

## Zoom Service 27<sup>th</sup> September 2020

### ***A gathering prayer***

Into the mix of humanity, with friends and neighbours, visitors and strangers, together we join to worship you, in different places, in company or alone, but at one in our worship, O Lord our God. Amen.

### ***Singing the Faith 39 Angel voices ever singing - Francis Pott (1832–1909) (alt.)***

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

### ***Prayers***

Generous, hospitable God, who turns no one away, welcome each one of us now in this time of worship and gathering and embrace us in your being.

Father-Mother God, you give me life in generosity and freedom: I adore you.

Lord of glory, you have died in utmost compassion for me: I adore you.

Spirit of knowledge and power, you will lead me in the way of humble self-giving: I adore you.

But, as I come so I also bring to my almighty and perfect God the shortcomings of my life, the frailties of my days, the disappointments of my heart. I admit and confess my sins in the hearing of my loving God. I come to the Lord with the burden of my own sins: selfishness, stubbornness, willfulness, pride, greed, envy, malice, insensitivity, cruelty.

### ***Quietness***

The Lord says: Come to me, all who are tired by heavy loads: And I will give you rest. And so I come to the Lord with the burden of my sins and the sins of my community: neglect, loneliness, derision, poverty, prejudice.

### ***Quietness***

The Lord says: Come to me, all who are tired by heavy loads: And I will give you rest. I come to the Lord with the burden of the sins of the whole world: the abuse of power, warfare, famine, torture, injustice.

### ***Quietness***

The Lord says: Come to me, all who are tired by heavy loads: And I will give you rest.

Precious Lord, I hear your voice and trust in your coming peace. I rely on your strength, and promise my co-operation. I know your love, and look toward holiness in you.

Father of all, you gave your only Son, to take upon himself the form of a servant and to be obedient even to death on a cross. Give me the same mind that was in Christ Jesus that, sharing in his humility, I may come to be with him in his glory; for he lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

### ***Philippians 2.1-13***

<sup>1</sup>If then there is any encouragement in Christ, any consolation from love, any sharing in the Spirit, any compassion and sympathy, <sup>2</sup>make my joy complete: be of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. <sup>3</sup>Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility regard others as better than yourselves. <sup>4</sup>Let each of you look not to your own interests, but to the interests of others. <sup>5</sup>Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus, <sup>6</sup>who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited, <sup>7</sup>but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness. And being found in human form, <sup>8</sup>he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death – even death on a cross.

<sup>9</sup>Therefore God also highly exalted him and gave him the name that is above every name, <sup>10</sup>so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bend, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, <sup>11</sup>and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

<sup>12</sup>Therefore, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed me, not only in my presence, but much more now in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; <sup>13</sup>for it is God who is at work in you, enabling you both to will and to work for his good pleasure.

### ***Singing the Faith 317 At the name of Jesus – Caroline Maria Noel (1817 – 1877)***

1	At the name of Jesus every knee shall bow, every tongue confess him King of Glory now. 'Tis the Father's pleasure we should call him Lord, who from the beginning was the mighty Word.	2	Humbled for a season, to receive a name from the lips of sinners unto whom he came, faithfully he bore it spotless to the last, brought it back victorious when from death he passed:	3	Bore it up triumphant with its human light, through all ranks of creatures to the central height, to the throne of Godhead, to the Father's breast; filled it with the glory of that perfect rest.
4	In your hearts enthrone him; there let him subdue all that is not holy, all that is not true; crown him as your captain in temptation's hour: let his will enfold you in its light and power.	5	For this same Lord Jesus shall return again, with his Father's glory, with his angel train; all the wreaths of empire meet upon his brow, and our hearts confess him King of Glory now.		

Paul acknowledges something that others could not see – the authority of Jesus. We hear now of a confrontation between Jesus and the religious leaders of his people.

### ***Matthew 21.23-32***

<sup>23</sup>When Jesus entered the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came to him as he was teaching, and said, 'By what authority are you doing these things, and who gave you this authority?' <sup>24</sup>Jesus said to them, 'I will also ask you one question; if you tell me the answer, then I will also tell you by what authority I do these things. <sup>25</sup>Did the baptism of John come from heaven, or was it of human origin?' And they argued with one another, 'If we say, "From heaven," he will say to us, "Why then did you not believe him?"

<sup>26</sup>But if we say, "Of human origin," we are afraid of the crowd; for all regard John as a prophet.' <sup>27</sup>So they answered Jesus, 'We do not know.' And he said to them, 'Neither will I tell you by what authority I am doing these things.

<sup>28</sup>What do you think? A man had two sons; he went to the first and said, "Son, go and work in the vineyard today." <sup>29</sup>He answered, "I will not"; but later he changed his mind and went. <sup>30</sup>The father went to the second and said the same; and he answered, "I go, sir"; but he did not go. <sup>31</sup>Which of the two did the will of his father?' They said, 'The first.' Jesus said to them, 'Truly I tell you, the tax-collectors and the prostitutes are going into the kingdom of God ahead of you. <sup>32</sup>For John came to you in the way of righteousness and you did not believe him, but the tax-collectors and the prostitutes believed him; and even after you saw it, you did not change your minds and believe him.'

