
Service for 10 October 2021.
A service of hymns and prayers
Worship Leader: Robyn Harvey

Opening Prayer:

My fellow worshippers, we are not clones. There are many differences among us, including different ways and degrees of experiencing God.

Some feel God as always very close, some feel God as occasionally close, and others feel God as more distant. But our feelings are not the measuring stick of our faith, or the essential ingredient in our worship.

The crucial factor is God's faithfulness. God promises to be with us whether we sense it or not.

God is here, let us worship with mind, heart, soul and strength.

The inclusive love of the Lord Jesus Christ be with you all
And also with you

Let us pray.

God our sublime Friend, you are far more majestic than human mind can ever conceive, and more loving than our deepest feelings can ever explain.

Yet we want to offer you the best we can do in thought and devotion, and offer the enthusiasm of our songs and prayers.

Holy are you, wonderful are you, awesomely humble are you, God of time and eternity!

Glory and honour, thanksgiving and praise, belong to you now and always. Amen!

Worship Introduction

Today we are having a service of favourite hymns, songs and prayers from different people in our church. We can't be together to sing at the moment so I thought we could start getting our voices ready for when we can sing which will be on 5

December. We hopefully will be able to resume a face to face service without singing on 31 October. Before we start I would like to thank everyone who has contributed to this service – Grace and the music team, Margaret, Rosemary, Jenny and Alan, Barnabas and Seungjae who has again helped me to put the service to video. We are a church filled with exceptional people – I hope you all enjoy today’s service.

Our first hymn is “I the Lord of Sea and Sky” and a favourite of Margaret Treble.

The Story Behind - I the Lord of Sea and Sky

Dan Schutte, the hymn's author, never assumed the tune would become so well-known.

Mr. Schutte was a Jesuit in his early thirties learning theology in Berkeley, California when one of his friends requested him to compose a song for a forthcoming ordaining Mass of deacons.

Schutte has stated that he frequently used Scripture as the foundation of his songs, so as he thought about the concept of being called for the ordaining Mass, he looked to the stories of the prophets, like Jeremiah, who asked God to bestow him with the best words to use.

Schutte describes his inspiration of the chorus as, “In all those stories, all of those people God was calling to be prophets have expressed in one way or another their humanness or their self-doubt.”

This biblical sense of doubt joined with counsel from the other St. Louis Jesuits was the reason Mr. Schutte altered the lyrics from a certain “Here I am, Lord; here I stand, Lord” to the self-doubting ultimate version: “Here I am, Lord; is it I, Lord?” Join with me in singing this hymn.

I the Lord of sea and sky I have heard my people cry
 All who dwell in dark and sin My hand will save
 I who made the stars of night I will make their darkness bright
 Who will bear my light to them? Whom shall I send?

*Here I am Lord, is it I Lord?
 I have heard you calling in the night
 I will go Lord, If you lead me,
 I will hold your people in my heart*

I, the Lord of snow and rain I have borne my people's pain
 I have wept for love of them They turn away
 I will break their hearts of stone Give them hearts for love alone
 I will speak my words to them Whom shall I send?
Here I am Lord, is it I Lord? ...

I, the Lord of wind and flame I will tend the poor and lame
 I will set a feast for them My hand will save
 Finest bread I will provide 'Til their hearts be satisfied
 I will give my life to them Whom shall I send?
Here I am, Lord. is it I, Lord? ...

Well that has loosened up the vocal chords a little.

Prayer of confession and thanksgiving

God of liberation and forgiveness, this day we come before you as a community of faith to acknowledge our dependence on you to forgive us of all our personal and shared sin; and how we have failed in our commitment to you. No matter how smugly we try to convince ourselves that we are 'good' people; that we love God; that we love ourselves; and that we also love our neighbours; that is not always true! We come with our regrets because we have failed you by not doing as we promised you; and we have failed you and ourselves by doing the very things we said we would never do! But above all, we have failed you because of our lack of love and loving. We give thanks that we can unburden our hearts and minds with our confessions to you; and that we can rest in your gentle and forgiving assurance that God's gracious mercy is greater than our sin and shame.

God of faithful and steadfast love, we come before you as a community of faith who seem to have lost their way on faith's journey. We each of us admit that our love for God is not always steadfast, unfailing or loyal; that sometimes, we feel that God is even cramping our style in life; with all the expectations you place upon us! We protest that we are 'only human'; as if that lets us off the hook with you! We come to confess to you that we are guilty of many things that are sin-stained; that our words, thoughts and actions have hurt people; and that we really regret our insensitive behaviour towards vulnerable people. Cleanse and renew us, we pray.

