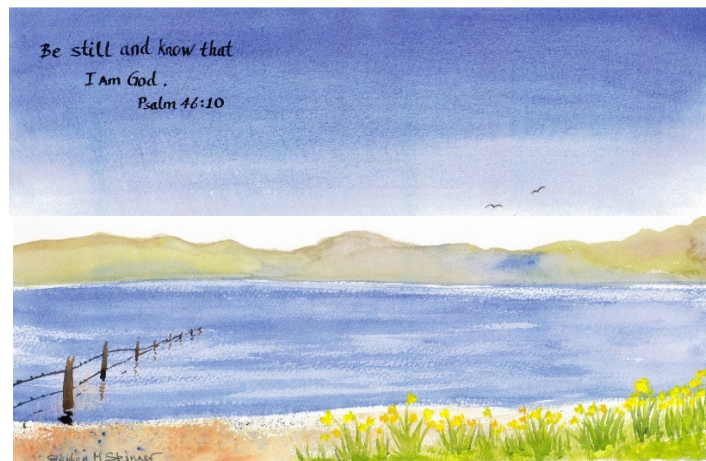


**Worship Sheet**  
**22<sup>nd</sup> March 2020 – the Fourth Sunday in Lent**

As we are unable to meet to worship at present, you are invited to use this Worship Sheet, knowing that your sisters and brothers in your Church Family will be doing the same. You can use it at any time, but if you would like to use it at 10.30am on Sunday, you will be worshipping God with many others. If it is safe to do so, and you keep a sensible distance, you may wish to meet with a neighbour to worship God together, but if you do this, please follow all the government guidelines. If you are worshipping on your own, I suggest that before you settle in your quiet place, that you switch off your telephone and then, when you are ready, perhaps light a candle, listen to a piece of music and have a moment of silence before using the sheet. I hope and pray that God will bless you as we worship him in our own homes, but together.

*Stephen.*



Hymn - Sing/ Read /pray /proclaim the words

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 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!  
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!  
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 with us the God of grace!

Henry Francis Lyte (1793-1

### A Prayer

Dear loving, heavenly Father,  
I thank you that I can come to you  
in this time of difficulty and uncertainty.  
I come to you, knowing that you are  
the source of love and comfort.  
I worship you, the Creator of heaven and earth,  
thanking you for your wonderful world,  
for the springtime and the signs of new life all around us.

I praise you for sending us your Son, our Lord Jesus  
and thank you Lord, during this time of Lent,  
for taking the road to Jerusalem,  
for dying in the cross to bring us forgiveness  
for all that I have done, said or thought,  
which separates me from you.  
I confess my wrongdoing to you

....

Thank you for forgiving me my sins.

I praise you, Father, for raising our Lord Jesus from the dead,  
For new life in you and for the hope  
and knowledge of eternal life in you.

Thank you for sending us your Holy Spirit,  
Who guides us, strengthens us and comforts us  
And fills us with your love, joy and peace day by day.

### *Silence*

These prayers I bring to you, I the name of Jesus,  
My Saviour, Lord and Friend, who taught us when to pray to say,

Our Father in heaven,  
hallowed be your name,  
your kingdom come,  
your will be done,  
on earth as in heaven.  
Give us today our daily bread.  
Forgive us our sins  
as we forgive those who sin against us.  
Lead us not into temptation  
but deliver us from evil.  
For the kingdom, the power,  
and the glory are yours  
now and for ever.  
Amen.

The Old Testament Lesson for today is 1 Samuel 16:1-13

16 The LORD said to Samuel, 'How long will you mourn for Saul, since I have rejected him as king over Israel? Fill your horn with oil and be on your way; I am sending you to Jesse of Bethlehem. I have chosen one of his sons to be king.'

<sup>2</sup> But Samuel said, 'How can I go? If Saul hears about it, he will kill me.' The LORD said, 'Take a heifer with you and say, "I have come to sacrifice to the LORD." <sup>3</sup> Invite Jesse to the sacrifice, and I will show you what to do. You are to anoint for me the one I indicate.'

