

Tamworth and Lichfield Circuit  
Worship at Home: 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2022

This resource has been prepared for us by Sue Hambly

God saw all that he had made, and it was very good. Genesis 1 v 31.



**Hymn 148 Singing the Faith** (Charles Wesley)

Come, let us with our Lord arise,  
Our Lord, who made both earth and skies:  
Who died to save the world he made, and rose  
triumphant from the dead;  
He rose, the Prince of life and peace,  
And stamped the day for ever his.

Then let us render him his own,  
With solemn prayer approach his throne,  
With meekness hear the gospel word,  
With thanks his dying love record,  
Our joyful hearts and voices raise,  
and fill his courts with songs of praise.

This is the day the Lord has made,  
That all may see his love displayed,  
May feel his resurrection's power,  
And rise again, to fall no more,  
In perfect righteousness renewed,  
And filled with all the life of God.

Honour and praise to Jesus pay  
Throughout his consecrated day;  
Be all in Jesus' name employed,  
Nor leave a single moment void;  
With utmost care the time improve,  
And only breathe his praise and love.

Pray

Prayers of adoration and



confession

This is the day that the Lord has made, we will rejoice and be glad in it.

Loving God we praise and thank you for the wonder of creation. We adore you for your Word which brought the world and all created things into being. We are awestruck at the diversity, the complexity and the immensity of your creation.

We are overwhelmed with wonder that you created us to be in a relationship with you and we thank you for Jesus, the Word, who has made the relationship real.

We are broken as we look out at our world and in at ourselves, our human failure to keep that relationship clean and true. We confess with all God's people that we have failed to care for creation, we have been complicit in actions and attitudes that divide and discriminate and lead to abuse, poverty and pain. We acknowledge our brokenness, and our need of healing and forgiveness.

We thank you that we are set free as we confess and receive your forgiveness in the power and presence of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

**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. 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**



**Bible Readings**

Acts 16.9-15

During the night Paul had a vision: there stood a man of Macedonia pleading with him and saying, 'Come over to Macedonia and help us.' <sup>10</sup> When he had seen the vision, we immediately tried to cross over to Macedonia, being convinced that God had called us to proclaim the good news to them. <sup>11</sup> We set sail from Troas and took a straight course to Samothrace, the following day to Neapolis, <sup>12</sup> and from there to Philippi, which is a leading city of the district of Macedonia and a Roman colony. We remained in this city for some days. <sup>13</sup> On the sabbath day we went outside the gate by the river, where we supposed there was a place of prayer; and we sat down and spoke to the women who had gathered there. <sup>14</sup> A certain woman named Lydia, a worshipper of God, was listening to us; she was from the city of Thyatira and a dealer in purple cloth. The Lord opened her heart to listen eagerly to what was said by Paul. <sup>15</sup> When she and her household were

baptized, she urged us, saying, 'If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come and stay at my home.' And she prevailed upon us.



### Revelation 21.10,21.22-22.5

And in the spirit, he carried me away to a great, high mountain and showed me the holy city Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God.... I saw no temple in the city, for its temple is the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb. And the city has no need of sun or moon to shine on it, for the glory of God is its light, and its lamp is the Lamb. The nations will walk by its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it. Its gates will never be shut by day—and there will be no night there. People will bring into it the glory and the honour of the nations. But nothing unclean will enter it, nor anyone who practises abomination or falsehood, but only those who are written in the Lamb's book of life. Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb through the middle of the street of the city. On either side of the river is the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit, producing its fruit each month; and the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations. Nothing accursed will be found there anymore. But the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and his servants will worship him; they will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. And there will be no more night; they need no light of lamp or sun, for the Lord God will be their light, and they will reign for ever and ever.

### Song 15 Singing the Faith (Chris Tomlin)

The splendour of the King, clothed in majesty  
Let all the earth rejoice, let all the earth rejoice.  
He wraps himself in light and darkness tries to hide  
And trembles at his voice, and trembles at his voice.

