

Sunday 23rd August '26

(prepared from Roots)

Call to worship

Come, let us stand before God,
who empowers us to challenge injustice.
Come, let us choose to worship,
choose to seek his wisdom, justice and strength.
Come, let us be empowered by his presence
and inspired by his love.

Hymn StF 693 Beauty for brokenness

Beauty for brokenness, hope for despair,
Lord, in your suffering world this is our prayer.
Bread for the children, justice, joy, peace,
sunrise to sunset, your kingdom increase.

Shelter for fragile lives, cures for their ills,
work for all people, trade for their skills;
land for the dispossessed, rights for the weak,
voices to plead the cause of those who can't speak.

*God of the poor, friend of the weak,
give us compassion we pray:
melt our cold hearts, let tears fall like rain;
come, change our love from a spark to a flame.*

Refuge from cruel wars, havens from fear,
cities for sanctuary, freedoms to share.
Peace to the killing-fields, scorched earth to green,
Christ for the bitterness, his cross for the pain.

Rest for the ravaged earth, oceans and streams
plundered and poisoned – our future, our dreams.
Lord, end our madness, carelessness, greed;
make us content with the things that we need.

Refrain

Lighten our darkness, breathe on this flame
until your justice burns brightly again;
until the nations learn of your ways,
seek your salvation and bring you their praise.

Refrain

Graham Kendrick (b1950)

Prayers

Lord God, we come before you just as we are – some
of us broken; some of us tired and weary; some of us
energised and full of joy – all of us gathering to offer
our worship and praise. Receive us as we are,
strengthen and inspire us to become all you want us
to be.

Lord God, we don't like it when we are mistreated,
taken advantage of, belittled and devalued.

But you, Lord God, enable us to endure hard times.
You help us when we feel burdened and defeated.
Empower us to forgive those who hurt us, and forgive
us when we are the ones mistreating others. Lord
God, forgive us our arrogance, our pride and
selfishness and when we let hardship shift our focus
and trust from you. Help us always to remember that
no problem is too big for you. Help us to realise that
together we can make a difference.

**Lord God, empower us with strength and courage
to always stand for what is right in your eyes. Amen.**

Father God, we offer our gratitude for the gift of your
Son who came as a living sacrifice, dying on the cross
to give us new life. Freed from sin, we offer ourselves
to you, cleansed and transformed by the blood of your
Son.

We lift joyful hearts full of thanks and praise.

Thank you, Lord, that you do not leave us hiding in the
reeds but lead us, as you did Moses, into the plans you
have for us. We realise our true worth in you, with
new life and direction. You empower us to make a
difference, in our own lives as well as others. Trusting
in you, we remain alert to all opportunities
to grow in courage, strength and understanding.

We lift joyful hearts full of thanks and praise. Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

Reading Exodus 1:8 – 2:10

Thought for the week from Roots

Empowered to rebel

The story of Moses, the baby in the bulrushes, is
familiar to many, but there is a quiet rebellion by the
women in the story that also flows through it. The
king, threatened by the growing number of Israelite
slaves, orders baby boys to be killed at birth in an
attempt to control their numbers. His insecurity and
fear motivate him to act in a way that is cruel and
inhuman as he wields his power to try to resolve the
problem.

The midwives quietly rebelled against the orders of
Pharaoh, who had commanded them to kill the baby
boys at birth. They cannot agree to do this as they
know it would be wrong in the eyes of God. They are
empowered by their beliefs, enabling them to stand
up to something they see and know is wrong. They
stand firm when questioned by Pharaoh, explaining
that they arrived too late at the birth to carry out his
decree. They acted with great courage, standing up to
a man with such power, and they are subsequently
blessed by God, who gives them families.

Moses' mother and sister also quietly rebelled against Pharaoh's wishes. His mother was empowered by her love for her precious baby and by her faith in God, who she trusted to look after him.

