



Chet Valley Churches
Last Sunday Praise
30 August 2020



Welcome

Welcome to Last Sunday Praise. In this file you will find links to the songs we have chosen for our worship. Click on the links to take you to each song.

While we are now able to meet in church for worship, we are not allowed to sing – so for the time being Last Sunday Praise will remain in this format.

Introduction

Our theme for this service is 'The Promises of God'. When we look closely we find that God makes some tremendous promises, and unlike so many of us, he never breaks them. So let's take some time to praise and worship God, starting with a hymn that will almost certainly be familiar to you.

♪♪ All the songs link to YouTube. Just click with your mouse on the link, which will take you to a song with on-screen words. You may have to skip a few YouTube adverts if we have chosen songs that are not currently on the Chet Valley Churches YouTube channel.

♪♪ Holy Holy Holy, Lord God Almighty
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fH6tbslLEaE>

♪♪ Hosanna – Praise is rising
https://youtu.be/E4O_dw58cZ0

♪♪ All Heaven declares
<https://youtu.be/bLAOYZHuV6U>

Pause for thought, and prayer...

Many people turn to God when there is a crisis to deal with, whether it's a personal crisis or something that affects everyone. We feel the need for someone to support us and walk alongside us in whatever we face. But we're not looking for an empty hope – the wishful thinking that leads us to say “It'll all be OK” when we know that it probably won't. We're looking for the trustworthiness of a great and loving God.

The prayer for today (the Collect) gives us a reminder of God's grace and mercy, for which we express our constant gratitude.

Perhaps you might read the prayer aloud, line by line, stopping to think about each line as you do so.

The Collect—A Special Prayer for the Day

God of constant mercy,
who sent your Son to save us:
remind us of your goodness,
increase your grace within us,
that our thankfulness may grow,
through Jesus Christ our Lord..

♪♪ Power of your love

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ga6Qtxzd6vk>

♪♪ Lord I come before your throne of grace

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4foIUV9pfrs>

♪♪ I cast my mind to Calvary

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kImHjYjFUx4>

Pause for thought, and prayer...

Praise the Name of the Lord our God. Why? Because he is faithful and walks with us through good times and bad. Even at the times when prayer feels like you're shouting at the ceiling, God is there. It reminds us of the poem written in a concentration camp:

I believe in the sun
even when it is not shining
And I believe in love,
even when there's no one there.
And I believe in God,
even when he is silent.

Perhaps you might like to ponder the following prayer.

A prayer for this time

Merciful Lord,
We live in a time of uncertainty,
when it seems that the rules we have to follow
change too fast to comprehend.
We pray for hope and assurance in these times
and patience to carry on.
We pray especially for those who feel let down,
lonely or depressed,
whether as a result of work issues
or lack of personal support.
Enable us to bring the hope that come from you alone.
In Jesus' name we pray, Amen

♪ In Christ Alone

<https://youtu.be/ljlsOQ269I4>

♪ The Lord's my shepherd

<https://youtu.be/upRoR7ej9Ns>

Talk

David Owen has written this reflection.

Promises, promises, promises.... I wonder how many times we might have heard it said. Often it is said when political parties issue their manifesto prior to a General Election. Many years ago I recall wandering the streets of Chester delivering manifestos to numerous letter-boxes - I won't say which party, but for the historically minded it was the party for which Megan Lloyd-George had formerly represented Anglesey as an MP. Political manifestos were and still are documents full of aspirations - often those promises are forgotten when the reality of government takes over....

Parents, and adults, are equally guilty of making promises to children with little thought as to whether they can be fulfilled. I recall the frustration I felt as a child when promised something only for it not to happen. It didn't matter to my child's mind whether the reason it didn't occur was outside the adults control or not. It was still a promise that had been broken, not kept. And I suppose that phrase says a lot about how we perceive the word "promise" - if it can be broken then surely the maintaining and fulfilment of it keeps something together!

Whilst tidying up (clearing out) items from my parents' home we've come across a couple of old Bank of England notes. On both are printed the words "Bank of England, Promise to pay the bearer on demand the sum of....." In one case One Pound and the other Ten Shillings! Signed by the Chief Cashier of the Bank of England. Now those promises are still good, albeit that I would need to send or deliver them to the Bank of England.