God of unconditional and gentle tenderness, we gather as your people of faith, aware of our sin and failings; our inconsistency and apathy when challenged by issues of

faith and culture; and our wilful insistence on going our own way and doing our own thing!

Generous God, in your mercy, hear our confessions and renew us with your loving and gracious mercy. Today, we celebrate a new start in our faith journey; and pray for guidance and blessing as we offer you our worship, witness and service; and ask for the courage to cling to our faith in God's unconditional tender love for us.

Amen.

Our next song is one sung by Isabella, Zac and Ashley and thankfully we still have the recording of that song.

“King of my Heart” is a Christian song written by John and Sarah McMillan, released in 2015. This modern hymn praises the goodness of God and calls on Him for refuge and salvation saying, "Be the shadow where I hide the ransom for my life." If you want to give your voice a rest just listen to the kids singing or you can join them in singing at home.

Bible Reading – Psalm 26

Our Old Testament reading today is from Psalm 26 which is a psalm written by David as all the psalms were. Psalm 26 is a sturdy prayer that can be prayed by an individual at any time. The morally uptight citizen can echo the psalm's claims of integrity with confidence. The hopelessly accused sinner can voice the psalm's willingness to be probed by God and found innocent, the words of this psalm can be spoken aloud before worship, yet they are equally valid when whispered in the marketplace. No matter who prays this psalm, how they pray it, or where they pray it, its words convey an immensely active desire to act with integrity and enjoy a covenantal relationship with God.

¹ Vindicate me, LORD,
for I have led a blameless life;
I have trusted in the LORD
and have not faltered.

² Test me, LORD, and try me,
examine my heart and my mind;

³ for I have always been mindful of your unfailing love
and have lived in reliance on your faithfulness.

- ⁴ I do not sit with the deceitful,
nor do I associate with hypocrites.
- ⁵ I abhor the assembly of evildoers
and refuse to sit with the wicked.
- ⁶ I wash my hands in innocence,
and go about your altar, LORD,
- ⁷ proclaiming aloud your praise
and telling of all your wonderful deeds.
- ⁸ LORD, I love the house where you live,
the place where your glory dwells.
- ⁹ Do not take away my soul along with sinners,
my life with those who are bloodthirsty,
- ¹⁰ in whose hands are wicked schemes,
whose right hands are full of bribes.
- ¹¹ I lead a blameless life;
deliver me and be merciful to me.
- ¹² My feet stand on level ground;

**This is the Word of the Lord
Thanks be to God.**

Kids Talk by Jenny Keast and one of her favourite hymns is “Jesus Loves Me”.

Today’s service is all about Favourite Hymns. The hymn I’ve chosen to talk to you about is a very popular one that is sung by children everywhere, probably more so in generations past. Hopefully, young people are familiar with it today. It’s called “*Jesus Loves Me*”.

Its history is this.

The hymn was first written by Anna B. Warner as a poem, Anna’s sister Susan requested a poem for a dying child and Anna wrote the wonderful words of *Jesus Loves Me* to bring comfort and peace.

Anna’s poem appeared in a novel, *Say and Seal*, and was put to music by William Bradbury in 1862.

“*Jesus Loves Me*” with its simple direct message, is one of the first hymns missionaries teach to new converts. It was the favourite hymn of Francis Schaeffer, who

recognised that ultimately what intellectuals and children alike need is the simple message of Jesus. Amy Carmichael, the Irish missionary to India, was converted after hearing this hymn at a children's mission in Yorkshire, England.

The message of this hymn has also been profound for many other people. A famous theologian – or person who studies the bible in great depth named Karl Barth was recorded as having stated, after being asked if he could summarise his life's work in theology in one sentence,

“Yes, I can. In the words of a song I learned at my mother's knee: *‘Jesus loves me, this I know, for the Bible tells me so’*”. That is the simple unadorned story.

So let us pray:

Dear Jesus,

Remind us all of your message that you love each one of us. When we don't know who else to turn to or talk to, you are there waiting.

Thank you.

In Your Name, Amen.

Our next hymn is a favourite of mine and is “In Christ Alone”.