<sup>4</sup> Samuel did what the LORD said. When he arrived at Bethlehem, the elders of the town trembled when they met him. They asked, 'Do you come in peace?'

<sup>5</sup> Samuel replied, 'Yes, in peace; I have come to sacrifice to the LORD. Consecrate yourselves and come to the sacrifice with me.' Then he consecrated Jesse and his sons and invited them to the sacrifice.

<sup>6</sup> When they arrived, Samuel saw Eliab and thought, 'Surely the LORD's anointed stands here before the LORD.'

<sup>7</sup> But the LORD said to Samuel, 'Do not consider his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him. The LORD does not look at the things people look at. People look at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart.'

<sup>8</sup> Then Jesse called Abinadab and made him pass in front of Samuel. But Samuel said, 'The LORD has not chosen this one either.' <sup>9</sup> Jesse then made Shammah pass by, but Samuel said, 'Nor has the LORD chosen this one.' <sup>10</sup> Jesse made seven of his sons pass before Samuel, but Samuel said to him, 'The LORD has not chosen these.' <sup>11</sup> So he asked Jesse, 'Are these all the sons you have?'

'There is still the youngest,' Jesse answered. 'He is tending the sheep.' Samuel said, 'Send for him; we will not sit down until he arrives.'

<sup>12</sup> So he sent for him and had him brought in. He was glowing with health and had a fine appearance and handsome features.

Then the LORD said, 'Rise and anoint him; this is the one.'

<sup>13</sup> So Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the presence of his brothers, and from that day on the Spirit of the LORD came powerfully upon David. Samuel then went to Ramah.

### Psalm 23

<sup>1</sup> The LORD is my shepherd, I lack nothing.

<sup>2</sup> He makes me lie down in green pastures,

he leads me beside quiet waters,

<sup>3</sup> he refreshes my soul.

He guides me along the right paths  
for his name's sake.

<sup>4</sup> Even though I walk  
through the darkest valley,<sup>[a]</sup>

I will fear no evil,

for you are with me;  
your rod and your staff,  
they comfort me.

<sup>5</sup> You prepare a table before me  
in the presence of my enemies.

You anoint my head with oil;  
my cup overflows.

<sup>6</sup> Surely your goodness and love will follow me  
all the days of my life,  
and I will dwell in the house of the LORD  
for ever.



### The Gospel reading for today is John 9:1-41

<sup>9</sup> As he went along, he saw a man blind from birth. <sup>2</sup> His disciples asked him, 'Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?'

<sup>3</sup> 'Neither this man nor his parents sinned,' said Jesus, 'but this happened so that the works of God might be displayed in him. <sup>4</sup> As long as it is day, we must do the works of him who sent me. Night is coming, when no one can work. <sup>5</sup> While I am in the world, I am the light of the world.'

<sup>6</sup> After saying this, he spat on the ground, made some mud with the saliva, and put it on the man's eyes. <sup>7</sup> 'Go,' he told him, 'wash in the Pool of Siloam' (this word means 'Sent'). So the man went and washed, and came home seeing.

<sup>8</sup> His neighbours and those who had formerly seen him begging asked, 'Isn't this the same man who used to sit and beg?' <sup>9</sup> Some claimed that he was. Others said, 'No, he only looks like him.'

But he himself insisted, 'I am the man.'

<sup>10</sup> 'How then were your eyes opened?' they asked.

<sup>11</sup> He replied, 'The man they call Jesus made some mud and put it on my eyes. He told me to go to Siloam and wash. So I went and washed, and then I could see.'

<sup>12</sup> 'Where is this man?' they asked him.

'I don't know,' he said.

<sup>13</sup> They brought to the Pharisees the man who had been blind. <sup>14</sup> Now the day on which Jesus had made the mud and opened the man's eyes was a Sabbath. <sup>15</sup> Therefore the Pharisees also asked him how he had received his sight. 'He put mud on my eyes,' the man replied, 'and I washed, and now I see.'

