

7th June 2026 – Morning Service

Jill Martin

Call to Worship: Psalm 33: 1-12 (NIV)

Sing joyfully to the Lord, you righteous;
it is fitting for the upright to praise him.
Praise the Lord with the harp;
make music to him on the ten-stringed lyre.
Sing to him a new song;
play skillfully, and shout for joy.

For the word of the Lord is right and true;
he is faithful in all he does.
The Lord loves righteousness and justice;
the earth is full of his unfailing love.

By the word of the Lord the heavens were made,
their starry host by the breath of his mouth.
He gathers the waters of the sea into jars;
he puts the deep into storehouses.
Let all the earth fear the Lord;
let all the people of the world revere him.
For he spoke, and it came to be;
he commanded, and it stood firm.

The Lord foils the plans of the nations;
he thwarts the purposes of the peoples.
But the plans of the Lord stand firm for ever,
the purposes of his heart through all generations.

Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord,
the people he chose for his inheritance.

StF 338 – There is a redeemer

1) There is a Redeemer,
Jesus, God's own Son.
Precious Lamb of God, Messiah,
Holy One.

*Ch) 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 Lamb of God, Messiah,
O 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.

Melody & Keith Green © 1982 Birdwing Music

Prayer of Adoration

You are the One, the Holy One, who looks on all you have made, with love. You gaze at me, and your faithful kindness overwhelms me. I fall silent before you, my words stalling, as my heart breaks open and pours out my thanks, my delight in you. The more I gaze back at you, the more I see through your eyes; I am born again in your devotion to your creation. Let my words fall before you, but grant me the words and the acts of love you long for me to have for your world. **Amen.**

Kerry Tankard, District Chair, Yorkshire West District

Prayer of Confession

God of healing,
God of wholeness,
we bring our brokenness,
our sinfulness,
our fears
and despair,
and lay them at your feet.

God of healing,
God of wholeness,
we hold out hearts and hands,
minds and souls
to feel your touch,
and know the peace
that only you can bring.

God of healing,
God of wholeness,
this precious moment
in your presence and power
grant us faith and confidence
that here broken lives
are made whole. **Amen.**

StF 707 – Make me a channel of your peace

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| 1) Make me a channel of your peace.
Where there is hatred, let me bring your love;
Where there is injury, your pardon, Lord;
And where there's doubt, true faith in you: | 2) Make me a channel of your peace.
Where there's despair in life, let me bring hope;
Where there is darkness, only light;
And where there's sadness, ever joy: |
| Ch) <i>O Master, grant that I may never seek
So much to be consoled as to console;
To be understood as to understand;
To be loved, as to love with all my soul.</i> | 3) Make me a channel of your peace.
It is in pardoning that we are pardoned,
In giving unto all that we receive,
And in dying that we're born to eternal life. |

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Reading: Matthew 9: 9-13, 18-26 (NIV)

As Jesus went on from there, he saw a man named Matthew sitting at the tax collector's booth. 'Follow me,' he told him, and Matthew got up and followed him.

While Jesus was having dinner at Matthew's house, many tax collectors and sinners came and ate with him and his disciples. When the Pharisees saw this, they asked his disciples, 'Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?'

On hearing this, Jesus said, 'It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but those who are ill. But go and learn what this means: "I desire mercy, not sacrifice." For I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners.'

While he was saying this, a synagogue leader came and knelt before him and said, 'My daughter has just died. But come and put your hand on her, and she will live.' Jesus got up and went with him, and so did his disciples.

Just then a woman who had been subject to bleeding for twelve years came up behind him and touched the edge of his cloak. She said to herself, 'If I only touch his cloak, I will be healed.'

Jesus turned and saw her. 'Take heart, daughter,' he said, 'your faith has healed you.' And the woman was healed at that moment.

When Jesus entered the synagogue leader's house and saw the noisy crowd and the people playing pipes, he said, 'Go away. The girl is not dead but asleep.' But they laughed at him. After the crowd had been put outside, he went in and took the girl by the hand, and she got up. News of this spread through all that region.

Reflection

Matthew is a tax collector, a Jewish man working for the Romans. A man of few principles, he is an outcast in Jewish society, mixing only with other tax collectors and sinners. Roman taxes had to be paid in Roman coinage, but there were no written documents listing monetary amounts people would have to pay. The amounts depended on the integrity of the collector. Not all the monies collected would go to Rome. A substantial sum would find its way into the pockets of the collectors. No wonder Matthew was a hated part of Jewish society, handling unclean Roman currency and stealing from his fellow Jews.

Why does Jesus call him to 'follow me'? I am put in mind of God's choice of the shepherd boy, David, famously telling Samuel, "*The Lord does not look at the things people look at. People look at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.*"

Matthew immediately responds to Jesus' call and follows. We immediately find ourselves reclined with Jesus at a table in a house, surrounded by other tax collectors and sinners. Matthew gives no indication of what sins have been committed apart from the sin of taxation.

