

Eighth Sunday after Pentecost

Eighth Sunday after Pentecost – 31 July 2022

The Faith Nurture Forum would like to thank Rev Dr Will Stalder, Minister of Methlick Parish Church, for his thoughts on the eighth Sunday after Pentecost.

Weekly Worship, based on the Revised Common Lectionary, is for everyone – in any capacity – who is involved in creating and leading worship.

It provides liturgical material that can be used for worship in all settings. Our writers are asked to share their approaches to creating and delivering this material to equip leaders with a greater confidence and ability to reflect on their own worship practice and experience and encourage them to consider how this material might be adapted for their own context.

We would encourage continual reflection on the changing patterns of worship and spiritual practice that are emerging from disruption and how this might help identify pathways towards development and worship renewal.

We may not all be gathered in the same building, but at this time, when we need each other so much, we are invited to worship together, from where we are – knowing that God can hear us all and can blend even distant voices into one song of worship.

Introduction.....	3
Ecclesiastes 1:2, 12-14; 2:18-23.....	4
Psalm 49:1-12	5
Colossians 3:1-11	7
Luke 12:13-21.....	8
Sermon ideas	9
Prayers	11
Musical suggestions	18
Reflecting on our worship practice	19
Useful links	21

Introduction

Karl Barth once told those training for ministry, “When you preach, preach with the Bible in one hand and the newspaper in the other. Preach, having an eye on current events, the state of our modern world, and the plight of our neighbour, while at the same time having an eye on what God might have to say about it.” (1)

What will the headlines be on 31 July 2022?

I hope and pray that by the time 31 July rolls around, the war in Ukraine will be over. Even if the war has ended, however, the effects of it will certainly last for some time to come. There will be millions grieving the loss of loved ones and of a homeland. There will be many seeking refuge here in Scotland. These Ukrainian refugees will be traumatised, in need of healing and a helping hand. Moreover, they will be a living reminder for us to reconsider the things that really matter and to put the things of this world in their proper perspective.

What might the Bible have to say about current events?

I’ve been asked to reflect on today’s readings through the lens of Stewardship, which is not a hard task, because both the readings and the events of today remind us that Stewardship matters. “Christian stewardship recognises that everything we have belongs to God and that we are called to care for all that God has given to us.”(2) If ever there was a time to be grateful for the things we have and care for what God has given us and for those less fortunate, it is now.

Ecclesiastes reminds us that there are times in life when we want to cry out, “All is vanity.” We work hard, but it can be taken away in an instant. Plus, we can’t take anything with us after this life. Psalms 49 echoes this hard truth, “Mortals cannot abide in their pomp”; Colossians 3 calls Christians to therefore put their hearts and minds on “things above”; and likewise, Jesus says in Luke 13, “Be rich towards God.”

On 31 July 2022, the newspapers and the Bible are singing from the same hymn sheet. They’re calling us to put the things of this world in their proper perspective, to value the things that really matter and to live our lives as stewards of the things God has given us.

Cardinal Francis George put it well: “The only thing we take with us when we die is what we have given away.” (3) Let’s be those with hearts and hands wide open to those who currently need it the most!

[1] While Karl Barth is referenced time and time again as quoting the above, it is doubtful that Barth said these exact words. That said, Karl Barth did say something to the effect in a May 1963 Time Magazine Article a few years before his death in 1968. See <https://content.time.com/time/subscriber/article/0,33009,896838,00.html>

[2] Definition of 'Christian Stewardship' found on the Stewardship Section of the Church of Scotland Website - <https://www.churchofscotland.org.uk/resources/stewardship>

[3] Quoted in an Online Article by Paris Schutz, "Cardinal George's Last Word: A New Book Titled 'A Godly Humanism,'" (News: WTTW, April 24, 2015, <https://news.wttw.com/2015/04/24/cardinal-george-s-last-word>)

Ecclesiastes 1:2, 12-14; 2:18-23

There's a saying that the opening line of any piece of writing is the most important. It grabs the reader's attention and sets the tone for the rest of the book or story. Ecclesiastes has one of the best openings there is. It has me hooked.

Vanity of vanities, says the Teacher,
vanity of vanities! All is vanity.

I like how the NIV puts it:

'Meaningless! Meaningless!'
says the Teacher.
'Utterly meaningless!
Everything is meaningless.'

