

Christ Church United Reformed Church, Rayleigh

Sunday 26th. October 2025

Call to worship: Rejoice in the Lord and be glad for God is our hope and salvation. The Lord blesses the earth with rain and crowns the year with bounty. The Lord makes old men dream dreams and God makes young girls see visions. Rejoice in the Lord and be glad, for God is our hope and salvation.

Hymn: WF 19 “Come let us worship Jesus”

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| 1. Come let us worship Jesus,
King of all nations Lord of all.
Magnificent and glorious,
Just and merciful.
<i>Jesus, King of the nations</i>
<i>Jesus, Lord of all,</i>
<i>Jesus, King of the nations,</i>
<i>Lord of all.</i> | 2. Lavish our hearts' affection,
Deepest love and highest praise.
Voice, race, language blending,
All the world amazed.
<i>Jesus, King of the nations, etc.</i> |
| 3. Bring tributes from the nations,
Come in joyful cavalcades,
One thunderous acclamation,
One banner raised.
<i>Jesus, King of the nations etc.</i> | 4. Come, Lord, and fill your temple
Glorify Your dwelling place,
till nations see Your splendour
and seek your face.
<i>Jesus, King of the nations etc.</i> |
| 5. Fear God and give Him glory,
For His hour of judgement comes.
Creator, Lord Almighty,
Worship Him alone.
<i>Jesus, King of the nations etc.</i> | |

Children's time:

Do any of the congregation know what the phrase “goodbye” is a shortened version of? In the morning and we travelled both ways at lunchtime on the bus

When do we say goodbye? After a family visit we say goodbye to those who are leaving. When we have visited someone in hospital, we say goodbye when we leave.

Let me tell you a story from my childhood. My twin and I went started school shortly after our fifth birthday and the school was about a mile or so from home. Our mother took us to the bus stop in the morning so that we could get to school on time and we also travelled home and back to school at lunchtime. However, our journey home at the end of the day was a different story! We were supposed to catch the bus, but as there was a group of five of us we decided to walk each other to our homes. As we reached each house we said goodbye, see you in the morning to each of our friends until my twin and I were the only ones left. What we did with our bus money is another story, but suffice it to say we were unwittingly shown up by the lady in our local sweetshop. Up until that point our parents had not twigged as to what was going on!

So, we say goodbye as we leave someone, who we may see the next day such as school friends or who we may not see for a while. In both instances we are saying "God be with you!"

Of course God never says goodbye to us for He is with us always – at school or at home, when we are outside, when we are awake and when we are asleep. For God loves each and everyone of us and will never say goodbye, even if we have said goodbye to Him and turned our backs on Him.

We are now going to bow our heads in prayer and talk to God. So let us pray.

Prayer (incl. Lord's Prayer – modern version please.)

Gracious God, we thank you that we are always your children and that you never say goodbye to us even when we have turned our backs on you for you love us no matter what. You call us to offer our lives in joyful service, but we confess that we hold back- from others, from sacrifice, even from you. We are slow to give and quick to complain and afraid to trust fully in in your love.

Forgive us. By your mercy, fill us again with your Spirit, that we may be poured out in love, as Christ was poured out for us.

Gracious God we acknowledge all the gifts that you given to all of us, even the youngest amongst us, especially the greatest gift of all, your

Son, Jesus Christ, who through His death on the cross and resurrection, defeated death and offers those who follow Him, forgiveness of their sins and everlasting life. Forgive us, Heavenly Father for we have not used these gifts as perhaps you wanted us to. May Your Holy Spirit guide us, strengthen and sustain us, enabling us to use these gifts that you have given us in your name.

Christ offers a crown of righteousness to those who love him and long for his appearance. Rejoice and be glad!

We continue in prayer by saying together the Lord's Prayer in its modern form which is on the screen – "Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours now and for ever". **AMEN**

Collection

Hymn WF 3 "All over the world the Spirit is moving"

All over the world the spirit is moving,
All over the world as the prophet said it would be;
All over the world there's a mighty revelation,
Of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.

All over His church, God's spirit is moving,
All over His church as the prophet said it would be;
All over His church there's a mighty revelation
Of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.

Right here in this place the Spirit is moving,
Right here in this place as the prophet said it would be;
Right here in this place there's a mighty revelation
Of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.

Reading: Psalm 65 (Jim)

This reading is dedicated to "the music director" and whilst this dedication might seem us to be redundant it is not. In Hebrew, the word translated as "psalm" refers to a melody of some kind and the term for "song" is a type of lyric, specifically a religious song. This, of course,

could refer to many of the Psalms, but it reminds me that in the modern church, although we do occasionally sing psalms, it is very rarely in the form of a metrical psalm as we used to do in the middle of the last century. Indeed in the Church of Scotland in which I was brought up, a metrical psalm was used to open worship.

As we study this psalm it is clear that David considers the worshipping of God as the right thing to do as are the promises that we make to Him. But why? David is quite clear in verses 2 and 3 that this is because God answers our prayers and people everywhere will come to him to seek forgiveness for their faults, and of course in many churches this is a large part of the prayer of confession.

Verses 4 and 5 are particularly interesting and curious. David says that blessed are those that God chooses and here David seems to be speaking about life in heaven in the presence of our Heavenly Father in His temple. However, Solomon's temple was not built for worshipping their Jehovah, until after David's death, so he must have had a very clear vision and understanding about heavenly dwelling and practices. Maybe this was one of the reasons why David longed for the courts of the Lord and desired to build something like them on earth.

