



**'Staying Connected'**  
**Worship and Pastoral Resources**  
**For Week Beginning**  
**12<sup>th</sup> July 2020**

**Opening Psalm. 65:1-9**

Praise awaits you, our God, in Zion; to you our vows will be fulfilled. <sup>2</sup>You who answer prayer, to you all people will come. <sup>3</sup>When we were overwhelmed by sins, you forgave our transgressions. <sup>4</sup>Blessed are those you choose and bring near to live in your courts! We are filled with the good things of your house, of your holy temple. <sup>5</sup>You answer us with awesome and righteous deeds, God our Saviour, the hope of all the ends of the earth and of the farthest seas, <sup>6</sup>who formed the mountains by your power, having armed yourself with strength, <sup>7</sup>who stilled the roaring of the seas, the roaring of their waves, and the turmoil of the nations. <sup>8</sup>The whole earth is filled with awe at your wonders; where morning dawns, where evening fades, you call forth songs of joy. <sup>9</sup>You care for the land and water it; you enrich it abundantly. The streams of God are filled with water to provide the people with grain, for so you have ordained it.

**Prayers**

Beloved God, with the eagerness of a child,  
You wait for our coming.  
With the urgency of a lover, you long for our return.  
With the anxious heart of a parent, your arms ache to hold us.  
And we who would come, restless or reluctant, weary or wary, hurting and yet hoping beyond hope, stand still, undecided.  
We are drawn to the promise of your kindness, but sometimes we are afraid of your disappointment, of your judgement, of your turning away from us.

*(A moment to share our thoughts with God)*

Yet, beloved God, you are still there, still eager, still waiting patiently with arms wide open.

The disappointment, the judgement, the turning away – that's us, not you.  
Forgive and heal us of all that recoils from our common humanity – our pride, our fear, our shame.

You have given us such worth. Help us to see ourselves and each other as you see us, and help us to know ourselves precious and loved.

**Amen**

*(Adapted prayer from 'Praying For The Dawn', Wildgoose Publications)*

**Hymn STF 24 Come, Now is The Time**

[https://youtu.be/FF9BPvj5I\\_4](https://youtu.be/FF9BPvj5I_4)

Come, now is the time to worship,  
Come, now is the time to give your heart.  
Come, just as you are to worship,  
Come, just as you are before your God, come.

One day every tongue will confess you are God,  
One day every knee will bow.  
Still the greatest treasure remains for those  
Who gladly choose you now.

Come, now is the time.....

Brian Doerkson  
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**Reading – Luke 11:1-13**

One day Jesus was praying in a certain place. When he finished, one of his disciples said to him, "Lord, teach us to pray, just as John taught his disciples." <sup>2</sup> He said to them, "When you pray, say:

"Father,<sup>[a]</sup>  
hallowed be your name,  
your kingdom come.<sup>[b]</sup>  
<sup>3</sup> Give us each day our daily bread.  
<sup>4</sup> Forgive us our sins,  
for we also forgive everyone who sins against us.<sup>[c]</sup>  
And lead us not into temptation.<sup>[d]</sup>"  
<sup>5</sup> Then Jesus said to them, "Suppose you have a friend, and you go to him at midnight and say, 'Friend, lend me three loaves of bread; <sup>6</sup> a friend of mine on a journey has come to me, and I have no food to offer him.'

<sup>7</sup> And suppose the one inside answers, 'Don't bother me. The door is already locked, and my children and I are in bed. I can't get up and give you anything.' <sup>8</sup> I tell you, even though he will not get up and give you the bread because of friendship, yet because of your shameless audacity<sup>[e]</sup> he will surely get up and give you as much as you need.

<sup>9</sup> "So I say to you: Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. <sup>10</sup> For everyone who asks receives; the one who seeks finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened.

<sup>11</sup> "Which of you fathers, if your son asks for<sup>[f]</sup> a fish, will give him a snake instead? <sup>12</sup> Or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion? <sup>13</sup> If you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!"

### **So what is God teaching us.....?**

Put simply, *"Come back to me and re-discover my love for you."*

The writer of Revelation records God's word in chapter 1:9 – 2:7, when He says:

*"I know your deeds, your hard work, and your perseverance....you have persevered and endured hardships for my name and have not grown weary."*

*Yet I hold this sin against you: You have forsaken the love you had at first....."*

We need to return to the Father. We need to re-discover our first love. We need to 're-learn', or maybe discover, what is at the heart of our faith – to live in a loving relationship with God through Jesus Christ.

We have been busy in running our churches. We have been dedicated to meeting regularly, to planning, to looking after the needs of our congregations, our buildings and our finances.