Thankfully the Promises of God aren't like any of those: For a start God's promises aren't aspirations they are reality from the moment they are made. Neither are they made with little thought about how they might be fulfilled because God's plans are for eternity; nor does one have to visit or send them away to a Redemption Centre to get them cashed!

The Bible is full of God's promises and reminders that He is faithful. So let's take a whistle-stop tour which shows several aspects of God's promises to us.

The Bible tells of the promises about God's goodness: When things get tough, it can be easy to focus on ourselves and our difficulties. If we care to look at these promises about who God is and then let them lift our eyes from our own situation to God who is infinitely good.

- **2 Samuel 7:28** Sovereign Lord, you are God! Your covenant is trustworthy, and you have promised these good things to your servant.
- **1 Chronicles 16:34** Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; his love endures forever.

- **Psalm 19:7** The law of the Lord is perfect, refreshing the soul. The statutes of the Lord are trustworthy, making wise the simple.
- **Psalm 34:8** Taste and see that the Lord is good; blessed is the one who takes refuge in him.
- **Psalm 84:11** For the Lord God is a sun and shield; the Lord bestows favour and honour; no good thing does he withhold from those whose walk is blameless.
- **Psalm 100:5** For the Lord is good and his love endures forever; his faithfulness continues through all generations.
- **Psalm 145:9** The Lord is good to all; he has compassion on all he has made.
- **Nahum 1:7** The Lord is good, a refuge in times of trouble. He cares for those who trust in him.
- **James 1:17** Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows.

The Psalmist knew what it was to be an outcast and in mortal danger yet turned to God who he knew was infinitely good.

Which leads us to acknowledging that God promises to be with us whatever we encounter. Not just in the big situations but each individual situation. If we remember the time when God gave Noah a rainbow as a sign that God keeps his promises. As He was faithful to Noah, He will be faithful to us.

- **Joshua 1:9** Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go.

- **Psalm 23:4** Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me.
- **Philippians 4:6-7** Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

If God is with us wherever we might be then we also recognise that God will provide for us and sustain us as well. The Bible is full of examples of God providing for His people both in the Old Testament and in the New. Time and again the God of life promises to provide whether our need is land, food, shelter, comfort or hope.

- **Proverbs 3:5-6** "Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight."
- **Matthew 6:31-33** So do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.
- **2 Corinthians 9:8** And God is able to bless you abundantly, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work.

God promises to give us everything we need in our daily lives. He also calls us to show that love and care to others.

In the Gospel accounts we see how Jesus, God the Son, also makes promises to us that will enable us to receive the peace and hope He offers us.

- **Matthew 11:28-30** Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.
- **John 10:10** "I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full."
- **John 14:27** Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid

Possibly the greatest promise of support for our daily life, is that given by Jesus to His followers at the end of Matthew's account of his earthly ministry: "And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age." (Matthew 28:20).

♪♪ **From the breaking of the dawn**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kMuq5zIuaMo>

Time for prayer...

Let's take time to pray for:

- Leaders and decision-makers across the world seeking to find a safe, viable way forward
- The decision-makers of this nation, both in politics and in health care, whose actions affect all of us
- The leaders and decision-makers of the church nationally, who must interpret government guidelines in a way that benefits the majority – and for understanding that no decision is going to be perfect for everyone
- People we know who are struggling as a result of Covid, either socially or economically
- Those who feel lost or depressed
- Those who are ill, either with the coronavirus or other ailments that don't hit the news bulletins
- Our own contribution to the wellbeing of our world

You might want to pray aloud the prayer that Jesus taught his first disciples. Use whatever version or language you wish!

Our Father in heaven,
Hallowed be your name.
Your kingdom come, your will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who sin against us.
Lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power and the glory
are yours, now and for ever.
Amen.

♪♪ **God sent his Son**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4M-zwE33zHA>

♪♪ **My heart is filled with thankfulness**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bK3IIBTw2I4>

♪♪ **Rejoice, rejoice, Christ is in you**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IwtLsQ-HYJY>

A blessing

The Lord bless you and keep you;
the Lord make his face shine upon you
and be gracious to you;
the Lord turn his face toward you
and give you peace.

Amen

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-9bwQsqqkew>