

## Worship for Sunday 13 June 2021

Welcome to our Worship for Sunday 13 June. Today's reflection is given by our Minister Rev. Annie Gray.

Our Call to worship comes from Psalm 20 which we will read later. It is the opening words, calling on the Lord for help and also verse 6, where we are assured of God's protection. In her very personal reflection on the Psalm and the parable of the mustard seed from St. Mark's gospel, Annie will speak of how even in the hard times –even shouting at God, God is there to help and God nurtures the smallest seed of faith in to a protecting tree.

You may like to keep a moment's quiet before we begin.

### Call to Worship

May the Lord answer you when you are in distress; Psalm 20.1a

He answers him from his heavenly sanctuary  
with the victorious power of his right hand. vs 6

The song 'All Heaven Declares': <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S-s9Kk6tfVU>

All heaven declares  
The glory of the risen Lord  
Who can compare with  
The beauty of the Lord

I will proclaim  
The glory of the risen Lord  
Who once was slain  
To reconcile man to God

Forever He will be  
The Lamb upon the throne  
I gladly bow the knee  
And worship Him alone

Forever You will be  
The Lamb upon the throne  
I gladly bow the knee  
And worship You alone

CCLI Song # 120556

Noel Richards | Tricia Richards

### Opening Prayers

Let us pray

Loving God we are not only literally in different places as we come to worship you today but we will be in different places in our spiritual lives too. Yet you are the same God who loves each one of us, as us. So whether we are fearful, whether we are expectant, whether we are filled with praise or whether we find it even hard to pray, you are already alongside us gently calling us on and protecting us.

Let us come then to worship together with one another with the Spirit of truth, that we may worship in Spirit and truth.

**Amen**

## **Prayer of Praise**

God of grace and growth,

For the abundance of your creativity:

**we praise you.**

For the transforming nature of your Spirit:

**we praise you.**

For the power of small beginnings:

**we praise you.**

For the mystery of hidden growth:

**we praise you.**

And for the harvest we are invited to delight in:

**we praise you.**

In Jesus' name. **Amen.**

## **Confession**

God of all,

you do not force growth but nurture it.

**Forgive us when we want too much too soon.**

But you do not leave us alone.

**Forgive us when we expect too little.**

You do not start big but start small.

**Forgive us when we want too much too soon.**

But you do not leave us with nothing.

**Forgive us when we expect too little.**

You do not sow greedily but graciously.

**Forgive us when we want too much too soon.**

But your grace is full to overflowing.

**Forgive us when we expect too little.**

You do not hurry the harvest but hallow it.

**Forgive us when we want too much too soon.**

But you are preparing a harvest.

**Forgive us when we expect too little.**

Forgive us, we pray, in Jesus' name. **Amen.**

Living God,

from a mustard seed to a tree, from I to we,

in you we grow. **Amen.**

In the mystery of the unseen, from brown field to green,

in you we grow. **Amen.**

By faith and not by sight, by day and by night,

in you we grow. **Amen.**

Forgiven and freed, through word and deed,

in you we grow. **Amen.**

As we sow and reap, as we laugh and weep,

in you we grow. **Amen.**

May your kingdom come, Father, Spirit, Son,

as in you we grow. **Amen.**

The first of our readings is Psalm 20, as we have already heard, it speaks of calling on God for help and protection and assures us of that protection.

### **Psalm 20 NIV**

**1** May the Lord answer you when you are in distress;  
may the name of the God of Jacob protect you.

**2** May he send you help from the sanctuary  
and grant you support from Zion.

**3** May he remember all your sacrifices  
and accept your burnt offerings.

**4** May he give you the desire of your heart  
and make all your plans succeed.

**5** May we shout for joy over your victory  
and lift up our banners in the name of our God.

May the Lord grant all your requests.

**6** Now this I know:

The Lord gives victory to his anointed.

He answers him from his heavenly sanctuary  
with the victorious power of his right hand.

**7** Some trust in chariots and some in horses,  
but we trust in the name of the Lord our God.

**8** They are brought to their knees and fall,  
but we rise up and stand firm.

**9** Lord, give victory to the king!  
Answer us when we call!

The Gospel reading is from Mark's gospel and is Jesus teaching on the nature of the Kingdom of God.

### **Mark 4:26-34 NIV**

#### **The Parable of the Growing Seed**

He also said, "This is what the kingdom of God is like. A man scatters seed on the ground. Night and day, whether he sleeps or gets up, the seed sprouts and grows, though he does not know how. All by itself the soil produces grain—first the stalk, then the head, then the full kernel in the head. As soon as the grain is ripe, he puts the sickle to it, because the harvest has come."

#### **The Parable of the Mustard Seed**

Again he said, "What shall we say the kingdom of God is like, or what parable shall we use to describe it? It is like a mustard seed, which is the smallest of all seeds on earth. Yet when planted, it grows and becomes the largest of all garden plants, with such big branches that the birds can perch in its shade."

With many similar parables Jesus spoke the word to them, as much as they could understand. He did not say anything to them without using a parable. But when he was alone with his own disciples, he explained everything.

Let us pray

Loving God we thank you for these readings and ask the help of your Spirit for us to truly hear your word to us. **Amen**

## **REFLECTION**

So there we are watching the end of Peter Rabbit 2 in our local cinema, to take our minds off our daughter and sister having an operation to remove her cancer and we get a text. It's now 4.45pm we think she must be out of surgery, but no they haven't called her yet and she has been sitting waiting in the hospital since 12 noon. Without a word, we all closed our eyes and prayed, afraid she would be sent home and have to go through the worry another day. Even my sceptical, about all this God stuff, husband joined in, without being asked ! Later we find that she was taken into surgery as we prayed !! This was the first real prayer to pass my lips for weeks.