“In Christ Alone” (2001) is one of the most popular Christian songs in this century. Northern Irishman Keith Getty (b. 1974) and Englishman Stuart Townend (b. 1963) are worship leaders and song writers who have collaborated to produce some of the most well-known and vibrant hymns of this era.

“Keith and I met in the autumn of 2000 at a worship event, and we resolved to try to work together on some songs. A few weeks later Keith sent some melody ideas, and the first one on the CD was a magnificent, haunting melody that I loved, and immediately started writing down some lyrical ideas on what I felt should be a timeless theme commensurate with the melody. So the theme of the life, death, resurrection of Christ, and the implications of that for us just began to tumble out, and when we got together later on to fine tune it, we felt we had encapsulated what we wanted to say.” (Atkins, 2004, n.p.)

In Christ alone my hope is found
He is my light, my strength, my song
This cornerstone, this solid ground
Firm through the fiercest drought and storm
What heights of love, what depths of peace
When fears are stilled, when strivings cease
My comforter, my all in all
Here in the love of Christ I stand

In Christ alone who took on flesh
Fullness of God in helpless babe
This gift of love and righteousness
Scorned by the ones He came to save
Till on that cross as Jesus died
The wrath of God was satisfied
For every sin on Him was laid
Here in the death of Christ I live

There in the ground His body lay
Light of the world by darkness slain
Then bursting forth in glorious day
Up from the grave He rose again
And as He stands in victory
Sin's curse has lost its grip on me
For I am His and He is mine
Bought with the precious blood of Christ

No guilt in life, no fear in death
This is the power of Christ in me
From life's first cry to final breath
Jesus commands my destiny
No power of hell, no scheme of man
Can ever pluck me from His hand
Till He returns or calls me home
Here in the power of Christ I'll stand

Another favourite of mine is 10,000 Reasons

David Redman wrote the song with a Swedish friend Jonas Myrin. He recalls “Jonas played me an idea for some of the chorus melody and I found it immediately

inspiring. The song came together really quickly – a good chunk of the song was actually a spontaneous moment. One thing I have realised over the years is there’s no distinct rule that says that something composed quickly must therefore be more spiritual or inspired! Yes God-breathed inspired worship songs can at times be written very quickly and spontaneously – but at other times they involved a lot of perseverance, perspiration and hard work!”

The point of this song he says is “If you wake up one morning and you cannot think of a reason to bring God some kind of offering of thanks or praise, then you can be sure there’s something wrong at your end of the pipeline and not his. We live beneath an unceasing flow of goodness, kindness, greatness, and holiness, and every day we’re given reason after reason why Jesus is so completely and utterly worthy of our highest and best devotion”.

**Bless the Lord oh my soul, oh my soul
Worship His Holy name
Sing like never before, oh my soul
I’ll worship Your Holy name**

VERSE 1

The sun comes up, it’s a new day dawning
It’s time to sing Your song again
Whatever may pass and whatever lies before me
Let me be singing when the evening comes
Bless the Lord oh my soul, oh my soul ...

VERSE 2

You’re rich in love and You’re slow to anger
Your name is great and Your heart is kind
For all Your goodness I will keep on singing
Ten thousand reasons for my heart to find
Bless the Lord oh my soul, oh my soul ...

VERSE 3

And on that day when my strength is failing
The end draws near and my time has come
Still my soul will sing Your praise unending
Ten thousand years and then forevermore
Bless the Lord oh my soul, oh my soul ...

Prayers of the People – Barnabas Joo

Dear Heavenly Father,

We thank you for another week where we may be not physically together but still brings our hearts to you.

Thank you, father, for keeping our congregation safe over this last outbreak of the Delta strain of the CoronaVirus.

We know not everyone has been so lucky.

We pray for your guiding hand to be with those who lost loved ones due to this virus.

We thank and ask for your blessings on the front-line workers who have kept our society functioning over the lockdown period.

And we eagerly wait for when we will be able to resume to normal life again out of lockdown, but we pray father that you give us sensibility and responsibility. Please help people be sensible in their actions so that the virus does not become unmanageable.

We saw father a change in the political leadership of NSW over this past week. We pray for your knowledge and compassion to guide our new Premier.

We pray for all the world leaders as the international community strives to tackle on important issues such as the pandemic and environmental issues later this year.

We pray for the countries in the Ecumenical Cycle, Belize, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico.