And age to age he stands, and time is in his hands;  
beginning and the end, beginning and the end.  
The Godhead, Three in one, Father, Spirit, Son,  
The Lion and the Lamb, the Lion and the Lamb.

How great is our God, sing with me  
How great is our God, and all will see  
How great, how great is our God.

Name above all names, worthy of all praise;  
My heart will sing: How great is our God.  
Name above all names, worthy of all praise;  
My heart will sing: How great is our God.



### Fantasy fiction or truth?

I wonder whether you enjoy reading – and if so, what type of book do you enjoy? If you visited the library would you be drawn to the factual, non-fiction shelves, or to poetry? Maybe to the shelves of books devoted to self help or practical skills or creative activity? If you prefer fiction do you look for adventure or romance, crime or mystery, science fiction or fantasy, historical or futuristic?






Our Bible is a bit like going to the library. There are so many different genres of writing contained within its pages. As we become familiar with reading the Bible we learn to distinguish between them and read them within their context in different ways.





Our first Bible passage is a narrative account of part of Paul's second missionary journey. He was aiming to get to Ephesus but was unable to travel there for unspecified reasons which Paul interprets as God's intervention. He then has a dream of a man calling him to travel to Macedonia. The way is open and so he does. As a result he meets Lydia, an important believer and trader with considerable influence, and speaks to her of Jesus, baptising her and her household and staying with her for his time in that area. This opened the way to further opportunities for Paul to share the gospel and to begin work which will be continued after that visit.





This dream of Paul was significant as are many dreams are in Scripture, and maybe in our lives and experience they can be helpful too. Dreams get a mixed response. Some psychologists tell us that dreams are a way for our minds to assimilate experiences and emotions so that they are dealt with and filed away safely in our subconscious filing cabinet in the brain. Some say that they are opportunities to work out different scenarios without judgement and so can be creative or help to find solutions. Others dismiss them as irrelevant to our conscious state of rational life.

 But dreams are not just to do with sleeping and unconscious brain activity. Dreams are also associated with visions. Visions are usually very positive and to do with seeing more clearly, or something being revealed – literally a revelation! Mental health experts say how important it is for people to take time to daydream. To take time out from focusing on timetables, targets and the to-do list, and to allow their minds to wander, to let thoughts travel in and out and to permit ideas to develop. Many find that in that space new ideas are born, peace can come, and wellbeing improves. It could be described as changing perspective from an ant  on the ground to an eagle  circling in the thermal currents of the air and looking at life through a wider lens.

 Dreaming helps us our perspective to change and to see things differently. The Bible is full of occasions when people climb mountains to meet with God or to have their perspective changed, or to see a new thing. It was significant that God led Moses to a mountain top to get a vision of the Promised Land, Jesus took his disciples up a mountain where they saw a vision of Jesus transcendent and holy, and here in the passage we read today, John is carried by the Spirit to a high mountain where he sees a vision of the holy city of Jerusalem. Such dreams or visions have everything to do with promise and hope and faith. It is the Easter season still – a season of resurrection hope. If we were to look objectively at the problems our planet and our world face today we could easily fall into despair. War, natural disaster, climate change, over-consumption of resources, discrimination and abuse are real. The magnitude of the problem could be overwhelming but we are Easter people and we live in hope. Not just a hope of “pie in the sky when we die” but a hope that God will restore and redeem all of creation and that the vision of the new heaven and new earth will be realised, when Jesus will worshipped and known as Lord of all. A hope born out of the reality that God is greater than death and darkness, and has the power to raise to new life all of creation, as Jesus himself revealed at Easter.

 Famously Martin Luther King announced “I have a dream...” and went on to describe a dream of all people, of all races, colours and backgrounds, sharing in an America marked by freedom and democracy. As the speech went on his language changes from “dream” to “hope”, to “faith”. This not a sleeping dream but a living hope and vision of a future world in alignment with God’s creative purpose. These type of dreams are also experienced in our Bibles. The prophets proclaim them, the Psalmists write poems about them, Mary and Hannah sing them, the persecuted church lives out her life and many meet their deaths in the light of the vision that God gives.

