

## Sources and Thanks

*Call to Worship* from the Church of England's *New Patterns of Worship*.  
*Affirmation of Faith* from the Reformed Church of France (translated by Andy Braunston)

All other liturgical material from Sarah Moore.

*Organ Pieces:* Opening *Ach Gott Von Himmel Sieh Darein* ("O God from heaven see this") by Johann Pachelbel (organ of The Spire Church, Farnham – 2020). Closing: *Toccata in Seven* by John Rutter (organ of All Saints', Odiham – 2020) both played by Brian Cotterill.  
<http://briancotterill.webs.com>

### Thanks to

Ray Fraser, Liane Todd, Addie Redmond, John Young, Barbara Redmond and the choir of Barrhead URC for recording spoken parts of the service.

## Copyright and Performance

*Here in This Place* by Marty Haugen (b1950) © 1982 GIA Publications  
sung by the composer

*Be Still and Know that I am God* recorded by Hyperion

*Sing of the Lord's Goodness* © 1981, Ernest Sands, OCP Publications  
Administered in the UK by Calamus, 30 North Terrace, Mildenhall, Suffolk IP28 7AB Performer unknown at Jazz Church

*O Worship the King* sung by Maddy Prior and the Carnival Band.

## URC Daily Devotions Sunday Worship Sunday 14th June 2020 The Rev'd Sarah Moore



### Introduction

Hello. My name is Sarah Moore, and I am currently serving as Transition Champion within the National Synod of Scotland. This is a special category ministry post that aims to work with congregations, and those who lead them, to discern appropriate patterns of mission and ministry for the future. I also serve the United Reformed Church as Assistant Clerk to the General Assembly.

This service was prepared and recorded from my home in Dunblane, central Scotland. A place known for being the hometown of tennis star Andy Murray and remembered for the 1996 Tragedy when, on the 13th

March, 16 children and their teacher were murdered in their classroom at Dunblane Primary School. This event forms a lasting scar on the local community.

### **Call To Worship**

We meet in the name of God, the Holy Trinity of Love

**who knows our needs, hears our cries, feels our pain, and heals our wounds.**

God is our light and our salvation. In God's name we light this candle and are reminded of Jesus, the Light of the World, God's own Voice who came to live with us.

**May our hearts be open to you, O God, now and always. Amen**

**Hymn:** *Gather Us In*  
Marty Haugen 1982

Here in this place, new light is streaming,  
now is the darkness vanished away.  
See, in this space, our fears and our dreamings,  
brought here to you in the light of this day.  
Gather us in the lost and forsaken,  
gather us in the blind and the lame.  
Call to us now, and we shall awaken,  
we shall arise at the sound of our name.

2: We are the young our lives are a mystery,  
we are the old who yearn for your face.  
We have been sung throughout all of history,  
called to be light to the whole human race.

### **Closing Words and Blessing**

*Some words from Ruth Wells, an Anglican priest and poet,*

God snuck home.

No longer bound by the expectations of a 'consecrated' building  
She's concentrated her efforts on breaking out.

Now in the comfort of a well-worn dining table She shares some bread,  
with some friends. And She laughs. And She weeps. In the sacred space  
of home.

*(@Ruthmw)*

And may the blessing of God  
who we know as Creator, Christ and Holy Spirit,  
be and remain with each one of us,  
with the people who we love,  
and with the people we are called to love. Amen.

**Hymn**    *O Worship the King*  
Robert Grant (1779-1838)

O worship the King  
all-glorious above,  
O gratefully sing  
His power and His love:  
our shield and defender,  
the Ancient of Days,  
pavilioned in splendour  
and girded with praise.

2 O tell of His might,  
O sing of His grace,  
whose robe is the light,  
whose canopy space.  
His chariots of wrath  
the deep thunderclouds form,  
and dark is His path  
on the wings of the storm.

3: The earth with its store  
of wonders untold,  
Almighty, Thy power  
hath founded of old;  
Established it fast  
by a changeless decree,  
And round it hath cast,  
like a mantle, the sea.

4: Thy bountiful care,  
what tongue can recite?  
It breathes in the air,  
it shines in the light;  
it streams from the hills,  
it descends to the plain,  
and sweetly distills  
in the dew and the rain.

5: Frail children of dust,  
and feeble as frail,  
in Thee do we trust,  
nor find Thee to fail.  
Your mercies, how tender,  
how firm to the end,  
our Maker, Defender,  
Redeemer, and Friend!

