



## Worship@Home

Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> February 2023

Sixth in Ordinary Time



### Call to worship

We come to worship  
knowing that God wants us  
to live up to his high standards.  
May we learn to live as he asks,  
treating everyone as Jesus would.

### STF 83: Praise my soul, the King of heaven

*Sing/read/pray the words or listen to it here*  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GyRIVbdsi4c>

Praise my soul, the King of heaven;  
to his feet thy tribute bring.  
Ransomed, healed, restored, forgiven,  
who like thee his praise should sing?  
Praise him! Praise him!  
Praise him! Praise him!  
Praise the everlasting King!

Praise him for his grace and favour  
to his people in distress;  
praise him, still the same for ever,  
slow to chide and swift to bless.  
Praise him! Praise him!  
Praise him! Praise him!  
Glorious in his faithfulness.

Father-like, he tends and spares us;  
well our feeble frame he knows;  
in his hands he gently bears us,  
rescues us from all our foes.  
Praise him! Praise him!  
Praise him! Praise him!  
Widely as his mercy flows.

Angels in the height adore him;  
ye behold him face to face;  
sun and moon bow down before him,  
dwellers all in time and space.  
Praise him! Praise him!  
Praise him! Praise him!  
Praise with us the God of grace!

Henry Francis Lyte (1793-18470)

### Let us pray together

God of Integrity,  
God of truth and wisdom,  
we worship and adore you.  
Jesus who lived without sin,  
who lived life in all its fullness,  
we worship and adore you.  
Holy Spirit, who leads and guides us  
to live with honesty and sincerity,  
we worship and adore you. **Amen.**

### A Prayer of confession

Reconciling God,  
forgive us when we make wrong choices,  
when our decisions are not of honesty and integrity.

#### **Reconciling God, we choose life.**

Forgive us when we hurt others by our words and  
actions.

#### **Reconciling God, we choose life.**

Forgive us when we judge others and think ourselves  
better.

#### **Reconciling God, we choose life.**

Forgive us when relationships break down and we do  
not want to repair them.

#### **Reconciling God, we choose life.**

Forgive us when we don't strive for peace.

#### **Reconciling God, we choose life – life in all its fullness in you.**

**Amen.**

### Gospel reading: Matthew 5:21-37

#### Reflection

In the 2002 film *Changing Lanes* starring Ben Affleck and Samuel L Jackson, one momentary incident turns two lives upside down. After lengthy bitterness and retaliation, eventually both parties realise they can work together to put things right for everyone, instead of being in conflict.

This week's Gospel reading starts with Jesus' counsel on seeking to resolve conflicts. Not just to seek an easier and happier life, but because it is one part of what it means to be – all the time – wholehearted, sincere, honest, pure, not rude, not angry, and more. Don't start by thinking 'it wasn't me'; if someone has an issue with you, take responsibility to sort it out – even if mending the situation, whoever started it, takes as much courage as cutting off a hand. Or to put it another way, don't give yourself up to evil thoughts but ask 'What would Jesus do?' And, even if truly you didn't start it, leave it to God to judge and respond. Remember that if you retaliate, God will judge you for how you acted!

Cutting off hands and plucking out eyes is not suggested here as our punishment for wrongdoing.

Rather it describes the radical scale of the action we may need to take to amend our lives to prevent our going astray. We wouldn't cut off your hand or pluck out an eye – so why do we contemplate doing these other awful things? Instead, we can choose a lifestyle and an attitude that reflects a life of integrity as a follower of Jesus.

Take a time to sit quietly

### **A time of prayer**

We pray for all those whose growth has been stifled. For children abused, neglected, criticised and bullied:  
**God of growth, may they know your love.**

For those in war zones, whose lives and homes have been destroyed:

God of growth, may they know your love.

For those suffering from illness, whose choices have been taken from them:

**God of growth, may they know your love.**

We pray for churches, communities and nations where division and prejudice have undermined trust and where pain and discord go unhealed:

**God of growth, may they know your love.**

We pray for animals captured and caged, for those who never feel the sun on their back and whose lives are cut terribly short:

**God of growth, may they know your love.**

We pray for ourselves, in every area of our lives, where we have not grown into the people we could be:

**may we know your love. Amen.**

### **The Lord's Prayer**

*Our Father .....*

### **StF 649: God! When human bonds are broken**

*sing/read/pray the words or listen to it here*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RVaHM4zJqo8&t=29s>

God ! When human bonds are broken  
and we lack the love or skill  
to restore the hope of healing,  
give us grace and make us still.

Through that stillness, with your Spirit  
come into our world of stress,  
for the sake of Christ forgiving  
all the failures we confess.

You in us are bruised and broken :  
hear us as we seek release  
from the pain of earlier living ;  
set us free and grant us peace.

Send us, God of new beginnings,  
humbly hopeful into life.

Use us as a means of blessing :  
make us stronger, give us faith

Give us faith to be more faithful,  
give us hope to be more true,  
give us love to go on learning :  
God ! Encourage and renew !

Fred Kaan (1929–2009)

### **A sending out prayer**

Loving Lord, we want to use  
our strong feelings to bring change;  
our words to encourage;  
our gifts to heal;  
our eyes to see as you see;  
our hands to give help.  
Lord, we choose life, we choose you.  
**Amen.**

### **Blessing**

God the creator of life, is with you.  
Christ, the Way, the Truth and the Life, is with you.  
The Holy Spirit, the Lord and giver of life is with you.  
And the blessing of God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit  
be with you.

Worship materials taken from [rootsontheweb.com](http://rootsontheweb.com)

Blessing taken from *Clouds and Glory* by David Adam

Hymns reproduced under Stretton Methodist Church CCCLi No 654548