### **Sermon**

The Christians in Philippi are encouraged by Paul to 'be of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind'. This could be read in a way that says that all Christians should agree with one another. But is this what Paul is saying? My understanding is that we should be of the same mind as Christ, having his love, being in full accord with him and of one mind with him. If this is the case, we should have some agreement as his disciples, at least around the principles of what we believe and do, but not necessarily on everything we do.

There are some approaches that we have to agree on as a people of faith – a people who have been offered new life in Jesus. And those are about the way in which we live out the life of faith. Life and our faith must be in tune to the extent that if we praise God for his creation then we have to care for that creation as God's stewards. If we believe that God's love is for all people then we are called to love people in our own lives by loving our neighbours (and our enemies). But how open are we to following the mind of Christ in our daily lives? The gospel reading picks this up with the conflict between Jesus and the religious leaders who have in some ways turned God's teaching into a rigid set of rules rather than guidance based on principles of faith and love. As Christians we are in danger of doing something similar.

There are Christians who worship God on a Sunday and then leave that behind as they continue into the week. God says to us all 'go and work in the world today sharing my love and justice with all' and we say yes Lord but then so often choose not to go. We make a show of our worship on one day and ignore God for the rest of the week. Gandhi said that he liked Christ (in particular the teaching of the Sermon on the Mount) but not the Christians who failed to follow the ways of Christ in life. What he saw were people who were often no different to others in the world around them – their actions meant that they disappeared amongst the crowd. These are the sons who say yes to working in the vineyard and then don't turn up.

But, in that parable, there is the son who says no to the Father but later does his will. The parable of the sheep and the goats is another interesting read here because it is those who have unknowingly done Jesus' will who enter the kingdom. The Jesuit theologian Karl Rahner talked of 'anonymous Christians', people who had lived in the way of Jesus without ever acknowledging him as Lord. He felt that these would have a place in heaven because they had followed the way of Christ. Where does this place people of other faiths or no faith who have loved in the way that we are called to by Jesus? Do they have the mind of Christ? Do they get the eternal reward?

That last question is not for us to answer but the parable surely reminds us that because of our faith in Jesus we are called by God to live out our faith in the vineyard of the world, to be guided by the mind of Christ in all that we do so that love, justice, mercy and forgiveness are offered to all. We are to be salt and light, and clearly different from others.

### **Prayer**

I'm grateful, Lord God, that you love me and care for me, that Jesus lived and died for me. I'm grateful that you are interested in me, even me with all my faults and failings. Thank you for sharing my life and my living, for being within my hopes and dreams. Thank you for giving me purpose and meaning. Thank you for

showing me how to live a life of goodness and truth, a life of caring and sharing. Thank you for your generosity and abundance even if I fail to see it. Thank you, God, for being you and thank you for making me, me. Amen.

### ***Prayers of Intercession***

So often I want to pray for others. But sometimes, God, I don't know how. I can't remember names or numbers; other issues weigh heavily on my heart. Thank goodness, God, that you know what I mean when I pray. So, I bring in this moment those names and faces, images and desires for others that pop in and out of my mind throughout the day: the old lady at the bus stop who needed a hand up the step; the young mum at the checkout trying to contain her four kids; the chap up the road who's lost his dog and is calling for him; the teachers struggling to understand the needs of those in their class; the doctors who wants to give more time but who simply can't; the young families who can't make ends meet; those without work, who can't find new jobs; those helping people to find work, knowing it is an uphill struggle; those with mental health issues and seeking help, or who are afraid and ashamed to seek help, or who are ignored and can't get help. So, God, for all these people and countless others, I offer my prayers.

### ***Silent prayer***

I know you do not need reminding, but you do need willing workers – even me – to help them know your love and have their needs met. Hear my ramblings, O God. Amen.

### ***The Lord's Prayer***

#### ***Offering and prayer of dedication***

In thanks for your grace, I praise you, Creator God. In thanks for your humility, I praise you, Saviour Christ. In thanks for your abundant blessing, I praise you, generous Spirit. In thanks for your healing love at work in our midst, I have served you in my worship; I will live for you in joy. Take the offerings of my life and use for your glory. Amen.

#### ***Singing the Faith 526 Lord of all hopefulness – Jan Struther (Joyce Placzek) (1901 – 1953)***

- 1 Lord of all hopefulness, Lord of all joy,  
whose trust, ever childlike, no cares could destroy,  
be there at our waking, and give us, we pray,  
your bliss in our hearts, Lord, at the break of the day.
- 2 Lord of all eagerness, Lord of all faith,  
whose strong hands were skilled at the plane and the lathe,  
be there at our labours, and give us, we pray,  
your strength in our hearts, Lord, at the noon of the day.
- 3 Lord of all kindness, Lord of all grace,  
your hands swift to welcome, your arms to embrace,  
be there at our homing, and give us, we pray,  
your love in our hearts, Lord, at the eve of the day.
- 4 Lord of all gentleness, Lord of all calm,  
whose voice is contentment, whose presence is balm,  
be there at our sleeping, and give us, we pray,  
your peace in our hearts, Lord, at the end of the day.

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### ***A sending out prayer***

May I go, Lord God, to meet the needs of others and share the love I have from you. And may the blessing of God, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, be with me always. Amen.

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