6: O measureless Might,  
ineffable Love,  
whom angels delight  
to hymn thee above!  
The humbler creation,  
though feeble their lays,  
in true adoration  
shall sing to thy praise!

Gather us in the rich and the haughty,  
gather us in the proud and the strong.  
Give us a heart so meek and so lowly,  
give us the courage to enter the song.

3: Here we will take the wine and the water,  
here we will take the bread of new birth.  
Here you shall call your sons and your daughters,  
call us anew to be salt for the earth.  
Give us to drink the wine of compassion,  
give us to eat the bread that is you.  
Nourish us well, and teach us to fashion  
lives that are holy and hearts that are true.

4: Not in the dark of buildings confining,  
not in some heaven, light years away,  
but here in this place, the new light is shining;  
now is the Kingdom, now is the day.  
Gather us in and hold us forever,  
gather us in and make us your own.  
Gather us in all peoples together,  
*fire of love in our flesh and our bone.*

**Prayers of Approach and Confession**

Holy One, the Psalmist calls us to worship you with gladness and singing, and so, Creator of the universe we do just that. Our first call is to glorify you and to rest in your presence so in these summer days we do just that.

We gather to offer our sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving remembering that we are your people and you are our God and that your faithfulness extends to all generations.

*[pause]*

St. Paul wrote to Christians in Rome that through their faith and ours we have peace with God and have access to God's grace.

Creating One, we hold our lives in your presence recognising that there are times you feel closer to us than life itself, when we feel that we are soaring on the wings of an eagle.

We hold our lives in your presence recognising that there are times too when your presence feels far from us and we roll our eyes at your promises questioning if we are indeed your people. Lord have mercy.

Redeeming One, there are times when loving you and loving neighbour is easy, and there are times too when it is impossible. Christ have mercy.

Comforting One, you who know what it is to be human, heal us and make us whole. Show us how to be the best creation of ourselves, teach us how we can grow beyond our worst selves. Lord have mercy.

*Silence*

'For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. Indeed while, rarely will anyone die for a righteous person ... But God shows love for us that while we were still sinners Christ died for us'.

We are a forgiven people. We are a renewed people. We are a called people.

As our Saviour taught us, so we pray: Our Father...

Compassionate God, we pray for your compassion in our online, digital and virtual engagement. We pray particularly for those leading online expressions of Church that they may be encouraged.

We remember too all who work in information technology, computer design, software designers, including those who design the games loved by many people.

We pray for people who work in social media and communication provision, for those at Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, TikTok and Google to name just a few. We pray for those at Lifesize and Zoom and the professionals behind the app this service is provided through. Give them hearts of compassion and enable them to do their work well.

Compassionate God, we pray for our families and friends, and for any who have asked us for our prayers or who we know to be in particular need. We pray for our own needs and concerns.

Be with us as we engage with the online world either in person or indirectly. As our hands, feet, and voices are strengthened for service, use our keyboards and microphones, computers, tablets, and smartphones too. Show us where you need us to go and give us compassion when we get there.

In Jesus' name we pray, in the power of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

harvest, help us to remember that we are those workers and that we labour in your name. Amen.

### **Prayers for the World**

Compassionate God as your Son had compassion on the crowds because they were harassed and helpless, hear our prayers as we try to look with your compassion on your world.

We ask for your gift and grace of compassion in our lives and relationships.

We pray for the gift of compassion to and from your Church. Show every local church how they might compassionately serve their community, and respond to the need in that place.

We pray for the United Reformed Church and for those who lead it, in its expressions at the General Assembly, in the Synods, and in our local churches.

We pray for the justice work done in our name through the Joint Public Issues Team, ecumenical and other agencies where thoughtful compassion informs and underpins our engagement.

Compassionate God we pray for our communities, online, local, national, and global.

We pray that our governments at Westminster, Edinburgh, Cardiff, and Belfast may be compassionate, in their debate and decision making and remember particularly the needs of the weakest and most vulnerable.

### **Prayer for illumination**

‘God’s love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us.’ Gracious God, we thank you for your Word that comforts us, that challenges us, that inspires us and calls us. We ask that we may have open hearts, open minds, and open lives as we listen again and anew to your word, a word for us, for churches and for our communities. Pour your Spirit upon us as we listen today. Amen

*Reading*

St Matthew 9.35-10.8

Then Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and proclaiming the good news of the kingdom, and curing every disease and every sickness. When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, ‘The harvest is plentiful, but the labourers are few; therefore ask the Lord of the harvest to send out labourers into his harvest.’

