

Circuit Service 25 July 2021

Call to worship:

Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. - Philippians 2:9-11

We also acknowledge his love, his grace, his power to heal and mercies that endure forever
Amen

We shall sing of his goodness for what he has achieved for humankind –

The vaccines, gradual restoration of life, the restoration of worship. He deserves our praise.

STF 338 THERE IS A REDEEMER

[\(1108\) There Is A Redeemer | Hereford Cathedral | BBC Songs of Praise #Hymns - YouTube](#)

1 There is a Redeemer,
Jesus, God's own Son,
precious Lamb of God, Messiah,
Holy One.

*Thank you, O my Father,
for giving us your Son,
and leaving your Spirit
till the work on earth is done.*

2 Jesus my Redeemer,
name above all names,
precious Lamb of God, Messiah,
O for sinners slain.

3 When I stand in glory
I will see his face,
and there I'll serve my King for ever
in that holy place.

vv. 1-2 Melody Green (b. 1946)

v. 3 Keith Green (1953–1982)

Prayers of Adoration and Confession

Almighty God, throughout the ages you have guided your people through the wilderness, through wars, famine and now through Covid 19 pandemic. Your assurance has always been that you are with us. Throughout all time, you have been with your people in the seasons of life. You have out of your grace, given us the precious gift of creation, the gift of life, the gift of redemption, and the assurance that we shall rule with your Son in your Kingdom. We are grateful for your presence – here - Father, Son, and Holy Spirit – that you have shown us the way of life and faith. We join with your churches and holy angels to bring you praise, adoration and extol your name. You are Holy, you are omnipotent, you are sovereign and mighty.

We are grateful that we are able to come together to worship you and to praise you.

But Father, we freely admit our shortcomings, you created us in flesh and weakness and we fall short of your expectation. We have failed to be good stewards of your creation. We have hurt loved ones and failed to share your love. We have not been the beatitude people that you wanted us to be.

Compassionate God, wash us in your grace. Renew us in your love. Equip us with courage and strength to be the followers of Christ. Infuse us with your Holy Spirit so that Christ will be the

centre in our lives. We acknowledge the presence of your Holy Spirit among us this morning – here and in our homes. May He rise above our worship and sanctify us in the precious blood shed on Calvary and make this worship acceptable to you. Amen

Shall we join in 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 and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen

STF 471 LORD I COME TO YOU

https://youtu.be/vazsKSuu90Y?list=TLPQMTMwNzIwMjFeTb6g_OauYg

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| 1 Lord, I come to you,
let my heart be changed, renewed,
flowing from the grace
that I found in you.
And Lord, I've come to know
the weaknesses I see in me
will be stripped away
by the power of your love. | 2 Lord, unveil my eyes,
let me see you face to face,
the knowledge of your love
as you live in me.
Lord, renew my mind,
as your will unfolds in my life
in living every day
by the power of your love. |
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Geoff Bullock (b. 1956)

*Hold me close,
let your love surround me ;
bring me near, draw me to your side.
And as I wait,
I'll rise up like the eagle,
and I will soar with you,
your Spirit leads me on
in the power of your love.*

Our Bible readings are coming from the book of Mark. The focus is on Jesus healing many.

BIBLE READINGS

MARK 1:29-45 – Jesus heals many

MARK 9:14-29 – Jesus heals a boy possessed by impure spirit

It is God who sustains us and heals us. It is God who opens the way for vaccines to heal the nations.

We cannot measure how he heals so many

STF 653 O CHRIST THE HEALER WE HAVE COME

[\(1108\) O Christ, the Healer - YouTube](#)

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| 1 O Christ, the Healer, we have come
to pray for health, to plead for friends.
How can we fail to be restored,
when reached by love that never ends ? | 4 In conflicts that destroy our health
we diagnose the world's disease ;
our common life declares our ills :
is there no cure, O Christ, for these ? |
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| <p>2 From every ailment flesh endures
our bodies clamour to be freed ;
yet in our hearts we would confess
that wholeness is our deepest need.</p> | <p>5 Grant that we all, made one in faith,
in your community may find
the wholeness that, enriching us,
shall reach the whole of humankind.</p> |
| <p>3 How strong, O Lord, are our desires,
how weak our knowledge of ourselves !
Release in us those healing truths
unconscious pride resists or shelves.</p> | <p>Fred Pratt Green (1903–2000)</p> |

SERMON

Somebody explained to me that there is a big difference between historical and historic events. Apparently when a significant event happens and belongs to the past and no longer belongs to the present then it is described as historical. But when something happens and continues to change the events that follow afterwards, and becomes a lasting importance then it becomes historic. You can see how I would struggle with these words. Covid 19 could qualify to be a historic catastrophic event, the way it has changed how we worship, how way we work, how we live, socialize, how we parted with our love ones who were departing. **And the advice to the public was isolate and for Christians it was - fight on our knees. A year ago, the only thing we clinged to was hope. Isn't it a miracle that so many have had a job in this country?**

At Jesus time, life was short because cure for illness was limited and hope of surviving after a serious illness was dim. Then came on the scene, a man who healed instantly, he was not a specialist consultant on any particular illness, he healed every kind of illness. He charged nothing, prescribed nothing and healed instantly.

