

## At Home Service 25th October 2020

### **Call to worship**

Come, love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind.

Come, love your neighbours with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind.

Come, love yourself with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind.

### **Singing the Faith 545 Be thou my vision**

1 Be thou my vision, O Lord of my heart, 2 Be thou my wisdom, be thou my true word,  
be all else but naught to me, save that thou art; be thou ever with me, and I with thee, Lord;  
be thou my best thought in the day and the night, be thou my great Father, thy child let me be;  
both waking and sleeping, thy presence my light. be thou in me dwelling, and I one with thee.

3 Be thou my breastplate, my sword for the fight;  
be thou my whole armour, be thou my true might;  
be thou my soul's shelter, be thou my strong tower:  
O raise thou me heavenward, great Power of my power.

4 Riches I heed not, nor earth's empty praise: 5 High King of heaven, thou heaven's bright Sun,  
be thou mine inheritance now and always; O grant me its joys after victory is won;  
be thou and thou only the first in my heart: Great Heart of my own heart, whatever befall,  
O Sovereign of heaven, my treasure thou art. still be thou my vision, O Ruler of all.

*Irish, 8th century translated by Mary Elizabeth Byrne (1880–1931) versified by Eleanor Henrietta Hull (1860–1935) (alt.)*

### **Prayer of adoration**

Lord, your love for me brings a smile to my face as I revel in the joy of being alive.

Lord, your love for me brings wonder into my heart as I see the beauty of your creation.

Lord, your love for me brings tears into my eyes as I remember the pain you carry for humanity.

Lord, your love for me makes me shout out loud as I cannot keep quiet about you.

Lord, your love for me makes me silent as no words can express my feelings for you.

*Silence.*

Lord, I love because you first loved me, and your faithfulness to me is beyond my understanding.

Lord, I worship you.

### **Singing the Faith 175 Light of the world**

1 Light of the world, 2 King of all days  
you stepped down into darkness, oh so highly exalted,  
opened my eyes, let me see glorious in heaven above.  
beauty that made this heart adore you, Humbly you came to the earth you created,  
hope of a life spent with you. all for love's sake became poor.

*So here I am to worship,  
here I am to bow down,  
here I am to say that you're my God,  
and you're altogether lovely,  
altogether worthy,  
altogether wonderful to me.*

*So here I am to worship ...*

And I'll never know how much it cost  
to see my sin upon that cross.

And I'll never know how much it cost  
to see my sin upon that cross.

*So here I am to worship ...*

*Tim Hughes. Words and Music: © 2000, Thankyou Music. Administered by Kingswaysongs, a division of David C Cook <tym@kingsway.co.uk>*

Lord, as I worship you I become aware of your grace, your mercy and your peace.

God of grace, forgive my self-concern, my lack of love and my ill-judged thought.

God of mercy, forgive my impatience, my hard heart, and my harsh words.

God of peace, forgive my wasting conflict, my wounding pride, my careless deeds.  
I ask this in the name of Jesus, who came to bring healing, and wholeness to all.

The promise we claim is that God who is faithful and just assures us of pardon and peace.

**Amen, thanks be to God.** (*you may wish to sing Light of the world, again*)

*Our Gospel reading comes from **Matthew 22: 34-40***

When the Pharisees heard that Jesus had silenced the Sadducees, they came together, and one of them, a teacher of the Law, tried to trap him with a question. "Teacher", he asked, "which is the greatest commandment in the Law?" Jesus answered, " 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.' This is the greatest and the most important commandment. The second most important commandment is like it: 'love your neighbour as you love yourself.' The whole Law of Moses and the teachings of the prophets depend on these two commandments."

### **Reflection**

Over the past weeks we have heard about the last week of Jesus' earthly ministry. His teaching brought healing and a new understanding of faith, but the religious leaders of the day became more and more anxious as Jesus seemed to challenge their traditional interpretation of the Law and ways of worship. The verses we have just heard from Matthew's Gospel record the final challenge from the Pharisees "Which commandment in the law is the greatest?"

We are all familiar with Jesus' answer, "The greatest and most important commandment is to love the Lord you God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind .The second most important is to love your neighbour as you love yourself." This is our calling as the People of God in every day and every age.

Over the past months of Lockdown I have been wondering how we can be church in our community when our buildings are no longer open. How can we meet together to worship, share our stories, and grow in faith? How do we make opportunities to listen to each other, speak of our troubles and joys, ask questions about faith and relate that to daily life?

Right now life seems so limited; distanced from each other, fearful that we may either catch a deadly disease from our friends and family or that we might pass something on to them, there seems little we can do.

As we reflect on Jesus' words perhaps we can think about how we have enacted that in our own lives over these past months, identify what things have been helpful and learn about how we can continue to be the People of God in this current time.

I actually found the first few weeks of Lockdown quite releasing and exciting. It was good to be able to let go of all the things that were on my list to do and could no longer be done because the government said so. The hour of daily exercise encouraged me to get out and about, walking the lanes, and the footpaths that surround our lovely village. I decided that one way of ensuring that I got out was to have a small group of older ladies to visit. So I have a route I go round and chat 'through their windows'. The weather was wonderful and it felt good to be living in a different way.

