

CIRCUIT SERVICE 20th March 2022 prepared by June Hardcastle Hymns from Singing the Faith

Call to Worship

We join together in worship in our building, with those on zoom and with those in heaven: those who have gone before us and now walk the streets of the Heavenly Jerusalem and sing praises with the angels and all the Heavenly Host. As we read in Scripture "The voices of many angels, numbering thousands upon thousands and ten thousand times ten thousand saying, Worthy is the Lamb who was slain to receive honour and glory and praise"

Hymn StheF 39 Angel voices <https://youtu.be/YI7kSoBAQUU>

<p>1 Angel voices ever singing round thy throne of light, angel-harps for ever ringing, rest not day nor night ; thousands only live to bless thee and confess thee Lord of might.</p> <p>2 Thou who art beyond the farthest mortal eye can scan, can it be that thou regardest sinful woman, man ? Can we know that thou art near us, and wilt hear us ? yea, we can.</p> <p>3 Lord, we know that thou rejoicest o'er each work of thine ; thou didst ears and hands and voices for thy praise design ; maker's art and music's measure for thy pleasure all combine.</p>	<p>4 In thy house, great God, we offer of thine own to thee ; and for thine acceptance proffer all unworthily hearts and minds and hands and voices in our choicest psalmody.</p> <p>5 Honour, glory, might, and merit thine shall ever be, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, blessèd Trinity. Of the best that thou hast given earth and heaven render thee.</p> <p>Francis Pott (1832–1909) <i>(alt.)</i></p>
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Prayer

Prayer. Lord our God, before time began, there you were with the angels and the heavenly beings, who are forever praising you and saying: "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty, who was, and is, and is to come."

You are the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the end, the Ancient Days, Holy One
Yet, You hear us when we call

You are our morning song

You are our sword and shield, deliverer, comforter

Even though we walk through the valley of the shadow of death we feel no evil, for we know that we shall dwell in your heavenly house for all eternity

Lord Jesus, you could have called upon ten thousand thousand angels to free you from the agony of the cross but instead you chose to open your arms to the nails. And on that following Sunday morning there stood angels by your tomb proclaiming your resurrection.

Our strength is in Your name
and we have nothing to fear?

We are holding on to Your faithful promise that you are with us always.

Lord our God, like the voice of many waters with your glory on their wings, the angels sing Holy, Worthy and our hearts desire is likewise to stand in your presence, to sing GLORY and to see your face O God, We stand confident on the promise we read in the book of Revelation that you set before us an open door which no man can shut.

How shall I sing that Majesty
which angels do admire?
Let dust in dust and silence lie;
sing, sing, ye heavenly choir.
thousands of thousands stand around
thy throne, O God most high;
ten thousand times ten thousand sound
thy praise; but who am I?
How great a being, Lord, is thine,
which doth all beings keep!
Thy knowledge is the only line
to sound so vast a deep.
thou art a sea without a shore,
a sun without a sphere;
thy time is now and evermore,
thy place is everywhere.

Lord God, this morning we do most earnestly and humbly ask that in this service we know your presence amongst us. And although we cannot see your face, we ask that we will know through your Holy Spirit working in our hearts that we have been touching heaven and that you, the living God have been with us. Amen

Video for young people.

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1HQp4CbNQIZG7XPMuY_Nwsak0OPMYmHeE/view?usp=sharing

Hymn StheF 161 Speak O Lord <https://youtu.be/3tPp8ov7cks>

<p>1 Speak, O Lord, as we come to you to receive the food of your holy word. Take your truth, plant it deep in us ; shape and fashion us in your likeness, that the light of Christ might be seen today in our acts of love and our deeds of faith. Speak, O Lord, and fulfil in us all your purposes, for your glory.</p> <p>2 Teach us, Lord, full obedience, holy reverence, true humility. Test our thoughts and our attitudes in the radiance of your purity. Cause our faith to rise, cause our eyes to see your majestic love and authority. Words of power that can never fail ; let their truth prevail over unbelief.</p>	<p>3 Speak, O Lord, and renew our minds ; help us grasp the heights of your plans for us. Truths unchanged from the dawn of time that will echo down through eternity. And by grace we'll stand on your promises, and by faith we'll walk as you walk with us. Speak, O Lord, till your Church is built and the earth is filled with your glory.</p> <p>Keith Getty (<i>b.</i> 1974) and Stuart Townend (<i>b.</i> 1963)</p>
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Readings Lectionary Isaiah 55 1-9; I Corinthians 10 verses 1-6, 12,13; Luke 13 1-9 (**all referred to in the sermon**)