The disciples have watched whilst this happens, the table filling and them keeping a distance; close enough to see, but far enough away to still be welcomed in society. Just like the Pharisees, the middle-class scholars

closely connected to the local synagogues. Unlike the Saducees, they tolerated Roman rules in order to preserve their Jewish way of life, but were on the lookout for people, like Jesus, who broke Jewish laws. Was it through fear of personal contamination that their questions regarding Jesus' behaviour were addressed through the disciples? Jesus, hearing, answers their questions.

He says that people who in good health have no need of a doctor, but those who are sick do. He leaves them with *"Go and learn what this means: I desire mercy, and not sacrifice. For I came not to call the righteous, but sinners,"* rather like "Follow me". The Pharisees are not the ones being called; they consider themselves already righteous and have no sense of need. Self-satisfied and confident in their own standing before God, they see no reason to follow. Jesus comes instead for those who recognise their sin and their need for mercy.

Then Jairus, the ruler of the local synagogue enters the story. He obviously has no problem with trusting Jesus and believing that Jesus has the power bring his daughter back from death. What faith he demonstrates. It begs the question of how much time has he spent in Jesus company. Jesus and his disciples follow Jairus – do they know where they are going or are they too blindly following?

The group moves on, but have the Pharisees stepped back, still fearful of becoming unclean? A woman, herself considered unclean because of her illness, reaches out and touches the fringe of Jesus' garment. Matthew allows the reader to hear her inner thoughts: she believes that if she can only touch his cloak, she will be healed. Jesus seems to perceive her faith, turns to her, and warmly addresses her as "daughter." Commending her faith, he declares her healed, and immediately her illness is gone.

Jesus arrives at Jairus house where the traditional lamentations are going on to mark the girl's death. Imagine the scene, music and wailing mourners. Jesus sends them away saying the girl is not dead but sleeping. They laugh at him. Jesus waited for calm and quiet whilst the crowd dispersed and only then entered the house and took her hand in Matthew's account no words were spoken, just Jesus' touch and the girl got up.

StF 673 – Will you come and follow me

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| 1) Will you come and follow Me if I but
call your name?
Will you go where you don't know and
never be the same?
Will you let My love be shown?
Will you let My name be known,
Will you let My life be grown in you and
you in Me? | 4) Will you love the 'you' you hide if I but
call your name?
Will you quell the fear inside and
never be the same?
Will you use the faith you've found
To reshape the world around,
Through My sight and touch and sound
in you and you in Me? |
| 2) Will you leave yourself behind if I but
call your name?
Will you care for cruel and kind and
never be the same?
Will you risk the hostile stare
Should your life attract or scare?
Will you let Me answer prayer in you and
you in Me? | 5) Lord, Your summons echoes true when You
but call my name,
Let me turn and follow You and never
be the same.
In Your company I'll go
Where Your love and footsteps show
Thus I'll move and live and grow in You
and You in me. |
| 3) Will you let the blinded see if I but call your name?
Will you set the prisoners free and never be the same?
Will you kiss the leper clean
And do such as this unseen,
And admit to what I mean in you and you in Me? | |

Reading: Romans 4: 13-25 (NIV)

It was not through the law that Abraham and his offspring received the promise that he would be heir of the world, but through the righteousness that comes by faith. For if those who depend on the law are heirs, faith means nothing and the promise is worthless, because the law brings wrath. And where there is no law there is no transgression.

Therefore, the promise comes by faith, so that it may be by grace and may be guaranteed to all Abraham's offspring – not only to those who are of the law but also to those who have the faith of Abraham. He is the father of us all. As it is written: 'I have made you a father of many nations.' He is our father in the sight of God, in whom he believed – the God who gives life to the dead and calls into being things that were not.

Against all hope, Abraham in hope believed and so became the father of many nations, just as it had been said to him, 'So shall your offspring be.' Without weakening in his faith, he faced the fact that his body was as good as dead – since he was about a hundred years old – and that Sarah's womb was also dead. Yet he did not waver through unbelief regarding the promise of God, but was strengthened in his faith and gave glory to God, being fully persuaded that God had power to do what he had promised. This is why 'it was credited to him as righteousness.' The words 'it was credited to him' were written not for him alone, but also for us, to whom God will credit righteousness – for us who believe in him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead. He was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification.

Reflection

Saul, as known by his Hebrew name, was a Pharisee and a tent maker. He was also known as Paul, his Roman name. As a Pharisee, he had been taught Jewish law under the tutorage of Gamaliel, a renowned teacher, and was a fierce protector of Judaism. He was involved in finding and destroying followers of Jesus to change their mindset and destroy their belief, even putting some to death. He was an eyewitness to Stephen's death by stoning.

Paul knew the life story of Abraham, the man who in old age became father to Isaac, borne by his wife Sarah, herself beyond childbearing age. He knew because it was written in the Pentateuch or Torah, the life story of Abraham, known as Abram until the covenant with God. He heard God's call to leave his homeland and start again nearly 300 miles away from his tribe, taking with him his nephew Lot and Sarai his wife with all their possessions. We are told that Abram was 75 years old when he heard God speaking to him telling him to move on.

