

Home Worship sheet Sunday 11 July 2021.
Mr David Webb

Prayer of Approach:

God, our God

This morning we gather to worship You.

We come together, each of us from our own lives,
with our own thoughts, and hopes, and worries.

Let us bring our hearts, with all that weighs on them, before You this morning in worship. And unburden us, do not let us be weighed down, but instead send Your Spirit anew among us, and clear in our hearts and minds a space to focus on You and our relationship with You. **Amen.**

Hymn: StF 25. God is here, as we his people meet to offer praise and prayer
God is here! As we his people meet to offer praise and prayer,
may we find in fuller measure what it is in Christ we share:
Here, as in the world around us, all our varied skills and arts
wait the coming of His Spirit into open minds and hearts.

Here are symbols to remind us of our lifelong need of grace;
Here are table, font and pulpit, here the cross has central place.
Here in honesty of preaching, here in silence, as in speech,
here in newness and renewal, God the Spirit comes to each.

Here our children find a welcome in the Shepherd's flock and fold;
Here as bread and wine are taken, Christ sustains us as of old.
Here the servants of the Servant seek in worship to explore
What it means in daily living to believe and to adore.

Lord of all, of Church and Kingdom, in an age of change and doubt,
keep us faithful to the gospel, help us work your purpose out.
Here, in this day's dedication, all we have to give, receive;
we who cannot live without you, we adore you! We believe.

Prayer of Praise and Thanksgiving, Confession and Absolution:

Accept, O Lord, our thanks and praise for all that you have done for us. We thank you for the splendour of the whole creation, for the beauty of this world, for the wonder of life, and for the mystery of love.

We thank you for the blessing of family and friends, and for the loving care which surrounds us on every side.

We thank you for setting us at tasks that demand our best efforts, and for leading us to accomplishments, which satisfy and delight us. We thank you also for those disappointments and failures that lead to acknowledge our dependence on you alone.

We thank you for your loving care throughout the C19 pandemic in the skill and dedication of all the Emergency Services – ambulance, hospital, fire and police and all others who worked for our Good.

Above all, we thank you for your Son Jesus Christ; for the truth of his Word and the example of his life; for his steadfast obedience, by which he overcame temptation; for his dying, through which he overcame death; and for his rising to life again, in which we are raised to the life of your kingdom.

Grant us the gift of your Spirit, that we may know Christ and make him known; and through him, at all times and in all places, may give thanks to you in all things. **Amen.**

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Gracious and loving God, open our hearts so that we are able to admit to you the fullness of our lives – that which is beautiful and good, and that which is hurtful and hateful.

We confess that we do not follow Jesus in all that we do.

We love with condition.

We judge and condemn.

We cast the first stone, and keep the logs in our own eyes.

We do not turn to You as the source of our healing.

Forgive us, we pray. Forgive our sin, and empower us to be imitators of Christ in love and service. Amen.

ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS

Friends in Christ, know this: the mercy of God is from everlasting to everlasting, and I remind you of this surpassing grace – in Jesus Christ, we are forgiven.

Alleluia! **Amen.**

Hymn. StF 251.

1. Jesus is waiting, waiting in the streets, no one is his neighbour, all alone he eats
Listen, Lord Jesus, I am lonely too. Make me friend or stranger, fit to wait on you.
2. Jesus Christ is raging, raging in the streets; where injustice spirals and real hope retreats.
Listen Lord Jesus, I am angry too. In the Kingdom's causes, let me rage with you.
3. Jesus Christ is healing, healing in the streets, curing those who suffer, touching those he greets
Listen Lord Jesus, I have pity too, Let my care be active, healing just like you.
4. Jesus Christ is dancing, dancing in the streets, where each sign of hatred, his strong love defeats
Listen Lord Jesus, I feel triumph too. On suspicion's graveyard, let me dance with you.
5. Jesus Christ is calling, calling in the streets. 'Come and walk faith's tightrope, I will guide your feet'.
Listen, Lord Jesus, let my fears be few. Walk one step before me, I will follow you..'

Readings: Amos 7. 12-17.

Amaziah said to Amos, "O seer, go, flee away to the land of Judah, earn your bread there, and prophesy there; 13 but never again prophesy at Bethel, for it is the king's sanctuary, and it is a temple of the kingdom." Then Amos answered Amaziah, "I am no prophet, nor a prophet's son; but I am a herdsman, and a dresser of sycamore trees, 15 and the Lord took me from following the flock, and the Lord said to me, 'Go, prophesy to my people Israel.'

Mark 6. 14-29. King Herod heard of it, for Jesus'[a] name had become known. Some were[b] saying, "John the baptizer has been raised from the dead; and for this reason these powers are at work in him." 15 But others said, "It is Elijah." And others said, "It is a prophet, like one of the prophets of old." 16 But when Herod heard of it, he said, "John, whom I beheaded, has been raised."

17 For Herod himself had sent men who arrested John, bound him, and put him in prison on account of Herodias, his brother Philip's wife, because Herod[c] had married her. 18 For John had been telling Herod, "It is not lawful for you to have your brother's wife." 19 And Herodias had a grudge against him, and wanted to kill him. But she could not, 20 for Herod feared John, knowing that he was a righteous and holy man, and he protected him. When he heard him, he was greatly perplexed;[d] and yet he liked to listen to him. 21 But an opportunity came when Herod on his birthday gave a banquet for his courtiers and officers and for the leaders of Galilee. 22 When his daughter Herodias[e] came in and danced, she pleased Herod and his guests; and the king said to the girl, "Ask me for whatever you wish, and I will give it." 23 And he solemnly swore to her, "Whatever you ask me, I will give you, even half of my kingdom." 24 She went out and said to her mother, "What should I ask for?" She replied, "The head of John the baptizer." 25 Immediately she rushed back to the king and requested, "I want you to give me at once the head of John the Baptist on a platter." 26 The king was deeply grieved; yet out of regard for his oaths and for the guests, he did not want to refuse her. 27 Immediately the king sent a soldier of the guard with orders to bring John's[f] head. He went and beheaded him in the prison, 28 brought his head on a platter, and gave it to the girl. Then the girl gave it to her mother. 29 When his disciples heard about it, they came and took his body, and laid it in a tomb.

