

Transcript for Service on May 17th 2020 led by Ruth Dillon & Karen Smith

Love rises

Introductory music & welcome

A time of quiet and reflection

O God, who is here — in this place, now — in our midst;

Empower us to praise You, not with words and actions which come from outside of us, but from within us; Dwell in us more fully that we may sing to You with all our being; Fill us with a sense of Your joy, that we might delight in Your worship; Focus us upon Your self-giving Love, which is above every love we have ever known, the source of all.

As we take time to quietly prepare for worship, O God, who is here — in this place — in our midst; Make Your love real here and now.

Silence for a short time

A Call to Worship

Let us worship the One who spoke in the beginning and created something out of nothing.

Let us worship the One who took on the clothing of humanity to set those who were oppressed free.

Let us worship the One whose Spirit rests continually upon us, calling us to bright new beginnings.

~ from *Watch Night Service 2016*, written by Rev. J. Lee Hill, Senior Pastor, Christian Fellowship Congregational UCC of San Diego. Posted on the **Worship Ways** page of the **United Church of Christ** website. http://www.ucc.org/worship_worship-ways

Hymn:

BIND US TOGETHER, LORD,

Bind us together, Lord
bind us together,
with cords that cannot be broken.
Bind us together, Lord,
bind us together,
bind us together with love.

There is only one God,
there is only one King
there is only one Body
that is why we sing:
Bind us together, Lord ...

Made for the glory of God,
purchased by his precious Son,
born with the right to be clean,
for Jesus the victory has won.
Bind us together, Lord ...

You are the family of God,
you are the promise divine,
you are God's chosen desire,
you are the glorious new wine.
Bind us together, Lord ...

Written by Bob Gillman © 1977 Kingsways Thankyou Music

Opening Prayers of Thanksgiving and Confession

Loving God, we praise you for your love shown to us in Christ –

Your love that goes on seeking us out, caring, guiding, protecting, forgiving, despite our reticence to hear you or to live as Jesus' disciples.

Teach us to respond by loving you and others.

Living God, forgive our feeble faith. Forgive us when we care so little about you, so little about others, and so much about ourselves.

Forgive us for turning the Christian faith into something we receive, rather something we share.

Living God, help us to more truly love as your people.

Give us a due sense of our responsibility towards others – the poor, the hungry, the sick, the homeless, the oppressed, the lonely, the weak, the sorrowful.

Help us to recognise our responsibility towards you & the world you have given us, so that in everything we think and say and do we may live for your glory and work for your kingdom. Amen

Lord, I need to admit to something

And I don't know where to start.

Is 'I'm sorry' enough?

I have done and said things

I should not have said and done.

My actions have not been loving, but selfish.

I have thought only of myself,

And did not think about how

My action would impact on other people.

I am embarrassed, ashamed, and need help.

Lord, forgive me for my selfishness,

Forgive me for my hurtful words,

Forgive me for my actions,

Which have wounded those I love and admire.

God of Forgiveness,

You are a God who yearns to be reconciled with us:

Who, time after time, will forgive us.

Thank you for wiping the slate clean,

And giving me confidence to say the right words

And to show loving actions. Amen

T is for Trouble Stepping over the Cracks ©Ruth Dillon 2020

Assurance of Pardon

As we worship, say our prayers; read from scriptures and meditate on them;

As we sing our songs; and renew our commitments to you,

Grant us the assurance again that you forgive us.

Heal us and strengthen us so that we may worship you well,

And go from here to live, love and serve to your praise and glory.

The Lord Jesus Christ gave us the pattern for all prayer, and so, together, we gladly say:

The Lord's Prayer.

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name.

Thy Kingdom come,

thy will be done,

on earth as it is in heaven

Give us this day our daily bread.

And forgive us our trespasses,

as we forgive those who trespass against us.

And lead us not into temptation,

but deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen

1st Reading : Micah 6: 1 - 9

read by Helen Bailey

Hear what the Lord says:

Rise, plead your case before the mountains, and let the hills hear your voice. Hear, you mountains, the controversy of the Lord, and you enduring foundations of the earth;

for the Lord has a controversy with his people, and he will contend with Israel.

“O my people, what have I done to you?

In what have I wearied you? Answer me!

For I brought you up from the land of Egypt,

and redeemed you from the house of slavery;

and I sent before you Moses, Aaron, and Miriam.

O my people, remember now what King Balak of Moab devised,
what Balaam son of Beor answered him, and what happened from Shittim to Gilgal,
that you may know the saving acts of the Lord.”

“With what shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before God on high?
Shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves a year old?

Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, with ten thousands of rivers of oil?
Shall I give my first-born for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?”

He has told you, O mortal, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you
but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?

The voice of the Lord cries to the city (it is sound wisdom to fear your name):

Hear, O tribe and assembly of the city!

2nd reading: Revelation 21: 3 - 6

read by Kirsten Bailey

And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying,

“See, the home of God is among mortals.

He will dwell with them;

they will be his peoples,

and God himself will be with them;

he will wipe every tear from their eyes.

Death will be no more;

mourning and crying and pain will be no more,

for the first things have passed away.”

And the one who was seated on the throne said, “See, I am making all things new.”

