

DSW Written Service 4<sup>th</sup> February 2024 by Revd Ruth Lownsborough

Welcome to this act of worship. As you pray, read and reflect, know that others worship with you.

Call to worship          Psalm 147: 7 & 11

Sing to the Lord with thanksgiving; make melody to our God on the lyre.

The Lord takes pleasure in those who fear him, in those who hope in his steadfast love.

Hymn StF 20 Be still for the presence of the Lord, the holy One is here    *David J Evans*

1 Be still, for the presence of the Lord,  
The holy One, is here;  
Come bow before him now  
With reverence and fear  
In him no sin is found  
We stand on holy ground.  
Be still, for the presence of the Lord,  
The holy One, is here.

2 Be still, for the glory of the Lord  
Is shining all around;  
He burns with holy fire,  
With splendour he is crowned:  
How awesome is the sight

Our radiant king of light!  
Be still, for the glory of the Lord  
Is shining all around.

3 Be still, for the power of the Lord  
Is moving in this place:  
He comes to cleanse and heal,  
To minister his grace -  
No work too hard for him.  
In faith receive from him.  
Be still, for the power of the Lord  
Is moving in this place.

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Prayer of Praise: Almighty, awesome God, revealed to us in Jesus Christ;

You are maker of heaven and earth.

You know the number of the stars and follow the wind on which the birds soar.

You know when there is thunder in the hills, when the valleys flood with rain,  
how the heavens stretch out like a tent to cover the breadth of our world.

You provide the means by which we can grow food to eat and resources which sustain our daily lives.

A season is a moment to you, and yet you know and call us, each one by name.

Not a single individual is forgotten or disregarded by you.

We offer you our grateful thanks; it is good to sing your praise. **Amen.**

Prayer of Confession: The Lord takes pleasure in those who fear him, in those who hope in his steadfast love. But there are many times when we lose sight of God's purposes, we make mistakes and hurt others. Let us bring to God those things that we know we have got wrong this past week, or before, asking for forgiveness and mercy.

*Silence*

How good it is to sing praises to our God, for he is gracious; he gathers the outcasts.

The Lord lifts up the downtrodden; he heals the broken-hearted, and binds up their wounds.

Thank you God that in Jesus, you give us the chance to make a new start. Help us to reflect your love more clearly. **Amen.**

**Lord's Prayer**

Readings: Isaiah 40: 21-31

21 Have you not known? Have you not heard?                      of the earth?  
Has it not been told you from the beginning?  
Have you not understood from the foundations

22 It is he who sits above the circle of the earth,  
 and its inhabitants are like grasshoppers;  
 who stretches out the heavens like a curtain,  
 and spreads them like a tent to live in;  
 23 who brings princes to naught,  
 and makes the rulers of the earth as nothing.  
 24 Scarcely are they planted, scarcely sown,  
 scarcely has their stem taken root in the earth,  
 when he blows upon them, and they wither,  
 and the tempest carries them off like stubble.  
 25 To whom then will you compare me,  
 or who is my equal? says the Holy One.  
 26 Lift up your eyes on high and see:  
 Who created these?  
 He who brings out their host and numbers them,  
 calling them all by name;  
 because he is great in strength,  
 mighty in power, not one is missing.

27 Why do you say, O Jacob,  
 and speak, O Israel,  
 'My way is hidden from the Lord,  
 and my right is disregarded by my God'?  
 28 Have you not known? Have you not heard?  
 The Lord is the everlasting God,  
 the Creator of the ends of the earth.  
 He does not faint or grow weary;  
 his understanding is unsearchable.  
 29 He gives power to the faint,  
 and strengthens the powerless.  
 30 Even youths will faint and be weary,  
 and the young will fall exhausted;  
 31 but those who wait for the Lord shall renew  
 their strength,  
 they shall mount up with wings like eagles,  
 they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk  
 and not faint.

Mark 1: 29-39 After Jesus left the synagogue with James and John, they went to Simon and Andrew's home. Now Simon's mother-in-law was sick in bed with a high fever. They told Jesus about her right away. So he went to her bedside, took her by the hand, and helped her sit up. Then the fever left her, and she prepared a meal for them.

That evening after sunset, many sick and demon-possessed people were brought to Jesus. The whole town gathered at the door to watch. So Jesus healed many people who were sick with various diseases, and he cast out many demons. But because the demons knew who he was, he did not allow them to speak.

Before daybreak the next morning, Jesus got up and went out to an isolated place to pray. Later Simon and the others went out to find him. When they found him, they said, "Everyone is looking for you."

But Jesus replied, "We must go on to other towns as well, and I will preach to them, too. That is why I came." So he travelled throughout the region of Galilee, preaching in the synagogues and casting out demons.

### Reflection

I often make a list of things to do; It helps me not to forget to do them and gives a sense of achievement when you can tick off an item or put a line through it. Such lists can also show how busy we sometimes are and help us to prioritise the 'must do' tasks.

