Worship at Home service Sunday 3rd August 2025 with Revd Ian Forsyth

A call to worship:

Downhearted or inspired, fed-up or joyful, eager or reluctant, we come just as we are, to be with God just as God is. Let us worship God together. **Amen.**

A gathering prayer:

Lord God, we come with our love seeking your love afresh. We come with our questions seeking your guidance. We come with our certainties seeking your challenge. We come with our sinfulness seeking your forgiveness.
So come, Father, Son and Holy Spirit and be whatever you need to be to us today. **Amen.**

StF 548 Blessed assurance

Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine! Oh, what a foretaste of glory divine!
Heir of salvation, purchase of God, born of his Spirit, washed in his blood.

Refrain:
This is my story, this is my song, praising my Saviour all the day long.
This is my story, this is my song,praising my Saviour all the day long.

Perfect submission, perfect delight, visions of rapture now burst on my sight; Angels descending bring from above echoes of mercy, whispers of love. [Refrain]

Perfect submission, all is at rest.I in my Saviour am happy and blest-watching and waiting, looking above, filled with his goodness, lost in his love.
(Refrain) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1WQdwkCdXpU

Bible readings

Psalm 49 v 1 - 12 Colossians 3 v 1 – 11

Reflection:

You may have heard people say that someone has their head in the clouds or that they are so heavenly minded that they are no earthly use. Firstly, this Bible passage verse 1 encourages us to set our minds on Christ, we are to focus our energy on Jesus and spiritual things rather than be distracted on mundane things.

This new identity in Christ also means that they have died to their old self and their new life is hidden with Christ in God.

Secondly, verses 2-4, call us ‘to seek things above’, Paul highlights the importance of not being distracted with things that don’t matter, but to focus on things that are spiritually important. Paul wants to encourage listeners to examine their daily choices and priorities, asking themselves if they are truly seeking the things above, or are they being preoccupied by their own ideas. The promise of Christ’s return is a powerful motivation for living a life focused on things above and a reminder of our future hope. This hope of Christ in glory is a reminder of the ultimate reward for those who have their minds set on things above.

Thirdly, verses 5-8, emphasise the importance of change where God’s love and teaching can inspire, profound, change and a new direction in life. In Acts 9, Saul, a devout Jew who actively persecuted Christians, had an encounter with Jesus on the road to Damascus. He was temporarily blinded as he was led to Damascus, where he was later healed and filled with the Holy Spirit. This encounter led to Saul's conversion and his subsequent transformation into Paul, who was one of the most influential apostles in the early church, known for his missionary journeys and his writings including Colossians.

There are many similar stories in the Bible how people were transformed when they met Jesus including Zacchaeus whose life changed dramatically after encountering Jesus. He was moved to repentance, promising to give half his possessions to the poor and repay those he had cheated four times over. Also, the Samaritan woman who had been shunned by her community met Jesus at a well and had a transformative conversation. This encounter led her to believe in Jesus as the Messiah and share her newfound faith with others in her town.

Finally in verses 9-11, Paul helps us to see the importance of being honest with each other, always telling the truth and fair to all. It also talks about inclusivity in verse 11, it reminds us that ‘Here there is no Gentile or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave or free, but Christ is all, and is in all’. This verse emphasizes that in Christ, social, cultural, and ethnic divisions are overcome. All believers are united under the lordship of Christ, who is the source of their identity and unity. As we journey through our week may we fix our eyes on Jesus and use the words of a well-known chorus below or listen to a new hymn.

Turn your eyes upon Jesus, look full in His wonderful face, And the things of earth will grow strangely dim, In the light of His glory and grace. (Helen Lemmel 1918). https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F2tKVqZZiI4

Prayer by John L Bell
May it not be long, Lord.

May it not be long before there are no more beggars at the door waiting for the crumbs from tables of the rich.

May it not be long before the northern exploitation of the southern economies is a fact of history, not a fact of life.
May it not be long before poor economies cease to be havens for sex tourism, child labour and experimental genetic farming.

May it not be long before those nations we once evangelised show us the larger Christ whom we, too often, have forgotten.
May it not be long before the governments of our nations legislate against commercial avarice and over-consumption which hurts the poor and indebts them.

May it not be long before Christians in this land examine their economic priorities in the light of the Gospel, rather than in its shadow.
May it not be long before we respond out of love, not out of guilt.

May it not be long before we find wells of hope deeper than the shallow pools of optimism in which we sometimes paddle.
May it not be long before we feel liberated and addressed by your Word as those first folk did who heard you summon the oddest of people to fulfil the oddest of callings.
May it not be long, Lord. **Amen.**

Poem Walking our story (unknown).
On footpaths, green lanes and holloways, harrowed paths, sunken roads, drove roads to market, ways to church, pilgrim paths, the way to the sea. Connecting thread, thought poetry, beaten track: our paths, settled ways, without impulse or suddenness, are mysterious and humbling. They tell the tendency, of desire, of loving.
A life of journeys, an archive of paths trodden by innumerable feet.

The feeling intelligence, the way to the undiscovered, the way home. **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. **Amen.**

StF 696 For the healing of the nation's

For the healing of the nations, Lord, we pray with one accord; for a just and equal sharing of the things that earth affords. To a life of love in action help us rise and pledge our word.

Lead us forward into freedom; from despair your world release, that, redeemed from war and hatred, all may come and go in peace. Show us how through care and goodness fear will die and hope increase.

All that kills abundant living, let it from the earth be banned; pride of status, race, or schooling, dogmas that obscure your plan. In our common quest for justice may we hallow life's brief span.

You, Creator-God, have written your great name on humankind; for our growing in your likeness bring the life of Christ to mind; that by our response and service earth its destiny may find.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Oi6d2sRUB1c

A sending out prayer:

As we go, Lord, please help us to look up, seeking the things that honour and please you, letting go of the things that damage us and others, clothed with Christ-likeness, to live and work to your praise and glory. **Amen.**