

Worship@Home 19th March 2023 4th Sunday in Lent & Mothering Sunday with Revd David Speirs

Opening Prayer:

Loving God, You nurture and care for all. Today, we give thanks for our mother churches where we were encouraged and developed on our faith journey. We lift up and thank you for the many mothers in our communities. We remember that today is a reminder of the different ways people can mother or be mothered. Gather us, Lord, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings.

Amen.

Taken from All We Can 'A prayer for Mothers'
<https://www.allwecan.org.uk/prayers/a-prayer-for-mothers/>

StF 88 – Praise to the Lord

<https://youtu.be/cIS9fBwOrk8>

Praise to the Lord, the Almighty, the King of creation! O my soul, praise him, for he is your health and salvation! All you who hear, now to his temple draw near, praise him in glad adoration.

Praise to the Lord, who has fearfully, wondrously, made us; Shelters us under his wings and so gently sustains us. Have you not seen all you have needed has been granted because he ordains it?

Praise to the Lord, who does prosper your work and defend you. Surely his goodness and mercy will daily attend you. Ponder anew what the Almighty can do, if with his love he befriends you.

Praise to the Lord, O let all that is in me adore him! All that has life and breath, come now with praises before him. Let the 'Amen!' sound from his people again; gladly because we adore him.

Alanna Glover | Catherine Winkworth | Joachim Neander | © 2018 Glover, Alanna. CCLI Song Number: 7125857

Please read:

Psalm 23

<https://bible.oremus.org/?ql=256097309>

Time to Reflect

The psalm that we have today as our lectionary reading is one of the most well-known and shared verses found in the Old Testament/Hebrew Bible. It has been the inspiration for a number of hymns and worship songs, including one rendition that became the theme to the popular BBC TV comedy series 'The Vicar of Dibley'. Psalm 23 is perhaps most commonly encountered in funeral services, providing hope and comfort to those who have lost loved ones. Yet its application is perhaps most relevant to our lives of faith as an encouragement to trust in God as we journey with him.

Psalm 23 speaks to those who are going through challenging and troubled times but it is also a passage that speaks to our daily experience of faith. The psalm is essentially one of trust; trusting that God is guiding us through life and leading us on, along difficult paths, to the place that he calls us to be. In the psalm God is a shepherd and a host who lays a table and anoints us, denoting our loved and cared for status. God is the one who leads us and is the one who welcomes us into his divine presence and encourages us to trust in him.

The entire basis of the trust that we place in God is built on the promises that he has made to us. A promise that God is always with us and a promise that we should not be afraid. Despite being surrounded by enemies and constant threats of danger, the psalmist knows that they can rely on the God who never leaves and never abandons his flock.

In the New Testament Jesus identifies himself as the 'Good Shepherd' who lays down his life for the sheep (John 10; 11). Jesus therefore is the fulfilment of God's promise that he will be amongst us and also that his presence with us will guide and save us. Jesus sacrifice on the cross, and his raising at Easter, is the demonstration that God will journey with us through everything: Life and death, bringing us through the other side into eternal life.

This Sunday is commonly known as 'Mothering Sunday' and is historically the time when people would return to their 'mother' church in which they were baptised. More recently, it has become a day where mothers and those who mother are celebrated.

On this day it is often pointed out that 'mothering' role that God takes on in the Bible. For example when God is described as being like a mother bear who defends her cubs (Hosea 13:8) or as an eagle above her nest (Deuteronomy 32:11-12), as one who births us (Deuteronomy 32:18), and as a comforting and nursing mother (Isaiah 49:15 & Isaiah 49:15). In the New Testament, Jesus speaks of the God who is a mother hen who seeks to gather in her chicks (Matthew 23:37 and Luke 13:34). The Shepherd also acts like a parent as they guide, feed and lead their flock to the pastures, caring for them every step of the way.

In a change of time and uncertainty Psalm 23 reminds us that we are never alone in what we are facing. We have God as our divine parent and Jesus as a shepherd, guiding us through the presence of the Holy Spirit. Even when we do not know where we are going we know that we are accompanied, cared for, and protected by God as we follow Jesus. Not only this, but recognised as precious by the one who has made us and given us life. It is the knowledge of that extravagant love, in which we are made members of God's household, that helps us as we journey.

So this Sunday we give thanks for all those who have guided and mothered us in our lives. Yet most of all we give thanks to God, who in Christ and the Holy Spirit, is always present for us.

Video

Psalm 23, Maggie's Story, The Bible Society.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Oz4_M9O0jNY&t

Prayer of Intercession

You are invited to pray silently for:

The needs of the world...
The Church and its calling...
Loved ones going through difficult times...
For peace, justice, and reconciliation...
In Jesus name. Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name;
thy kingdom come;

thy will be done;
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation;
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
the power and the glory,
for ever and ever.
Amen.

STF 481 – The Lord's my Shepherd

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oKJfs8C14yc>

The Lord's my shepherd, I'll not want;
He makes me lie in pastures green.
He leads me by the still, still waters,
His goodness restores my soul.

*And I will trust in You alone,
And I will trust in You alone,
For Your endless mercy follows me,
Your goodness will lead me home.*

He guides my ways in righteousness,
And He anoints my head with oil,
And my cup, it overflows with joy,
I feast on His pure delights.

And though I walk the darkest path,
I will not fear the evil one,
For you are with me, and your rod and staff
Are the comfort I need to know.

Stuart Townend © 1996 Thankyou Music.
CCLI Song Number: 1585970

Final Prayer

May the Lord who brought us to birth by his Spirit, strengthen us for the Christian life.
May the Lord who provides for all our needs sustain us day by day.
May the Lord whose steadfast love is constant as a mother's care, send us out to live and work for others.

And the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be with you and remain with you always. Amen.

Benediction for Mothering Sunday by the Mothers Union <https://re-worship.blogspot.com/2012/03/mothering-sunday-benediction.html>