There are times in life when I want to throw my arms up in the air in hearty agreement. "Vanity!" "Meaningless!" and the author of Ecclesiastes seems to agree. They are the opening lines and the concluding lines in Ecclesiastes 12:8. The author of Ecclesiastes, therefore, seems to say, everything is *hebel* (breath, vapour, vanity or meaningless). But there is an epitaph (chapter 12:9-14), a second word, added either by the author themselves or a later editor or redactor: verses 13-14 say, "The end of the matter; all has been heard. Fear God, and keep his commandments; for that is the whole duty of everyone. For God will bring every deed into judgement, including every secret thing, whether good or evil."

The minister or preacher, therefore, has a choice. Do you allow your congregation the space to vent, cry out to God, lament the senseless and transitory aspects of life? Or do you fast forward to the end and remind your hearer that meaning can be found in a meaningless word?

Surely, there is scope for both.

One can feel the angst in Ecclesiastes 2:18-23. “What do mortals get from all the toil and strain with which they toil under the sun? For all their days are full of pain, and their work is a vexation; even at night their minds do not rest.” Psalm 49 and Luke 12 certainly continue these themes.

So how should these passages from Ecclesiastes be read?

As Fee and Stuart say in *How to Read the Bible Book by Book*, the book of Ecclesiastes is the “ponderings of a Wisdom teacher who wrestles with life’s realities; what is to be gained by achieving wealth or wisdom when in the end death claims both rich and poor, wise and foolish; but specially set in a context of knowing the fear of God.”

As the bulk of Ecclesiastes wrestles with “life’s realities,” it seems wise to give the congregation the permission to wrestle as well. Let the congregation wrestle with God, wrestle with questions, frustrations and anger and wrestle with aspects of stewardship and finance in light of life’s injustices.

But, don’t stop there, stuck in an eternal wrestling match with the questions of life. In chapter 12:13-14, the author of Ecclesiastes insists there’s another story, another angle to look at things, another conclusion to be reached.

[Psalm 49:1-12](#)

Ben Paterson writes, “Prayer is more than a tool for self-expression, a means to get God to give us what we want. It is a means he uses to give us what he wants, and to teach us to want what he wants. Holy Scripture in general, and the Psalms, teach us who God is and what he wants to give.” (1)

While it is true that every aspect of human emotion and experience are contained in the Psalms and that they can help express what we long to pray in times of anger, joy, sadness, grief, trauma, war, atrocity and peace, to name but a few – the Psalms do much more. A simple survey of the types of Psalm and the communal context in which they were sung

underscore this fact. Prayer is more than self-expression. It is a means to broaden our awareness of others: of God and God's values, and of the needs of others...

Psalm 49 fits into this mould. It is a 'wisdom psalm' and invites the faith community to consider the true value of wealth and finance in light of the great leveller of death. Psalm 49:12 says, "Mortals cannot abide in their pomp; they are like the animals that perish."

So, what place should wealth and finance have in this life? One can approach this question from a few different angles.

For a helpful philosophical answer to the question, "Can money really make us happy?" see Thomas Aquinas (2).

For a more prayerful and contemplative reflection on the question, *The Catholic Prayer Bible, Lectio Divina Edition* (3) invites us to prayerfully consider the wisdom of Psalm 49 in the following four headings:

- **Introduction:** This so-called wisdom psalm emphasises the foolishness of a disordered trust in wealth, as if it were possible to use such wealth to avoid the death that inevitably faces each person. Ironically, this trust in wealth, far from making a person immortal, will make that person even more like animals that lack any spiritual dimension.
- **Reflect:** How much of my life is staked on illusions of self-sufficiency? Do I place more emphasis on things that I cannot take with me from this world, or on spiritual treasure that endures forever?
- **Pray:** Lord, You are my lasting treasure, and it is use that I want to possess even now.
- **Act:** I will practise a healthy detachment from the things that belong exclusively to this present world, and still more from those things that are sinful or that lead me into sin.

[1] Ben Paterson, *God's Prayer Book: The Power and Pleasure of Praying the Psalms* (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale, 2008, p. 7)

[2] Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* I-II, q.2. a1.