Hiding him and putting him in a basket on the river took faith and courage, as did the actions of her daughter, who approached Pharaoh's daughter when the baby was found.

Pharaoh's daughter also quietly rebelled against his orders, although she may not have known the orders or that this baby was subject to them. She acts with compassion when she rescues him, names him and arranges for his care.

Faith in God empowers these women.

We see around us the misuse of power as leaders and regimes promote war, killing and bloodshed. We see the misuse of power creating oppression and fear globally and locally through religious intolerance, slavery and the mistreatment of others. We see the devastating effects of flood, famine and fire, along with the impact of pollution and the disregard of habitats and ecosystems, often caused by poor choices and decisions. We can feel overwhelmed and powerless, but the women in today's story were empowered by what they knew was right and by their faith in God. Let us look for opportunities to stand firm in our faith, knowing that we can make a difference with our actions and our voice – and even through our quiet rebellion.

Prayers for others

Lord Jesus Christ, Messiah, Son of the living God, we come to you now and bow before you. In the stillness, as we worship you, we think about who you are, saying some of the names of God out loud or in our hearts. We bring to mind the week that has just passed and recall who you have been for us in different situations this week: maybe our guide, our comforter, our Lord, our healer. Lord, we thank you that you are always with us in every situation, whether we acknowledge you at the time or not. Give us eyes to see you at work in our lives.

Lord, give us the insight to see who you are.

Give us the courage to declare it and act upon it.

Lord, we turn our thoughts to the world around us. Where have we seen your glory this week? We thank you for images of your glory in a beautiful sky, a captivating view, the smile of a friend, the laughter of a child. Surprise us this week with something new from your world that we've never seen or appreciated before. Help us to respect the beauty of everything you have made. Lord, give us the insight to see who you are. **Give us the courage to declare it and act upon it.**

Lord, as we reflect on the situations that spoil your beautiful world, help us nevertheless to see your presence in every situation.

Lord, give us the insight to see who you are.

Give us the courage to declare it and act upon it.

We lift to you places of conflict. Give the victims of war hope, we pray. Help them to see glimpses of you, even in the most difficult times. We ask for your safety on all who support the wounded, the bereaved and the homeless. We thank you for those who work to bring peace between nations.

Lord, give us the insight to see who you are.

Give us the courage to declare it and act upon it.

Lord, as we remain in the stillness, we reflect on all those who have encouraged us over the years to grow deeper and closer to you. Give us the wisdom to see how we can encourage others this week.

Lord, give us the insight to see who you are.

Give us the courage to declare it and act upon it.

Lord, we pause to reflect on the gifts and skills you have given each of us. We thank you for opportunities to use our gifts for your glory. Deepen our insight and give us the courage to step out in new directions following your lead. Send us out from here to serve you with joy, wisdom and faithfulness as we proclaim that you are the Christ, the Son of the Living God.

Amen.

Hymn StF 526 Lord of all hopefulness

Lord of all hopefulness, Lord of all joy,
whose trust, ever childlike, no cares could destroy,
be there at our waking, and give us, we pray,
your bliss in our hearts, Lord, at the break of the day.

Lord of all eagerness, Lord of all faith,
whose strong hands were skilled at the plane and the lathe,
be there at our labours, and give us, we pray,
your strength in our hearts, Lord, at the noon of the day.

Lord of all kindliness, Lord of all grace,
your hands swift to welcome, your arms to embrace,
be there at our homing, and give us, we pray,
your love in our hearts, Lord, at the eve of the day

Lord of all gentleness, Lord of all calm,
whose voice is contentment, whose presence is balm,
be there at our sleeping, and give us, we pray,
your peace in our hearts, Lord, at the end of the day.

Jan Struther (Joyce Placzek) (1901-1953)

Closing prayer

May we be empowered to show loving resistance, inspired by Jesus' example and strengthened by his Spirit. May we stand strong in our faith, to challenge injustice, speaking up for those with no voice, showing and sharing Christ in our community.

Amen.