

Worship at Home Service Sunday 10th March 2024 with Revd Ian Forsyth

A call to worship:

God gives us light. And yet often we stick to darkness. It takes courage to go into the light, a willingness to start again, to keep trusting – trusting that one day, we will see, and finally find peace. **Amen.**

A gathering prayer

Wonderful God, in the very beginning, the first thing you gave us was your light, your heavenly light, even before you made the sun. In your light we flourish. And we call your Son, Jesus Christ, the light of the world. He reaches into our darkness, and heals us, and makes us whole. Today, help us to learn how to be children of your light. **Amen.**

StF 175 Light of the world you stepped into darkness.

Light of the world, you stepped down into darkness. Opened my eyes, let me see Beauty that made this heart adore you Hope of the life spend with you.

*Here I am to worship, Here I am to bow down
Here I am to say that You are my God
You're altogether lovely, altogether worthy
Altogether wonderful to me.*

King of all days. Oh, so highly exalted glorious in heaven above. Humble you came to the earth you created. All for love's sake become poor

Refrain

And I'll never know how much it cost.
To see my sin upon that cross.
And I'll never know how much it cost.
To see my sin upon that cross.

Refrain

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-MmRGSEG2LM>

Bible readings

Psalm 103. (1-7),8-13; Ephesians 2.1-10; John 3.14-21

Mother's Day Prayers

Gracious God, on this Mothering Sunday, we bring you our prayers for all entrusted with the responsibility of motherhood.

Loving God, **hear our prayer.**

We pray for mothers the world over, recognising both the joys and demands they experience – privilege and pressures, hopes, and fears, pleasure and pain that motherhood entails. Equip them with the love, wisdom, and strength they need. Loving God, **hear our prayer.**

We pray for single mothers, bearing the responsibility of parenthood alone, struggling sometimes to make ends meet, and stigmatised by certain sections of society. Grant them the emotional, physical, and financial resources they need. Loving God, **hear our prayer.**

We pray finally for those who long to discover their natural mothers, those who have become estranged from them, and those whose mothers have died – all for whom Mothering Sunday brings pain rather than pleasure, hurt rather than happiness. May your love enfold them always. Loving God, **hear our prayer.**

Gracious God, we pray for mothers and children everywhere. May your blessing be upon them, your love enrich them all. Loving God **hear our prayer. Amen.**

Time to reflect:

Mothering Sunday is a day when we celebrate our mothers and their influence on our lives. Often the work that mothers do is unseen, and this reminded me of a children's TV programme I watched as a child. I remember watching 'Bill and Ben the Flowerpot Men', when TV screens were in black and white and there was no watching TV on demand. Bill and Ben used to have fun and games in the garden before the gardener came to do the garden. We never saw the gardener and what he did, but we could see the garden was tended, mothers are a bit like that often unseen, ensuring that everything is in place and ready for the day.

All my life I have known a lady called Elizabeth, who was a midwife and for years, she delivered babies in Glasgow and in midwife years she felt the call of God to work in the Philippines, for a Christian charity,

working in the baby unit, delivering babies. She never had children of her own but the mothers she supported both at home and abroad continue to keep in touch with her sharing news of their children and grandchildren. Elizabeth may not have had children of her own, but she has journeyed with the mothers and often been a mother figure to them.

I recall being told that 'no perfect parenting book exists, and she was right' however some years ago while volunteering with a charity called 'Care for the Family and Rob Parsons the founder wrote a book entitled 'The Sixty-Minute Mother,' which talked about the expectations put on mothers to be perfect. He talked about the expectations of a 'supermum' who would always ... have the stuff to make models that were on Blue Peter, always remember to take library books back before the due date, knowing the school holiday dates and always gets to the bottom of the laundry basket. However, he recognised that parenthood was difficult, full of ups and downs and not feeling pressure to be perfect.

This weekend we are celebrating Mothering Sunday, it is a day where so many of us have mixed emotions, from grieving the loss of a parent, to celebrating memories of happy times. Some people may not have happy memories about their childhood and may struggle on Mothering Sunday. Parents are not perfect; we all live in a world that makes many demands.

As we consider the passage today, we are reminded that God, our heavenly father, made the ultimate sacrifice sending us his son as described in John 3 v 16 from The Message it says:

This is how much God loved the world: He gave his Son, his one and only Son. And this is why: so that no one need be destroyed; by believing in him, anyone can have a whole and lasting life.

Mother Theresa once said about Mothering Sunday 'For parents it is very important that children learn from their fathers and mothers how to love one another, not in school, not from the teacher, but from you.

It is important that you share with your children the joy of smiling, we all can smile'.

It is my prayer on this Mothering Sunday we give thanks for Mother's everywhere that they may have a day full of joy and happiness and that in some small way, Mothering Sunday will bring a smile to your face. Amen

StF 99 All creatures of our God and King Love

All creatures of our God and King,
Lift up your voice and with us sing
Alleluia, alleluia!

O burning sun with golden beam,
and silver moon with softer gleam:
O praise him, O praise him,
Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!

Thou rushing wind that art so strong,
Ye clouds that sail in heaven along,
O praise him, alleluia!
Thou rising morn, in praise rejoice,
Ye lights of evening, find a voice:

Thou flowing water, pure and clear,
Make music for thy Lord to hear,
Alleluia, alleluia!
Thou fire so masterful and bright,
That givest man both warmth and light:

Dear mother earth, who day by day
Unfoldest blessings on our way,
O praise him, alleluia!
The flowers and fruits that in thee grow,
Let them his glory also show:

Let all things their creator bless,
And worship him in humbleness,
O praise him, alleluia!
Praise, praise the Father, praise the Son,
And praise the Spirit, Three in One:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MUZD0hgtSgE>

A sending out prayer:

Loving God, we humans are afraid of the darkness. But, for you, darkness and light are alike, and no problem. You can see in the dark, and we can put our hand in yours and trust you, knowing that the light will dawn again in your time.

Amen.