<https://www.newadvent.org/summa/2002.htm>

[3] *The Catholic Prayer Bible NRSV: Lectio Divina Edition* (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1984, p. 878)

Colossians 3:1-11

Colossians 3:1-2 says, “So if you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth...”

Upon first reading, Paul seems to be setting up a dichotomy between the things of earth and the things of heaven. The things of Earth = bad; the things of heaven = good. Christians are, therefore, called to “seek the things that are above,” heavenly things, good things.

And yet... A lyric keeps repeating in the background of my mind like a skipping LP. “Some people are so heavenly minded that they are no earthly good.” It’s a quote commonly credited to Oliver Wendell Holmes Sr. (d.1894), who was a physician, poet and father of an Associate Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States, but it was popularised by the great Johnny Cash in his song, ‘No Earthly Good’ from his 1977 album, *The Rambler*.

Here are few lines of the song...

“Come heed me, my brothers, come heed, one and all
Don’t brag about standing or you’ll surely fall
You’re shining your light and shine it you should
But you’re so heavenly minded, you’re no earthly good.

If you’re holding heaven, then spread it around
There’s hungry hands reaching up here from the ground
Move over and share the high ground where you stood
So heavenly minded, you’re no earthly good.

The gospel ain’t gospel until it is spread
But how can you share it where you’ve got your head
There’s hands that reach out for a hand if you would
So heavenly minded, you’re no earthly good.”

So, who’s right? Paul or Johnny?

Both!

We misread Paul if we think he was setting up a dichotomy between heaven and earth, body and spirit. Paul was no Gnostic. Rather, he’s trying to make a point: having been

baptised with Christ in His death, we have been raised with Christ in His resurrection. As such, we, who call ourselves Christians, really are new creatures (2 Corinthians 5:17; Galatians 2:20), and our lives should be lived accordingly.

Among a number of unsavoury characteristics and behaviours Paul lists in verse 5-8, Paul says that greed should have no place in the lives of those who call themselves by Christ's name. So, one could make the case, that, according to Paul, the more heavenly minded we are, the better we are for the earth. We are kinder and more generous. We hold the things of this world lightly not because they have no value, but because we are stewards of the gifts God has given to us and want to share them with generous hearts.

Colossians 3 invites us to lift our gaze to heaven, and I like to think that when I do (I hope I'm not too heretical in saying this), I might just see Paul and Johnny singing together because heaven = good for the earth.

[Luke 12:13-21](#)

Why does Jesus turn a deaf ear to a legitimate cry for justice?

This passage opens with someone in the crowd appealing to Jesus, saying, "Teacher, tell my brother to divide the family inheritance with me" (v13). And yet Jesus refuses to act as judge or arbiter. It seems harsh and unfeeling, uncharacteristic of what we know of Jesus. Before we look at the text in greater detail, we have to answer the question, "Why?"

Kenneth Bailey is helpful in this regard. In his book, *Poet & Peasant and Through Peasant Eyes* (1), he outlines a few key theological points, which help answer the question.

- A naked cry for justice, unqualified by any self-criticism, is not heeded by Jesus.
- In a case of a broken personal relationship Jesus refuses to answer a cry for justice when the answer contributes to a finalising of brokenness of that relationship. Jesus did not come as a divider.
- Jesus' parables often reflect a profound concern for justice for the poor. For him justice includes a concern for needs and not simply earnings (cf. Matt. 20:1-16). But here a self-centred cry for justice is understood by Jesus as a symptom of a sickness. Jesus refuses to answer the cry but rather addresses Himself to the healing of the sickness that produced the cry.

In other words, Jesus didn't ignore a legitimate cry for justice. Rather, like a master physician, consultant or GP, Jesus looked past the symptoms of the disease in order to ascertain its root cause and so prescribe a fitting remedy.

The disease – Greed. The remedy – Stewardship.

You can see this in the Parable of the Rich Fool, which is bookended by two important statements or principles (2) and which provide a foil for the Rich Fool.

- Luke 12:15: “Take care! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; for one's life does not consist in the abundance of possessions.”
- Luke 12:21: “Be rich towards God.”

