

Sheffield United Reformed Churches
Team Ministry worship for individuals or families on
Sunday 17th January 2021 at 10:30 am

Call to Worship (from first letter of John 5, verses 7, 9 and 11)

Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God.

This is how God showed his love among us:

He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him

So, dear friends, since God so loved us, so we should love one another.

Hymn

Here is love, vast as the ocean, loving-kindness as the flood,
when the Prince of Life, our Ransom, shed for us His precious blood.
Who His love will not remember? Who can cease to sing His praise?
He can never be forgotten throughout heaven's eternal days.

On the mount of crucifixion fountains opened deep and wide;
through the floodgates of God's mercy flowed a vast and gracious tide.
Grace and love, like mighty rivers, poured incessant from above,
and heaven's peace and perfect justice kissed a guilty world in love.

Prayers of Praise and Thanksgiving

Creator God, Who made all things for your pleasure and in whom all things hold together
And in whom we all live and move and have our being, we worship you saying
“Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty, who was, and is, and is to come”

Sovereign Lord, the nations of the world are as a drop in the bucket to you - yet you call us in your
great love, to worship Jesus: the Lamb who was slain.

With his blood, he purchased for God a people drawn from every tribe and language and nation.
And so, we declare that he is worthy to receive honour and glory and wisdom and power and
strength.

We declare, with all your Heavenly host that he alone is worthy to break open the seals of history
so that your will and purposes may unfold in these times in which we live.

We praise you that, in a chaotic world, you are with us in Jesus

Holding your people, your Church and your world in an unfailing embrace

Lord, Father and Friend of us all

When all things fade, your love remains

When love of friend and even family fails, your love is here

When the shifting sands of life subside, the rock of your faithfulness stands firm

When time slips through our fingers, your love endures

When our best human love is tainted by selfishness, your cross brings grace

When our best human love is twisted by hate your Spirit brings renewal and change

So renew and strengthen us as we worship you, through Christ and in the Holy Spirit



Readings

I Samuel 3: 1-10 - God calls us in the stillness...

Psalms 139: 1-18 – God knows and cares for us...

John 13: 31-35 - Jesus says: “As I have loved you, you must love one another...”

Song - R&S 745

A new commandment I give unto you: that you love one another as I have loved you, that you love one another as I have loved you.

By this shall all know that you are my disciples: if you have love one for another.

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Reflection – by Peter Heckels - based on John 13: 34 - *As I have loved you, you must love one another.*

What is love like?

Love is sincere (Romans 12: 9) - Love has an open heart and an open hand. Love knows nothing of corruption or deceit.

Love is generous (2 Corinthians 8: 24; 1 John 4: 11) - Love is marked by sacrificial giving of time, money, energy and gifts to those in any form of need.

Love is active (Hebrews 6: 10; 1 John 3: 18) - Expressions of love are backed with acts of service.

Love is forbearing and forgiving (Ephesians 4: 3; Colossians 3: 12-14) - Love turns a blind eye and deaf ear to the faults and failings of others and quickly releases them from the sins which have hurt us.

Love is uniting (Ephesians 4: 3; Philippians 2: 2; Colossians 2: 2) - Love is always seeking to make peace and heal divisions in families and churches.

Love is positive (1 Corinthians 13: 4-7) - Love believes the best about others, not fearing the worst.

Love is sensitive (Romans 14: 15; Galatians 5: 13) - Love takes care not to say or do anything that will cause another to stumble.

Love is up-building (Ephesians 4: 15; 2 Timothy 2: 22-26) - So that even when a truth is spoken that may hurt, love always aims to build that person into Christ.

Love is the summary of the entire Christian faith (Romans 13: 10; Colossians 3: 14; 1 Corinthians 13: 1 and 14: 1) - Love is the fulfilling of God's Law and must be the Christian's first and foremost aim.

If that portrait of love leaves us breathless, it is meant to, but remember God does not require us to strive for such qualities in our own strength, for this is the gift of His Holy Spirit dwelling within us.

Hymn

How deep the Father's love for us, how vast beyond all measure
That He should give His only Son to make a wretch His treasure
How great the pain of searing loss, the Father turns His face away
As wounds which mar the Chosen One bring many sons to glory

Behold the man upon a cross; my sin upon His shoulders;
Ashamed, I hear my mocking voice call out among the scoffers.
It was my sin that held Him there until it was accomplished;
His dying breath has brought me life; I know that it is finished.

I will not boast in anything; no gifts, no power, no wisdom;
But I will boast in Jesus Christ, His death and resurrection.
Why should I gain from His reward? I cannot give an answer;
But this I know with all my heart: His wounds have paid my ransom.

Prayers of Intercession

Lord of all life, we bring the life of your world and place it in your loving embrace once more. As a young girl laboured in a cold and dirty out-house in a far-away land and through a dark night of pain, long ago...

Through her birth-pains, you brought new life and hope into the world in the child of Bethlehem. Rulers and scholars bowed in wonder and worship before your purposes and wisdom.

So we bring your world in the birth-pains of our present difficult days, also hoping for the emergence of new life from our current time...

We hold before you the nations which are as a drop in a bucket and yet you love them and long to draw from each one a people of obedience and praise to worship and serve you.

So we pray for the United States, asking that peace and grace may break forth, so that a focus of love and understanding may draw people to unite.

We echo this prayer for all nations where there is strife, particularly where we are striving to bring healing to the sick, comfort to the bereaved and support to those who are struggling. May the phone ring for the lonely, the sound of joy come to the sad, the wonder of creative gifts sustain the frustrated.

We pray for parents, teachers, police officers and health workers who are seeking to support the young, keep communities safe and bring hope through the vaccination programmes.

We pray for our Governments in the nations and in local areas, that you will give to them wisdom, knowledge, time and strength to make the decisions that will help individuals and communities through the current crisis

As you came to live among us, humbly, and share our sorrows and struggles, so we pray for ordinary people in the every-day challenges they face. In the decisions they make and the love they share, may the life of your Kingdom encircle and keep them.

So we pray for particular people who are on our hearts: those who are dying or bereft, those undergoing operations and medical care, those who are ill or suffering from Covid
(name people for whom you are concerned here...)

We pray for your church, especially in this city of Sheffield, that as we seek you in the present and consider the way in which you are leading us, so we may bring your renewing life to this city.

We bring all these prayers, remembering we belong to your family as we say the prayer that your Son taught us... **The Lord's Prayer**

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.

Come, Almighty, to deliver; let us all Thy life receive;
suddenly return and never, never more Thy temples leave.
Thee we would be always blessing, serve Thee as Thy hosts above,
pray and praise Thee without ceasing, glory in Thy perfect love.

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 heav'n we take our place,
Till we cast our crowns before Thee, lost in wonder, love, and praise.

Blessing

God bless those that you love
God bless those who love you
God bless those who love those that you love,
And those who love those that love you.

And may the Grace of our Lord, Jesus Christ, the Love of God
and the Fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all.....