Also he said, “Write this, for these words are trustworthy and true.”

Then he said to me, “It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end.

To the thirsty I will give water as a gift from the spring of the water of life.

A time to reflect

Rev’d Ruth Dillon

Today marks the end of Christian Aid Week; however, this year it has been quite different from other years. In our church buildings we would usually give thanks for the work of Christian Aid, thanks for money collected via the collection envelopes and would thank the volunteers who gave time and energy to promote Christian Aid. But this year donations are given via E- envelopes, and I would encourage to look at Fleet URC website for further information.

Yet the responsibility is still ours. The reading from Micah tells us what we should be doing, and that is to continue to do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with our God.

It is easy to understand that in the context of issues on our doorstep, like the suffering of people who are ill, or who have died with coronavirus, a terminal illness, or other illnesses, it can be more difficult to recognise that people are suffering in countries that we do not know or have not visited. Yet the call from Micah is just as strong: do justice, love kindness and walk humbly with our God .

So how do we do that?

Firstly - do justice... *Christian Aid is not just about bringing stories to our churches once a year, it is a year round commitment, of stories of overcoming hardship through your giving; it is about addressing issues of poor sanitation, clean water, farming, and enabling communities to have new skills for micro businesses - and all done surrounded with Prayer and the knowledge that God is blessing the smallest act of Justice.*

Secondly –do kindness... *Kindness is easy when it is someone we know and love, but in our own context it is sometimes more difficult to love the stranger, for we cannot know them or talk to them, especially if that stranger is hundreds or even thousands of miles away. Christian Aid provides videos so we can get to know people who are in need of our prayers and kindness. Jesus loved the stranger – always - he never judged, only loved unconditionally. He listened and respected them and gave people time to tell their story. Kindness is having a compassionate heart and acting on what you feel. Kindness can be through our giving, yes, but also through committed prayer. You will have found some prayers and stories on both churches’ websites and on the Christian Aid website and I do encourage you to listen to the stories of people who are highlighted this year.*

Finally - to walk humbly with God

As this virus spreads across the world, love rises up in response. You’ve already shown incredible kindness to your neighbours. Now is the time to reach out to our neighbours both near and far. Coronavirus is spreading faster in developing countries, and one reason is the lack the lack of soap and clean water for handwashing. To walk humbly with God means that God will bring situations into lives, and we are encouraged to follow. To follow means to walk, or run as you wish, but we do not go alone, for God is with us; in people’s deepest despair God is with his people, and what binds us together to walk with God, is Love. A Love which will wipe away every tear, a Love which knows no boundaries, and a Love which heals and gives hope.

I would like to close with a prayer from Christian Aid, and I invite you to say the prayer with me.

God who is love, your Love never fails

Even in the darkest moments, love gives hope.

Love compels us to fight against coronavirus alongside our sisters and brothers living in poverty.

Love compels us to stand together in prayer with our neighbours near and far. Love compels us to give and act as one.

Now, it is clear that our futures are bound together more tightly than ever before.

As we pray in our individual homes – around the nation and around the world – we are united as one family.

Amen.

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Music

A prayer for others

We pray for those who are lonely. We hope in the promise that the home of God will be among people: that God will dwell with us, that we will be his people and that God himself will be with us.

We mention in our hearts those we know who are lonely or isolated.

Pause

Lord you said, 'See, I am making all things new.'

'Amen, make all things new!'

We pray for those who are crying; the sad, the depressed and the anxious. We have hope in the promise that God will wipe every tear from our eyes.

We mention in our hearts those we know who are sad and who know tears.

Pause

Lord you said, 'See, I am making all things new.'

'Amen, make all things new!'

We pray for those who are experiencing the consequences of death, the bereaved and those who are mourning. We have hope in the promise that death and mourning will be no more.

We mention in our hearts those we know who are affected by death and mourning.

Pause

Lord you said, 'See, I am making all things new.'

'Amen, make all things new!'

We pray for those who are in pain, suffering from illness either physical or mental. We have hope in the promise that crying and pain will be no more.

We mention in our hearts those we know who are ill or in pain. In particular we bring to God.....

Pause

Lord you said, 'See, I am making all things new.'

'Amen, make all things new!'

We pray for those who are thirsty for truth, love and grace; those who seek God and his life with earnest hearts. We have hope in the promise that God will give water to the thirsty without cost from the spring of the water of life.

We mention in our hearts those we know who hunger and thirst for God.

Pause

Lord you said, 'See, I am making all things new.'

'Amen, make all things new!'

Lord, your words are trustworthy and true.

You are the Alpha and the Omega,
the beginning and the end.

We pray all this in the powerful and hopeful name of Jesus Christ,

Amen

Written by Sara Hargreaves <https://engageworship.org/ideas/prayers-intercession-based-revelation->

Final Prayer & Blessing Ruth

May the God who is Love, bring your people in unity with your grace and commitment, and bless us with a desire to do justice.

May Jesus who touched the unlovely, listened to the desperate and lifted the lowly, bring your people hope in our challenging world, and enable us to do kindness.

May the Holy Spirit, who prompts us and lifts us when we stumble, give us courage to place each foot on firm ground, and to walk humbly with our most gracious God.

Amen