The Rich Fool amassed a wealth of possessions, but was wealthy only in relation to himself. In contrast, true wealth, or rather ‘fulfilling’ wealth, to use the Aquinas’ argument, is ordered according to a different end, not self but God. It's this perspective that lays the groundwork for Christian stewardship and a generous spirit. It's this perspective that underscores the quote, above, by Cardinal Francis George: “The only thing we take with us when we die is what we have given away.” In other words, the richest people in this world are those who are rich towards God, who practise the principles of Christian stewardship and who generously share from the storehouses of heaven. These Christians are the merriest of all.

[1] Kenneth Bailey, *Poet & Peasant and Through Peasant Eyes: A Literary-Cultural Approach to the Parables in Luke* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1983, p. 70)

[2] Ibid, p. 57)

Sermon ideas

If you're anything like me, you may not have followed the old homiletics adage that a preacher should spend an hour praying for every minute of their homily or sermon. You've certainly prayed and reflected on this morning's passages, maybe not in a one, but on the go. You've utilised every opportunity afforded to you during a Zoom meeting with your video turned off. Despite all that, God has been gracious to you, and you probably already have an idea of what you should share on Sunday. The challenge is: “How should I begin? How do I make the sermon engaging or catch my congregations' attention from the get-go?” With that in mind, I've included an introduction and some anecdotes that could be used for this Sunday.

Introduction

The Biggest Slice of the Pie Joke (Greed Joke)

Josh and Jenny came in from school one day and wanted a snack. Their mother had baked a cake earlier in the week and there was just enough left for each of them to have a slice. "Let's have a piece of cake," suggested Josh. "I'll get the cake while you get us a glass of milk."

So Josh sliced up the cake while Jenny got the milk.

But when Josh sliced up the cake, one slice looked like this: LARGE

And the other one looked like this: SMALL

One slice was much larger than the other one, and Josh placed the small slice in front of Jenny and kept the large slice for himself.

"What?! Look what you have done!" cried Jenny. "You gave me the small slice of cake and kept the big slice for yourself."

"Well, how would you have done it?" Josh asked.

"If I were serving the cake," said Jenny, "I would have given you the large slice and kept the smaller slice for myself."

"Well, what are you complaining about?" said Josh, "That's exactly what I did!"

Luke tells us that a huge crowd had gathered around Jesus, and someone from that crowd shouted out... "Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me."

We've been there before... Whether personally or in the lives of those we know and love... the dividing up of an estate can get oh-so ugly.

As Fred Craddock says, "[It can be an] ugly dispute: haggling over furniture, dishes, silverware, house, land and savings left by the deceased." (1)

It's amazing what can happen in the hearts of normally placid and contented individuals when there is an inheritance to be divided...

I think of the P7 teacher who once posed the following problem to her class:

Inheritance Joke

A wealthy man dies and leaves 10 million GBP.

1/5 goes to his wife, 1/5 goes to his son, 1/6 goes to his butler and the rest goes to charity. Now, what does each get?"

After a very long silence in the classroom, Little Johnny raised his hand and said, "I think ma'am, a lawyer!"

We've been there before. And we can commiserate with the young man who shouted out to Jesus, "Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me." It doesn't seem like he's being unreasonable. It doesn't seem like it's wrong to ask for a fair distribution of one's inheritance... Then why does Jesus turn the man's request into a lesson on greed? Why turn the man's cry for justice into a sermon on stewardship?

This morning's lectionary readings give us the opportunity to reflect on and address that question. They are passages that help us grapple with the value and importance of Christian Stewardship.

Ecclesiastes gives us the opportunity to lament the economic injustices of the world. Psalm 49 invites us to prayerfully consider the true value of wealth and finance. Colossians 3 calls us to see our finances from a different perspective and Luke 12 reminds us that the richest people in this world are those who are rich towards God.

May God help us this morning to become richer towards God and more generous towards others!

[1] Fred Craddock, *Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching, Luke* (Louisville: John Knox Press, p. 163)

Prayers

In the same way that good preaching holds the Bible in one hand and the news in the other, the liturgy of a Sunday service should hold the two in balance as well. We come to church with hearts and minds saturated by the events of our lives and the world, and we need time and space to be drawn into God's loving presence in order to hear God's word. This dynamic, where God slowly brings to pass what we say in the Lord's Prayer, "on earth as it is in heaven," happens in prayer, during the different component parts of a Sunday service. This dynamic is also evident in the Psalms, where the Psalmist pours out their anger and lament, their doubts and complaints at the outset of many of the psalms, but by the end,

has been moved (by God in prayer) to faith and trust. Even in Lamentations, there is that beautiful line, “The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases, his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness” (Lam 3:22-23). I hope to show a little bit of this dynamic in the following prayers and hope these brief examples, which use the readings and themes from the readings, might be beneficial to the prayers you develop in your own context.