<sup>16</sup> Some of the Pharisees said, 'This man is not from God, for he does not keep the Sabbath.'

But others asked, 'How can a sinner perform such signs?' So they were divided.

<sup>17</sup> Then they turned again to the blind man, 'What have you to say about him? It was your eyes he opened.'

The man replied, 'He is a prophet.'

<sup>18</sup> They still did not believe that he had been blind and had received his sight until they sent for the man's parents. <sup>19</sup> 'Is this your son?' they asked. 'Is this the one you say was born blind? How is it that now he can see?'

<sup>20</sup> 'We know he is our son,' the parents answered, 'and we know he was born blind. <sup>21</sup> But how he can see now, or who opened his eyes, we don't know. Ask him. He is of age; he will speak for himself.' <sup>22</sup> His parents said this because they were afraid of the Jewish leaders, who already had decided that anyone who acknowledged that Jesus was the Messiah would be put out of the synagogue. <sup>23</sup> That was why his parents said, 'He is of age; ask him.'

<sup>24</sup> A second time they summoned the man who had been blind. 'Give glory to God by telling the truth,' they said. 'We know this man is a sinner.'

<sup>25</sup> He replied, 'Whether he is a sinner or not, I don't know. One thing I do know. I was blind but now I see!'

<sup>26</sup> Then they asked him, 'What did he do to you? How did he open your eyes?'

<sup>27</sup> He answered, 'I have told you already and you did not listen. Why do you want to hear it again? Do you want to become his disciples too?'

<sup>28</sup> Then they hurled insults at him and said, 'You are this fellow's disciple! We are disciples of Moses! <sup>29</sup> We know that God spoke to Moses, but as for this fellow, we don't even know where he comes from.'

<sup>30</sup> The man answered, 'Now that is remarkable! You don't know where he comes from, yet he opened my eyes. <sup>31</sup> We know that God does not listen to sinners. He listens to the godly person who does his will. <sup>32</sup> Nobody has ever heard of opening the eyes of a man born blind. <sup>33</sup> If this man were not from God, he could do nothing.'

<sup>34</sup> To this they replied, 'You were steeped in sin at birth; how dare you lecture us!' And they threw him out.

<sup>35</sup> Jesus heard that they had thrown him out, and when he found him, he said, 'Do you believe in the Son of Man?'

<sup>36</sup> 'Who is he, sir?' the man asked. 'Tell me so that I may believe in him.'

37 Jesus said, 'You have now seen him; in fact, he is the one speaking with you.'

38 Then the man said, 'Lord, I believe,' and he worshipped him.

39 Jesus said, [a] 'For judgment I have come into this world, so that the blind will see and those who see will become blind.'

40 Some Pharisees who were with him heard him say this and asked, 'What? Are we blind too?'

41 Jesus said, 'If you were blind, you would not be guilty of sin; but now that you claim you can see, your guilt remains.'

Hymn - Sing/ Read /pray /proclaim the words

Amazing grace -- how sweet the sound --  
that saved a wretch like me!  
I once was lost, but now am found,  
was blind, but now I see.

2 God's grace has taught my heart to fear,  
his grace my fears relieved;  
how precious did that grace appear  
the hour I first believed!

3 Through many dangers, toils and snares  
I have already come;  
God's grace has brought me safe thus far,  
and grace will lead me home.

4 The Lord has promised good to me,  
his word my hope secures;  
he will my shield and portion be  
as long as life endures.

5 And, when this heart and flesh shall fail  
and mortal life shall cease,  
I shall possess within the veil  
a life of joy and peace.

6 When we've been there ten thousand years  
bright shining as the sun,  
we've no less days to sing God's praise  
than when we first begun.

John Newton (1725-1807) (alt.)

