



AT HOME SERVICE

Sunday 11th January 2026

compiled by Alison Morgan - Local Preacher

Let us pray

God of hope, open our eyes, our ears and our hearts to become more aware of the hope that you offer:
A hope that is refreshing;
A hope that has no limits;
A hope that is for all people. Amen

Hymn: 16 Mission Praise

1] All my hope on God is founded,
All my trust He shall renew;
He, my guide through changing order,
Only good and only true.
God unknown,
He alone
Calls my heart to be His own.

2] Pride of man and earthly glory,
Sword and crown betray His trust;
All that human toil can fashion,
Tower and temple, fall to dust.
But God's power,
Hour by hour,
Is my temple and my tower.

3] Day by day our mighty giver
Grants to us His gifts of love;
In His will our souls find pleasure,
Leading to our home above.
Love shall stand
At His hand,
Joy shall wait for His command.

4] Still from man to God eternal
Sacrifice of praise be done,
High above all praises praising
For the gift of Christ His Son.
Hear Christ's call
One and all:
We who follow shall not fall.

after Joachim Neander (1650-1680)

Robert Bridges (1844-1930)

Let us pray

God of justice and resilience, we give you thanks for calling us by name.
To shed your light where there is darkness,
To lead others to your Son, our Saviour,
To be open to the empowering hope of your Holy Spirit.
May we never grow weary of praising you but serve you with all our heart,
With all our mind and with all our strength,
Today and always. Amen

God of hope,
When we listen to your word, but don't take it to heart:
Please forgive us we pray.
When you reach out your hand to us, but we don't take it...
When injustice needs to be challenged, but we remain silent....
When we are lost and in darkness and don't see your hope...
Lord, draw us back to you. Amen

God of richness and refreshment:
Your tenderness enables us to trust again,
Your forgiveness enables us to begin again,
Your call enables us to follow you,
Your faithfulness enables us to find peace in you,
And your Spirit enables us to live as your servants in the world today. Amen

Loving God
Your wonderful light can shine in the darkest of nights.
Your justice can stand firm against the worst corruption
Your comforting spirit can reach the depths of despair.
You call us to share that hope as we praise you.
Refreshing hope, thank you. Amen

The Lord's Prayer

Reading from Isaiah 42: 1-9

Here is my servant, who I uphold, my chosen, in whom my soul delights; I have put my spirit upon him; he will bring forth justice to the nations. He will not cry out or lift his voice or make it heard in the street; a bruised reed he will not break, and a dimly burning wick he will not quench; he will faithfully bring forth justice. He will not grow faint or be crushed until he has established justice in the earth, and the coastlands wait for his teaching. Thus says God, the Lord, who created the heavens and stretched them out, who spread out the earth and what comes from it, who gives breath to the people upon it and spirit to those who walk in it: I am the Lord; I have called you in righteousness; I have taken you by the hand and kept you; I have given you as a covenant to the people, a light to the nations, to open the eyes that are blind, to bring out the prisoners from the dungeon, from the prison those who sit in darkness. I am the Lord; that is my name: my glory I give to no other, nor my praise to idols. See, the former things have come to pass and new things I now declare; before they spring forth, I tell you of them.

Reading from Matthew 3 13-17

Then Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan, to be baptized by him. John would have prevented him, saying 'I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?'. But Jesus answered him, 'Let it be so now, for it is proper for us in this way to fulfil all righteousness'. Then he consented. And when Jesus had been baptized, just as he came up from the water, suddenly the heavens were opened to him and he saw God's Spirit descending like a dove and alighting on him. And a voice from the heavens said, 'This is my Son, the Beloved, with whom I am well pleased'.

Reflection

In Isaiah 42, the divine speaker announces the presence of a servant who is chosen by God and a source of delight for God. God will place God's spirit upon this servant so that the servant is able to bring forth justice to the nations, to be a light, to open blind eyes and bring out prisoners. In Matthew 3, when Jesus is baptized, God's spirit likewise descends upon him and God delights in him. The relationship here is not between God and God's servant, but between God and God's beloved son.