In the reading from Mark's gospel, Jesus had had a busy day by anyone's calculations, emphasised by the sense of urgency with which Mark writes; everything is immediately, straight away, at once. Perhaps this is reflecting Mark's concern and urgency about the work and discipleship of those who would read his gospel.....Come on, there's work to be done in Jesus' name!

Jesus' day looked something like this:

- Teaching/preaching in synagogue at Capernaum
- Healed a man with unclean spirit at the synagogue, in the middle of worship, disrupting usual procedure.
- Went to Simon's house, healed Simon's mother-in-law from a fever. She immediately tended to our needs.

- In the evening healed many people, physically and mentally. Silenced peoples' demons

Jesus didn't make a TO DO list like we do, he had a mission and each day was shaped by it. He had come to proclaim God's kingdom, his authority and purpose was evident in all that he did, responding to peoples' need as he came across them. Jesus healed and restored people, enabling them to be part of their community again.

On this particular day, the demons were destroyed and people made well. It didn't happen just in the regular place of worship, the synagogue, but also in people's homes.

Mark, the gospel writer, reflects that his readers, after Jesus' resurrection, were not in the synagogues, having been rejected by more orthodox Jews, but met in each other's houses. Jesus' power and authority was active anywhere, anytime....it still is!!

I'm sure from our own experience of a busy day, we can imagine Jesus being physically and mentally tired by the time he got some rest.

The next morning, before light, Jesus went off alone to pray. Jesus knew his need not only for physical rest but for spiritual refreshment and renewal too. Even though his ministry was only just beginning, he recognised the overwhelming need of the people and what he himself needed in order to serve them. So Jesus did what is most important....he spent time in prayer with God.

'Those who wait on the Lord will renew their strength, they shall rise up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint'. (Isaiah 40:31)

If the Son of God needed to spend time in prayer to be guided and strengthened, then we as God's children need to as well. How many times do we struggle along in our own strength, because we do not spend time with God each day?

God loves us and God wants us to intentionally spend time in his presence, however we find we can do that most easily. There are many ways to seek God but what matters is that we actually do it.

At the beginning of this year, many Methodists renewed their covenant relationship with God in a Covenant service and prayed the Covenant Prayer, putting everything about our lives under God's direction. Daily prayer and time with God nurtures us in that relationship and enables us to serve God.

The needs we come across in our everyday lives may feel overwhelming. We might experience a sense of helplessness, weakness, inability to make any difference to the situation of others. Or sometimes we can feel overwhelmed by our own personal situations/circumstances.



I invite you to take a look at this picture and imagine yourself as one who has come to Jesus.

Perhaps you see yourself as one of the crowd who come to Jesus for healing?

Maybe you're finding it difficult to be alongside someone else in their need

Maybe there is something else weighing you down.

Spend some time in the presence of Jesus and hear his word of restoration for you.

Whatever our situation, God has promised to be with us and when we spend time with God, bringing our worries, concerns, hopes and dreams to God, we will find support, strength and comfort.

'What a friend we have in Jesus, all our sins and grief to bear! What a privilege to carry everything to God in prayer' (StF 531). Amen

### Prayers of intercession

Heavenly Father, I wait on your healing power.  
Heal those who are sick. Restore those who are struggling.  
Comfort those who are distressed.  
As I wait, Lord, renew my strength.

Heavenly Father, I wait on your cleansing power.  
Forgive my sins. Change my bad habits.  
Transform my attitudes.  
As I wait, Lord, renew my strength.

Heavenly Father, I wait on the power of your good news.  
Open the eyes of those who are searching. Bring your light into places of darkness.  
Give your hope to those who are despairing.  
As I wait, Lord, renew my strength.

Heavenly Father, I wait on the power of your Spirit.  
Give courage and strength to those who serve.  
Refresh those who are weary.  
Give a new vision to those who dream.  
As I wait, Lord, renew my strength.

I pray all these prayers in the name of Jesus Christ, my Lord and Saviour. Amen

### **Hymn**

StF 652 Lord we come to ask your healing

Jean Holloway

1. Lord, we come to ask your healing,  
Teach us of love;  
All unspoken shame revealing,  
Teach us of love.  
Take our selfish thoughts and actions,  
Petty feuds, divisive factions,  
Hear us now to you appealing,  
Teach us of love.

2. Soothe away our pain and sorrow,  
Hold us in love;  
Grace we cannot buy or borrow,  
Hold us in love.  
Though we see but dark and danger,  
Though we spurn both friend and stranger,  
Though we often dread tomorrow  
Hold us in love

3. When the bread is raised and broken,  
Fill us with love;  
Words of consecration spoken,  
Fill us with love.  
As our grateful prayers continue,  
Make the faith that we have in you  
More than just an empty token,  
Fill us with love.

4. Help us live for one another,  
Bind us in love;  
Stranger, neighbour, father, mother –  
Bind us in love.  
All are equal at your table,  
Through your Spirit make us able  
To embrace as sister, brother,  
Bind us in love.,

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### Blessing & sending

God is with you every moment of every day. As you seek to serve and worship God, may you know the blessing and peace of God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen