



AT HOME SERVICE

Sunday 23rd August 2026

12th Sunday after Trinity

*compiled by Michael Winter - Local Preacher
& Anglican Lay Minister*

Psalm 138

I will praise you, Lord, with all my heart;
before the “gods” I will sing your praise.
I will bow down toward your holy temple
and will praise your name
for your unfailing love and your faithfulness,
for you have so exalted your solemn decree
that it surpasses your fame.
When I called, you answered me;
you greatly emboldened me.
May all the kings of the earth praise you, Lord,
when they hear what you have decreed.
May they sing of the ways of the Lord,
for the glory of the Lord is great.

Though the Lord is exalted, he looks kindly on the lowly;
though lofty, he sees them from afar.
Though I walk in the midst of trouble,
you preserve my life.
You stretch out your hand against the anger of my foes;
with your right hand you save me.
The Lord will vindicate me;
your love, Lord, endures forever -
do not abandon the works of your hands.

Opening Prayers

God, our hope, as we gather now to worship you, fill us with anticipation and prepare us by your Spirit. Be the first thought in our hearts and help us to be conscious of your direction. Strengthen us for service, nourish us with the bread of life, Transform us for mission. In the name of Jesus Christ, we ask this. Amen.

Jesus is the Bread of Heaven for eternal life. In this time of worship, may we find his sustenance and strength, and by the leading of the Holy Spirit, may we come ready to receive from Father God. Let our hearts and minds resolve to offer him thanks and praise. Through Christ our Lord. Amen

As we prepare for worship, let us come honestly before Almighty God and acknowledge our shortcomings and the ways we have compromised our faith. Let us return to the Source of All Being, that we might draw strength and encouragement. May the springs of living water well up within us to cleanse and renew us. May the rivers of righteousness flow out from us to bring healing to the whole creation. In the name of Christ we ask this. Amen

Hymn: STF 556

1] Just as I am, without one plea,
But that you died to set me free,
And at your bidding, 'Come to me!'
O Lamb of God, I come.

4] Just as I am - your love unknown
Has broken every barrier down -
Now, to be yours, yes yours alone,
O Lamb of God, I come.

2] Just as I am, though tossed about
With many a conflict, many a doubt,
Fightings within and fears without,
O Lamb of God, I come.

5] Just as I am, of that free love
The breadth, length, depth and height to prove,
Here for a time and then above,
O Lamb of God, I come!

3] Just as I am, you will receive,
Will welcome, pardon, cleanse, relieve:
Because your promise I believe,
O Lamb of God, I come.

Charlotte Elliot (1789-1871)

Reading: Romans 12: 1-8

Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God - this is your true and proper worship. Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is - his good, pleasing and perfect will. For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the faith God has distributed to each of you. For just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us. If your gift is prophesying, then prophesy in accordance with your faith; if it is serving, then serve; if it is teaching, then teach; if it is to encourage, then give encouragement; if it is giving, then give generously; if it is to lead, do it diligently; if it is to show mercy, do it cheerfully.

Prayers

Paul writes, "Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind." Let us bring that request for transformation to the One who is able to change us.

Dear Heavenly Father, We praise You for the depth of Your mercy which saves us and for the power of Your Spirit which sanctifies us. We thank You that our lives can be offered as a living sacrifice, not to earn Your love, but as a response to the grace we have already received.

Lord, we ask that You would renew our minds today. Replace anxious thoughts with Your truth, and selfish desires with a heart for Your Kingdom. Help us to see our lives as a gift to be poured out for You and for others. We pray that You would show us how to use the gifts You have given us to build up Your Church. When we encounter people who are difficult to love, or when we face evil in the world, empower us by Your Spirit to overcome it with good. Let our love be sincere and our devotion be steadfast, mirroring the love You have shown us in Christ. We pray for the Church everywhere, that we would function as a healthy, united body, demonstrating Your beauty to a broken world. Amen.

