

Christ Church, Ipswich

Sunday 25th January 2026

Family Worship

Hello, I hope you are well. Today, on this the third Sunday after Epiphany our readings will be Isaiah 9:1-4 and Matthew 4:12-23. Let us worship God together:

Call to worship

To all God's people present here:
everyone is welcome!
Unprepared or ready; uncertain or sure,
Remember God loves you:
listen to God's voice, because
Now is the time to follow God's call.

A gathering prayer

Lord, you invite us to turn,
to make a new start and to follow you.
You call us beyond ourselves.
You call us to welcome friend and stranger
until the whole world has turned
and worships you. **Amen.**

A prayer of approach

God of all that is good, we have all taken different routes to get here, we all have different stories to tell. We all carry different burdens, different people in our hearts. We all have different needs and face different challenges, but together we come to you to be inspired by your word, to sing our songs of praise, to move beyond our limitations, to grow in the likeness of your Son, Jesus Christ, in whose name we pray. **Amen.**

R&S 380 Christ, whose glory fills the skies

1 Christ, whose glory fills the skies,
Christ, the true, the only Light,
Sun of Righteousness, arise,
triumph o'er the shades of night;
Dayspring from on high, be near;
Daystar, in my heart appear.

2 Dark and cheerless is the morn
unaccompanied by thee;
joyless is the day's return,
till thy mercy's beams I see,
till they inward light impart,
glad my eyes, and warm my heart.

3 Visit then this soul of mine,
pierce the gloom of sin and grief;
fill me, radiance divine,
scatter all my unbelief;
more and more thyself display,
shining to the perfect day.
immortal invisible God

Charles Wesley (1707-88)
& Godfrey Thring (1823-1903)

A prayer of adoration

Forgiving God, Father of all,
almighty and powerful one,
whose kingdom has come near:
we come to sit at your feet today.

Jesus, light of the world,
you stepped down into darkness
and came and lived among us:
we come to sit at your feet today.

Holy Spirit,
you breathe life into our calling,
your wisdom and guidance helps us to follow you:
we come to sit at your feet today. Amen.

A prayer of confession

Forgiving God,
 we are sorry when we say one thing and do another;
 we are sorry when we say yes and then say no;
 we are sorry when you call us and we choose not to follow.
 Lord, you have called us to follow you:
 we are sorry when we choose to ignore you;
 we are sorry when we choose to do what we want;
 we are sorry and respond to your call.
 As you called the fishermen to leave their nets and follow you,
 help us to follow you too,
 to go in a new direction with you.
 Transform us and make us whole,
 and help us to enjoy the journey with you. **Amen.**

Assurance of forgiveness

Loving and merciful God, who has called us to repentance:
 we are truly forgiven by you. We experience renewal in presence and can respond to your call to follow
 you, knowing we are healed and restored. **Amen.**

A prayer of thanksgiving

Father God, thank you that you sent Jesus
 who came to give us freedom through the cross.
 You have called us to put down our 'nets' and follow you.
 You have offered us new life in you –
 a new path to follow, as a new light has dawned.
 Thank you that you walk beside us on the journey,
 the journey from darkness into your marvellous light.
 Thank you that you offer us life full of adventure,
 life in all its fullness. **Amen.**

The Lord's Prayer

Family Talk

R&S 558 Will you come and follow me

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?

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?

3 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?

4 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.

Graham Maule & John L. Bell.
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Old Testament Reading**Isaiah 9:1-4****(OT page 581)***The Righteous Reign of the Coming King*

9 But there will be no gloom for those who were in anguish. In the former time he brought into contempt the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, but in the latter time he will make glorious the way of the sea, the land beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the nations.

² The people who walked in darkness
have seen a great light;
those who lived in a land of deep darkness—

on them light has shined.

³ You have multiplied the nation,
you have increased its joy;
they rejoice before you
as with joy at the harvest,
as people exult when dividing plunder.

⁴ For the yoke of their burden,
and the bar across their shoulders,
the rod of their oppressor,
you have broken as on the day of Midian.

Gospel Reading**Matthew 4:12-23****(NT page 3)***Jesus Begins His Ministry in Galilee*

¹² Now when Jesus heard that John had been arrested, he withdrew to Galilee. ¹³ He left Nazareth and made his home in Capernaum by the lake, in the territory of Zebulun and Naphtali, ¹⁴ so that what had been spoken through the prophet Isaiah might be fulfilled:

¹⁵ 'Land of Zebulun, land of Naphtali,
on the road by the sea, across the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles—

¹⁶ the people who sat in darkness
have seen a great light,
and for those who sat in the region and shadow of death
light has dawned.'

¹⁷ From that time Jesus began to proclaim, 'Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near.'

Jesus Calls the First Disciples

¹⁸ As he walked by the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the lake—for they were fishermen. ¹⁹ And he said to them, 'Follow me, and I will make you fish for people.' ²⁰ Immediately they left their nets and followed him. ²¹ As he went from there, he saw two other brothers, James son of Zebedee and his brother John, in the boat with their father Zebedee, mending their nets, and he called them. ²² Immediately they left the boat and their father, and followed him.

Jesus Ministers to Crowds of People

²³ Jesus went throughout Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the good news of the kingdom and curing every disease and every sickness among the people.

R&S 492 Dear Lord and Father of mankind

1 Dear Lord and Father of mankind,
forgive our foolish ways!
Reclothe us in our rightful mind;
in purer lives thy service find,
in deeper reverence, praise.