Then Jesus summoned his twelve disciples and gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to cure every disease and every sickness. These are the names of the twelve apostles: first, Simon, also known as Peter, and his brother Andrew; James son of Zebedee, and his brother John; Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas and Matthew the tax-collector; James son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus; Simon the Cananaean, and Judas Iscariot, the one who betrayed him.

These twelve Jesus sent out with the following instructions: ‘Go nowhere among the Gentiles, and enter no town of the Samaritans, but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. As you go, proclaim the good news, “The kingdom of heaven has come near.” Cure the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out demons. You received without payment; give without payment.

**Hymn:** *Be Still and Know That I am God*  
Anonymous

Be still and know that I am God...

I am the Lord that healeth thee...

In thee, O Lord, I put my trust...

### *Sermon*

Nearly three months ago our communities received word from the UK Government, and from the devolved governments in Edinburgh, Cardiff, and Belfast that due to Covid-19, a novel Coronavirus, the nations of the United Kingdom would be going into lockdown. As I write this sermon on the last day of April, these lands, like many countries around the world, remain in lockdown.

The impact on church life, in all parts of the United Reformed Church, was immediate. Straight away worship services in our chapel buildings ceased. Social events and study groups stopped. People stopped travelling to meetings. Those whose jobs and lives entail significant amounts of time living out of suitcases and who yearn for a settled period at home suddenly found that life was just that with a bit more added for good measure. I was one of them. Be careful what you wish for might indeed be an appropriate response.

We were sent home with a 'Stay home; protect the NHS; save lives' mantra ringing in our ears. And for the most part that is what we all did. What happened next was that many in our churches adapted. We turned to our internet connections and telephone lines and built church and community online instead. Paradoxically as we went home we were sent out into a new space. That new space, new for many church folk but

### **Affirmation of Faith**

**We believe in God.**

**Despite His silence and His secrets we believe that He lives.**

**Despite evil and suffering we believe that He made the world so that all would be happy in life.**

**Despite the limitations of our reason and the revolts of our hearts, we believe in God.**

**We believe in Jesus Christ.**

**Despite the centuries which separate us**

**from the time when he came to earth, we believe in His word.**

**Despite our incomprehension and our doubt, we believe in His resurrection.**

**Despite his weakness and poverty, we believe in His reign.**

**We believe in the Holy Spirit.**

**Despite appearances we believe He guides the Church;**

**despite death we believe in eternal life;**

**despite ignorance and disbelief,**

**we believe that the Kingdom of God is promised to all. Amen.**

### **Offertory**

Christ calls and we respond. Discipleship is a whole life enterprise but we wonder what we have to offer. We give our money for the work of the Church in our communities, in our nations and in the world. We offer too ourselves, our time, our energy, our interests, our work.

Let us pray.

Lord of the harvest, accept the offering we set before you, enable us to be your hands, feet, and voice in the world. Send labourers into the

through means such as this is here to stay, perhaps in time in parallel with worship in person. Christ is challenging us to discern what the being sent out will look like. There are no easy answers other than that we are confident that we are commissioned by Christ, in his name, to do his work of proclaiming that the kingdom of heaven has come near in world that includes the online. Our world is changing before our eyes and where we find community is changing too. Our task as followers of Jesus Christ is the same to go where he sends us and calls to proclaim that the kingdom of heaven has come near. Amen.

**Hymn: Sing of the Lord's Goodness**  
1981, Ernest Sands

Sing of the Lord's goodness,  
Father of all wisdom,  
come to Him and bless His name.  
mercy He has shown us,  
His love is for ever,  
faithful to the end of days

*Come then all you nations,  
sing of your Lord's goodness,  
melodies of praise and  
thanks to God.*

*Ring out the Lord's glory,  
praise Him with your music,  
worship Him and bless His name.*

2: Power He has wielded,  
honour is His garment,  
risen from the snares of death.

His word He has spoken,  
one bread He has broken,  
new life He now gives to all.

3: Courage in our darkness,  
comfort in our sorrow,  
Spirit of our God most high;  
solace for the weary,  
pardon for the sinner,  
splendour of the living God.

4: Praise Him with your singing,  
praise Him with the trumpet,  
praise God with the lute and harp;  
praise Him with the cymbals,  
praise Him with your dancing,  
praise God till the end of days.

far from new for all, was to the lands of Facebook Live, Lifesize, YouTube, and Zoom.

