Worship at Home service Sunday 18th May 2025 with Revd Ian Forsyth

Opening prayer:

The Lord's name is to be exalted, his glory is above earth and heaven.
So, let us come before him now, young and old together
and praise his name. **Amen.**

And did those feet in ancient time.

And did those feet in ancient time, walk upon England's mountains green?
And was the holy Lamb of God, on England's pleasant pastures seen?
And did the countenance divine, shine forth upon our clouded hills?
And was Jerusalem builded here, among these dark satanic mills?

Bring me my bow of burning gold!
Bring me my arrows of desire!
Bring me my spear! O clouds, unfold!
Bring me my chariot of fire!
I will not cease from mental fight,
nor shall my sword sleep in my hand,
till we have built Jerusalem
in England's green and pleasant land.
hhttps://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2ebtI8vbYFQ

Bible readings Psalm 148 John 13 v 31 – 35

Reflection:

A New Commandment, Love, Love, Love (John 13 v 31-35).

This passage is all about love. The film 'Love Actually' it follows the lives of different people, but the common theme is love. The film ends with a scene at the airport where people are welcomed by family.

The passage is titled a 'New Commandment' where Jesus explains to the disciples that they should love one another in the same way that He loved them. He explains love should be unconditional, not based on whether we like someone or agree with them. Love in the Bible is about treating others how we would like to be treated ourselves. Jesus says, that by loving unconditionally, people will know that you follow Jesus.

In Northampton we have many opportunities to come alongside other Churches to be a witness in our local areas.

The World Council of Churches, local ecumenical partnerships where Churches seek out ways of working together. One of the greatest acts of love is when ministers and lay people pray together and work together to be a witness in the local community. Rick Warren (author of 'The Purpose Driven Church') says, 'He (God) created the church to meet your five deepest needs: a purpose to live for, people to live with, principles to live by, a profession to live out, and power to live on. There is no other place on earth where you can find all five of these benefits in one place'.

At Easter this year the Churches in Great Billing hosted an Easter event for Children and families to attend a fun event with activities around the village including a trail to the Churches in Great Billing to explore the Easter story. This was an opportunity to share God's love in the community.

We are called to gentleness and non-judgmentalism and a showing of unconditional love to all those we know, even the weak and vulnerable; and those who make a mess of their own lives. The words of this song remind us how we should love one another.

Let there be love shared among us, let there be love in our eyes.
May now your love sweep this nation, cause us O Lord to arrive.

Give us a fresh understanding, of brotherly love that is real,
Let there be love shared among us, let there be love.

The next time you are collecting someone from the airport, observe those around you who are excited and waiting for a friend or family member, ready to hug them. This reminds us how God loves us, and therefore we should show God's love to those around us.

A prayer of confession

Lord, we ask forgiveness for the times
when we don't accept your Word because it seems strange to us.
Lord, forgive us for not seeing the big picture.
For the times when we hang on to the old,
doing things as we always did.
Lord, forgive us…

For when we think we are the only one's worthy of your love.
Lord, forgive us…

For when we make judgements on things we have no right to judge.
Lord, forgive us...

Open our eyes to new life in you. **Amen.**

Prayer for those who strive for social justice

For those who fight injustice and make a stand for good, who strive to give the poor a chance to live as they should, for all who labour, heart and soul, to make our world more fair, we ask your courage and strength - Lord, answer hear our prayer.

For those who show compassion, who work to heal and mend, who nurse the sick, support the weak. Encourage and befriend, for all who reach out in your name to offer love and care, we ask your blessing, power, help - Lord, answer hear our prayer.

For those who tackle conflict, where wounds run red raw, who strive to conquer hatred and put a stop to war, who work to foster dialogue despite the scars we bear, we ask your guidance, vision, faith - Lord, answer hear our prayer.

For those who try to witness to Christ through word and deed, to show his love embraces each colour, culture, creed, who point to light and life and hope in which the world can share, we ask your wisdom, grace and truth - Lord, answer hear our prayer. Amen.

I cannot tell why he whom angels' worship StF 350

I cannot tell why he, whom angels worship,
should set his love upon us, now or then,
or why, as Shepherd, he should seek the wanderers,
to bring them back, they know not how or when.
But this I know, that he was born of Mary
when Bethlem's manger was his only home,
and that he lived at Nazareth and laboured,
and so the Saviour, Saviour of the world, is come.

I cannot tell how silently he suffered,
as with his peace he graced this place of tears,

or how his heart upon the cross was broken,
the crown of pain to three and thirty years.
But this I know, he heals the broken-hearted
and stays our sin and calms our lurking fear
and lifts the burden from the heavy laden;
for still the Saviour, Saviour of the world is here.

I cannot tell how he will win the nations,
how he will claim his earthly heritage,
how satisfy the needs and aspirations
of east and west, of sinner and of sage.
But this I know, all flesh shall see his glory,
and he shall reap the harvest he has sown,
and some glad day his sun will shine in splendour
when he the Saviour, Saviour of the world, is known.

I cannot tell how all the lands shall worship,
when at his bidding every storm is stilled,
or who can say how great the jubilation
when every heart with love is filled.
But this I know, the skies will thrill with rapture,
and myriad, myriad human voices sing,
and earth to heaven, and heaven to earth, will answer:
'at last the Saviour, Saviour of the world, is King!'
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qh0RKetMB0o

A sending out prayer:

Life-giving God, Alpha and Omega, beginning and end, journey with us as we go from this place into our communities. As we look forward to the time when you will make all things new, enable us, by your Spirit, to bring your kingdom here on earth. **Amen.**