2 In simple trust like theirs who heard
beside the Syrian sea
the gracious calling of the Lord,
let us, like them, without a word,
rise up and follow thee.
3 O Sabbath rest by Galilee!
O calm of hills above,
where Jesus knelt to share with thee
the silence of eternity
interpreted by love!

4 With that deep hush subduing all
our words and works that drown
the tender whisper of thy call,
as noiseless let thy blessing fall
as fell thy manna down.

5 Drop thy still dews of quietness,
till all our strivings cease;
take from our souls the strain and stress,
and let our ordered lives confess
the beauty of thy peace.

6 Breathe through the heats of our desire
thy coolness and thy balm;
let sense be dumb, let flesh retire;
speak through the earthquake, wind, and fire,
O still, small voice of calm!

J.G. Whittier (1807-92)

Reflection

A moment for reflection as Stephen plays the organ

R&S 353 There's a wideness in God's mercy

1 There's a wideness in God's mercy
like the wideness of the sea;
there's a kindness in his justice
which is more than liberty.

2 There is plentiful redemption
in the blood that has been shed;
there is joy for all the members
in the sorrows of the Head.

3 There is grace enough for thousands
of new worlds as great as this;
there is room for fresh creations
in the Lord's unfathomed bliss.

4 For the love of God is broader
than the measures of our mind;
and the heart of the Eternal
is most wonderfully kind.

5 But we make his love too narrow
by false limits of our own;
and we magnify his strictness
with a zeal he will not own.

6 If our love were but more simple
we should take him at his word;
and our lives would be illumined
by the glory of the Lord.

F. W. Faber (1814-63) altd.*

Our prayers of intercession

The people walking in darkness have seen a great light. We pray for the places of your world that are experiencing great darkness now: where there is war, unrest, confusion, repression. Shine your light particularly upon Ukraine, the Middle East, Venezuela, Greenland.... we pray. Illumine the way forward for a safer, fairer, peaceful world.

L: Lord, in the same way that you chose to be with us,

All: May we choose to take your message of love to our neighbours.

Lord, we lift those areas of our local community that are struggling in darkness now... We pray for situations where there is unemployment, trauma, abusive relationships, hopelessness, hunger. Show us how we can bring your light into one of these places this week: as individuals, families or as a church congregation. Go before us to illumine our way so that we follow your lead rather than our own initiative. Give us eyes to see where you are working and the courage to follow.

L: Lord, in the same way that you chose to be with us,

All: May we choose to take your message of love to our neighbours.

Lord, we thank you for calling each of us to be your disciples. Lord whatever we are feeling, help us to remember that each of us is known by you, precious and deeply loved. And each of us has a calling to follow your lead. Open our eyes to see how we can serve you in the places you have put us: our schools, our workplaces, our homes and families. Thank you that you know our strengths and our weaknesses and still have a role for each of us to bring your kingdom closer. In the stillness now, show us one person or place that you particularly want us to share your love with this week.

L: Lord, in the same way that you chose to be with us,

All: May we choose to take your message of love to our neighbours.

Lord, may your light dawn on those we know who are struggling, whether with physical pain, anxiety, fear, depression or sadness. We particularly remember... Lord, increase their joy in miraculous ways this week. Touch them with your compassion and your tenderness. May they find you in new ways. Give us the grace to serve them, knowing that, in doing so, we are serving you.

L: Lord, in the same way that you chose to be with us,

All: May we choose to take your message of love to our neighbours.

Lord, we pray for those we know who have yet to respond to your call. Surprise them with your closeness this week. Help us not to miss the opportunities to lead them towards you: Give us a word, a moment, a chat over coffee... help us to be willing to step out of our routines and comfort zones to tell others about you. Make us interruptible, we pray.

And, in the quiet now, we thank you for those who led us to you. Thank you, Lord, for their witness.

L: Lord, in the same way that you chose to be with us,

All: May we choose to take your message of love to our neighbours.

Lord, as we go out from here may we be cleansed, refreshed and challenged by all that we have heard and done today. Send us out to be your light bearers. Enrich us with your word and go before us in your glory as it illumines our path. May we return next week filled with deeper insights of you that we can share with others. **Amen**

R&S 509 O Jesus, I have promised

1 O Jesus, I have promised
to serve thee to the end;
be thou for ever near me,
my Master and my Friend;
I shall not fear the battle
if thou art by my side,
nor wander from the pathway
if thou wilt be my guide.

2 O let me feel thee near me;
the world is ever near,
I see the sights that dazzle,
the tempting sounds I hear;
my foes are ever near me,
around me and within;
but, Jesus, draw thou nearer,
and shield my soul from sin.

3 O let me hear thee speaking
in accents clear and still,
above the storms of passion,
the murmurs of self-will.
O speak to reassure me,
to hasten or control;
O speak, and make me listen,
thou guardian of my soul.

4 O Jesus, thou hast promised,
to all who follow thee,
that where thou art in glory
there shall thy servant be;
O guide me, call me, draw me,
uphold me to the end;
O give me grace to follow,
my Saviour and my Friend.

John Ernest Bode (1816-74)*

A sending out prayer

Lord, send us out
as renewed people.
Help us to turn away from what is wrong
and turn to what is right.
Help us to turn towards our neighbours
and to all who are lost.
Help us to turn away from distractions
and towards more adventuring with you.
Help us now and always. **Amen.**

The Blessing

And may the blessing of God Almighty,
Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,
be upon us and those we love,
this day and always. **Amen.**

The Grace

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

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