

**Waterloo United Free Church Service**  
**22<sup>nd</sup> Nov 2020, Rev Robert Shallcross**

*For this week's service you will need to read the sheet for words and sermon. The DVD and YouTube video contain the worship songs only, for you to join in with those.*

**Call to Worship**

Since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.

**Hymn (DVD/YouTube)**

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.<sup>1</sup>

**Prayer**

Lord God our Heavenly Father, though separated from all else yet close to you, accept now the worship of your people wherever we may be and in whatever circumstances we find ourselves. For to you alone we look for all that truly satisfies our deepest longings and most fervent hope. We acknowledge you are our faithful Creator and the sustainer of our lives, the One who has guided us throughout our days and by your mercy brought us in safety to this day. Grant us now the strength of your Holy Spirit that we may once more be upheld and challenged by your Word and find therein the source of all our hope in Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour.

Forgive us when we have fallen short of our calling to be your people, when our love has grown cold and we have become weary in service, when we have been tempted to compromise our faith and been disobedient to your Word. Turn us from all that would disgrace our discipleship and make us better able to serve our Lord humbly and with thanksgiving for that great love shown in his life, death and glorious resurrection and ascension, that now and hereafter we may be found united to him who is alone our Saviour, even Jesus Christ in whose name we pray.  
Amen

**Bible reading: Ephesians 1: 15-23**

**Paul's Prayer**

<sup>15</sup> For this reason, ever since I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all of God's people, <sup>16</sup> I have not stopped giving thanks to God for you. I remember you in my prayers <sup>17</sup> and ask the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, to give you the Spirit, who will make you wise and reveal God to you, so that you will know him. <sup>18</sup> I ask that your minds may be opened to

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see his light, so that you will know what is the hope to which he has called you, how rich are the wonderful blessings he promises his people, <sup>19</sup> and how very great is his power at work in us who believe. This power working in us is the same as the mighty strength <sup>20</sup> which he used when he raised Christ from death and seated him at his right side in the heavenly world. <sup>21</sup> Christ rules there above all heavenly rulers, authorities, powers, and lords; he has a title superior to all titles of authority in this world and in the next. <sup>22</sup> God put all things under Christ's feet and gave him to the church as supreme Lord over all things. <sup>23</sup> The church is Christ's body, the completion of him who himself completes all things everywhere.

### Sermon

We are not the first nor only people to live with being unable to meet together for worship. In the New Testament there are letters written by the Apostle Paul whilst he was in prison and therefore unable to meet with his fellow Christians including those addressed to in the letter to the Ephesians which we have just read.

Paul writes that though separated from one another, his joy is that he can still pray for them with a sense of thanksgiving for their united faith. Let this be a lesson, we do not forget at this time but rather, let it be our great encouragement. That prayer for each other is not limited by government edict, scientific protocol or social distancing. Rather it is the means by which we are constantly bound together and together bound to our Lord Jesus Christ.

Within his prayer Paul tells the Ephesian believers that he prays *“that they may know what is the hope to which the Lord has called them, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power. Eph 1:18-19*

To hope for an inheritance of riches and power at a time like this or at any other time may seem a vain hope, and so it is for most people, until and unless we look again and see the source of such hope. We all hope that this pandemic will go away and we can once more return to what we once considered normality, but such hopes and

others like it may be no more than fanciful wishes; and whether they come true or not dependent on so many things deemed uncertain and unknown at the present time. However, the hope to which the Apostle speaks is not based on human activity that may or may not come to fruition, but is solely grounded on the basis of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, which is the sure anchor of the soul. Our hope is none other than Jesus Christ raised from death to glory. It is this hope that gives the Christian stability in an otherwise uncertain world. It is the call in these uncertain days to look up and know by faith that there in Heaven, seated at the right hand of his Father, is the Son who shared our earthly life that we might become members of the household of faith and be counted amongst the redeemed.

Such hope, Paul tells us, is revealed in the richness of a glorious inheritance which is ours in Christ. Any inheritance you may receive is always the product of the one who bestowed that inheritance upon you, and this is true not only of what may be put into a person's will to be shared amongst others at his death, but also is true when we inherit some characteristics of our parents; he has his father's eyes or she has inherited her mother's kindness. It is true also in what we have inherited from our Lord Jesus Christ. What are these riches of Christ that have become our precious inheritance? They are surely found in the grace of compassion, patience, humility and love that dominated the life of Jesus, that they may too be found in the lives of his followers, the indwelling of the Holy Spirit that enables us to live a life that is founded on that which was in Christ Jesus. Just like the hope that we possess such inheritance having its source not in our own capacity but through our union with Christ and relying on all that he has achieved.

This brings us to the third petition that Paul makes in his prayer; for us to know the immeasurable greatness of the power of Christ in our lives. Paul like every Christian knew to his cost that he so often did not do the good that he wanted to do but rather the evil he did not want to do he did (Romans 7: 19). It is the worry of many a Christian which can lead us to ask why

bother to try and live the life Christ would have me live, for I know in my heart of hearts I will fail, if not today, some other time. What good then to have had hope and claim a rich inheritance? What can save us from such thoughts is once more founded not in who we are or what we have done or shall do, but in the power of Christ at work in us. At times we are tempted and feel burdened with a heavy load, but it is as nothing compared to the burden of temptation our Lord was called to endure and overcame to help us overcome and triumph. By his victory over sin and death we too may know for certain that the Christian life is not lived in vain. God is working His purpose out and that purpose includes the life He has called you to live. There is a power greater than we can begin to imagine that takes our human efforts no matter how paltry they may seem and transforms them by virtue of what Christ has already achieved to make them his own.