 John, writing to the persecuted Christians, brought a vision of hope and faith and beauty, a Revelation of the nature and re-creative power of God who loves “the world so much that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him, will not die but have eternal life.” His vision is of the city of Jerusalem transformed and illuminated by God and the risen Christ. The symbols of healing and water and life are there. John’s vision, Revelation, is in the library of Scripture of fantasy writing – bringing a new perspective, a new hope, and new vision, and a promise of God’s unfailing love and power and purpose for his world and for his people.

 Such a dream, such a vision, such a hope, gives us the courage and the faith and the determination to work with God, in the power and vision of the Spirit, to bring resurrection hope to the places we have influence and opportunity. We can speak out for the voiceless, we can give to the poor, we can pray for those in need, we can help to protect our planet, we can dream and use new ideas to bring renewal and hope and peace in our communities. Let’s seek out visions of God’s activity in our world and use our imagination, our dreaming, to join in with Him to build his kingdom – not just a country as Luther King dreamt of – but a planet proclaiming the love and creative power of God for everyone.



### Pause and pray

 Pray

Spend some time reflecting on the word of God now. Spend time with John’s vision of the new Jerusalem and imagine yourself in the city streets or walking by the river of life in the presence of Jesus, sharing your hopes and longings.



 Pray

**Prayers of Intercession**

## God of new life, restoration and hope, we bring to you our prayers for our world today.



Thank you for the dreams you give us. Dreams of hope and peace and justice and truth. Dreams of harmony and love, where people live together in unity, celebrating diversity and working together to establish peace and dignity for all. Dreams of a world where there is enough for everyone, and all of creation works together to proclaim your glory.

We dream of peace. We pray for places of conflict – between nations, between people, between people and the natural world. *Spirit of God, restore peace we pray.*

We dream of a world where all are treated with respect and love. We pray for people who exercise power over others and for those who are powerless. *Spirit of God, bring justice and hope we pray.*

We dream of life without the threat of disease and pain. We pray for those who are suffering today and for those who work to support them so that suffering may be eased. *Spirit of God bring healing we pray.*

We dream of a world where everyone may dream and hope and imagine a future of promise. We pray for those whose lives are damaged, those who can't see beyond the darkness, and those who have the power to bring change and freedom and opportunities to others. *Spirit of God, bring hope we pray.*

We dream of life where death is not the end. We pray for those at the end of life, for those who wait, and those who mourn. *Spirit of God, be with them and bring comfort and hope and peace.*

Thank you for the gift of imagination, for the hope that you place within us, for the joy which is ours because of your love and your grace and your purpose for us. We dream for ourselves, that we might know your presence always, and be filled with your Spirit to walk with you and work alongside you in your world.

Amen.



## Hymn 407 Singing the Faith (Keith and Kristyn Getty and Stuart Townend)

Hear the call of the kingdom,  
lift your eyes to the king;  
let his song rise within you  
as a fragrant offering  
of how God, rich in mercy,  
came in Christ to redeem  
all who trust in his unfailing grace.

Hear the call of the kingdom  
to be children of light,  
with the mercy of heaven,  
the humility of Christ;  
Walking justly before him,  
loving all that is right,  
that the life of Christ may shine through us.

### Chorus

*King of heaven, we will answer the call.  
We will follow, bringing hope to the world,  
Filled with passion, filled with power to proclaim  
Salvation in Jesus' name.*

Hear the call of the kingdom  
To reach out to the lost  
With the Father's compassion  
in the wonder of the cross,  
Bringing peace and forgiveness,  
and a hope yet to come:  
let the nations put their trust in him.



**Blessing:** May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with us all every day and for ever. **Amen.**

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