Peter recalls the day Jesus came for lunch in his house and his street was filled with people seeking healing. Our Lord had to come out and he healed them all till late night. If contemplatively you were in this queue with a friend or relative who was not well, what will be your immediate response when it came to your turn to be in the presence of Jesus? **He is not a specialized consultant, he treats blindness, mental health issues, paralytic, dermatological diseases including leprosy, deafness, dumbness, arthritis, back pain - you name it, is simply Amazing, using his voice, his touch – will he do the same for me? Yes, He is Lord over all, and what he has done for others, he will do for you.**

Jesus left the house early the following morning to go and pray and by the time Peter and Andrew got up, the street was filled again with more people seeking healing. That is the essence of hope – it becomes the only light in the darkness. But, unfortunately, Jesus was nowhere to be found. They sent a search party looking for Jesus. He had become the only hope for the people who were dying.

When they found him, they said to him everybody is looking for you, Lord. You would expect that with such success the night before, Jesus would be pleased and reply “Let’s plan and build a church immediately”.

Instead he was sad about it, because he had to bring **the Kingdom of God to the people so that the Holy Spirit could start his work through the church and time was limited. He replied, “let’s go to another town so that I can preach the Word of God there”.** Yes, we pray for healing for the body but Jesus also cares for the salvation of our souls as well.

On their way another dramatic incident took place, a man came and knelt before Jesus and said to him “If you are willing you can make me clean Lord”.

We all know how serious it is to breach Covid 19 lockdown rules. But here is a man, who should be wearing a face mask over his lower lips to indicate that he is a leper. He had to keep 50 steps away from people and he was required to shout “unclean, unclean” if anybody approached him. Here he was a few inches from Jesus.

Have you ever been in the position waiting for biopsy results from your doctor? The anxiety of waiting for the results. The concern when the doctor says it is malignant and it has to be treated or the relief when the doctor says it is benign. In Jesus’ days if you woke up in the morning with skin infection it would strike terror in you because you would have to go and see the priest to examine you and determine whether it was leprosy or not. **If it was leprosy you would not only be dealing with the dreadful disease, but you have to leave your family, your home, business and friends to go and live in a cave outside the city, you will be pronounced unclean. You will have to wear a face mask covering the lower lips and you have to shout “I am unclean”** should anybody approach you. To be a leper was the ultimate condemnation. This leper would have gone through these phases and asked to leave home and not come back.

Then he heard about Jesus and heard he was in town. He breaks the rules of 50 paces distancing and took off his mask and came to kneel before Jesus. **“Please Lord if you are willing you could make me clean”**. **Jesus had compassion but was angry with the damage inflicted by the disease and he said “I am willing”**. **If Jesus was not divine, then touching a leper, touching demon possessed, touching the dead would have made him unclean**. But the command in his voice, the power and authority over diseases, over death and demons, He is Lord over all. Jesus cares and gets angry at the ravages of our fallen world.

The question here is that Jesus became the only hope for the leper, for the sick who were seeking healing that morning in front of Peter's house, and the hope for 1000s and 1000s of sick people in Israel that time especially when the power to heal was given to disciples as well.

A year ago, the only hope we had was when a vaccine would become available to make everybody safe? We Christians had to fight on our knees against the ravages of such a deadly virus. We cannot be a faithless generation. The disciples were powerless in healing the boy with epilepsy. The man brought his son to Jesus and said your disciples could heal my son. Our Lord Jesus made it clear to the church, I am going to leave you and go to my father. But I will not leave you alone. Tarry in Jerusalem until you receive the power which will be my presence in you and with you in the form of the Holy Spirit. The church today has more power than the disciples had before the Pentecost. We cannot allow Jesus to lament at the lack of power and the lack of faith in our generation. Sometimes, our faith is assaulted by circumstances and we have to stay close to the Word of God and trust the one who died for you.

When this man looked at his son and looked at Jesus and he was filled with amazement.

The disciple asked our Lord Jesus why and where did we fail? The reality is when we come against a formidable enemy like Covid19, it is not enough to rely on the reservoir of faith that we have. We have to fight on our knees and plead with God using every means of grace. We cannot take our prayer for granted, we have to pray. Only then will we know that our God responds to prayer. We are still fighting Covid19 and people are still dying in other countries.

We need to pray for them so that they can also get vaccines to break the cycle of infection and reduce the death rate.

