

Dorset South & West Circuit Written Service 16th May 2021 Easter 7 prepared by Rev Ruth Lownsborough

Welcome to this act of worship. Take comfort that although you may be on your own, you are part of God's church, worshipping God together with others at this time.

Call to worship Psalm 1: 1-3

Happy are those
who do not follow the advice of the
wicked,
or take the path that sinners tread,
or sit in the seat of scoffers;
but their delight is in the law of the Lord,
and on his law they meditate day and

night.
They are like trees
planted by streams of water,
which yield their fruit in its season,
and their leaves do not wither.
In all that they do, they prosper.

Prayer of Adoration

God of yesterday, tomorrow and today, we are children of the world you love and care for. We praise you, heavenly Father, for calling us into relationship with you. We praise you, Lord Jesus, for the power of your name and the protection of your prayers. We praise you, Holy Spirit, for your guidance and gifts that enable us to draw others to you. For you are faithful in times of uncertainty, strong when we are weak, and the breath of all our being, the energy of all our doing and the peace of all our resting. Amen.

Hymn StF 343

All my days I will sing this song of
gladness,
Give my praise to the Fountain of delights;
For in my helplessness You heard my cry,
And waves of mercy poured down on my
life.

I will trust in the cross of my Redeemer,
I will sing of the blood that never fails;
Of sins forgiven, of conscience cleansed,
Of death defeated and life without end.

*Chorus: Beautiful Saviour, Wonderful
Counsellor,
Clothed in majesty, Lord of history,
You're the Way, the Truth, the Life.
Star of the Morning, glorious in holiness,
You're the Risen One, heaven's Champion
And You reign, You reign over all.*

I long to be where the praise is never-
ending,
Yearn to dwell where the glory never
fades;
Where countless worshippers will share
one song,
And cries of 'worthy' will honour the
Lamb!

*Beautiful Saviour, Wonderful Counsellor,
Clothed in majesty, Lord of history,
You're the Way, the Truth, the Life.
Star of the Morning, glorious in holiness,
You're the Risen One, heaven's Champion
And You reign, You reign over all.*

Stuart Townend ©1998 Thankyou Music

Prayer of Confession & assurance of Forgiveness

Forgive us, gracious God, when we have turned away from your word and immersed ourselves in the distractions of the world.

Forgive us, when we have sought to belong to the world and compromised your truth to fit in.

Forgive us, when we have bickered among ourselves and not shown the world that we are one.

Forgive us, when we have distanced ourselves from those you have called us to serve.

Forgive us, O God; protect us and unite us. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Gracious God, we thank you for the enduring prayer of Jesus for his disciples, which reaches and reassures us today as we walk in their footsteps, reminding us that we are not alone but protected, empowered, forgiven, and surrounded by your grace every step of the way. Amen.

Reading John 17: 6-19 Jesus prays for his people

⁶“I have made you known to those you gave me out of the world. They belonged to you, and you gave them to me. They have obeyed your word, ⁷and now they know that everything you gave me comes from you. ⁸I gave them the message that you gave me, and they received it; they know that it is true that I came from you, and they believe that you sent me.

⁹“I pray for them. I do not pray for the world but for those you gave me, for they belong to you. ¹⁰All I have is yours, and all you have is mine; and my glory is shown through them. ¹¹And now I am coming to you; I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world. Holy Father! Keep them safe by the power of your name, the name you gave me, so that they may be one just as you and I are one. ¹²While I was with them, I kept them safe by the power of your name, the name you gave me. I protected them, and not one of them was lost, except the man who was bound to be lost—so that the scripture might come true.

¹³And now I am coming to you, and I say these things in the world so that they might have my joy in their hearts in all its fullness. ¹⁴I gave them your message, and the world hated them, because they do not belong to the world, just as I do not belong to the world. ¹⁵I do not ask you to take them out of the world, but I do ask you to keep them safe from the Evil One.

¹⁶Just as I do not belong to the world, they do not belong to the world. ¹⁷Dedicate them to yourself by means of the truth; your word is truth. ¹⁸I sent them into the world, just as you sent me into the world. ¹⁹And for their sake I dedicate myself to you, in order that they, too, may be truly dedicated to you.



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What are your first impressions as you look at this image?

How does prayer help you in uncertain times?

How would you describe the potential of prayer?

Reflection: I remember the early times that Richard and I were entrusted with looking after our young grandchildren for a weekend. Our daughter wrote out a comprehensive list of instructions not because she didn't trust our ability to cope but because she cared so deeply for all of us and wanted the weekend to go smoothly. She trusted, not just that we would be ok, but that we would all have a wonderful time together which, of course, we did, even if it was tiring!

In the reading from John's gospel, Jesus knows that soon he will be separated from his disciples as he walks the path to crucifixion, resurrection and beyond, leaving his disciples to continue his Father's work. Jesus knows that his friends will need all the help and protection that God can provide, once he is no longer physically with them. Jesus prays a fervent prayer commending the disciples to his Father's loving care and asking God to dedicate them to himself by means of the truth of God's word. This gospel was written at a time of severe hardship and persecution of the early church

Today, in our time, we too can hear this prayer as Jesus' disciples, the ones who are called to continue God's mission in all kinds of circumstances, empowered by the Holy Spirit.

Jesus himself knew the importance and power of prayer as the gospel accounts testify to the many times when he withdrew to a quiet place to spend time with God, his Father who had loved and cared for him whilst on earth. Prayer is the basis of our living relationship with God, the way in which we can communicate with God, giving and receiving.

Perhaps, at a difficult time, you have known the support which comes from knowing that you are being held before God in the prayers of others.

Prayer is a powerful activity which can be life-changing when it is offered in the name of Jesus.

Prayer is also something that sometimes people feel anxious about, that their prayers are not quite right, not acceptable enough. There are many different ways to pray, as many as the people that are praying; what's important is sharing with God what's on our hearts, our prayerfulness and sincerity towards God and how we live that out in our everyday lives.

Know that today, you are held in the heart of God and prayer is keeping company with the God who loves us, no matter what. Amen.

Hymn StF 658

A charge to keep I have, a God to glorify,
A never dying soul to save, and fit it for the sky.

To serve the present age, my calling to fulfill:
O may it all my powers engage to do my Master's will!

Arm me with jealous care, as in your sight to live;
And O your servant, Lord, prepare a strict account to give!

Help me to watch and pray, and on yourself rely,
so shall I not my trust betray, nor love within me die. Charles Wesley

Prayers of Intercession *Spend time now to bring to God those people on your heart*
All-powerful God, who understands our needs before we think and speak, we unload our pains and joys, our sorrows and our celebrations, and bring our prayers before you, trusting that you hear us in our need. We pray:

for the hurting and the hurt;

for the loved and the loveless;

for the young and old;

for believers and non-believers;

for those certain of their faith and those who waver;

for those of different faiths and identities from us;

for the ill and those in pain and distress;

for the dying and those whose bodies are etched with the marks of death and dying;

for the grieving whose minds are bewildered and burdened by grief.

All-powerful God, surround each and every one with the circle of your protection. **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.**

Blessing & Sending

God of love, may our worship and prayers continue as you lead us into the coming days.

We ask in the name of Jesus, whose whole life was an offering of worship to you.

And may God's blessing be with us always. **Amen.**