

# Worship At Home

## 18<sup>th</sup> February 2024

As we come to worship you, may our hearts leap  
for joy, peace and love.  
Free us, Lord from all that keeps us from You.  
Relieve us of misery, anxiousness and shame,  
and fill us again and again with the hope of peace;  
To you, Lord, we lift up our soul; in you we  
trust;  
Help us to know your ways, Lord,  
and teach us your paths of truth  
You are my salvation;  
Help me to Remember, your compassion and  
love, for they are from everlasting.  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.  
(abridged: from Psalm 25)

God of revelation, unveil your Kingdom in our midst.  
Show us who we truly are in you:  
expose the illusions that distort our vision,  
deliver us from temptations that contort our living,  
open our eyes in this time of trial -  
that resistance may be the secret of our joy  
and our joy a sign of your shalom. **Amen.**

~ Prayer posted on the **Monthly Prayers** page of the **Christian Aid** website. <http://www.christianaid.org.uk/>



We worship the  
Lord in the  
beauty of  
holiness...

**Listen or sing or read the words of this hymn - CH4 755 Be still and know that I am God.**

- <sup>1</sup> Be still and know that I am God.  
Be still and know that I am God.  
Be still and know that I am God.
- <sup>2</sup> I am the Lord who saves and heals.  
I am the Lord who saves and heals.  
I am the Lord who saves and heals.
- <sup>3</sup> In you, Lord God, I put my trust.  
In you, Lord God, I put my trust.  
In you, Lord God, I put my trust.

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Be still  
and know that  
I'm God...

[https://youtu.be/Gu1jZ7hes4I?si=NO\\_fluW0Rfo2KAoq](https://youtu.be/Gu1jZ7hes4I?si=NO_fluW0Rfo2KAoq)

**Let us pray,**

As we come into your presence, may we feel you close to us. (Pause in the silence)  
You are worthy Lord of all glory and honour and praise. We sit in your presence and feel  
the calm of this space.  
Lord God of all storms and rainbows, of rain and sunshine, Creator, we worship you and adore  
you. As we gaze in wonder at the beauty of your creation and marvel at stormy skies and at  
how our sky can show a whole range of emotions in an instance, we recognise the vibrant  
colours of each rainbow we see as a message from you.  
Like Noah and his family, we praise you for this everlasting sign of your love and care for the  
whole of our world - your great desire to preserve and not destroy.  
At the transfiguration, the sky again revealed your love when you identified him as your  
beloved Son, strengthening him with the same Spirit who empowers and strengthens each of us.

For all these assurances of your love for us and for the whole creation, we praise and worship you, O God, in the power of the Holy Spirit and in the name of Jesus Christ, our Saviour and Lord. **Amen**

**Listen or sing or read the words of this hymn -CH4 245 It's a world of sunshine**

It's a world of sunshine, a world of rain;  
it's a world of laughter, a world of pain;  
it's a world we must share, where we must learn to care,  
for the world belongs to God.

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[Refrain:] *This is God's world after all,  
this is God's world after all,  
this is God's world after all,  
Yes, it's God's good world.*

It's a world of plenty, a world of need;  
A world of love and a world of greed.  
It's a world we must share, where we must learn to care,  
For the world belongs to God.  
*This is God's world after all, ...*

It's a world of water, a world of drought.  
It's a world of faith and a world of doubt.  
It's a world we must share, where we must learn to care,  
For the world belongs to God.  
*This is God's world after all, ...*



<https://music.churchofscotland.org.uk/hymn/245-its-a-world-of-sunshine-a-world-of-rain>

**Reading:** [Genesis 9: 8-15](#); [1 Peter 3:18-22](#).

**Reflection:** Lent 1: Clingers to the past or shapers of the future?

Today is the first Sunday in Lent and traditionally it was regarded as a time to look back, to evaluate our lives and our achievements, to examine ourselves and it is a time when we look back over the events of Jesus' life. But Lent is also a time to think and reflect on the future. We know that the crucifixion of Jesus was an important event which has shaped our future. But do we as Christians make the difference we ought to in our world and society? Are we people who cling to the past or people who are shaping the future?

Back in the 1980s there were two films making the headlines - 'The day after' a film which imagined the possible horrific results of a nuclear holocaust and a drama exploring the life and times of John F Kennedy. Despite the fact that the former was an award-winning film and the drama a cheap rate, low budget film - the low budget film collected more at the box office. More people chose the nostalgia of the 1960's than the one concerned with surviving a horrific future which is still a possibility.



Reading the story of Noah is an example of the same thing. Much of the book of Genesis was written down when Israel was experiencing some of the nation's greatest hardships. From the 8<sup>th</sup> to the 6<sup>th</sup> centuries BC the tiny country had been assaulted on all sides by a succession of empires. The people entered and exited years of captivity and in the 6<sup>th</sup> century BC a group of Jewish writers set themselves to the task of writing down their history from the perspective of their

relationship with God. They believe that the suffering experienced, happened because God was judging their nation, and they knew all the stories handed down through the centuries that their relationship with God involved the promise of hope and salvation. 1

Noah's story is such a story and weary readers of the 6th century. across so strongly about God's the earth that he states it verses of our reading, the times!