Father, we pray for those who have been oppressed and abused by the military and government officials. We ask for divine protection over them and for justice to be done on their behalf. We also earnestly pray that there would be an end to the government corruption prevalent in these nations and that a just system would be established to uphold the rights of the people regardless of their social and economic status.

We think of the congregations in our Inter-Church Council – Uniting Church Congregation, Faith communities, chaplains in the City of Ryde zone. Be with their

members, and minister and help their ministries. We pray that have also kept safe over the lockdown period.

Finally, father, we pray for our own congregation. Thank you for our wonderful church family. Thank you for our minister, and our lay-minister, Robyn who carry on the service today so we can continue to hear your word.

We pray that you put your safekeeping and comforting hand over us until we can meet again.

We pray in Jesus' name,
Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,

我們在天上的父，

願人都尊祢的名為聖，

하늘에 계신 우리 아버지，

아버지의 이름을 거룩하게 하시며，

your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.

願祢的國降臨，

願祢的旨意行在地上，

如同行在天上。

아버지의 나라가 오게 하시며，

아버지의 뜻이 하늘에서와 같이

땅에서도 이루어지게 하소서。

Give us today our daily bread.

我們日用的飲食 今日賜給我們，

오늘 우리에게 일용할 양식을 주시고，

Forgive us our sins,
as we forgive those who sin against us.

免我們的債
如同我們免了人的債
우리가 우리에게 잘못한 사람을
용서하여 준 것같이
우리 죄를 용서하여 주시고,

Save us from the time of trial
and deliver us from evil.

不叫我們遇見試探,
救我們脫離兇惡,
우리를 시험에 빠지지 않게 하시고
악에서 구하소서.

For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours
now and for ever.

因為國度, 權柄, 榮耀,
全是祢的, 直到永遠.
나라와 권능과 영광이
영원히 아버지의 것입니다.

Amen.

**Our next hymn is “When I Survey the Wondrous Cross” by Isaac Watts
a favourite of Jenny Keast**

Isaac Watts (1674-1748) was one of the greatest hymn writers of all time composed the beautiful hymn, “When I Survey the Wondrous Cross.” Isaac was born in England, the first son of a family of the Dissenting tradition. Though his training in Greek, Latin and Hebrew would have allowed him the opportunity to become an Anglican priest, he chose to pastor a Dissenting congregation.

“When I Survey” is a hymn which is saturated with theology and a call for an emotional response from the singer. This hymn was transformed into a statement of faith that crosses denominational lines and generations.

When I survey the wondrous cross
 On which the Prince of Glory died
 My richest gain I count but loss
 And pour contempt on all my pride

Forbid it Lord that I should boast
 Save in the death of Christ my Lord
 All the vain things that charm me most
 I sacrifice them to His blood

See from His head His hands His feet
 Sorrow and love flow mingled down
 Did ever such love and sorrow meet
 Or thorns compose so rich a crown

Were the whole realm of nature mine
 That were an offering far too small
 Love so amazing so divine
 Demands my soul my life my all

Another hymn that is a favourite to many and especially to Alan Keast is “O Love that will not let me go” by George Matheson.

George Matheson was born at 39 Abbotsford Place in Glasgow, to George Matheson (d.1891), a merchant and Jane Matheson (a second cousin), he was the eldest of eight children.

At age 20, George Matheson was engaged to be married but began going blind. When he broke the news to his fiancée, she decided she could not go through life with a blind husband. He never married.

He was educated at Glasgow Academy and the University of Glasgow, where he graduated first in classics, logic and philosophy. In his twentieth year he became totally blind, but he held to his resolve to enter the ministry, and gave himself to theological and historical study. In 1879 the University of Edinburgh conferred upon

him the honorary degree of Doctor of Divinity. In 1890, he became a fellow of the Royal Society of Edinburgh, upon the proposal of Sir William Thomson, Robert Flint, Hugh Macmillan and James Lindsay. He died suddenly of apoplexy (stroke) at Avendell House in North Berwick Edinburgh in 1906.

He was licensed to preach by the Presbytery of Glasgow in 1866 and started as an assistant minister of Sandyford. His first ministry began in 1868 at Innellan, on the Argyll coast between Dunoon and Toward. He continued in ministry until 1879 and was once invited to preach at Balmoral Castle by Queen Victoria.