Gathering prayer / Call to worship

“Vanity of vanities” says Ecclesiastes

And our newspapers corroborate the theme.

Money gained; money lost; stolen by a missile or a bomb

We work hard and others benefit, how can we not complain?

But there’s another story, a higher truth we know

A power working, by God’s hand, a kingdom ever growing.

In all our doubts and trials, our wars and poverty

Your faithful hand is guiding; Your grace always providing.

So, help us, dear Lord this morning, to move from doubt to faith

To live our lives as stewards of the things You’ve blessed us with.

Confession / Repentance

In every prayer of confession, I like to start with God and end with God. While aspects of doubt and greed will undoubtedly be included in any confession, the riches of God’s grace must always be prominent. So some sort of opening declaration, absolution or promise of forgiveness should be included therein.

God, You are our highest good, the only One able to satisfy our deepest longings.

You are the true font of joy and gladness.

In You, we are always rich.

In You, all gifts are ordered and find their rightful place.

In You, we find the joy of giving.

In You we find shalom: wholeness, healing.

But how quickly we are overawed when others grow rich.

We are blinded by the splendour of their homes,
the increase of their wealth as their profit margins increases.

How quickly we turn to doubt and disbelief, suspicion and misgiving.
“It’s vanities of vanities,” we say – “this war and unfair policies.”

Or we turn to greed and try to hoard. We build bigger barns, open another bank account, to hold what should be shared.

Lord, we confess, we can easily become misguided.

We can be swayed by greed and selfishness.
We can store up reserves in churches when our neighbours can’t afford their supper.
We can covet more and more of that which is not really our own.
But in the end, we acknowledge that it leaves us feeling empty.

Lord, we ask for Your grace and forgiveness.

Fill us with the awareness that all things come from You,
and that we will be forever restless
unless all things find their right place and purpose in You.
Fill us with gratitude for the things You’ve given us.
Fill us with the riches of Your kingdom, so we can share with those who need it.
And give us clean hearts, kind and open hearts to do it.
And in so doing, we and our neighbours, both new and familiar,
will find shalom: wholeness, healing.

Thank You, Lord, for always hearing our prayers,
extending grace with open arms
and giving us that which we need to change and order our lives back to You,
for Your glory and the benefit of others.

Thanksgiving / Gratitude

I often begin a prayer with a Bible reading or a stanza from a hymn that’s just been sung. The words of Scripture or the hymn are still resonating in the air and in our hearts, and it provides a perfect segue into conversation with God, especially when giving thanks in a prayer of thanksgiving.

There are number of amazing hymns in the suggested music below. Any one of them could be used. For the sake of example, I’ve chosen CH4 503 – “I will offer up my life”.

*“Jesus, what can I give, what can I bring
to so faithful a friend to so loving a king?
Saviour, what can be said? What can be sung
as a praise of your name for the things you have done?
Oh, my words could not tell not even in part
of the debt of love that is owed by this thankful heart.”*

Loving God, our hearts are bursting with gratitude for all that You give.
We are truly rich in You.

You have lavished us with gifts of grace and forgiveness,
friendship and comfort in grief,
financial provision in times of need.

You have filled us with peace in the midst of adversity,
vision and signs of growth in the midst of the Church restructuring,
kindness and hospitality in the midst of war and millions of refugees.

You have been faithful for hundreds of years,
through all the disruptions and unions,
pandemics and plagues,
wars and skirmishes between nations and families and friends.
You have been faithful through it all.

And our words could never tell, not even in part
Of the debt of love that is owed, by us.

All we can do is say thank You.

All we can do is live our lives as stewards of all that You have given us.

And in so doing, we hope that Your name might be praised in deed and word!

And this truth is forever proclaimed that nothing is ever vanity in You!

Thank You!