This prayer of Paul may be summed up in asking that each of us may know with hope in our hearts all that Jesus Christ has done for us and that because He is the King of glory his will shall be done. Amen.

### **Hymn (DVD/YouTube)**

How sweet the name of Jesus sounds  
In a believer's ear!  
It soothes his sorrows, heals his wounds,  
And drives away his fear.

It makes the wounded spirit whole  
And calms the troubled breast;  
'Tis manna to the hungry soul,  
And to the weary, rest.

Dear Name! the Rock on which I build,  
My Shield and Hiding Place,  
My never-failing treasury, filled  
With boundless stores of grace!

Jesus! my Shepherd, Saviour, Friend,  
My Prophet, Priest, and King;  
My Lord, my Life, my Way, my End,  
Accept the praise I bring.

Weak is the effort of my heart,  
And cold my warmest thought;

But when I see Thee as Thou art,  
I'll praise Thee as I ought.

Till then I would Thy love proclaim  
With every fleeting breath,  
And may the music of Thy name  
Refresh my soul in death.

### **Prayer**

Lord God our Father we thank you that you sent your Son to live our life and to die our death that we might share his eternal life through the power of his resurrection, glorious ascension and rule at your right hand. Help us each day to look to him who is the author and sustainer of our earthly pilgrimage that at the last we may be welcomed into the eternal glory of your presence.

Grant us now the strength we need to overcome our anxieties and fears and so to live our lives that others may take courage and hope to face the coming days in the strength of the Spirit of Christ.

We pray you would grant wisdom to those whose decisions affect so many people in these days within both local and national government and enable the skill and knowledge of those in advisory roles to be well used for the greater good.

We give thanks for those whose dedication and compassion brings healing to those who are sick and pray the staff of our hospitals and surgeries may continue to find encouragement and strength for the workload being placed upon them.

We would ask that we may be conscious of those situations overlooked by our own concerns and anxieties: bring us to share what we can with those who are suffering greatly due to poverty or violence, hatred or abuse, whether close by or far from where we are. Grant to such those amongst their fellows who will bring comfort and relief and help us to play our part in whatever way we can.

Bless the Church of Jesus Christ in her life of witness to the saving power of our Saviour and guard and keep those safe who are being

persecuted for righteousness sake. Watch over our congregation whilst we are being kept apart that we may be joined in prayer and concern for each other's needs until by your mercy we meet again.

We commend to your care our families and friends this day wherever they are, particularly those who are alone and feel isolated at this time.

These our prayers and the unspoken prayers of our hearts we bring in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen

### **Hymn**

I cannot tell why he, whom angels worship,  
should set his love upon the sons of men,  
Or why, as Shepherd, he should seek the wanderers,  
To bring them back, they know not how or when.  
But this I know, that He was born of Mary,  
when Bethlehem's manger was his only home,  
And that he lived at Nazareth and laboured,  
and so the Saviour, Saviour of the world, is come.

I cannot tell how silently He suffered,  
as with his peace he graced this place of tears,  
Or how his heart upon the cross was broken,  
the crown of pain to three and thirty years.  
But this I know, He heals the broken-hearted,  
And stays our sin and calms our lurking fear,  
And lifts the burden from the heavy laden;  
For yet the Saviour, Saviour of the world is here.

I cannot tell how He will win the nations,  
How He will claim His earthly heritage,  
How satisfy the needs and aspirations  
Of east and west, of sinner and of sage.  
But this I know, all flesh shall see His glory,  
And he shall reap the harvest He has sown,  
And some glad day his sun will shine in splendour,  
When He the Saviour, Saviour of the world, is known.

I cannot tell how all the lands shall worship,  
When, at his bidding every storm is stilled,  
Or who can say how great the jubilation  
When every heart with love and joy is filled.  
But this I know, the skies will thrill with rapture,  
And myriad, myriad human voices sing,  
And earth to heaven, and heaven to earth, will

answer,  
'At last the Saviour, Saviour of the world, is King!'

### **Benediction**

Now may the God of peace himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. He who calls you is faithful and he will surely do it.

The blessing of God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit be with us all  
Amen

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### **Offering**

The offering for the Lord's work is gratefully received. Please send by cheque (to Sue W), or direct payment.

### **Homegroup/Bible Study**

We are meeting for small group Bible study at 8pm on Tuesday evenings via video meeting. You can join if you have online access, or by telephone. Contact Sue or Linda for joining information.

### **Leave**

Our Minister, Linda is on study and annual leave for two weeks, 14<sup>th</sup> – 28<sup>th</sup> November.

### **Christmas Angels**

Please keep knitting Christmas angels so that we can spread some joy around our community this Advent. Speak to Linda if you require the pattern or wool.

### **Harvest Appeal**

Thank you for your giving, our Harvest appeal raised £1,280 which will go to the work of Home of Hope orphanage, Malawi.