

Christ Church, Ipswich
Sunday 8th February 2026
Family Worship for the Fifth Sunday after Epiphany
Led by Neil
Guest Organist: Mr Hugh Singleton

Hello, I hope you are well. Today, our readings will be Isaiah 58:1-12 and Matthew 5:13-20.
 Let us worship God together:

Call to worship

When our words are not enough, how should we act?
 When our actions seem too little, how should we pray?
 God calls us to speak and act and pray, that others will see
 and praise God through the love that shines from us.

A gathering prayer

Lord, open our eyes to those who need help.
 Keep us from giving up
 when it seems too difficult to help everyone.
 Help us to remember that you renew and restore,
 and let us be as salt and light in all the places around us. **Amen.**

A prayer of approach

Light of the world,
 may your light shine in us,
 may your light shine out of us,
 and may our light shine on all in our communities,
 as we come to worship you today. **Amen.**

R&S 265 I cannot tell why he, whom angels worship

1 I cannot tell why he, whom angels worship,
 should set his love upon the human race,
 or why, as Shepherd, he should seek the wanderers,
 to bring them back, within the fold of grace.
 But this I know, that he was born of Mary,
 when Bethlehem's manger was his only home,
 and that he lived at Nazareth and laboured,
 and so the Saviour, Saviour of the world, is come.

2 I cannot tell how silently he suffered,
 as with his peace he graced this place of tears,
 or how his heart upon the cross was broken,
 the crown of pain to three-and-thirty years.
 But this I know, he heals the broken-hearted,
 and stays our sin, and calms our lurking fear,
 and lifts the burden from the heavy-laden,
 for yet the Saviour, Saviour of the world, is here.

3 I cannot tell how he will win the nations,
 how he will claim his earthly heritage,
 how satisfy the needs and aspirations
 of east and west, of sinner and of sage.
 But this I know, all flesh shall see his glory,
 and he shall reap the harvest he has sown,
 and some glad day his sun shall shine in splendour,
 when he the Saviour, Saviour of the world, is known.

4 I cannot tell how all the lands shall worship,
 when, at his bidding, every storm is stilled,
 or who can say how great the jubilation
 when all the hearts of earth with love are filled.
 But this I know, the skies will thrill with rapture,
 and myriad, myriad human voices sing,
 and earth to heaven, and heaven to earth, will answer:
 'At last the Saviour, Saviour of the world, is King!'

William Y. Fullerton. (1857-1932)

A prayer of adoration

Living God,
we celebrate your desire for justice and mercy.
When others stay silent we will speak up,
for you are the living Word.
When others stand down if things get tough
we will stand up in the power of your Spirit,
for you are our inspiration;
Father, Son and Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

A prayer of confession

Forgive us, merciful God,
when we disappoint you with our complacency,
our half-heartedness, our hypocrisy.
Forgive us when we are all words and no action,
or all action and no integrity.
Forgive us when we let you down,
when we let down those around us,
when we let ourselves down.
In Jesus' name. **Amen.**

Assurance of forgiveness

Forgiving God, thank you that even when we let you down, when we have not acted as you would,
when we have allowed our light to fade and our saltiness to lose its flavour,
still we are forgiven and healed and restored in you – ready to go out and shine for you. **Amen.**

A prayer of thanksgiving

Father God,
thank you that you have prepared for us
far more than we can ever hope, believe or imagine;
no eye, no ear, no heart can conceive
what you have prepared for those who love you.
That is so amazing!
Thank you that you restore us and transform us
to become the people you have called us to be.
Thank you that you are the light of the world.
Thank you that you are the salt of the earth.
Thank you that in you we can be salt and light too,
that we can go out and revitalise our communities,
bringing hope and renewal to our families, our friends,
our neighbours and our churches. **Amen.**

The Lord's Prayer

Family Talk

R&S 572 Colours of day dawn into the mind

1 Colours of day dawn into the mind,
the day has begun, the night is behind.
Go down in the city, into the street,
and let's give the message to the people we meet:

*So light up the fire and let the flame burn,
open the door, let Jesus return.
Take seeds of his Spirit, let the fruit grow,
tell the people of Jesus, let his love show.*

2 Go through the park, on into the town;
the sun still shines on, it never goes down.
The light of the world is risen again;
The people of darkness are needing our friend.

3 Open your eyes, look into the sky,
the darkness has come, the Son came to die.
The evening draws on, the sun disappears,
but Jesus is living, his Spirit is here.

