each proud division ends.
That love that made us makes us one, and strangers now are friends,

Communion

Gathered with those you were closest to, you, set aside tradition to allow your Father's presence to be seen in the ordinary, everyday act of living. Take our gifts and may our ordinary things be transformed, to see your kingdom here on Earth.

Give thanks in your own words...take and eat some bread....drink some wine...be silent for a while...

Prayer after Communion and intercessions for God's world

God, you have given us new birth into a living hope through the gift of your Son.

God with us, like a mother you have fed us with yourself and strengthened us for journeying ahead.

God of truth and power, you take our weakness and our sin and refashion us by grace.

We remember all those ordinary people who have allowed us to meet God alive within them. People who have inspired us with their storytelling; their care in the times when life is rough; their emotional balm that has healed our wounds.

May we allow you to challenge our traditions so that you may be met in the ordinary acts of kindness and hospitality you invite us to follow as disciples?

We pray for the world in all its need: for its peace, remembering today....

for the victims of war, terror, famine and disease, that they may be freed from all afflictions;

for those who are forced to flee their homes, that they may find safe lodging;

for those who misuse power, that they may serve others, not themselves;

for those who nurture hatred in their hearts, that they may come to know the meaning of the Cross.

We remember all the people who are going back to work, those who have lost their livelihood, all the staff who still work on the front line, those who are isolated, those shielding and those who are vulnerable.

We pray for justice, for those who work for reconciliation, for those who are exploited and we ask that you hear our cry for peace.

We pray for our families, our neighbours and friends and today we think especially of our ministry team.

We pray for Jamie and his family, especially as he takes up his new role, we pray that you will strengthen him and give him wisdom as he leads us together in Yorkshire, one church in the body of Christ. Amen

Closing Hymn R&S 663

Love divine, all loves excelling, joy of heaven, to earth come down,
fix in us Thy humble dwelling; all Thy faithful mercies crown.
Jesus, Thou art all compassion; pure, unbounded love Thou art;
visit us with Thy salvation; enter every trembling heart.

Breathe, O breathe Thy loving Spirit into every troubled breast!
Let us all in Thee inherit; let us find the promised rest.
Take away the love of sinning; Alpha and Omega be;
end of faith, as its beginning, set our hearts at liberty.

Finish then Thy new creation; pure and spotless let us be.
Let us see Thy great salvation perfectly restored in Thee.
Changed from glory into glory, till in heaven we take our place,
till we cast our crowns before Thee, lost in wonder, love, and praise.

Blessing

Together met, together bound, we'll go our different ways,
And as His people in the world, we'll live and speak His praise

So may the blessing of God the Trinity,
Our Creator, our Redeemer, Our Source
Be ours for the world