



AT HOME SERVICE

Sunday 24th August 2025

compiled by Rev. Melvyn Cooke

Call to Worship

Romans 11:33–36

Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways! “For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who has been his counsellor?” “Or who has given a gift to him that he might be repaid?” For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory forever. Amen

Hymn – 975 MP

1] Before the throne of God above
I have a strong and perfect plea:
A great High Priest whose name is Love,
Who ever lives and pleads for me
My name is graven on his hands,
My name is written on his heart.
I know that while in Heav'n he stands
No tongue can bid me thence depart,
No tongue can bid me thence depart.

2] When Satan tempts me to despair,
And tells me of the guilt within,
Upward I look and see him there,
Who made an end of all my sin.
Because the sinless Saviour died,
My sinful soul is counted free;
For God the just is satisfied
to look on him and pardon me,
To look on him and pardon me.

3] Behold him there, the risen Lamb,
My perfect, spotless righteousness,
The great unchangeable I AM,
The King of glory and of grace.
One with himself I cannot die;
My soul is purchased by his blood.
My life is hid with Christ on high,
With Christ, my Saviour and my God,
With Christ, my Saviour and my God.

Charles L. Bancroft (1841-1892)

Prayers of Approach

God, of all that is and is yet to be
We thank you for this amazing world in which we live.
For the diversity of the whole of creation.
For the ways in which we can experience.
what you have made through our different sense.
We praise you that you encounter your people,
In every age, in every place, in every setting.
We praise you that you make no distinction between one person and the next and that we are all made on
your image.

We praise your faithfulness to those who have gone before us,
For your faithfulness to us today, and we trust in your faithfulness for tomorrow.
God your love knows no bounds and your mercy know no limits.
You embrace us and offer forgiveness and healing to all.
God, forgive us for the ways that we discriminate and exclude, consciously or unconsciously.
Forgive us for the limits and conditions
we set on your love, mercy, and forgiveness. Forgive us for our lack of imagination
that reduces you to simply what we can perceive. Forgive us when we take without thinking
and forget to share without counting.
Fill us with Lord, with your peace and mercy.
Free us from the destruction of our behaviour and restore us to a life lived in you. Amen

Reading **Hebrews 12: 18 - 29**

You have not come to a mountain that can be touched and that is burning with fire; to darkness, gloom and storm; to a trumpet blast or to such a voice speaking words that those who heard it begged that no further word be spoken to them, because they could not bear what was commanded: "If even an animal touches the mountain, it must be stoned to death." The sight was so terrifying that Moses said, "I am trembling with fear."

But you have come to Mount Zion, to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem. You have come to thousands upon thousands of angels in joyful assembly, to the church of the firstborn, whose names are written in heaven. You have come to God, the Judge of all, to the spirits of the righteous made perfect, to Jesus the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel.

See to it that you do not refuse him who speaks. If they did not escape when they refused him who warned them on earth, how much less will we, if we turn away from him who warns us from heaven? At that time his voice shook the earth, but now he has promised, "Once more I will shake not only the earth but also the heavens." The words "once more" indicate the removing of what can be shaken - that is, created things - so that what cannot be shaken may remain.

Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us be thankful, and so worship God acceptably with reverence and awe, for our "God is a consuming fire."

Hymn – 18 StF

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| 1] Be still and know that I am God. | 2] I am the Lord who saves and heals. |
| Be still and know that I am God | I am the Lord who saves and heals. |
| Be still and know that I am God. | I am the Lord who saves and heals. |

3] In you, Lord God, I put my trust.

In you, Lord God, I put my trust.

In you, Lord God, I put my trust. *Anon (based on Psalm 46:10-11)*

Reflection

I have spent time in recent days trying to understand what it means to live in a multicultural society. Often the debate it seems to me is prompted not so much about our ability to live by grace and through acceptance of one another, but with a fear of somehow losing control over something that we proclaim is precious to us, but when push comes to shove, is difficult to describe. Is my culture shaped by my surroundings, or do I shape my culture by my values, and if I do then where do those values come from, and are my values better than the values, or traditions of others?

When Paul writes to the Hebrew church, a community of believers shaped and molded by heritage, tradition, and religious background, he states emphatically that - *"since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us be thankful, and so worship God acceptably with reverence and awe, for our "God is a consuming fire."* (Hebrews 12; 28,29) or as The Message translation puts it, *"Do you see what we've got? An unshakable kingdom! And do you see how thankful we must be? Not only thankful, but brimming with worship, deeply reverent before God. For God is not an indifferent bystander. He's actively cleaning house, torching all that needs to burn, and he won't quit until it's all cleansed."*

So, what is this Kingdom that God says we live in and by? This Kingdom involves a choice where we take the initiative to live for God and His kingdom, or as Jesus taught in His prayer, *"Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven."* (Matthew 6:10 KJV)

Many years earlier than this, the writer of the Psalms wrote, *"Teach us to number our days aright, that we may gain a heart of wisdom."* (Psalm 90:12 NIV) So much of our lives seem to be lived out through what I would call an automatic gear mode. Just as in a car, the engine decides what is the best gear to drive up a hill matching gradient with speed, it self-selects the most efficient gear to use in order not to strain the engine. For many of us we seemingly do the same with life choices, we allow or enable others to decide, often based upon making the least fuss or to enable us to blend into the background around us, we fit our culture, rather than shape a Kingdom. Life for many remains in automatic mode, until something goes wrong. However, Psalm 90:12 says whilst God has control of my life - I am intentionally going to manually set my days - life will not just happen, but I have an intentional attitude to choose the values and truths that will emanate from my life.

The familiar prayer, *"Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done"*, tells us of both a desire for the now and the future. That same prayer also tells us of the blessing of living in that Kingdom - *"For thine is the Kingdom and the power and the glory"* - this is as Paul reminds us a Kingdom that is unshakeable, if only we learn to live in it and by it, or as the writer of old reminds us in Psalm 91: *"Whoever dwells in the shelter of the Most High will rest in the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the Lord, "He is my refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust."*

If you say, "The Lord is my refuge, and you make the Most High your dwelling, no harm will overtake you; no disaster will come near your tent.

Because he loves me," says the Lord, "I will rescue him; I will protect him, for he acknowledges my name. He will call on me, and I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble."

Here is the familiar prayer of surrender, but the full version not the edited version so often used:

"God, grant me the serenity to accept the thing I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference. Living one day at a time; Enjoying one moment at a time; Accepting hardship as a pathway to peace; Taking as Jesus did, this sinful world as it is, not as I would have it; Trusting that You will make all things right if I surrender to Your will so that I may be reasonably happy in this life and supremely happy with You forever in the next. Amen."

Praying for others through the Lord's Prayer

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name

Loving God, the Father of us all

we pray for our brothers and sisters in Christ,

for the Church which is your family on earth today

and which has its squabbles like all earthly families.

We pray especially for the part of your family which meets here at St ... bringing to you our particular joys and needs.

Your kingdom come: **Your will be done.**

Your will be done on earth as in heaven

Heavenly King, whose power is exercised with love,

we pray that all in positions of power in our world and in our church may use it seeking both to know and do your will

and to know and serve the needs of others

Your kingdom come: **Your will be done.**

Give us today our daily bread

Loving Father, the giver of all good things,

we thank you for all that feeds us in body, mind and spirit, and we pray for those who are hungry today:

those without enough to eat,

those without company or love,

those without peace or a purpose in life.

Your kingdom come: **Your will be done.**

Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil

Compassionate God, the help of all in need,

we pray for those who are facing a hard task or decision, for those who are going through a difficult time because of illness, worry, or grief.

We pray for ourselves, for those we know,

and for those whose needs are known only by you.

Your kingdom come: **Your will be done.**

For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours

Eternal God, whose kingdom stretches beyond the limits of our sight and beyond the bounds of death,

we think with love of those who were close to us

and are now with you in heaven and share in your glory.

Your kingdom come: **Your will be done.**

Merciful Father: **accept these prayers for the sake of your son our saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.**

(Andrew Tawn 1998)

Hymn – 385 StF

1] Holy Spirit, we welcome you

Holy Spirit, we welcome you

Move amongst us with holy fire

As we lay aside all earthly desire

Hands reach out and hearts aspire

Holy Spirit, Holy Spirit, Holy Spirit, we welcome you.

2] Holy Spirit we welcome you

Holy Spirit we welcome you

Let the breeze of your presence flow

that your children here might truly know

How to move in the spirit's flow

Holy Spirit, Holy Spirit, we welcome you.

3] Holy Spirit, we welcome you

Holy Spirit, we welcome you

Please accomplish in me today

Some new work of loving grace I pray

Unreservedly have your way

Holy Spirit, Holy Spirit, Holy Spirit, we welcome you.

Christopher Bowater (b.1947)

Songs published under CCLI No 558764