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ORDINARY 13A

28th June 2020

A short act of worship for use in peoples homes
while churches are closed.

A free resource funded by **twelvebaskets**.

For more information <https://theworshipcloud.com/terms/free-weekly-resource>

Hymn: 82 STF – O Lord my God, when I in awesome wonder - [YouTube](#)

Opening Prayers

God of welcome, throughout the Old Testament, the New Testament, and throughout history, you invite people to be a part of your larger story, the story of God's love expressed in hospitality.

God of welcome, you have invited us to worship you today and we respond with joy.

Jesus Christ, you were invited to a wedding and you transformed the ordinary into the special.

Jesus Christ, you were invited into the homes of sinners and you brought salvation and rejoicing.

Jesus Christ, you were invited into the homes of friends and you offered blessing and grace.

Jesus Christ, you came amongst us as a human child and we respond with joy.

Holy Spirit, you were welcomed by the prophets of old who testified in your power.

Holy Spirit, you were welcomed by the early church who witnessed in your power.

Holy Spirit, you were welcomed into every generation of the church who sought to live in your power.

Holy Spirit, we welcome you today into our worship, our prayers, our hearts and our service.

Amen.¹

Let us say the Lord's Prayer

Readings: Genesis 22: 1-14 - [Click for Reading](#)

Romans 6: 12-23 - [Click for Reading](#)

Matthew 10: 40-42 - [Click for Reading](#)

Reflections on the readings

I wonder what has made you feel most alive this week?

Take a moment to reflect this now. Don't worry if you can't think of a moment from this week; if not, think of a moment that stands out from any time in your life; when have you felt most alive?

[You may wish to make plans to speak to someone about this – maybe someone from your household, someone you could arrange a socially-distanced meeting with to reflect on these questions during the week, or by giving someone a ring. You

¹ Opening prayers written by Jill Baker

could arrange to both / all work through the service and then have a conversation, or even work through it on the phone together].

Maybe this question is really the same question as ‘where have you seen God this week?’ – in Romans 6 we hear that life is a gift from God - there is no life without God.

One way to recognise God is to pay attention to the moments we feel life most richly. These moments are always gifts from God, but are particular blessings in times of darkness.

Covid-19 and the global response to it has brought illness and death into the forefront of our lives and minds this year. But we have also been confronted with questions about life, and living:

What does life look like under social distancing?

Where can we find joy when we are surrounded by barriers and physically cut-off from our communities?

How much of life can we live meaningfully over the internet and on the phone?

These are questions that our families, our communities and people all over the world are grappling with. What all these questions remind us of is that life is not lived in isolation, as an individual. We are inextricably bound up with our neighbour, and are responsible for each others’ health and happiness and wellbeing.

In 2020, the way that our lives are bound up with our neighbours has led to sacrifice.

For some people that has meant stark sacrifices; our key workers are putting their health at risk every day to enable life. For others of us it has meant putting life on pause for a while and staying at home.

As John Donne put it in his 1624 poem:

No man is an island,
Entire of itself;
Every man is a piece of the continent,
A part of the main.

This is the stuff of the Gospel. God choosing to become man, to walk amongst us and bind up his life – and death – with the people Jesus walked alongside. And of course, to sacrifice himself. The mystery of the crucifixion and resurrection, as well as the way Christ lived, has profound implications on how we understand life and death as Christ-followers.

And Abraham’s life is ultimately one which leads to life in abundance. We all know that ‘Father Abraham Had Many Sons, Many Sons Had Father Abraham’.

Considered the patriarch of Judaism, Christianity and Islam, Abraham is blessed by God who makes his ‘descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and as the sand on the seashore’.

How can this abundant life begin with a path up the mountain to death and to sacrifice?

There is more than just a hint of Jesus' death and resurrection in this Old Testament story. A father leading his son into what looks like the path of death but actually results in life, and life in abundance. Abraham and Isaac are foreshadowing the greater (fulfilled) death and resurrection of Christ.

There is something so mysterious about all of this, but amidst it all is a certain truth. God's great goodness is never ending. Even paths to death can result in abundant life.

Rowan Williams, who was Archbishop of Canterbury for 10 years from 2002, was present at the tragic events that occurred in New York on September 11th 2001, an experience that brought him close to death and in the midst of chaos and calamity. The next day he was challenged in the street about where God was as thousands of people died. He responded: "if you want to know where God was, maybe it's the firemen trying to break through, maybe it's the rescue worker, the emergency worker, maybe it's somebody on the 35th floor just holding someone else's hand on the 35th floor in their last moments..."

What we see in this image is that God's goodness is expressed through the goodness all around us now. We might be asking where God has been this year, in the midst of Covid-19. But perhaps God has been the front line workers sacrificing their health to save others. Maybe God has been the friends and family reaching out to loved ones to do shopping. Maybe God is at work as vaccines are trialled and developed. Maybe God is at work in everything we discussed or thought about just moments ago when we spoke about when we have felt most alive even in these often difficult times.

In all of these paths we are not passive; we are invited to be co-creators in these stories of life.

Today I pray that, even in darkness, each of us may turn to God and experience God's good gift of life, so that paths that seem to lead only to death may become places in which the Kingdom of God might break through.

Amen.²

Prayers of intercession

The Psalmist writes;

"How long, O Lord? Will you forget me forever? How long will you hide your face from me? How long must I bear pain in my soul, and have sorrow in my heart all day long?"

² Reflection written by Lucy Zwolinska

Sometimes we feel like that – for ourselves and for others around the world whose suffering seems endless. In our prayers for others today we express something of that longing for things to change, using silence in which to lament all that is wrong.

We hold in silent prayer the groaning of this world, the sense of hopelessness at the effects of pollution and climate change, of plastic waste and rising sea levels...

[Silence]

How long, O Lord?

We hold in silent prayer the grief of so many around the world, mourning the loss of family and friends to incurable illness, to starvation and to war...

[Silence]

How long, O Lord?

We hold in silent prayer the great needs of our own society, these islands, this city/town/village, our street, those who live around the church where we worship...

[Silence]

How long, O Lord?

We hold in silent prayer our own families, knowing there are hurts we cannot heal, grievances we cannot solve, challenges we cannot answer...

[Silence]

How long, O Lord?

We hold in silent prayer our own needs, our fears and anxieties, our sins and selfishness, our desire to change and our failure to do so...

[Silence]

How long, O Lord?

In our longing and our lament, we hear again the words of the psalmist; 'But I trusted in your steadfast love; my heart shall rejoice in your salvation. I will sing to the Lord, because he has dealt bountifully with me' and we offer our prayers in the name of the Creator God who brought light out of darkness, in the name of Jesus Christ who brought life out of death and in the name of the Holy Spirit who brought order out of chaos.

So today Lord, hear our prayer. We ask that you free us from all our sins, we ask that we clearly hear your words of grace, that our sins are forgiven. And today dear Lord we say here I am, use me.

Amen.³

Hymn: 707 STF – Make me a channel of your peace - [YouTube](#)

³ Prayers of intercession written by Jill Baker

Blessing

Creator of the universe,

Lord of all time and space,

You are present in this place, in this moment.

We go into the days ahead, seeking to encounter more of you, our God.

Amen.⁴

⁴ Additional prayers by Tim Baker