Sermon https://drive.google.com/file/d/1V_CEp9Tg5v0kse4ZettmqGwDs1x5-mT/view?usp=sharing

Pilate was known as a thoroughly unpleasant and unpopular Governor of Judea. If the New Testament hadn't been written we would know through the writings of the first century Jewish historian, Josephus.

Josephus lists many things that Pilate did which upset the local Jewish population. Sometimes he seemed to be deliberately making them angry. He trampled on their religious sensibilities. He flouted their laws and conventions. For example, once he used money from the temple treasury to build an aqueduct then brutally crushed the rebellion which followed.

So we come to two incidents mentioned in today's Gospel

1) The first a state-sanctioned terror....

People had come on a pilgrimage from Galilee to Jerusalem and had gone to the temple to offer sacrifices. Pilate, perhaps fearing an uprising, but more likely he just wanted to put off pilgrims from going, he sent in the troops. The pilgrims were killed. And in the temple courtyard was the blood of the pilgrims mingling with the blood of the sacrifices. Together with the horror of the loss of life, the area then became ritually unclean.

2) The second an accident caused by shoddy workmanship

Siloam was an area just outside the walls of Jerusalem on the southeast side of the city. The tower of Siloam was part of an aqueduct system, a construction project that Pilate had begun. Word on the street was that he had syphoned off some of the money earmarked for

this project for his own projects of wine, women, song and an upscale lifestyle, so corners were cut resulting in the tower falling, and eighteen people were killed in the catastrophe.

WHAT IS IT THAT JESUS SAYS?

Do you think that these Galileans were worse sinners than all the other Galileans because they suffered this way? ³I tell you, no! But unless you repent, you too will all perish. ⁴Or those eighteen who died when the tower in Siloam fell on them—do you think they were more guilty than all the others living in Jerusalem? ⁵I tell you, no! But unless you repent, you too will all perish.”

BEING GOOD, BEING INNOCENT OF WRONG DOING DOES NOT PROTECT YOU FROM TERROR, DOES NOT PROTECT YOU FROM THE RESULTS OF THE WRONG DOING OF OTHERS.

OUR ONLY HOPE IS IN TURNING TO GOD AGAIN AND AGAIN AND AGAIN (REPENTENCE) THAT WILL PREVENT US COMMITTING THE KIND OF SINS THAT PILATE HAD,

Also because bad happens to good people BECAUSE OF THE WRONG DOING OF OTHERS, OUR ONLY HOPE IS IN TURNING TO GOD AGAIN AND AGAIN AND AGAIN SO in the midst of trouble WE CAN FIND God AND FIND THAT HE keeps his promises and gives us the strength to endure.

Both the Isaiah reading and Jesus say there is just the one way forward – to turn to God again and again and again.

What was it Isaiah said?

**Seek the LORD while he may be found,
call upon him while he is near;**

⁷let the wicked forsake their way,

and the unrighteous their thoughts;

let them return to the LORD, that he may have mercy on them,

and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.

The Corinthians reading warns us to keep away from wrongdoing, to be careful, lest we be caught up in its many variations.

OUR ONLY HOPE IS IN TURNING TO GOD AGAIN AND AGAIN AND AGAIN so that in the midst of trouble – because bad happen to good people- but in the midst of trouble God keeps his promises and gives us the strength to endure. As the Corinthians writer says God is faithful. He will not let you be tested beyond your strength.

We also read in this gospel passage that little story of the unfruitful fig tree. Tempted to cut it down.....no says the gardener, give it another chance. This is what God the Gardener does when we turn to him – he gives another opportunity to abide in him and bear fruit.