Prayer for others / Intercession

It's easy to fall into a rut, uttering the same words in our prayers, especially if we follow a tradition of praying extemporaneously. It's for this reason that turning to the prayers of others can enrich the writing of our own liturgies and prayers. Here is a beautiful prayer by Christine Odell on the readings for today and themes of stewardship. (1)

Generous God,
We pray for rich countries with a surplus of wealth
And for poor countries in debt to them;
We pray for rich countries whose stores are overflowing,
And for countries whose harvests have failed;
We pray for rich countries flaunting their material success,
And for the poor who live there, forgotten or ignored.
Generous God,
Help us not pile up treasures for ourselves
While remaining paupers in Your sight.

Silence

Generous God,
We pray for those whose wealth has given them power,
And for those whose poverty has made them powerless;
We pray for those whose lives are given to making money,
And for those who can barely afford to live;
We pray for the successful, the popular, the talented,
And for those who are given little respect.
Generous God,
Help us not pile up treasures for ourselves
While remaining paupers in Your sight.

Silence

Generous God,
We pray for Your church with its many possessions,
And for Your people who live in poverty;
We pray for Your church, entrusted with the gospel,
And for those crying out for love and hope;
We pray for Your church, filled with Your Holy Spirit,
And for those who long for guidance and peace.
Generous God,
Help us not pile up treasures for ourselves
While remaining paupers in Your sight.

Silence

In the name of Your Son, Jesus Christ, our Saviour,
Who was rich, yet for our sakes became poor,
So that through his poverty we might become rich. **Amen**

[1] Christine Odell. *Companion to the Revised Common Lectionary: 1. Intercessions* (Peterborough: Epworth Press, 1988), p. 157

Blessing / Closing prayer

The blessing or closing prayer is one of my favourite parts of the service, it's one final opportunity to sum up the themes of the day and bless God's people. I always try and make eye contact with each person in the congregation, as if to convey that God wants to bless them. Here is one blessing that you could use that ties in the readings for today and the theme of stewardship.

May you go in the knowledge of God's grace and provision,
grateful for all that God has given
and desiring to be rich in the things of God,
sharing the gifts God has given you
with those who need God most.

And as you go,
may the blessing of God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit
be with you now and until He says to you,
"Well done, my good and faithful friend."

I also include a poem (author unknown) and a prayer I've used during one of our Sundays on Stewardship:

Poem (author unknown)

This year I stopped to contemplate the kind of gift I'd bring
To lay at the nail-scarred feet of my Gracious Heavenly King.
He's given my very life to me, and the blessings I hold dear,
But I can't come up with anything appropriate, I fear.

Every time I give Him something, He more than doubles the return...
I gave to Him my weakness, His strength He then confirmed
Would always be there for me to securely hold on to.
I gave Him my shattered life – He gave me life anew.

I gave Him my pain and heartbreak, all that troubled my weary soul
He gave me hope and happiness, and made my body whole.
I gave Him all my doubts and fears, the things that stood in the way
Of my daily service in His name – He made them go away.

I offered Him my feeble voice, to sing His praise in song –
He filled my heart with a melody, that will last my whole life long.
I offered Him my hands to serve, to help out those in need,
He gave me the talent to use these tools, so that I would succeed.

I gave Him my life completely, to show His light in a world of night,
He gave me a wonderful testimony, a way to share His light.
I offered Him my eyes to see all that they could take in –
He showed to me a world of fear, unhappiness and sin.

For every gift I gave to Him, He handed back to me
Instructions for their uses – endless possibility
To reach a world that needs to find the Saviour that I found,
So on and on, I serve, for to Him in love I'm bound.

Prayer (*all*)

Bountiful Lord,
thank You that You are willing
to take all that we offer to You
and then multiply it for good.
We know that we grow by giving
in faith,
gratitude,
and even in want.

For when we give, we give to You,
and You multiply it
beyond our wildest imaginations.
Take all that we are
and all that we have –
our time, talents and money,
and bless this community
and grow Your church through our giving.
Amen!

Musical suggestions

Our [online music resource](#) is on the Church of Scotland website; you can listen to samples of every song in the Church Hymnary 4th edition (CH4) and download a selection of recordings for use in worship. You will also find playlists for this week and liturgical seasons and themes on the *Weekly Worship* and *Inspire Me* tabs.

You can find further musical suggestions for this week in a range of styles on the [Songs for Sunday blog](#) from Trinity College Glasgow.