For those unfamiliar with these names, they refer to the various online sites that have come to the fore in these days to enable folk to participate in worship, meetings and other social activities online. I have used Zoom to go to Church, attend meetings, catch up with family and friends, and to participate in dance and exercise classes. What I used to do pre-virus in person I now do via an internet connection. These virtual spaces have their own risks. Concern has been raised with some justification about privacy and security. Enter a number wrong and you might find yourself in a place different to where you sought to go. Forget the security safeguards and a disruptive visitor might find their way to your gathering. There are those who are very nervous of using these programmes; and we shouldn't forget, those who for whatever reason are not able to use them. The 'what if I break it?' or 'what if it breaks me?' instinct can be strong. For others what we have experienced was less new but still a huge jump up to another level. Attending meetings online was already starting to happen. Some friends were already dabbling with virtual worship and pondering what digital Church might look like. I was watching with interest, and let's be honest, a little trepidation. How could I do that.

I wonder if the apostles named in our reading: Simon, Andrew, James, John, Philip, and the others, who were with Jesus as he went around all the cities and villages, teaching, proclaiming, and curing, felt rather like that. I wonder if they had any clue that they were going to be sent out themselves to do this work in Jesus' name with his authority? I wonder to what extent they shared the compassion that Jesus had for the crowds who Matthew tells us were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Jesus calls his disciples to prayer. He connects these people who were struggling with the image of the harvest. We might imagine that a harvest of people called to be a part of Christ's kingdom would be

those who were strong and sorted. No, we get a glimmer of the thread running through the gospels that prioritises the poor in spirit, those who mourn, the meek, those who yearn for righteousness, the merciful, the pure-hearted, the peacemakers and the persecuted, and the helpless and harassed are the ones that the kingdom of God is for first and foremost. The way of the world is not to consider that good soil might be found in such a place as this.

The mission is Christ's, so the mission is God's, and the disciples become the answer to their own prayer. They pray asking the Lord to send out labourers into the harvest and then immediately learn that they are the ones who will be sent out. The disciples are given authority over unclean spirits, and the ability to cure every disease and every sickness. They are sent not among the Gentiles or the Samaritans to the lost sheep of the House of Israel. The disciples are mandated to proclaim the good news. "The kingdom of heaven has come near." The work includes curing the sick, raising the dead, cleansing the lepers, and casting out the demons. What's more the fruits of this mission are to be free at the point of delivery. No money making exercise is this.

It is likely that just as we know about the Great Commission at the end of the Gospel of Matthew, so did the early readers and hearers of this part of the story. The Church has read and received the stories and teachings of Jesus as part of the whole story of Jesus from its earliest days. We know, like they knew, that being sent out is part of the deal that is Christian discipleship. The disciples were sent out to the lost sheep of the House of Israel, and in some ways this list reminds us that they themselves were part of this flock. Matthew's roll call includes a tax collector, one who collaborated with the occupying power; a Zealot, one who was at least a political enthusiast and at most a domestic terrorist; and a betrayer, perhaps Judas ends up as one of the most infamous of the group, and one who's name lives on in the chants of football supporters called out at turncoat players.

We know that Jesus' mission would be fraught with apparent difficulty even though the opening verses of the passage we heard made it sound so easy. Easy it was not, and easy it is not. We are not called to share in this mission in an ideal world. We wonder how can we speak about our faith in our own lives and situations. We know that as the disciples were sent out among their own people that sharing the good news of the kingdom of heaven among our own people can feel out and out impossible. We have no clue how to do it. Going to other people, gentiles and Samaritans and their equivalents of our day, though hard enough, might actually be the easier ask.

We are commissioned with Jesus' authority as well. We are commissioned to go out, to proclaim, to cure, to raise, to cleanse, and to cast out too. In our age of science and of Covid-19 we can be tempted to say that much of that at face value is impossible so we can't do it. We can't do it so we won't bother discerning onwards. Discerning what that means is an urgent task before everyone called to be a disciple of Jesus today, and for the church communities to which we belong.

As I reflect from a place of lockdown I wonder what this means for us in this age of Covid-19 that for myself I have come to think of as Coronatide. As we were sent home we were and are sent out. As one whose ministry is grounded in the theme of transition, I have long been aware that how we as disciples of Jesus today live out this call, this vocation, is changing. One common question that I get asked in Scotland is what is the Church transitioning from and to what. It would seem that the online is a part of this. The digital, the online, the virtual can be and is real. Real people, engaging with each other. Real people, forging community. Real people, hearing Christ's call to follow him. Real people, being sent out.

In all sorts of ways the world during and after the Covid-19 crisis is not the same as it was before. Our church life is going to be changed no doubt. It seems likely that the online and engaging with Sunday worship