

Circuit worship sheet for 12 July 2026

prepared by Revd W John Young

Call to Worship. Open our eyes Lord to see the wonders of your creation and the amazing grace of salvation in Jesus. Open our ears to hear the good news of Christ our Saviour and open our hearts to receive you Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen

StF 434

1 Rock of Ages, cleft for me,
let me hide myself in thee;
let the water and the blood,
from thy riven side which flowed,
be of sin the double cure,
cleanse me from its guilt and power.

2 Not the labours of my hands
can fulfil thy law's demands;
could my zeal no respite know,
could my tears for ever flow,
all for sin could not atone:
thou must save, and thou alone.

3 Nothing in my hand I bring,
simply to thy cross I cling;
naked, come to thee for dress;
helpless, look to thee for grace;
foul, I to the fountain fly;
wash me, Saviour, or I die.

4 While I draw this fleeting breath,
when mine eyes shall close in death,
when I soar through tracts unknown,
see thee on thy judgement throne,
Rock of Ages, cleft for me,
let me hide myself in thee.

Augustus Montague Toplady (1740–1778)

Prayer. Loving God, we bow in wonder at all you have done in creating the universe and making us living beings who can appreciate some of your creativity. Forgive us where we fall short in word, thought and deed and give the renewing power of your Spirit, the Spirit of Jesus, to help us to live the Christian way in every part of life, Amen.

Reading Romans 8:1-11

8 There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. **2** For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death. **3** For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do: by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and to deal with sin, he condemned sin in the flesh, **4** so that the just requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. **5** For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit. **6** To set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace. **7** For this reason the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God; it does not submit to God's law—indeed it cannot, **8** and those who are in the flesh cannot please God. **9** But you are not in the flesh; you are in the Spirit, since the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him. **10** But if Christ is in you, though the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness. **11** If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will give life to your mortal bodies also through his Spirit that dwells in you.

Also read Mt 13:1-9, 18-23

Reflection on Romans 8:1-11.

Back in the 1960s when I was a young local preacher I moved to a bedsit near the circuit LP secretary who mentored my preaching. We met every week for Bible study to help us prepare our sermons. One year we studied Paul's letter to the Romans. It is the longest and deepest of Paul's letters and it took us a whole year to wrestle our way through its profound issues of life and faith. Head spinning stuff! However, my friend had a knack of seeing the wood

through the trees and said that Romans can be summed up as 'Under new management'.

There are garden centres all over the place. One near us was looking rather tired and was taken over by another organisation. Some repairs were done and some are ongoing. The name is the same, it covers the same area and there are improvements and changes. It is under new management and things are not as they were, it is a work in progress.

Romans has a lot about sin, the force that tries, and often succeeds, to separate us from God. We can beat ourselves up over our failures, but Paul wrote Romans to demonstrate God's loving faithfulness, God's gift of life in Jesus and the Spirit. That is God's new management. Our part is to accept it and the resources God gives us; a pattern for living (Jesus), gifts of grace for service (Rom 12: 6-8) and the Spirit who fills us with God's love (Rom 5:5). Overall, we are not condemned for failure but welcomed in Jesus Christ by mercy, grace and kindness. He lived, died and was raised for us. That is more than enough for us to fix our minds on. It can be a struggle and we may resist the changes that Christ brings, we are, after all works in progress and are usually well aware of it. To encourage us I came across the following story.

John V Taylor (missionary, bishop and author of many books including *The Go-Between God*) told of an Indian Christian teacher who was dismissed because of some misdemeanour and went off to a far away village, away from malicious Christian gossip. He made his living as a potter and the Church heard no more of him. Years later evangelists were sent to that place and told the stories of Jesus. The villagers said, 'We knew that man, he lived here for years'. The preachers said, 'no, we mean Jesus Christ.' The people replied, 'He never told us his name

but the man you describe was our potter without a doubt.'

May we progress in the love of Christ that transforms us day by day.

Prayers of Intercession.

- On this day we pray for our District and Dan Haylett our District chair.
- Let us pray too for our District link with Cuttack in India, for the theological college and James the new principal, for the hospital and RJ's project to help widows and orphans.

Let us pray for people in need.

- People devastated by the earthquakes in Venezuela.
- People affected by wars in Ukraine, the Middle East, Sudan and elsewhere.
- People we know...

Pray the Lord's Prayer

StF 565 Only by grace can we enter,
only by grace can we stand;
not by our human endeavour,
but by the blood of the Lamb.
Into your presence you call us,
you call us to come.
Into your presence you draw us,
and now by your grace we come,
now by your grace we come.

Lord, if you mark our transgressions,
who would stand?

Thanks to your grace we are cleansed
by the blood of the Lamb.

Lord, if you mark our transgressions,
who would stand?

Thanks to your grace we are cleansed
by the blood of the Lamb.

Only by grace can we enter....

Gerrit Gustafson

Benediction

¹³ May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. (Romans 15:13)