Volunteers, like so many of you, have tirelessly offered your time and energy to the life of The Church – in order that worship, pastoral care and service to the community continues, praying and hoping that others might join us.

We are incredibly grateful for the dedication and commitment of people like yourselves who work so hard in our churches.

Notice how God Himself recognises such dedication and commitment:

*"I know your deeds, your hard work, and your perseverance....you have persevered and endured hardships for my name and have not grown weary."*

One of my childhood memories is going to the beach on holiday, blowing up the dinghy (inflating – not exploding!), and messing about with my brother in the sea.

We were always careful to note where our stuff was on the beach (usually identifiable by the wind-breaks), so we knew where to go back to when it was time for lunch.

Very often, when we started to head to where we thought our stuff was, it became clear that it wasn't there. It wasn't that it had been moved – rather that although we had started off in line with it, we gradually drifted on the water until we lost sight of it.

It is absolutely right to recognise such hard work and perseverance expressed by God in Revelation, but we need also to acknowledge that all the time, without noticing, we have been drifting away from our first love – the husband of The Church.

I believe God is saying to us, *"Come back to me and re-discover my love for you."*

So when He says to us, *"You have forsaken the love you had at first....."* it isn't simply to rebuke or condemn – but to say, *"I want you to come and receive the love I have for you, and I want you to pass that love onto others – that they too will come to me."*

This is a chance to respond to God's invitation to be the Church God intended – not to return to be the Church we had become before lockdown.

As this weekend has reminded us, prayerful relationship with God is paramount. Perhaps our best prayer right now is, *"Lord, teach us to pray!" Amen.*

**Hymn STF 481 The Lord's My Shepherd**  
<https://youtu.be/pN4tPkX0MG0>

THE LORD'S MY SHEPHERD, I'll not want.  
He makes me lie in pastures green.  
He leads me by the still, still waters,  
His goodness restores my soul.

And I will trust in You alone.  
And I will trust in You alone,  
For Your endless mercy follows me,  
Your goodness will lead me home.  
(Descant)  
I will trust, I will trust in You.  
I will trust, I will trust in You.  
Endless mercy follows me,  
Goodness will lead me home.

He guides my ways in righteousness,  
And He anoints my head with oil,  
And my cup, it overflows with joy,  
I feast on His pure delights.

Chorus

And though I walk the darkest path,  
I will not fear the evil one,  
For You are with me, and Your rod and staff  
Are the comfort I need to know.

Chorus

Stuart Townend.  
©1996 Thankyou Music

**Prayers**

Holy Spirit of God, you breathe in us, on all  
that is inadequate and fragile.  
You make living water spring even from our  
hurts themselves.  
And through you, the valley of fears becomes  
a place of wellsprings.  
So, in an inner life with neither beginning nor  
end, your continual presence makes new  
freshness break through.  
(Sri Lanka)

Breathe now in us with justice on all that  
diminishes or destroys God's children or God's  
creation.  
Breathe now in us with peace to close the  
hostile distances between people and nations.

Breathe now in us with protection for those  
bruised by grinding indifference or the cruelty  
of others.

Breathe now in us with healing for those  
haunted by the memory of suffering or  
shame.

Breathe now in us with love for those who are  
full of self-loathing, who cannot love  
themselves or others.

Lord, by your Holy Spirit, draw us close to you,  
teach us to pray, and use us to channel your  
love to others who have yet to meet you.  
In Jesus name, **Amen.**  
*(Adapted prayer from 'Praying For The Dawn',  
Wildgoose Publications)*

**The Lord's Prayer**

**Hymn STF 459 Captain of Israel's Host**  
<https://youtu.be/MmuxLKP7F4U>

Captain of Israel's host, and guide  
of all who seek the land above,  
beneath the shadow we abide,  
the cloud of your protecting love.  
Our strength, your grace, our rule, your word,  
our end, the glory of The Lord.

By your unending Spirit led,  
we shall not in the desert stray,  
we shall not full direction need,  
nor miss our providential way.  
As far from danger as from fear,  
while love, almighty love, is near.

Charles Wesley (1707 – 1788)

**Blessing**

Lord Jesus,  
You refresh us with your love.  
You set us on the way.  
Sometimes where you lead we do not  
understand.  
We ask that you would call us, guide us  
challenge us and unite us as we learn afresh  
how to be your disciples.

Bless us, lead us, love us and bring us home to  
your heart.

In your name we pray. **Amen**

*(Adapted prayer from 'Praying For The Dawn',  
Wildgoose Publications)*

