

## **Eighteenth Sunday after Pentecost**

### **Eighteenth Sunday after Pentecost – 9 October 2022**

The Faith Nurture Forum would like to thank Rev Rhona Graham and the writing group at Glasgow Tron St Mary's for their thoughts on the eighteenth 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.

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## Introduction

October is a month with a particular focus on tackling poverty. Monday 17 October is the United Nations' International Day for the Eradication of Poverty and 3-9 October is [Challenge Poverty Week](#) and the resources for the first four Sundays in October have been written by Priority Area congregations.

You will also find more Challenge Poverty Week resources on the Priority Areas [Facebook page](#), including videos and prayer memes. We would encourage you to share these with your congregation as a way of highlighting how the church is engaging in anti-poverty work at a local level. Since the early 1990s the Church of Scotland has placed a priority on putting resources into the most deprived communities. However, while there is great work happening in [Priority Area congregations](#) (those in the 5% most deprived parishes), it is important to recognise that the priority for the poorest and the most marginalised is the Gospel imperative facing the whole church.

How do I prepare for worship? For the last few years have followed the Lectionary, often focussing on just one of the readings listed for that Sunday during worship. I take the passage and read it the Monday before I preach, read through commentaries, look at this resource, Spill the Beans and Working Preacher, and then leave it till the Thursday or Friday, when I find I can pull the service together. I asked a few members of the church here to be part of putting this material together, from our Youth Zone, Praise Band, and our faithful members. This week we are coming out of Challenge Poverty Week, but it's challenge poverty every week here in our church of Tron St Mary's in the north of Glasgow. The reading from 2 Timothy challenges us about endurance. In our area, we have a real community issue with poverty, which affects at least one in every three people living around our church. Our community knows what it is to endure, and this Challenge Poverty Week, we give prayer and support to those in the community that need us to endure with them. God endured through Jesus for us, through the pains of the resurrection, and this equips us to walk with those who endure poverty.

## [Jeremiah 29:1, 4-7](#)

This Old Testament book is a letter from the prophet Jeremiah. Written to the group that were in need of such a letter perhaps, it comes with instructions for building homes, planting, making marriages, and in turn making children. It comes after destruction, but with a message of hope. The letter comes on the back of its readers being scattered and its people in crisis, but there is a sense coming from the writer that the reader needs to stop.

Stop and regroup, rebuild and start again. Verses 5 and 7 are of particular interest now, at the end of Challenge Poverty Week: first is verse 5: “Build houses and live in them; plant gardens and eat what they produce.” In 2022, we have people living here through immigration, as refugees and asylum seekers and we have a housing and food crisis that is getting deeper as the cost of living rises. Planting your own vegetables, sustainable living, food bank support, and housing that meets the needs of our most vulnerable are just as important now as it was for those being addressed in this letter from Jeremiah. Verse 7 says: “But seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the Lord on its behalf, for in its welfare you will find your welfare.” This verse stands out to the reader of the letter, that we need to care for the city or area that we are in, that it’s right for us to fight for every bit of green space. It’s around 2,600 years since this letter was written, yet it could be written today – for all to care for the area around them, for the people that live there, and for communities to keep planting.

*Rhona Graham*

## [Psalm 66:1-12](#)

Three points arise for me from this psalm: it is for a leader; to sing to God; the writer shares in the people’s suffering; and they never give up.

With this being Challenge Poverty Week, this psalm asks the leader (and readers) to draw our focus onto God, and give God glorious praise. Each week in the church, we may aim to do just that, through our worship, giving God the glorious praise, and this psalm is no different from what may be our practice already. Singing in public can be a very uncomfortable thing to do – some of us love it and belt out our song as we can really engage with God through singing, giving God the glory. Some of us shy away from it, barely moving our mouths, but are able to give glory to God in other forms. Here the writer is not simply telling us to sing, but also to make a joyful noise, so if you’re not into singing, it’s ok to clap during worship!

But something that really stands out in this psalm when I read it, is the suffering that is acknowledged by the reader. It is something that flows through most of the readings this week, that every human will endure suffering of some form, and the writer here is accepting that it happened, but coming through suffering, to the other side, bringing glory to God as you do, will leave its marks. People in our communities who are in need because of poverty need of us to walk with them in their suffering – just as someone may have done with us, and as Jesus has definitely done with us. Where do you see poverty and suffering in your community,? You might be in an area that feels more wealthy, with expensive cars in the driveway, yet no food in the fridge. They say we are all just two pay packets away from

poverty, life can change in the blink of an eye, but this passage gives the reader hope, to keep with God, in all that comes.