And here we are travelling through Lent with Jesus – he is on a journey to Jerusalem – not to overthrow and take over but to go to the cross for us. He is entirely innocent and entirely good BUT will experience when bad things happen to good people. BUT it will not be a random set of circumstances like what happened to the Galileans in the Temple or the 18 killed by the tower of Siloam....**it will be by Father's will and by the choice of Jesus. That is how He is known. We know also how Pilate was known.**

The question for us this morning is this: how will we be known?

Prayer

Lord our God, where we have made wrong choices, forgive us. Where we have failed to bear the fruits of discipleship, forgive us. We confess before one another and before the whole company of heaven that we have sinned in thought, word and deed and what we have left undone. We thank you that in your graciousness you forgive us and open before us an open door to heaven which no one can shut. Renew us, remake us until that day when we stand before you in the Heavenly Jerusalem and worship you with the angels and the saints from every age. Amen.

Hymn All I once held dear StheF 489

<https://youtu.be/09CzdMszUos>

<p>1 All I once held dear, built my life upon, all this world reveres, and wars to own, all I once thought gain I have counted loss ; spent and worthless now, compared to this. <i>Knowing you, Jesus, knowing you, there is no greater thing. You're my all, you're the best, you're my joy, my righteousness, and I love you, Lord.</i></p>	<p>2 Now my heart's desire is to know you more, to be found in you and known as yours. To possess by faith what I could not earn, all-surpassing gift of righteousness.</p> <p>3 Oh, to know the power of your risen life, and to know you in your sufferings. To become like you in your death, my Lord, so with you to live and never die.</p> <p>Graham Kendrick (b. 1950)</p>
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Prayers of intercession

Almighty God, Father of all mercies, throughout all of human history your desire to abide with us and to create places of meeting has never wavered. Therefore with hope and with confidence we bring our prayers before you.

We ask that we may be so rooted and grafted in you, that we bear fruit to your glory. Nourish and tend your church that we may be strong and fit to serve this present age.

Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer.

We pray for the rulers and governments of people, that they promote conditions where all may flourish, defending the poor and the weak, the vulnerable and those easily overlooked.

Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer

We pray for those who are struggling for survival, those whose lives have collapsed around them, those who have been stripped of their dignity, those who have lost hope.

Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer

We pray for those whose health has failed, whether that be of mind, body or spirit.

In a time of quiet we remember those others who are on our hearts and minds

Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer

Lord God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, we know that at the end we shall see you face to face in all your glory.

In a time of quiet we remember before you those who we have loved and who have gone before us to that place where countless angels dwell and where there is no more sorrow and no more pain and where they have heard the words of King Jesus "Come, blessed of my Father and receive the Kingdom prepared for you".

We gather up all our prayers in the words that Jesus taught us.

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.

Hymn 470 Lord for the years <https://youtu.be/Cd14v0e1RWU>

- 1 Lord, for the years your love has kept and guided,
urged and inspired us, cheered us on our way,
sought us and saved us, pardoned and provided,
Lord of the years, we bring our thanks today.
- 2 Lord, for that word, the Word of life which fires us,
speaks to our hearts and sets our souls ablaze,
teaches and trains, rebukes us and inspires us,
Lord of the word, receive your people's praise.
- 3 Lord, for our land, in this our generation,
spirits oppressed by pleasure, wealth and care ;
for young and old, for commonwealth and nation,
Lord of our land, be pleased to hear our prayer.
- 4 Lord, for our world ; when we disown and doubt him,
loveless in strength, and comfortless in pain ;
hungry and helpless, lost indeed without him,
Lord of the world, we pray that Christ may reign.

5 Lord, for ourselves ; in living power remake us,
self on the cross and Christ upon the throne ;
past put behind us, for the future take us,
Lord of our lives, to live for Christ alone.

Timothy Dudley-Smith (*b.* 1926)

Closing Prayer. We remember always this: best of all, God is with us.

The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Love of God and the Fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us
all evermore. Amen.