Both of these passages provide an opportunity to talk about the role of these individuals as God's earthly representatives, As God's chosen ones, as workers of injustice in the world. What is their mission and role? Why are they divinely chosen? Why do they need the spirit of God? And is this a role for individuals and/or communities.

And how might we, as God's people today, do God's work. How do we take up the mission of the servant?

The kingdom of Judah finds itself in exile with the temple in ruins and kingship at an end. Zion in all its splendour has been diminished, and some of the Judahites are forced exiles in the foreign land of Babylonia. Without a temple and a Davidic leader, the future of the people is greatly in peril. They need assurance, assistance, and a new vision.

Into this difficult political and religious situation, the prophet of Isaiah introduces a servant figure. Is it the prophet himself? Or a ruler whether foreign such as Cyrus or native such as a Davidic kingly figure? Is the servant an individual person or all of Israel. Personal or communal. In Isaiah 49 vs. 3 it names the servant as Israel, 'And God said to me, "You are my servant, Israel, in whom I will be glorified".

Christians have seen the servant in individual terms and associated clearly with Jesus - his life and ministry, but especially his death and resurrection. Jews have understandably gravitated toward the communal interpretation and viewed Israel as called to be a servant to the world, a light to other people.

In Matthew 3 we could ask, is Jesus the servant because of his baptism or is it a communal service? Matthew is clearly presenting a narrative about an individual. Jesus is baptized. He is the Beloved God's Son, the one in whom God is well pleased. But we are invited to see ourselves in this baptism experience, to see the Christian community as baptized like Jesus into faith, in the beloved community. We are together the daughters and sons of God. God is well pleased with us.

When we hold tension between communal and individual readings of Isaiah 42 and Matthew 3, we can see we have individual models of servanthood as examples. Second Isaiahs servant and Jesus, point us toward our important work. They demonstrate that relationship with God is possible. They lay out the types of ministries possible when we are led by God's spirit. But we - as a community - also participate in this work of justice together as communities of faith. As churches, not just as individuals, we are God's servants to the world. We participate in God's new thing, God's new exodus out of exile and brokenness, God's community is God's servant.

Let us pray

God of love, we pray for all those who are newly baptised, or who have recently found that you are real;
We pray for all in ordained and lay ministries, and for those sensing a special calling.
Help us to listen to your guiding.

God of power, we pray for those who are in authority and in positions of influence and responsibility;
May they be earthed in humility, courageous in integrity, and mindful of the need to serve.

God of mercy, we call to mind those with whom we share the work and leisure of our life;
We pray for those we treasure and those we battle with, and ask you to breathe into all our relationships
the forgiving love which cleanses and heals.

God of wholeness, we remember those who are aching today in body, mind or spirit;
Know that nothing is unredeemable, we ask that you will bring good even out of these barren places.

God of life, we pray for those whose earthly lives have ended;
We remember those who have died violently and tragically, suddenly and unprepared.
We give you thanks for lives well lived and for happy memories.
May they rest in the eternal peace of heaven.

In God all things work together for good. Amen

Hymn: 651 Mission Praise

1] The kingdom of God
Is justice and joy,
For Jesus restores,
What sin would destroy;
God's power and glory
In Jesus we know,
And here and hereafter
The kingdom shall grow.

2] The kingdom of God
Is mercy and grace,
The captives are freed,
The sinners find place,
The outcast are welcomed
God's banquet to share,
And hope is awakened
In place of despair.

3] The kingdom of God
Is challenge and choice,
Believe the good news,
Repent and rejoice!
His love for us sinners
Brought Christ to His cross
Our crisis of judgement
For gain or for loss.

4] God's kingdom is come,
The gift and the goal,
In Jesus begun,
In heaven made whole;
The heirs of the kingdom
Shall answer His call,
And all things cry, 'Glory'!
To God all-in-all.

Bryn Rees (1911-1983)

Blessing

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