- CH4 153 – “Great is thy faithfulness”
- CH4 180 – “Give thanks with a grateful heart”
- CH4 238 – “Lord, bring the day to pass”
- CH4 392 – “When I survey the wondrous cross”
- CH4 465 – “Be thou my Vision”
- CH4 468 – “Son of God, eternal Saviour”
- CH4 489 – “Come down, O Love Divine”
- CH4 500 – “Lord of creation”
- CH4 501 – “Take this moment, sign, and space”
- CH4 502 – “Take my life, Lord, let it be”
- CH4 503 – “I will offer up my life”
- CH4 505 – “All that I am, all that I do”
- CH4 506 – “All I once held dear”
- CH4 508 – “I bind my heart this tide”

- CH4 621 – “Spirit of Jesus, if I love my neighbour”
- CH4 655 – “For your generous providing”
- CH4 795 – “Take, oh, take me as I am”
- “Bigger Barns” – Carolyn Winfrey Gillette (Tune: Aberystwyth)
http://www.carolynshymns.com/bigger_barns.html
- “I’d rather have Jesus than silver or gold” – Rhea Miller (CMP 319)
<https://hymnary.org/hymn/CMP2000/319>)
- “When it’s all been said and done” – Don Moen
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DA7HH0I7SCo>
- “Take my gifts and let me love you” – Shirley Murray
<https://www.hopepublishing.com/find-hymns-hw/hw369.aspx>
- “Turn your eyes upon Jesus” – Helen Lemmel (CMP 712)
<https://hymnary.org/hymn/CMP2000/712>)
- “Turn your eyes upon Jesus” (Church Online) - Hillsong Worship
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7Ka7bVQmbnk>

Reflecting on our worship practice

Since the start of the pandemic in 2020, the way we worship has changed and we need to reflect on the changing or newly established patterns that emerged and continue to emerge as a result of the disruption.

We can facilitate worship for all by exploring imaginative approaches to inclusion, participation and our use of technologies in ways that suit our contexts. This is not an exhaustive list, but some things we could consider are:

- Framing various parts of the worship service in accessible language to help worshippers understand the character and purpose of each part. This is essential for creating worship for all (intergenerational worship) that reflects your community of faith.

- Holding spaces for reflection and encouraging prayer to be articulated in verbal and non-verbal ways, individually and in online breakout rooms.
- In online formats the effective use of the chat function and microphone settings encourages active participation in prayer, e.g. saying the Lord's Prayer together unmuted, in a moment of 'holy chaos'.
- While singing in our congregations is still restricted, we can worship corporately by using antiphonal psalm readings, creeds and participative prayers.
- Using music and the arts as part of the worship encourages the use of imagination in place of sung or spoken words.
- Use of silence, sensory and kinaesthetic practices allow for experience and expression beyond regular audio and visual mediums.

The following questions might help you develop a habit of reflecting on how we create and deliver content and its effectiveness and impact, and then applying what we learn to develop our practice.

- How inclusive was the worship?
Could the worship delivery and content be described as worship for all/
intergenerational? Was it sensitive to different "Spiritual Styles"?
- How was the balance between passive and active participation?
- How were people empowered to connect with or encounter God?
What helped this? What hindered this?
- How cohesive was the worship?
Did it function well as a whole?
How effective was each of the individual elements in fulfilling its purpose?
- How balanced was the worship?
What themes/topics/doctrines/areas of Christian life were included?
- How did the worship connect with your context/contemporary issues?
Was it relevant in the everyday lives of those attending and in the wider parish/
community?
How well did the worship connect with local and national issues?
How well did the worship connect with world events/issues?
- What have I learned that can help me next time I plan and deliver worship?

Useful links

Up to date information for churches around Covid-19 can be found [here](#)

You can listen to samples of every song in the Church Hymnary 4th edition (CH4) and download a selection of recordings for use in worship [here](#)

You can find an introduction to spiritual styles online [here](#)

You are free to download, project, print and circulate multiple copies of any of this material for use in worship services, bible studies, parish magazines, etc., but reproduction for commercial purposes is not permitted.

Please note that the views expressed in these materials are those of the individual writer and not necessarily the official view of the Church of Scotland, which can be laid down only by the General Assembly.