Matheson himself wrote of the composition which he wrote on the marriage of his sister – she had looked after him since he became blind.

"I am quite sure that the whole work was completed in five minutes, and equally sure that it never received at my hands any retouching or correction. I have no natural gift of rhythm. All the other verses I have ever written are manufactured articles; this came like a dayspring from on high."

Oh love that will not let me go
 I rest my weary soul in thee
 I give thee back the life I owe
 That in thine ocean depths its flow
 May richer, fuller be

Oh light that followest all my way
 I yield my flickering torch to thee
 My heart restores its borrowed ray
 That in thy sunshine's blaze its day
 May brighter, fairer be

Oh joy that seekest me through pain
 I cannot close my heart to thee
 I trace the rainbow through the rain
 And feel the promise is not vain
 That morn shall tearless be

Oh cross that liftest up my head
 I dare not ask to fly from thee
 I lay in dust's life's glory dead

And from the ground there blossoms red
Life that shall endless be

Prayer of Blessing

I hope you have enjoyed today's different service. We have learnt a lot about the authors of these hymns and songs and how God inspired them to write such great lyrics. There is a message from all those authors that the presence of God was with them as they wrote the words. As I said at the beginning of this service - God promises to be with us whether we sense it or not. As you read and sing to yourself the final song, please feel the presence of our Lord with you in your home.

It's time to start moving back along those separate paths from which we have come. None of us can predict what this week may bring, but there is one certainty: the resources of the God, who engineered the whole universe, will be there for you. You may be tested, you may suffer, you may waver and become weary, but you will not finally be overcome. God is your strength and salvation.

Amen!

God is our strength and salvation!

The blessing of God all-loving,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit,
be with you today and evermore.

Amen!

Final hymn is “Deep Stillness of the Silent Inland” by Robin Mann – a favourite of Rosemary Brook

A Christmas card from Warren and Lorraine Bartlett in 1997 contained this adapted Celtic (or Gaelic) Blessing which was sent to Robin. Warren was at that time moderator of the Uniting Church in Victoria, and this blessing had been written for the annual synod of their church. Julie Perrin, a storyteller, had written the words — or rather, she says, - they were just waiting to be written down'. The song is made really complete with a series of movements devised by Ian Ferguson. What a great world you've made. Thanks for this country, Australia. May we be reminded of your presence by whatever we see and feel and hear.

For you, deep stillness of the silent inland
 For you, deep blue of the desert skies
 For you, flame red of the rocks and stones
 For you, sweet water from hidden springs.

From the edges seek the heartlands
 and when you're burnt by the journey
 may the cool winds of the hovering Spirit
 soothe and replenish you.
 In the name of Christ, In the name of Christ

FOR YOU – DEEP STILLNESS Movements by Ian Ferguson

“For you” – Each time these words are sung we extend our arms and hands forward and out in a sweeping gesture of openness and offering.

“Deep stillness of the silent inland” – We gently bring our hands in to cradle our belly feeling space and stillness in that place — the heart of our land resounds in the centre of our bodies. We offer that feeling.

“For you, deep blue of the desert skies” – With our extended arms we trace the arch of the sky and lift our faces to the sky, bathing ourselves in the depth and immensity of it — and we offer that feeling.

“For you, flame red of the rocks and stones” – We clap on ‘red’, then form one fist on ‘rocks’, followed by another on ‘stones’. We hold our fists together close in front of us, feeling the bite of the flame and the strength of the rock — and we offer that.

“For you, sweet water from hidden springs” – We form a cup with our hands, scoop that water in front of us, then, with a pouring/flowing/circling action we bring our hands to our chest and then to our sides, letting the water flood into our hearts and out to wash over those around us.

“From the edges seek the heartlands” – We join our hands with those on either side of us and bring our right hand holding our neighbour's left up to our hearts.

“And when you're burnt by the journey” – Still holding hands we swing our arms down and let our heads hang in a relaxed motion.

“May the cool winds of the hovering Spirit” – We raise our heads and swing our arms high above our heads, releasing hands as we reach the top.

“Soothe and replenish you” – We lower our arms slowly down in front of us with a wavelike motion in a gesture of peace.

“In the name of Christ” – We cross one arm over our chest. **“In the name of Christ”** – We bring the other arm to join the first and bow our heads with arms crossed over our chests before beginning again on **“for you”** with a sweeping gesture of open offering.



Mrs. Robyn Harvey