From that I learn that change can bring about refreshment, but also that routine was good. A routine that included important tasks like caring for myself (washing, dressing, eating good food, and exercising), a routine that included time of private prayer and study, and a routine that included reaching out to others (phone calls with family, emails to a group of friends and face to face contact, through a window, with a handful of people.)

Then things began to feel unreal. The weather was lovely, but rather strange for that time of the year. I missed my old weekly routine, I missed going to church, I missed easily chatting with friends over a coffee, I missed seeing my family. I was very aware of the fear of catching Covid-19. The first time I left the safety of the village I was very anxious, I know that others have felt the same. I looked at everyone with suspicion, wondering where they had come from and who they had been in contact with.

At that time I remembered the story of Peter stepping out of the boat and nearly drowning as he was overwhelmed by the storm about him and began to miss the safety of the boat and his friends. Calling out to Jesus 'save me, Lord' Jesus reached out to him and brought him to safety. I remembered the stories that others had told me of times when they felt overwhelmed and had called out for help and been brought back to a place of safety. I remembered times in my own life when that had happened and called out to Jesus to save me and be with me. I no longer feel overwhelmed, but I am still anxious.

I continue with my earlier routine, but I still wonder about how we can effectively and responsibly reach out to family, friends and strangers in a way that demonstrates the love God and makes his kingdom present.

Jesus' response to the question 'Which commandment is the greatest?' reminds us that loving God with our whole being goes hand in hand with loving our neighbours in the same way as we love ourselves. I remember, when I was a child, we were told that the only way to experience JOY in our lives was to put Jesus first, Others next and Yourself last. Over the years I have come to think differently. I think that the greatest commandment tells us to put Jesus first, Ourselves next, and You (the other person) last. In practice it's not possible to separate things in that way. If we truly love God with our heart, soul and mind, we will automatically love ourselves. We need to know how to love ourselves in order to love others. God's love is boundless and flows through us out into the world. The things that we can do may be small, but we have to trust that they are sufficient. Government guidelines about 'Hands, Face and Space' are there to keep us all safe. By following them we are showing our care and respect for others. Jesus' guidelines of loving God with our whole being and loving our neighbours in the same way as we love ourselves, bring wholeness and well-being. As we follow the government guidelines we can also, prayerfully seek ways to make God's kingdom present in our communities. Let's do it!

### ***Prayers of intercession***

As we come to a time of prayer for others I invite you to think of your neighbours.

What do you know about their hopes, their needs, their anxieties? Is there a small kindness you could do for them today? Pray for them by name and if there are difficulties, ask for reconciliation and healing of any broken relationships.

Neighbours are one thing, but what about your family or your close friends? (use the same format as above).

And now pray for the world: the church, our leaders, scientists seeking cures for diseases, medical and social care staff, teachers. Pray for them, that God will give them wisdom, compassion and strength as they fulfil their calling.

### ***Lord's prayer.***

As our Saviour taught his disciples, we pray:

**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.**

### **Offering Prayer**

*In the quietness offer back to God from the blessings that you have received over the last few days. Offer time to reflect on God's word and to pray. Offer time to serve friends, family, neighbours and even those you are less friendly with. Offer from your resources in charitable giving and to the work of the gospel through the church.*

*Remember to follow up with the tangible gifts that you have offered over the coming days.*

***Singing the Faith 483 We are marching in the light of God.***

- 1 We are marching in the light of God,  
we are marching in the light of God.  
We are marching in the light of God,  
we are marching in the light of God.  
We are marching, oh,  
we are marching in the light of God,  
we are marching, oh,  
we are marching in the light of God.
- 2 We are living in the love of God,  
we are living in the love of God.  
We are living in the love of God,  
we are living in the love of God.  
We are living, oh,  
we are living in the love of God,  
we are living, oh,  
we are living in the love of God.
- 3 We are moving in the power of God,  
we are moving in the power of God.  
We are moving in the power of God,  
we are moving in the power of God.  
We are moving, oh,  
we are moving in the power of God,  
we are moving, oh,  
we are moving in the power of God.

*Original Xhosa:*

*Siyahamb' ekukhanyen' kwenkhos',  
siyahamb' ekukha kwenkhos.  
Siyahamb' ekukhanyen' kwenkhos',  
siyahamb' ekukha kwenkhos nyen' kwenkhos'.*

*Siya' hamba hamba, siyahamba,  
hamba siyahamb' ekukhanyen' kwenkhos'.  
Siya' hamba hamba, siyahamba,  
hamba siyahamb' ekukhanyen' kwenkhos'.*

South African traditional v. 1 Anders Nyberg (b. 1955) vv. 2, 3 Andrew Maries (b. 1949)

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***Final prayer and blessing.***

Know that the Lord watches over you, seeking your well-being at all times and guiding you in paths of peace. The peace of the Lord be with you, with those you love and those you are called to love, today and always. Amen.