

Worship at Home Service Sunday 12th January 2025 with Revd Ian Forsyth

A call to worship:

Jesus said, 'Come to me all you who are weary and burdened.' So let us come to him now with the weariness of our return to everyday life, and the burdens of the year ahead. Let us put them and ourselves into his strong arms, so that he can lower us into the waters and raise us, cleansed and refreshed.
Amen.

A gathering prayer

God, our loving parent, you encouraged Jesus at his baptism, saying you were well pleased when he presented himself along with the community for baptism in the Jordan. May you be pleased with us as we present ourselves here today.
Amen.

Spirit of the living God StF 395

Spirit of the Living God,
Fall afresh on me,
Spirit of the Living God,
Fall afresh on me.
Break me, melt me,
mould me, fill me.
Spirit of the Living God,
Fall afresh on me.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6uhbt5dgX4w>

Bible readings

Psalms 29; Luke 3 v 15-17

Reflection:

Today we are going to reflect on Psalm 29 as we journey through this year. We are twelve days into 2025, and Psalm 29 encourages us to raise up in a song of praise, through the storms of life. The writer of this Psalm uses descriptive language to illustrate the power of the storms. I wonder whether there is a more terrifying description of a storm in the Bible. The Psalmist describes the crashes and the trembles in this Psalm through the vivid imagery in the words. The storms may rage, the destruction may increase, but God has not lost control of his world.

In verse 10 he reminds us he is 'above the flood and has taken his seat as King for ever'.

In life we often experience difficult times, and it was back in November 2024 I heard the very sad news of one of my best friend's fathers who died, and the memories of both us spending time together with his father brought tears of sadness to my eyes. Hebrews 11 v 13 says 'Each one of these people of faith died not yet having in hand what was promised, but still believing. How did they do it? They saw it way off in the distance, waved their greeting, and accepted the fact that they were transients in this world'.

Within hours of hearing this news I heard of the preacher Tony Campolo who also died, and I recall him visiting our Church in Northern Ireland where he opened his sermon with a bold statement, 'I have calculated how much your cars are worth in the church car park, and you have said that you cannot afford a youth worker and an assistant minister'. He went on to say that if you all sold your new cars and got second hand cars the Church would be able to further their mission to the community. This was over thirty years ago, and it reminded of a verse in Matthew's Gospel Chapter 6 v 21, 'For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also'. Tony Campolo studied John Wesley, the father of Methodism, in a class on "Christian classics." He said he was moved by the Wesleyan revival with its "social consciousness, attacking slavery, championing the rights of women, ending child labour laws." The Late Tony Campolo said: "The Wesleyan vision was warm-hearted evangelism with an incredible social vision, trying to see the world as he saw it, changed me greatly."

As we travel through our journey in this world, we can support each other in the difficulties and storms in our lives. With God, we can help those around us and can praise God in the midst of a storm. I close with a song that reminds us that God gives us the 'strength to face the day'.

Praise is rising, eyes are turning to You, we turn to You

*Hope is stirring, hearts are yearning for You,
we long for You
Cause when we see You, we find strength to
face the day*

*In Your Presence all our fears are washed
away, washed away*

*Hosanna, hosanna
You are the God Who saves us, worthy of all
our praises
Hosanna, hosanna
Come have Your way among us
We welcome You here, Lord Jesus
Hosanna (Praise Is Rising) by Paul Baloche.*

A prayer of adoration

Epiphany God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit,
we adore you. Parent (Father) God, you care
for us, tend to our wounds and swaddle us
with love:
we adore you.

Lord Jesus Christ, you were born for us, lived
for us, suffered for us, died for us, raised for
us:
we adore you.

Holy Spirit, you were poured out upon us at
baptism and beyond, poured out for our
blessing and our faith:
we adore you.

Epiphany God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit,
we adore you. Amen.

Assurance of forgiveness

Almighty, Eternal God, we have walked
journeys we should not have walked; done
things we should not have done; said words
that should not have been spoken. We have
ignored the gifts of your Spirit, seeking to
quench it rather than be cleansed by it. We
have been as silent as a dark night when we
should have been like a crackling fire bringing
comfort, warmth and reassurance. Almighty
and Eternal God, forgive us, we pray, and
kindle your flame within us.
Amen.

A prayer of praise

Praise the Lord's glorious name. Praise the
Lord for glory and power. Praise the Lord for
his voice heard above the storms of life.
Praise the Lord for strength in our weakness.
Praise the Lord who blesses us with peace.
Praise the Lord whose Spirit is poured out for
us. Praise the Lord whose Spirit is kindled
within our hearts. Praise the Lord whose love
everlasting is forever our comfort. Praise the
Lord who's very being has transformed us.
Praise the Lord who walks each step of life
with us. Praise the Lord, Praise the Lord!
Amen.

I heard the voice of Jesus say StF 248

I heard the voice of Jesus say,
"Come unto Me and rest;
lay down, thou weary one, lay down
thy head upon My breast."
I came to Jesus as I was,
so weary, worn, and sad;
I found in Him a resting place,
and He has made me glad.

I heard the voice of Jesus say,
"Behold, I freely give
the living water, thirsty one;
stoop down, and drink, and live."
I came to Jesus, and I drank
of that life-giving stream;
my thirst was quenched, my soul revived,
and now I live in Him.

I heard the voice of Jesus say,
"I am this dark world's Light;
look unto Me, thy morn shall rise,
and all thy day be bright."
I looked to Jesus, and I found
in Him my Star, my Sun;
and in that Light of life I'll walk,
till trav'ling days are done.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=74kyfROS4q8>

A sending out prayer:

King Jesus, may you be enthroned in our
lives,
and may we seek to live according to your
will,
as members of your kingdom, this week and
always. **Amen.**