With incredible faith and trust, Abram did as he was told, believing in God's promise that he would be given land and children Sarai would be the mother and Abram the father of a nation. This was a covenant with God, the birth of a chosen nation, the Jews who would worship one God the architect of creation blessed by God.

Paul was converted to Christianity whilst serving the God of Abraham. On a journey to Damascus to report on more groups of Christians which were springing up, he heard the voice of Jesus, "*Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?*" He replied, "*Who are you, Lord?*" "*I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. But rise and enter the city, and you will be told what you are to do.*"

He found himself blind and needing help to reach a place of safety where he could stay. He waited for word to reach him, which of course after 3 days waiting, he was visited by Ananias. Just as Jonah was hesitant to follow the instructions to travel to Nineveh, Ananias was reluctant to visit Saul his reputation was hardly welcoming. But as we know, when you are called you find your world changing and so you do what God leads to do. Knowing all the time you are not on your own because God provides all you need.

Paul shares the amazing trust and faith which Abraham and Sarah showed demonstrating his own change of heart. His new-found religious fervour and determination to take the news of God's grace and salvation

through the life and death and resurrection of Jesus. Full of the Spirit, Paul set new churches encouraging, guiding and sometimes reprimanding through his letters which still speak to us today. Paul listened and followed and with the blessing of God set new churches, bringing Christ to Jews and Gentiles. Who brought you to know Jesus?

StF 652 – Lord, we come to ask your healing

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| 1) Lord, we come to ask your healing,
Teach us of love;
All unspoken shame revealing,
Teach us of love.
Take our selfish thoughts and actions,
Petty feuds, divisive factions,
Hear us now to you appealing,
Teach us of love. | 3) When the bread is raised and broken,
Fill us with love;
Words of consecration spoken,
Fill us with love.
As our grateful prayers continue,
Make the faith that we have in you
More than just an empty token,
Fill us with love. |
| 2) Soothe away our pain and sorrow,
Hold us in love;
Grace we cannot buy or borrow,
Hold us in love.
Though we see but dark and danger,
Though we spurn both friend and stranger,
Though we often dread tomorrow,
Hold us in love. | 4) Help us live for one another,
Bind us in love;
Stranger, neighbour, father, mother -
Bind us in love.
All are equal at your table,
Through your Spirit make us able
To embrace as sister, brother,
Bind us in love. |

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Prayers of Thanksgiving

For the expanding grandeur of creation, worlds known and unknown, galaxies beyond galaxies, filling us with awe and challenging our imaginations: **We give thanks this day.**

For this fragile planet earth, its times and tides, its sunsets and seasons: **We give thanks this day.**

For the joy of human life, its wonders and surprises, its hopes and achievements: **We give thanks this day.**

For our human community, our common past and future hope, our oneness transcending all separation, our capacity to work for peace and justice in the midst of hostility and oppression: **We give thanks this day.**

For high hopes and noble causes, for faith without fanaticism, for understanding of views not shared: **We give thanks this day.**

For all who have labored and suffered for a fairer world, who have lived so that others might live in dignity and freedom: **We give thanks this day.**

For human liberty and sacred rites; for opportunities to change and grow, to affirm and choose: **We give thanks this day.**

We pray that we may live not by our fears but by our hopes, not by our words but by our deeds. **We give thanks this day.**

Prayers of Intercession

Holy Spirit, Comforter, we pray for all those who need your comfort today:

those who are grieving the loss of loved ones;
those struggling with poor physical and mental health;
those facing personal battles with addictions;
those trapped in poverty and systems of injustice.

May they know your presence, receive your hope, and be touched by your joy.

Holy Spirit, Advocate and Counsellor, we pray for all those who need your vision and direction today:

for political leaders, that they will use their power for the good of all people;
for young people considering what to do with their lives. Give them wisdom to discern the gifts you have given them, and the call you are placing on their lives;
for our denomination, Synods and local churches, that we will be open and responsive to wherever you would lead us.

May we know your leading, and be bold in love and witness, sharing in the life of your kingdom. **Amen.**

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come; thy will be done; on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory for ever and ever. **Amen.**

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.**

StF 663 – I the Lord of sea and sky

1) I, the Lord of sea and sky,
I have heard my people cry.
All who dwell in dark and sin my hand will save.
I, who made the stars of night,
I will make their darkness bright.
Who will bear my light to them?
Whom shall I send?

*Ch) Here I am, Lord.
Is it I, Lord?
I have heard you calling in the night.
I will go, Lord,
if you lead me.
I will hold your people in my heart.*

2) I, the Lord of snow and rain,
I have borne my people's pain;
I have wept for love of them - they turn away.
I will break their hearts of stone,
give them hearts for love alone.
I will speak my word to them.
Whom shall I send?

3) I, the Lord of wind and flame,
I will tend the poor and lame.
I will set a feast for them - my hand will save.
Finest bread I will provide
till their hearts are satisfied.
I will give my life to them.
Whom shall I send?

Daniel L. Schutte © OCP Publications

Blessing

May the love of the Father,
the tenderness of the Son,
and the presence of the Spirit,
gladden your heart
and bring peace to your soul,
this day and all days, **Amen.**