The Collect

ALMIGHTY and everlasting God, who art always more ready to hear than we to pray, and art wont to give more than either we desire or deserve: Pour down upon us the abundance of thy mercy; forgiving us those things whereof our conscience is afraid, and giving us those good things which we are not worthy to ask, but through the merits and mediation of Jesus Christ, thy Son, our Lord. Amen

The Lord's Prayer

Hymn: STF 338

1] There is a redeemer,
Jesus, God's own Son,
precious Lamb of God, Messiah,
Holy One.

*Thank you, O my Father,
for giving us your Son,
and leaving your Spirit
till the work on earth is done.*

2] Jesus, my Redeemer,
name above all names,
precious Son of God, Messiah,
Lamb for sinners slain.

3] When I stand in glory
I will see his face
and there I'll serve my King for ever
in that holy place.

v.1-2: Melody Green (b.1946)

v.3: Keith Green (1953-1982)

Reflection (based on a sermon by Rev. Elizabeth Lovell Milford)

".. offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God" Romans 12 v 1

"80 percent of life is just showing up." This well-known quote, often attributed to actor and director Woody Allen, indicates the importance of presence in life; of just being there to watch, receive, be available. In times of crisis, a friend or family member's simple presence is often worth the most, even if there is not much they can do. A child or teenager in a school production or sporting event will scan the crowd for a familiar face to cheer them on. Showing up matters. So, when Paul writes about showing or presenting our bodies it should remind us of the importance of showing up for God. How we engage our physical selves, what we do day to day, is a reflection of our faith. He puts it in terms that believers in Rome would understand, referencing practices of sacrifice. But, instead of a specific animal brought to the temple, Paul calls it a "living sacrifice," a phrase that plays on what is known with something new. For Paul, our presence is not some sacrifice that ends in death, but instead is a consecration or dedication to the will and work of God that is life-giving. It marks renewal and wholeness, and so we present ourselves, freely and openly, trusting that when we show up, God does too.

But, as another clichéd phrase goes, “showing up is half the battle.” For Paul, there is more to embodied faith than just physical presence. It also involves an opening of the mind. In order to be our most faithful selves, we need to wrap our minds around things in new ways, ways that push and challenge us to better, examine ourselves, our communities, our nation and even our world. We have to do more than just show up; we have to think about it, too. It is easy to fall into the trap of just going through the motions without really engaging our minds. This is especially true when it comes to our worship. We like to be lulled and comforted. And sometimes that’s what we need – a sanctuary from all the chaos and conflict that is happening in our world, a haven. But I don’t think that’s what Paul had in mind for the early church, certainly not in Romans. If anything, the Roman church had a very persuasive argument for the need for shelter and separation from the world. They were under attack, persecuted by the Empire, forced into hiding because of very real risks. But even then, perhaps especially when the world was at odds, Paul called them to reflect on the ways of the world so that they would not conform to the evils that surrounded them, but could be transformed by the renewing of their minds – something that happened in the context to true, authentic worship within the body of Christ.

Hymn: STF 465

1] Guide me, O thou great Jehovah,
pilgrim through this barren land;
I am weak, but thou art mighty;
hold me with thy powerful hand.
Bread of heaven, bread of heaven,
feed me now and evermore,
feed me now and evermore.

2] Open thou the crystal fountain,
whence the healing stream shall flow.
Let the fiery, cloudy pillar
lead me all my journey through.
Strong Deliverer, strong Deliverer,
be thou still my strength and shield,
be thou still my strength and shield.

3] When I tread the verge of Jordan,
bid my anxious fears subside.
Death of death, and hell's destruction,
land me safe on Canaan's side.
Songs of praises, songs of praises
I will ever give to you,
I will ever give to you.

William Williams (1717-1791)
translated by Peter Williams (1727-1796)

Blessing

May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,
and the love of God,
and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all,
now and for evermore. Amen