And that was not the only miracle that day. So many of you have been praying for my daughter, and she was so so afraid at going into hospital alone, (because of covid rules). But our great God had it all in hand and my friend and Priest Eleanor just "happened" to be called for a minor operation at the same time and place as my daughter. So she sat with her, encouraged her, prayed with her and calmed her nerves. If this is not answer when in distress and help from the sanctuary, I don't know what is !!!

Now during the turmoil of the last few weeks and the shock of a healthy 26 year old getting a cancer diagnosis, I have found it difficult to pray. Now this is so unusual for me, I'm a love to pray three times a day at least woman. But could I pray? No, I could cry, feel confused, shout at God, bargain with God, eat chocolate, but pray? No. However during these weeks I know how much my family and I have been wrapped in the prayers of others, a warm blanket around us all, healing, holding and at times perceptible. Never think your prayers for others are wasted. I am so eternally grateful to the loving people from St John's, and others who knew what was going on, and held us all in prayer.

So like those fields of wheat which just go on growing without thought, life grows and goes on for all, looked over by God.

During my very first day of training to be a priest, many years ago now, I left the classroom and stood outside under a tree, convinced this was not for me. I looked down and at my feet was an acorn, and as I picked this acorn up, and looked carefully at it some words about acorns growing into flourishing trees came to mind and I felt a sense of great peace, and happily returned to the classroom to resume my studies.

And yes over the years my faith and ministry flourished, I grew, as sadly did my waistline !! Happy, content in the Lord's will, and then this cancer diagnosis, that shrivelled my faith to the size of a mustard seed.

And that little mustard seed of faith? Well that was about the size of my faith through all this, shrunk to a small dark compact seed, hidden in the dark ground, but now I feel signs of new growth pushing towards the light, ready to grow again. I can't say I have done anything to make this happen at all. It is just happening because I have been watered with your prayers, as God chose where to plant me, growing again because of his faithfulness and

love. I am in awe to think how God can and will take that little wizened seed of my faith and grow it to a flourishing plant that birds can perch in its shade!!

My friends I am sharing all this with you to encourage you. No matter what you are going through, no matter how little or large your faith is, God is with you, with each one of us. Never think your prayers for others are wasted, never be afraid to ask others to pray for you, for we are assured, "May he give you the desire of your heart and make all your plans succeed".

May each of our mustard seeds of faith grow and flourish, for I am sure God has great plans for St John's Church, that it will be a place where many kinds of birds may find rest for their souls within its branches. Amen.

*You may wish to keep silence for a time, to reflect, to pray for Annie, her daughter and the whole family, and also to give thanks for the encouragement she has brought us. We then continue in prayer, prepared by Jackie Collins.*

## **Prayers**

Dear Lord

We come together today to worship and praise your holy name, no matter how we might be feeling. Nothing is more important than worshipping you who hold our lives in your hands. Help us to worship you in spirit and in truth and to be truly open to you, not hampered by our own desires. Let the light of your love shine through as we give thanks for the week that has just passed and for the week ahead. Give us strength to face the challenges we may be facing and may we give thanks for those things we have accomplished and experienced. May we experience joy and wonderment in your world Lord, whether it is through hearing laughter or receiving a hug from a friend; through a kind word or action. May we give to others just as much as we receive.

We give thanks for the power of prayer, for those answers we have been waiting for and for the anticipation of those answers yet to come. Give us hope when all seems hopeless and strength when we are weak.

We ask for your blessing on those changes we may be experiencing in our own lives, for those things that we fear and for those things we are praying for that we want to change.

No matter how small or large our seed of faith is, uphold us Lord Jesus. Whether we are on our knees praying or have fallen on our knees with the weight of our distress, lift us up we pray.

We give thanks for the world you created and we are truly sorry for those things we have done to the world to make it less than the perfect place you would have it to be. We pray for our world leaders, that they will have a vision of building a better world for people; cleaner, fairer, where resources can be shared and relationships forged.

We pray for our churches and in particular for our church here in St Johns, for our ministers Adele and Annie. Give them wisdom and strength and guide them as we move forward in the months ahead. We pray too for those working to keep the church open and for providing services on line. We ask for your blessing on the congregation whether at home or in church and help us to feel connected, wherever we are.

We think of those we know who are ill, those who care for loved ones and those worried about the current situation, the way the pandemic has changed all our lives. Give us comfort at this time and your peace in these uncertain times.

Be with those taking exams at the moment and the stress that can occur, for those seeking work and those worried about their future. May they feel your love and comfort during the days ahead.

Living God, help us to live each day for you so that your life may shine each day through us to the glory of your name **Amen**

The Song 'We are a moment (Be unto Your name)'  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aQvi7AFXv0c>

We are a moment You are forever  
Lord of the ages God before time  
We are a vapor You are eternal  
Love everlasting reigning on high

We are the broken You are the healer  
Jesus Redeemer mighty to save  
You are the love song we'll sing forever  
Bowling before You blessing Your name

*Holy holy Lord God Almighty  
Worthy is the Lamb Who was slain  
Highest praises honor and glory  
Be unto Your name  
Be unto Your name*

CCLI Song # 2177476

Gary Sadler | Lynn DeShazo

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### **Concluding Prayer**

We arrived as different person and we go as different persons, but we are one people. Let us go in the knowledge that God answers our call and cares for us (even when we don't always see it); and that there is in each of us that small seed of the Kingdom and God is nurturing it.

Go then to love and serve the Lord; and go in the blessing of God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit **Amen**.

Reflection: Rev. Annie Gray; prayers of intercession: Jackie Collins; the rest of the service prepared by Tim Rogers.  
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