*Rhona Graham*

## **2 Timothy 2:8-15**

This is a letter from Paul in the New Testament, and in this chapter Paul is lamenting his suffering for knowing Jesus, what he learned, and how he wants to share this with the reader. But Paul also really wants the reader not just to rely on Jesus, but to fully depend on Jesus.

Jesus' death did not keep Him from the world; His suffering gave hope when He died and rose again. Paul is alluding to his own suffering here, that has resulted in him now being 'free' to use his experience to write to various communities in the world to advise them to keep the gospel at their core.

Verse 11 reminds the reader that if Jesus suffered it, so might we. When we follow in faith, we don't automatically become immune to the hardships of life. People who live in poverty in the hardest parts of the world, where finding water to survive each day is their only task, can have a deeper faith than those with swimming pools in their back gardens. Having a deeper faith does not mean that their suffering will end right there and then. But as a community of Christians, we can use this to motivate us to be like Paul, to take the good with the bad, and do practical things that will end poverty, hunger and thirst, for all in the world.

The message of verses 14-15 is powerful – when we accept Jesus, when we love God, when we hear the Spirit, we can stand tall, on the shoulders of Jesus, and let people know that by our faith, we will suffer with them in their situations, that we know pain, and we can use that to our advantage when sharing the Good News.

*Rhona Graham*

## **Luke 17:11-19**

My first thought when I read this passage was – what a horrible disease leprosy is and to have it was the worst thing that could happen to anyone. But despite this, Jesus was willing to help to make those who suffered from it better. Other people would have avoided the man in this reading, but not Jesus, who was willing to help anyone in trouble, no matter what. At this point Jesus did not do anything physical, but told the men to go to the priest

even though they still had leprosy (the law said they could only go to the priest when they had been cured). The ten men were miraculously cleansed through obeying Jesus. I wonder how they were not challenged by the people in the area as they walked to see the priest. Although ten were cured only one came back to Jesus to thank Him for making him well. I wonder if sometimes when I ask God to help me out of a bad situation, whether things turned out right, do I remember to thank Jesus for curing me of the things that stop me from sharing God with a healed soul?

In this Challenge Poverty Week, in churches across Scotland, people are engaging with many people who struggle in the community, and maybe only one comes back to say thank you. Do we stop if we don't get the thanks? Or do we keep doing what Jesus did, giving thanks for the one that came back, and giving thanks for the others that also received – they may not come back, but they may pay it forward.

*Marion Dunn*

## **Sermon ideas**

Most people, myself included, find it is easier to follow the New Testament passages, in this case Luke and 2 Timothy. But I am a firm believer in challenging myself and I am sure you are too. So why not look at the Old Testament passages, Jeremiah and Psalms, and preach on them instead?

One of the themes that you could use to link the psalm and the cleansing of the lepers in Luke is making a joyful noise. Why not link these together – not necessarily by singing Psalm 66, but after preaching on the New Testament where Jesus has cleansed the Lepers, you could sing an uplifting, celebratory song after your sermon.

I always feel encouraged when I read the many stories of Jesus healing and cleansing in His ministry, that our feelings should be the same as the folk in biblical times felt.

Some ideas that come out of the passages are that when we look at challenging poverty the passages are all linked to each other as they are detailing the things that God does for us and how God provides for us – not only in a spiritual sense but also in a physical one. We see the miracles and challenges that Jesus faces, and this could link into challenging poverty, which is a big problem in our society. With God's guidance we can try and bring this to the fore and try and resolve this big problem in a way that helps those less fortunate than ourselves.

*Andrew Dunn*

## Prayers

### Call to worship

Make a joyful noise to God, all the earth  
Sing glory to God's name, God's glorious name.  
All the earth worships You; they sing praises to You, Sing praises to Your name.  
Open our ears to listen. Open our eyes to see Your face.  
In this hour of worship take away the busyness of the week  
and give it to You, our Heavenly Father.

*Andrew Dunn*

### Thanksgiving prayer

Father God,  
We have so much to thank You for –  
food to eat, clothes to wear, friends and families and so much more.  
But we are aware that there are many in the world –  
in this country and in countries far away, who do not enjoy these blessings.

So we give thanks today –  
for those who challenge poverty by their words and their actions.  
For all those who give of their time, money and skills  
to bring relief to people whose lives are blighted by poverty,  
and people who have to make difficult choices  
about how to use the scarce resources that they have.