Talk:

Well, the lives of prophets don't seem too sure, do they? The verses we have from Amos don't seem too bad do they? But we must not forget what he has said in God's words, for example, earlier in what is now chapter 5 – "**Don't worship the pagan gods at Bethel... Instead I[God] want to see a mighty flood of justice, an endless river of righteous living**". Words like that don't get you friends. Amos was murdered later on.

Another prophet -Micah - around the same time had this to say – speaking God's words: **He has shown you, O Man, what is good: and what does the Lord require of you? But to do justly and love mercy and to walk humbly with your God?!**

A very similar message to Amos' - words people don't want to hear. Today as yesterday. For we have to question where is the justice, where is the righteous living as we look around our country and the world.

And we come to the story of John the Baptist. We have John himself – with a message not unlike the two prophets before him: **Repent, repent and live righteously**. Aimed at each of us and still as relevant today as it hit home then, even in the highest rank of local society: Herod Antipas – a puppet ruler for Rome – and his family. Herod had stolen the wife of Philip his brother and because of the complexities or the relationships within that family, also his niece. John spoke publicly about the situation, eventually getting himself arrested and made Herod feel very guilty about this. Herodias, the stolen wife, felt anger - revenge instead. Her opportunity came a little later when Herod had been entertaining his cronies on his birthday and his step-daughter, Herodias, danced for them. He asked what she would like – so being only a teenager, she asked her Mum for help. Mum said: **Ask for John the Baptist's head on a platter**. Herod felt even worse after this request which he had to carry out or lose face.

Dangerous times for a prophet then. But have they changed? We can think of Dietrich Bonhoeffer in WW2 for standing up against Hitler. We remember Martin Luther King, or Archbishop Romero, both dying for justice and equality. So dying is still one of the risks a prophet still runs.

Are we prophets? Well, yes we are. We have challenges for our courage to speak out against the injustices and lies now as then. **Amen.**

Hymn StF. 504. May the mind of Christ my Saviour, live in me from day to day

May the mind of Christ my Savior
Live in me from day to day,
By His love and pow'r controlling
All I do and say.

May the Word of Christ dwell richly
In my heart from hour to hour,
So that all may see I triumph
Only through His pow'r.

May the peace of Christ my Savior
Rule my life in every thing,
That I may be calm to comfort
Sick and sorrowing.

May the love of Jesus fill me,
As the waters fill the sea;
Him exalting, self abasing,
This is victory.

May I run the race before me,
Strong and brave to face the foe,
Looking only unto Jesus
As I onward go.

May His beauty rest upon me
As I seek the lost to win,
And may they forget the channel,
Seeing only Him.

Our Prayers for Others and Ourselves

At the end of each section after a pause for thought there is a bidding and a response,

Lord, in your Mercy: Hear our Prayer

Holy God we pray for your Church, we pray for our particular denomination that it may truly seek your truth and speak your word of saving grace. May we, its members, be happy to accept the wide variety of understanding, thought and theology that makes us vibrant and living in your Spirit. May we seek co-operation and fellowship with all other denominations and extend that hand of fellowship to Islamic, Jewish and all other seekers after God.

(Short Silence) **Lord, in your Mercy: Hear our Prayer**

Creator God we pray for the leaders of the world carrying responsibilities for the lives of their people. We pray for the Governments of the world that they may seek the Common Good and we pray for all still affected by the Coronavirus and for a new determination to end the Pandemic which brings with it so much fear, heartache and suffering.

(Short Silence) **Lord, in your Mercy: Hear our Prayer**

Gracious God we pray for those who feel excluded, exploited or ignored and for all who are still unable to resume normal level of employment because of the Pandemic's effect on industry, agriculture and tourism. Help us, your people, to work together to build a community which is as open and generous as your love, shown to us in the gift of your Son Jesus Christ.

(Short Silence) **Lord, in your Mercy: Hear our Prayer**

Loving God we pray for healing in body, mind and spirit for all who are in need. We pray that in lives darkened by any kind of pain, distress or grief the light of Christ will bring comfort, hope and a sense of your all-encompassing love.

(Short Silence) **Lord, in your Mercy: Hear our Prayer**

Lord, your love reaches beyond the grave. At the end of our days on earth be with us and with those we love and with those whom we love and have gone before us. Fit us to join them in your loving glory in our due time . We pray for those who have recently died and those bereaved by their passing, thinking of those we know and those we don't know who suffer the same grief and loss

(Short Silence) **Lord, in your Mercy: Hear our Prayer**

And so Heavenly Father we thank you for the opportunity of being together in prayer. As we look forward to the week to come, we pray for an awareness of your love and support in all we do.

Merciful Father: **accept these prayers for the sake of your Son, our Saviour, Jesus Christ. Amen.**

Amen.

We pray the prayer Jesus taught us to say:

*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.

Our Going-Out Prayer:

We can't go anywhere
outside the love of God,
each day is full of praise
and thanksgiving.

Let us go in praise.
Let us go in thanksgiving.

Let our feet
tap to the rhythm of God
in the world.

For let us remember that:

GOD IS GOOD All the Time

ALL THE TIME God is Good

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. AMEN.