## A Reflection

Six months ago, we planned a family gathering this weekend and took it for granted that it would all go according to plan. Now, two parts of the family are in quarantine and one, who works in the NHS, does not want to travel and increase the risk of catching the Coronavirus. It is disappointing, but the celebrations have been postponed until July, and we'll do the best we can by having a group Skype! The Coronavirus situation has helped me realise what is and is not important. Birthday celebrations are great, but they are not essential and can keep. What is vital is the love and care of family and friends, health, communication and faith.

As I was considering this Sunday's worship, several suitable passage from the Bible came to mind, but I thought that I would check out the lectionary readings for this week. What treasures they contain.

Firstly, God shows Samuel that the next king is not to be Jesse's eldest son, Eliab, who looked the part, but was rejected by God who "looks at the heart". Seven sons were rejected. Then, God told Samuel to anoint the least likely son, the youngest, who was out in the fields caring for the sheep. God looks beyond worldly views and values to what is really important, a person's heart, mind, approach to life.

The Psalm is so appropriate, as in these historic and unprecedented times, it reminds us that even when we are walking through the darkest of valleys, God is with us. Just as a staff or rod helps support us when we are finding it hard to walk alone, so God is helping us through these difficult times.

Having been reassured of this, the gospel reminds us that Jesus is the light of the world. He is the one to whom we can turn with our worries and fears, knowing that he is with us and will see us through. He is the light we need in the darkness.

Furthermore, when Jesus first sees the man who had been blind from birth, the disciples ask him, "who had sinned, this man or his parents?". Jesus answered, "Neither this man nor his parents sinned, but this happened so that the works of God might be displayed in him". If anyone who catches the Coronavirus asks, "Who sinned, me or my parents?" Jesus would say, "Neither..." If anyone asks "Why me? What have I done to deserve this?" The answer would be nothing. These things happen.

After a discussion with the Pharisees about spiritual blindness, this episode in Jesus' ministry ends with the blind man, who can now see, declaring his belief in Jesus. Now is an appropriate time to reaffirm our belief and faith in Jesus. We do not know what the next few days, weeks or months will bring, but we do know that God is the same yesterday, today and tomorrow, and that Jesus, the light of the world, is with us. If ever our faith has ever been

something we do because we have always done it, or it has only been like a good theory, then now is the time to know that our faith is something which we live day by day, knowing that Jesus walks with us. It has been my experience that in the darkest days, God has been most present. I may not have felt him near. I may have even felt that he was a long way off. However, I have known that he was with me, like a light in the darkness, bringing me through the night into the dawn of a new day.

On 21<sup>st</sup> March 1960 I came into the world in "Old Tree Maternity Hospital", Launceston, Cornwall. Years later, whilst on a pastoral visit in circuit in Cornwall, I passed "Old Tree". It is now a nursing home for elderly people. Jane said that she would book me in so that I can leave this world where I came into it!! I brought nothing into the world and I will take nothing out. Nothing material that is! We leave with faith, knowing that Jesus has gone to prepare a place for us and that eternal life leads us to him. Death is an equaliser. No matter who we are, rich or poor, educated or uneducated, male or female, southern or northern, etc., it will happen to us all. In the same way, the Coronavirus is no respecter of persons and anyone may be contaminated. What is disturbing is how some people are chosen over others to receive treatment and protection. Whether president or pleb, young or old everyone should be treated the same, just as everyone is loved by God and equal in God's eyes. God does not judge as people judge, by appearance and human values, but by the heart. We come to Jesus, just as we are, with our hopes and fears, knowing that we can trust in him and knowing that he is with us. He is the light of the world, our hope, and our joy, and he will give us peace.

A time of prayer by Revds. Heather Wilson and Paul Wood

*All seeing, all knowing God I call on you today. May your Spirit give your world a sense of calm and peace in these difficult times.*

*On this Mothering Sunday, we pray for all Mums. The good ones and the not so good. We remember all those who would have liked to have children but for whatever reason could not.*

*We pray for our church in this time of uncertainty:*

*For those people who are worried about leaving their home and those who cannot.*

*For those needing to make decisions in order to care for other.*

*We pray for carers, doctors and nurses.*

*We continue to pray for those who will feel more isolated by not being able to attend and act of worship today.*



I especially want to pray for .....