We thank You that there are people who are prepared to speak out  
and to hold politicians and large companies to account  
and who are prepared to put their faith into actions by showing Your love.

Help us as we give thanks for the blessings we enjoy  
and to do what we are able to show Your love to those in need.  
In Jesus' name  
Amen

*Jean Slimmon*

### Intercession

This prayer was written by young people in our Youth Zone. I asked them what they think about when I say the word 'poverty'. They told me the things that came to mind, like no

money, no food no home, etc. I then got them to think about what things are available for people in this situation in our community, city, and around the world.

Dear God

As we come to the end of Challenge Poverty Week,  
we think of the many things that we are grateful for in our lives and community.  
We give thanks that we are able to have food that we can easily have,  
that we are able to shop for and to grow.

We give thanks for foodbanks that provide for those in need  
and for those who generously donate and volunteer their time to help them.

We are grateful that we are able to go to school  
and be fully kitted out with all our uniform and new things.  
We know that there are some children who don't have these things  
but we have people who run uniform banks  
and we give thanks for them, working tirelessly, collecting and sharing these items  
and making sure that all children are provided with what they need.

We think about the homeless in our city  
and pray that you protect them and help them each day.  
We give thanks for the various groups that provide meals and clothes for them.

We give thanks for the Lodging House Mission and the work they do day in, day out.  
Thanks for all the staff and volunteers.

Lord, we pray for those all around the world who are in poverty –  
may You guide those that support them.  
We give thanks for those we support in Christian Aid, Tear Fund and many more.

Lord thank You for all You do. In Your name we pray. Amen

*The Youth Zone*

### **Adoration**

Loving Father God,  
We come to You now, with hearts full of love and thanksgiving.

You are the most caring, forgiving Father; “Abba”, as Your son Jesus called You.



How privileged are we, that we can talk freely and personally to You – the genius Creator of the whole world?

We can be selfish, lazy and foolish sometimes, but when we ask for Your forgiveness, You are quick to forgive us.

You protect us, and guard us, and lovingly answer our prayers when we ask for guidance and protection.

When we come to a crossroads, or have important decisions to make, You take time to listen to us, and help us to choose the right path.

You listen to our voices when we pray for others, and Your healing powers are wonderful to behold.

You know us so well, and You love to hear our voices as we open our hearts to You, Father God.

You have often come to our rescue when we have strayed from Your perfect ways, and we humbly and gratefully now give You thanks and adoration for Your goodness.

You have often given us strength when we were weak or weary and we pray that we can be brave enough to share the truth of Your power, and Your unfailing love with others.

With Your help we can live lives worthy of You, we can say what You would say to help others, or act generously and sincerely when we hear of people in need.

We are humbled, Lord God, that You willingly take time to listen to us, sinful and misguided as we sometimes are.

How gracious of You, Our Father and Creator, to pay attention to us, to care what happens to us, to love us, undeserving as we are.

We bless You for sending Your Son, Our Lord Jesus Christ, to be such a perfect example for us to follow.

You sent Him to live for us, to teach us,

and to show us a perfect example of how to live our lives.  
Then, Father God,  
You asked Him to give up His life for us by dying a cruel and humiliating death on the Cross.

But, Lord God, You raised Him on the third day – our Saviour the Lord Jesus Christ.  
Your perfect plan was then to send us Your Holy Spirit, to live in us, and through us.

Thank You Father.  
We love You, and trust You for every aspect of our lives, Lord God.  
Through our Lord Jesus, Amen

*Margaret MacLennan*

### **Closing Prayer/Blessing**

You, our God, walk with us, eat with us, sleep with us.  
In every beat of our heart You are there.  
So as we leave where we sit and stand in this place,  
we take You with us, in all we do, Amen.

*Rhona Graham*

### **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 259 – “Beauty for Brokenness/ God of the Poor” <https://songselect.ccli.com/Songs/1236690>
- CH4 544 – “When I needed a neighbour” <https://songselect.ccli.com/Songs/227923>
- CH4 553 – “Just as I am” <https://songselect.ccli.com/Songs/2296522>
- MP 1016 – “The heart of worship” <https://songselect.ccli.com/Songs/2296522>

- “His mercy is more” <https://songselect.ccli.com/Songs/7065053>
- “Build Your Kingdom Here” <https://songselect.ccli.com/Songs/6186078>

## 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](#)

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