However, before we think that David is only talking about Jews, the word for blessed at the start of verse 4 is used exclusively for people, illuminating as it does the state of being for all those who are in an intimate relationship with God – blissful, happy and happy.

The remainder of this psalm is full of beautiful imagery as David pictures how the Lord cares for His land and His people. He sets the mountains in place, stills the roaring of the seas and His people, and visits the earth and waters it. Just as it is also described in Revelations chapter 22, God enriches the earth by the river of God He waters the furrows and the people are fed. The mornings and evenings rejoice, and so should we because he blesses our endeavours and causes them to prosper.

I honestly believe that in cutting out the metrical psalms from our worship, we have reduced our relationship with God, for in no other form is our praise for God set out so clearly. **AMEN**

Hymn; R&S 34: "Holy, Holy, Holy! Lord God Almighty"

Holy, holy, holy! Lord God Almighty,
early in the morning our song shall rise to thee;
Holy, holy, holy! Merciful and mighty,
God in three Persons, blessed Trinity!

Holy, holy, holy! All the saints adore thee,
casting down their golden crowns around the glassy see,
cherubim and seraphim falling down before thee,
who wast and art and evermore shall be.

Holy, holy, holy! Though the darkness hide thee,
though the sinful human eye thy glory may not see,
only thou art holy, there is none beside thee,
perfect in power, in love and purity.

Holy, holy, holy! Lord God Almighty,
All thy works shall praise thy name, in earth and land and sea;
Holy, holy, Holy! Merciful and mighty,
God in three Persons, blessed Trinity.

Reading: 2 Timothy Ch. 4 vv6-8 (Jim)

Talk 2

For Paul, the end is very near, and he is offering a deeply personal goodbye from prison. When Erasmus, the Dutch reformer was growing old, he said; "I am a veteran and have earned my discharge and must leave the fighting to younger men." So, Paul, the veteran warrior, is also laying down his arms so that Timothy may take them up. No passage in the New Testament is more full of word pictures than this.

Paul is clear that the time where his life must be sacrificed, but here the word he uses for sacrifice is the verb which means to pour out a libation, a drink offering to the god's. Every Roman meal ended with a kind of sacrifice. A cup of wine was taken and was poured out to the gods. It is as if Paul is saying: "The day is ended; it is time to rise and go; my life must be poured out as a sacrifice to God." He did not think of himself as going to be executed, he thought of himself as going to offer his life to God.

Ever since his conversion, he had offered everything to God – his money, his scholarship, his time, his physical strength, the acuteness of his mind and the devotion of his heart. Only life itself was left to offer, and he was gladly going to give that God as well. Here is a man that you might assume would be downhearted but is instead joyfully awaiting the sacrifice of his life.

Paul says “the time of my departure has come.” The word he uses for departure, *analsis*, is a vivid one, full of many pictures and each one tells us something about leaving his life. It is the word for unyoking an animal from the shafts of cart or plough. Death to Paul was rest from labour. As Edmund Spencer had in his poem “The Faerie Queen” sleep after toil, port after stormy seas, ease after war, death after life are lovely things.

It is the word for loosening bonds or fetters. Death for Paul was a release. He was to exchange the confines of a Roman prison for the glorious liberty of the courts of heaven just as David described them in psalm 65. Finally, it is the word for loosening the ropes of a tent. For Paul, it was time to strike camp once more. He had made many journeys across the roads of Asia Minor and Europe. Now Paul was setting out on his last and greatest journey; he was taking the road that led to God.

Both our readings this morning have talked about the courts of heaven, David as par of our worship of God and why indeed we should worship him and Paul as he draws near to the end of his life and starts out on the road that will lead him to these very courts where he will come face to face with his Master. But what can we take from this deeply personal farewell from Paul? Just this; death is laying down the burdens in order to rest; it is laying aside the shackles to be free, and it is the dismantling of a temporary campsite in order to take up residence in the courts of heaven as described by David and Paul. **AMEN**

Hymn: WF 13 “Bind us together, Lord bind us together”

*Chorus: 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.*

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| 1. There is only one God,
there is only one king, | 2. Made for the glory of God,
purchased by His precious Son, |
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there is only one body, born with the right to be clean,
that is why we sing: for Jesus the victory has won.
Bind us together, Lord etc. Bind us together, Lord etc.

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, etc.

Prayers of Intercession

Hymn: R&S 405 "Angel voices ever ringing"

Angel voices ever singing,
round thy throne of light,
angel harps for ever ringing
rest not day nor night;
thousands only live to bless thee,
and confess thee,
Lord of might.

Lord we know that thou rejoices
o'er each work of thine;
thou didst ears and hand and voices
for thy praise design;
craftsman's art and music's measure
for thy pleasure
all combine.

In thy house, great God we offer
of thine own to thee,
and for thine acceptance profer,
all unworthily,
hearts an minds and hands and voices
in our choicest
psalmody.

Honour, glory, might and merit
thine shall ever be,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit,

blessed Trinity;
of the best that thou hast given
earth and heaven
render thee.

Dismissal and blessing

Fight the good fight with all your might for Christ is your strength and Christ you right. Finish the race. Keep the faith. Love deeply and live well. Claim the crown of righteousness, which is given to all who love God and who yearn for Christ's appearance.

Brothers and sisters in Christ, go out from His house, secure in the knowledge that your Heavenly Father holds you in His loving arms; that His Son, our Saviour, Jesus Christ, will walk alongside you and that God's Holy Spirit will guide, strengthen and sustain you so that you can become the face of God in your community. **AMEN**

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