The rainbow signifies the reconciliation and rebirth. storm - a thing of beauty- backdrop of clouds-

In many cultures, the bridge linking heaven to beautiful image. In a

of Genesis is saying. Here in this phenomenon of nature is the promise that God cares about humanity. God values human beings and wants them to have an abundant full life lived according to divine definitions as outlined by the prophets, of justice, righteousness and love.

give great encouragement to its war- The writer wants to get his message pledge or promise to never destroy over and over again. In the ten word covenant is repeated 7

divine presence of hope, It often appears after a an arc of colour against a symbol of hope and promise.

rainbow is understood as a earth and that is a way that is what the writer

But, like Eliza Doolittle in the musical *My Fair Lady* we protest a message of words only. In response to a romantic declaration of love from a smitten admirer, Eliza proclaims in song that she is sick of words and insists petulantly "show me". You would think that God would decline to go along with our 'show me' game but God refuses to do. God's response is the word made flesh - Jesus Christ .



Up until that point, like the Jews of the 6<sup>th</sup> century and up till now, we can read the message and see the rainbow - the symbol that evil has been defeated, that life will continue. A distant multi-coloured bridge in the sky. Jesus, however, was not distant, not an object, but one who actually shared our humanity.

The experience of the Holy Spirit in our lives today makes us newly aware of God's presence and call on our lives. The good news God is promising is that we will become a new person. The challenge of the Gospel is never to 'play it safe'- to hide in the security of nostalgia - the comfort of the familiar or the assurance of our status. We are called out into the unknown, but we are sustained by the Spirit - our inner rainbow. Just as the rainbow in the sky can be thought of as a bridge between heaven and earth, so our inner rainbow is the bridge between us and other people, between us and God - a bridge of love. Because if the experience of the Spirit could be compressed into a single word, it would be love.

So, to come back to the question posed earlier, do we as Christians make a difference in the world? Are we clingers to the past or shapers of the future? Jesus struggled in the wilderness for about 40 days - about the same length of time as Lent - how about using these days to wrestle with the questions?



Let's pray ..

Loving Father, When we look back on our lives, there are so many mistakes that we have made; so many things that we should have done, but didn't; times when we deliberately



behaved badly; times when we neglected our duty towards others; times when we were hurtful, or careless of other people's feelings; times when we spoke without thinking of the effect of our words; times when our actions caused long-lasting hurt or harm; times we would wish to forget, but the memory stays around in the mind.

All of us have some things in our past that cause us discomfort when we think of them and we hope that they stay buried and that no one ever finds out about them.

Loving and merciful God, forgive us for those things that trouble us. Help us to recognize that as we confess them to you, you are willing to deal with these issues and clear our minds and our consciences and, if it is possible, help us to right the wrongs.

Teach us your ways of forgiveness and mercy in our dealings with others, so that we may be as willing to forgive them their mistakes as you are to forgive us. And lead us on into the future with a renewed awareness of your goodness and love towards us and all your children.

Faithful God, all lives are in your hands. Be with all who are living through troubled times, in dangerous situations, or with personal problems. Help them to know that they can put their trust in you and teach us how to be supportive and caring in such circumstances.

Show us how we can help to bring your comforting presence into a needy world.

Amen

Listen or sing or read the words of this hymn - CH4 465 Be Thou my vision

- <sup>1</sup> Be thou my Vision, O Lord of my heart; naught be all else to me, save that thou art;  
thou my best thought, in the day or the night,  
waking or sleeping, thy presence my light.
- <sup>2</sup> Be thou my Wisdom, be thou my true Word; I ever with thee, and thou with me, Lord;  
thou my great Father: thine own I would be;  
thou in me dwelling, and I one with thee.
- <sup>3</sup> Be thou my breastplate, my sword for the fight; be thou my dignity, thou my delight,  
thou my soul's shelter, and thou my high tower:  
raise thou me heavenward, O Power of my power.
- <sup>4</sup> Riches I heed not, nor earth's empty praise, thou mine inheritance, now and always;  
thou, and thou only, the first in my heart,  
High King of Heaven, my treasure thou art.
- <sup>5</sup> High King of Heaven, after victory won,  
may I reach heaven's joys, O bright heaven's sun!  
Heart of my own heart, whatever befall, still be my Vision, O Ruler of all.

[https://youtu.be/6CMclT\\_Hjg?si=78gJe7JE-vZ7JhWY](https://youtu.be/6CMclT_Hjg?si=78gJe7JE-vZ7JhWY)

*May I go out disrupt all that is wrong, unjust and hateful in this world.*

*May I nurture and plant seeds of love.*

*May I celebrate your coming into this world - then, and now, Immanuel.*

*May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all evermore. Amen.*

*Thank you to those who have taken the time to contact me. Take care out there this week.*

*May the blessing of God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit be with you this day and each day.*

*Rev. Susan Thorburn, [sthorburn@churchofscotland.org.uk](mailto:sthorburn@churchofscotland.org.uk)*

*If you choose to email me, please can you tell me who you are and where you live. Thank you.*