*Holy God,*

Present with us now, guide me in all I do and say – that it might reflect your love for the world.

Through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen

A Prayer by Revd. Dr. Barbara C Glasson, the President of the Conference:

Loving God

If we are ill, strengthen us

If we are tired

Fortify our spirits

If we are anxious

Help us to consider the lilies of the field and the birds of the air.

Help us not to stockpile treasures from supermarkets in the barns of our larders!

Don't let fear cause us to overlook the needs of others more vulnerable than ourselves

Fix our eyes on your story

And our hearts on your grace

Help us always to hold fast to the good and see the good in others.

And remember there is just one world, one hope,

One everlasting love, with baskets of bread for everyone.

In Jesus we make our prayer,

The one who suffered, died and was raised to new life,

In whom we trust, these days and all days. Amen

Hymn - Sing/ Read /pray /proclaim the words

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

Chorus

*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 (b.1963)

The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,  
and the love of God,  
and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit,  
be with us today and always. Amen.



## Light a candle of hope: A national call to prayer

*Presidents of Churches Together in England have issued a call to prayer in the light of the Coronavirus pandemic. This is for all churches and people of prayer to join on Sunday 22nd March, Mothering Sunday.*

*They write....*

This Mothering Sunday, 22nd March, we are calling all churches to a National Day of Prayer and Action. At such a time as this, when so many are fearful and there is great uncertainty, we are reminded of our dependence on our loving Heavenly Father and the future that he holds.

At 7pm this Sunday, light a candle in the windows of your homes as a visible symbol of the light of life, Jesus Christ, our source and hope in prayer.

Whether you are continuing to worship as congregations or not, we have the great privilege and freedom to be able to call upon God, wherever we are, individually and corporately, for healing in our nation. We would pray for all in leadership at this time, making decisions about the containment of the COVID-19 virus, for those working in health and social care, and especially for the most vulnerable, whether elderly or those with underlying health conditions.

There are already stories being told of wonderful acts of kindness across neighbourhoods. Alongside your prayers, take the opportunity to telephone or email

someone who is isolated, buy some additional food for your local foodbank, or offer to deliver shopping for an elderly neighbour. We may not be able to touch physically, but we can make connections in so many other ways.

In the meantime, do please attend to all [the government health advice](#) that will be issued, and look out for resources from your specific church governing bodies. At least for those of us in the global North, we do seem to be in unusual times, and wisdom and flexibility about worship gatherings are a key part of our Christian discipleship during this period.

We note that this call to prayer and action comes on Mothering Sunday: a time of thankfulness, remembering especially mothers who have served us, often in very costly ways. It is also a very mixed day for many. For some the remembrance is painful, and for others Mothering Sunday is a reminder of disappointment or loss. In many ways, this period under the shadow of the coronavirus will be prompting similarly diverse reactions and so it seems especially appropriate that the call to prayer is made this Sunday. At this time of uncertainty join in with the National Day of Prayer and Action, lighting a candle of hope\*.

“Cast all your anxiety on him, because he cares for you” 1 Peter 5:7

### **Presidents of Churches Together in England**

**Archbishop Justin Welby**, The Archbishop of Canterbury

**Cardinal Vincent Nichols**, The Cardinal Archbishop of Westminster

**Revd Dr Hugh Osgood**, The Free Churches Moderator

**Archbishop Angaelos of London**, CTE President for the Orthodox Churches

**Pastor Agu Irukwu**, CTE Pentecostal President

END

*\*Safety note - please take all necessary fire precautions when using a lit candle. Ensure you remain with the lit candle at all times, and do not leave it to burn if you leave the room. Ensure there are no fabrics or materials such as curtains near the candle. If you are able to use a small electric ‘candle’ instead, that will be safe to leave unattended*