

ORDER OF SERVICE – Worship at Home 6th September 2020

A short act of worship for use in people's homes, provided by Erica Gassor.

A gathering prayer:

Together we come to worship, individuals gathered as one in the name of the Lord. Amen

Hymn: STF 550 (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-X-4HRj8III>)

Forth in Thy name, O Lord, I go,
My daily labour to pursue,
Thee, only Thee resolved to know
In all I think, or speak, or do.

The task Thy wisdom has assigned
O let me cheerfully fulfil,
In all my works Thy presence find,
and prove Thy good and perfect will.

Thee may I set at my right hand,
Whose eyes my inmost substance see,
And labour on at Thy command,
And offer all my work to Thee.

Give me to bear Thy easy yoke,
And every moment watch and pray,
And still to things eternal look,
And hasten to Thy glorious day.

For Thee delightfully employ
Whate'er Thy bounteous grace has given,
And run my course with even joy,
And closely walk with Thee to heaven. Charles Wesley (1707-1788)

Prayers of approach, confession and adoration:

O Lord my God, I sometimes tremble as I think of who I am and who you are.
Bring me now, in this moment, to know you.
See me as I am, and see my yearning to be more like you.
May I lay aside anything that hinders my journey with you, and with my friends and neighbours. Amen

In the higgledy-piggledy ways of life, Lord, with challenges and changes pulling me this way and that; I sometimes find it hard, in the heat of the moment, to know what is right and what is wrong.
Forgive me for my failings and wrongdoings.
Forgive my insensitivities to the ways of others.
Forgive anything that cuts me off from others or from you. Amen

God of the vastness of all that is, of all peoples and communities, here I am, part of the church; wanting to worship and adore you, marvelling at your love and care and your persistence with me. You are beyond my imagining. Again and again I am engulfed in your vastness and love.

How can I do anything but praise you, again and again? Amen

Now let us join in The Lord's Prayer

Today's Readings:

Psalm 119: 33-40

- ³³ Teach me, Lord, the way of your decrees,
that I may follow it to the end.
- ³⁴ Give me understanding, so that I may keep your law
and obey it with all my heart.
- ³⁵ Direct me in the path of your commands,
for there I find delight.
- ³⁶ Turn my heart towards your statutes
and not towards selfish gain.
- ³⁷ Turn my eyes away from worthless things;
preserve my life according to your word.
- ³⁸ Fulfil your promise to your servant,
so that you may be feared.
- ³⁹ Take away the disgrace I dread,
for your laws are good.
- ⁴⁰ How I long for your precepts!
In your righteousness preserve my life.

Matthew 18: 15-20

¹⁵ "If your brother or sister sins, go and point out their fault, just between the two of you. If they listen to you, you have won them over. ¹⁶ But if they will not listen, take one or two others along, so that every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses. ¹⁷ If they still refuse to listen, tell it to the church; and if they refuse to listen even to the church, treat them as you would a pagan or a tax collector.

¹⁸ "Truly I tell you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven. ¹⁹ "Again, truly I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about anything they ask for, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven. ²⁰ For where two or three gather in my name, there am I with them."

Reflection:

Our first reading today is taken from Psalm 119 and is a wonderful plea to God asking him to help us to follow his teachings and asking that we live in his shadow, following his ways, doing his will.

Our second reading is from Matthew and gives advice on how to love and support those around us who may be finding things difficult or not quite following the right path.

But we have to be careful for, as it says in Luke 6: 42. “How can you say to your brother, ‘Brother, let me take the speck out of your eye,’ when you yourself fail to see the plank in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother’s eye.”

The best way to protect yourself from slipping and to help others to follow the right path is, as it says in Romans 13 v14 “rather clothe yourself with the Lord Jesus Christ”.

One of my clearest memories as a child was the excitement of waiting for our summer and winter outfits to be delivered from the catalogue my mother used. We had two new outfits a year and the excitement of waiting for the carrier to arrive with the parcels containing our new clothes was something that will stay in my memory for ever. Certain clothes I remember to this day. One in particular was a red suede jacket with a white mock fur lining. After days of excitedly waiting, it arrived and I can clearly remember wearing it for the first time as I walked the 2 miles down to the village. The warmth and the joy that I felt as I skipped along was a wonderful feeling.....*that* is how we should feel when we clothe ourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ!

So what does clothing ourselves with Jesus actually mean? It means following his teachings with a generous and unending love for all those around us. Sometimes those who are in need are very close to us and we do not always instantly recognise it. We can overlook the fact that those closest to us are suffering, we can overlook the fact that those in our church community are unhappy or having difficulties, we can neglect to help those in our town or county who are struggling with different aspects of life and indeed, on a larger scale, in the world around us.

Wrapping Christ around us is a way of equipping ourselves to look at each of these areas and respond in a way that Jesus would respond, responding with love, care and concern and gently guiding each person to come closer to God through Jesus.

It is very easy to be drawn into the ways of the world with money, possessions or attitudes and all of us should stop and reflect on our own lives and see whether they reflect Jesus. Those around us and in the wider community see our love for Christ in what we say and do in our daily lives. With Christ wrapped around us we can boldly go out into the world to show his love to all those in our community and beyond! Hallelujah! Amen

Prayers of intercession:

Father God, I turn to you to prayer for the world and for others. We have been thinking this morning of those who are struggling and are finding life difficult – the loss of loved ones, the fear of the virus, or other illnesses, loss of security and money worries and even the loss of their homes. At times Father, the problems can seem insurmountable. Help me to show your love and care for those in need, to guide and support each person to find a way through their problems and difficulties. Let me reach out to those in my own communities and the world. The horror of war and famine stretches wide across the world and Father, I ask that you reach out and bring your love, care and peace to those who are suffering. Open the minds and hearts of the world’s leaders and teach those in power to share so that *all* have a chance of living life in peace and with sufficient food. Amen

Hymn: STF 487 (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=unWnWSgoSt0>)

You shall go out with joy
And be led forth with peace,
The mountains and the hills
Will break forth before you.
There'll be shouts of joy
And all the trees of the fields
Will clap, will clap their hands.
And all the trees of the fields will clap their hands,
The trees of the fields will clap their hands,
The trees of the fields will clap their hands,
While you go out with joy.

The blessing:

And now may the peace of God,
which passes all understanding,
keep our hearts and minds
in the knowledge and love of God
and of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord;
and the blessing of God almighty,
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
be among us and remain with us always. Amen