May our faith be renewed in him and may we acknowledge him as Lord and Saviour of all. In Christ alone, our hope is found. Amen

Stf 351 IN CHRIST ALONE OUR HOPE IS FOUND

[\(1119\) In Christ Alone \(My Hope Is Found\) - Adrienne Liesching | LYRIC VIDEO - YouTube](#)

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| <p>1 In Christ alone my hope is found,
he is my light, my strength, my song ;
this Cornerstone, this solid Ground,
firm through the fiercest drought and storm.
What heights of love, what depths of peace,
when fears are stilled, when strivings cease !
My Comforter, my All in All,
here in the love of Christ I stand.</p> <p>2 In Christ alone ! — who took on flesh,
fullness of God in helpless babe !
This gift of love and righteousness,
scorned by the ones he came to save :
till on that cross as Jesus died,
the wrath of God was satisfied
for every sin on him was laid ;
here in the death of Christ I live.</p> | <p>3 There in the ground his body lay,
light of the world by darkness slain :
then bursting forth in glorious Day
up from the grave he rose again !
And as he stands in victory,
sin's curse has lost its grip on me,
for I am his and he is mine —
bought with the precious blood of Christ.</p> <p>4 No guilt in life, no fear in death,
this is the power of Christ in me ;
from life's first cry to final breath,
Jesus commands my destiny.
No power of hell, no scheme of man,
can ever pluck me from his hand ;
till he returns or calls me home,
here in the power of Christ I'll stand !</p> |
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Keith Getty (*b.* 1974) and Stuart Townend (*b.* 1963)

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

God of hope, your Son Jesus became the hope of many in his mission in Israel and he is our hope today. We are still fighting this dreadful disease and people are dying in many countries. It is only in your son Jesus that our hope is found. Help us to find the power in your Word and to trust the power in your Holy Spirit in our journey to lift restrictions. Help us to recover from the damage that Covid19 has done to jobs, businesses, people's health and our faith.

We pray for the sick among us. Lord we ask that you continue to heal your people who are sick or lonely and troubled. We pray for those whose health have been directly impacted by Covid 19 and are recovering, we ask that out of your grace you heal them spiritually and physically.

We ask Lord to help us work to reverse the effects of climate change especially in places and communities facing extreme weather – either too much rain or too little rain, people facing flooding and cyclones. May we be assisted by your Holy Spirit who is constantly repairing our ravaged world.

We pray for your churches around the world and their attempts to resume normal congregational worship. Lord allow your Holy Spirit to prepare your people everywhere to come into your presence and worship you in safety.

Lord, you created us in your image and yet injustice, poverty, inequality and violence dominate our lives in our world. Help us to understand the effect of injustice and the effect of poverty, the effect of domestic violence and exploitation. Lord in your mercy hear our prayer.

We remember those who have died, and those who mourn them. Lord we pray for ourselves, our well-being and welfare. We ask that you heal your people, renew our physical strength, bless each one of us and renew our faith and make us a channel of peace that last and endures through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

STF 186 TELL OUT MY SOUL

[\(1108\) Tell Out my Soul - Lyrics Video - YouTube](#)

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| 1 Tell out, my soul, the greatness of the Lord !
Unnumbered blessings, give my spirit voice ;
tender to me the promise of his word ;
in God my Saviour shall my heart rejoice. | 3 Tell out, my soul, the greatness of his might !
Powers and dominions lay their glory by ;
proud hearts and stubborn wills are put to flight,
the hungry fed, the humble lifted high. |
| 2 Tell out, my soul, the greatness of his name !
Make known his might, the deeds his arm has done ;
his mercy sure, from age to age the same ;
his holy name — the Lord, the Mighty One. | 4 Tell out, my soul, the glories of his word !
Firm is his promise, and his mercy sure.
Tell out, my soul, the greatness of the Lord
to children's children and for evermore ! |

Timothy Dudley-Smith (*b.* 1926)
Based on the *Magnificat*

BLESSING

May God be your fortress, May God enfold you in his love and grace through the work of the Spirit. The Lord bless you and keep you, the Lord lift his face towards you and may his peace be with you now and ever more. Amen

Suggestion for an alternative hymn to STF 351 In Christ Alone

STF 18 BE STILL AND KNOW THAT I AM GOD

[\(1119\) Be Still And Know That I Am God Song Lyrics | Divine Hymns - YouTube](#)

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| 1 Be still and know that I am God.
Be still and know that I am God.
Be still and know that I am God. | 3 In you, O Lord, I put my trust.
In you, O Lord, I put my trust.
In you, O Lord, I put my trust. |
| 2 I am the Lord who saves and heals.
I am the Lord who saves and heals.
I am the Lord who saves and heals. | Anonymous
Based on Psalm 46:10-11 |