

Worship at Home service Sunday 11th February 2024 with Revd Ian Forsyth

A call to worship:

We come together to share in the story of faith, to share our own stories and to add new chapters, to the story of the Church.

Thanks be to God. Amen.

A gathering prayer

Here we are again, Lord. There are many temptations to be elsewhere, but, as you live and as we ourselves live, we will not leave you. It's a lifelong journey: as long as life lasts, we're on it.

And while we're on it we should make the most of it. Help us to make the most of this time together with each other and with you today. **Amen.**

StF 186 Tell out my soul

Tell out, my soul, the greatness of the Lord!
Unnumbered blessings, give my spirit voice;
tender to me the promise of his word;
in God my Saviour shall my heart rejoice.

Tell out, my soul, the greatness of his name!
Make known his might, the deeds his arm has done; his mercy sure, from
age to age the same; his holy name, the Lord, the mighty One.

Tell out, my soul, the greatness of his might!
Powers and dominions lay their glory by.
Proud hearts and stubborn wills are put to flight, the hungry fed, the
humble lifted high.

Tell out, my soul, the glories of his word!
Firm is his promise, and his mercy sure.
Tell out, my soul, the greatness of the Lord
to children's children and for evermore!

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

Bible readings

Psalm 50.1-6; Mark 9.2-9

A prayer of adoration

Inspirational God, from little acts of faith, you bring huge transformation;
from little acts of trust, you bring huge opportunities; from little seeds,

you bring huge growth;
from little steps, you bring huge progress;
from little showings of love, you draw us into your huge heart, and hold us
as one –
for you are our all, forever. **Amen.**

A prayer of confession

*Response after each phrase: **Forgive us we pray.*** God of truth when we
won't go far enough in speaking out for justice.

When we won't go far enough out of our comfort zone.

When we won't go far enough in taking responsibility for our behaviour.

When we won't go far enough in meeting the needs of those around us.

Forgive us and help us to change, to grow, and to appreciate fully all that
you have done for us – in Jesus' name. **Amen.**

Assurance of forgiveness

Living God, your forgiveness enables and empowers us to change, to
move on and to be made whole. Thank you for your patience, your grace,
and your presence with us each step of our life's journey – and
beyond. **Amen.**

A prayer of thanksgiving

God of our setting out and of our arriving,
we rejoice that, wherever we go, you go with us. When we journey
together, you bless us with fellowship. When we journey alone, you bless
us with courage. When we journey in the footsteps of others, you bless
us with gratitude. When we journey to new places, you bless us with
faith. And when we make our last journey, you bless us with the
knowledge that we are safe within your eternal love – thank you,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

A prayer of confession

*Response after each phrase: **Forgive us and shake us up.***

O God, when compassion should begin with us, but doesn't:

When justice should begin with us, but doesn't:

When unity should begin with us, but doesn't:

When understanding should begin with us,

but doesn't: When hospitality should begin with us, but doesn't:

When hope should begin with us, but doesn't:

In Jesus' name we pray. **Amen.**

Time to reflect:

What is your favourite Love song?

What is your favourite film about love? What is your Favourite food?

My answers are at the end of today's reflection. You may have guessed that today's thoughts are all about Love, Love, Love.

Valentine's Day is coming up this week and I am sure you have seen adverts for chocolates, flowers, and cards. However today I would like to think about the love God has for the whole world. Sometimes we quote John 3 verse 16 and forget verse 17. Today we are looking at both verses, 'For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him'.

This is God's rescue plan for all humanity from the very beginning of time and continues in our lifetime and in our children's lifetime, throughout all generations in the future.

One of my all-time favourite hymns is Love Divine, the first verse always reminds me of God's great love for me.

The second love is our love for God. I have a very good friend who suffers from depression, and he often says he draws comfort from the psalms, as it somehow brings him to that place of praise. Below are three Psalms that help us to reflect on God, as you worship at home in a time of silence.

Psalm 9 v 1 – 2, I will give thanks to you, Lord, with all my heart; I will tell of all your wonderful deeds. I will be glad and rejoice in you; I will sing the praises of your name, O Most High.

Psalm 86 v 12, I will praise you, Lord my God, with all my heart; I will glorify your name forever.

Psalm 106 v 1, Praise the Lord. Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; his love endures forever.

The third and final love is love for others. The others might be people we meet each week, members of our family both near and far. Others could also be those we bump into as we go about our daily lives, either where we live, shopping and in Church. The story of the Good Samaritan reminds me of someone thinking of his neighbour but in truth, the Samaritans were bitter enemies of the Jews. So, it is even more important to see the Samaritan not only being kind, but he was in fact providing care for his enemy and leaving him in a place where he would receive care which he financed.

The words in John's Gospel says 'Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends. Jesus calls us his friends. As we think of what is happening all around us, whether it is people at war and the increase of violence in our towns and cities. How can we in Northampton Methodist Church challenge the injustice and bring healing and reconciliation in our town?
My answers to the questions.
What is your favourite Love song? - I just called to say I love you.
What is your favourite film about love? - Love actually.
What is your Favourite food? - Chilli Con Carne.

StF 503 Love divine all love excelling.

Love divine, all loves excelling, joy of heav'n to earth come down, fix in us thy humble dwelling; all thy faithful mercies crown!
Jesus, thou art all compassion, pure, unbounded love thou art; visit us with thy salvation; enter every trembling heart.

Come, Almighty to deliver; let us all thy life receive; suddenly return and never,
never more thy temples leave. Thee we would be always blessing, serve thee as thy hosts above; pray, and praise thee without ceasing,
glory in Thy perfect love.

Finish then, thy new creation;
pure and spotless let us be;
let us see thy great salvation
perfectly restored in thee:
Changed from glory into glory,
till in heav'n we take our place,
till we cast our crowns before thee,
lost in wonder, love, and praise!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tqHlAxjrpw8>

A sending out prayer:

Lord, like your first disciples you send us out as sheep among wolves. Teach us to be wise as serpents as well as innocent as doves. Remind us that your peace comes with us, and your hand is there to guide and encourage. **Amen.**