Sue McClellan, John Pac, Keith Rycroft. 1974
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The children go to Junior Church with our love and blessing

Old Testament Reading**Isaiah 58:1-12**

58 Shout out, do not hold back!

Lift up your voice like a trumpet!

Announce to my people their rebellion,
to the house of Jacob their sins.

² Yet day after day they seek me
and delight to know my ways,
as if they were a nation that practised righteousness
and did not forsake the ordinance of their God;
they ask of me righteous judgements,
they delight to draw near to God.

³ 'Why do we fast, but you do not see?
Why humble ourselves, but you do not notice?'
Look, you serve your own interest on your fast-day,
and oppress all your workers.

⁴ Look, you fast only to quarrel and to fight
and to strike with a wicked fist.
Such fasting as you do today
will not make your voice heard on high.

⁵ Is such the fast that I choose,
a day to humble oneself?
Is it to bow down the head like a bulrush,
and to lie in sackcloth and ashes?

Will you call this a fast,
a day acceptable to the Lord?

⁶ Is not this the fast that I choose:
to loose the bonds of injustice,
to undo the thongs of the yoke,
to let the oppressed go free,
and to break every yoke?

⁷ Is it not to share your bread with the hungry,
and bring the homeless poor into your house;
when you see the naked, to cover them,
and not to hide yourself from your own kin?

⁸ Then your light shall break forth like the dawn,
and your healing shall spring up quickly;
your vindicator shall go before you,
the glory of the Lord shall be your rearguard.

⁹ Then you shall call, and the Lord will answer;
you shall cry for help, and he will say, Here I am.
If you remove the yoke from among you,
the pointing of the finger, the speaking of evil,

¹⁰ if you offer your food to the hungry
and satisfy the needs of the afflicted,
then your light shall rise in the darkness
and your gloom be like the noonday.

¹¹ The Lord will guide you continually,
and satisfy your needs in parched places,
and make your bones strong;
and you shall be like a watered garden,
like a spring of water,
whose waters never fail.

¹² Your ancient ruins shall be rebuilt;
you shall raise up the foundations of many
generations;
you shall be called the repairer of the breach,
the restorer of streets to live in.

Gospel Reading**Matthew 5:13-20***Salt and Light*

¹³ 'You are the salt of the earth; but if salt has lost its taste, how can its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything, but is thrown out and trampled under foot.

¹⁴ 'You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill cannot be hidden. ¹⁵ No one after lighting a lamp puts it under the bushel basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all in the house. ¹⁶ In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven.

The Law and the Prophets

¹⁷ 'Do not think that I have come to abolish the law or the prophets; I have come not to abolish but to fulfil. ¹⁸ For truly I tell you, until heaven and earth pass away, not one letter, not one stroke of a letter, will pass from the law until all is accomplished. ¹⁹ Therefore, whoever breaks one of the least of these commandments, and teaches others to do the same, will be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever does them and teaches them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. ²⁰ For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.

R&S 636 The Church of Christ, in every age

1 The Church of Christ, in every age
beset by change but Spirit-led,
must claim and test its heritage
and keep on rising from the dead.

2 Across the world, across the street,
the victims of injustice cry
for shelter and for bread to eat,
and never live until they die.

3 Then let the Servant Church arise,
a caring Church, that longs to be
a partner in Christ's sacrifice,
and clothed in Christ's humanity.

4 For he alone, whose blood was shed,
can cure the fever in our blood,
and teach us how to share our bread
and feed the starving multitude.

5 We have no mission but to serve,
in full obedience to our Lord;
to care for all, without reserve,
and spread his liberating Word.

F. Pratt Green (1903-2000)
© Oxford University Press
from *Planting Seeds and Growing Trees*

Reflection

A moment for reflection

R&S 601 Christ is the world's true light

1 Christ is the world's true light,
its captain of salvation,
the daystar clear and bright
and joy of every nation;
new life, new hope awakes,
where'er we own his sway:
freedom her bondage breaks,
and night is turned to day.

2 In Christ all races meet,
their ancient feuds forgetting,
the whole round world complete,
from sunrise to its setting:
when Christ is throned as Lord,
all shall forsake their fear,
to ploughshare beat the sword,
to pruning-hook the spear.

3 One Lord, in one great name
unite us all who own thee;
cast out our pride and shame
that hinder to enthrone thee;
the world has waited long,
has travailed long in pain;
to heal its ancient wrong,
come, Prince of Peace, and reign.

G. W. Briggs (1875-1959) altd.*
© Oxford University Press
from *Enlarged Songs of Praise*

Our prayers of intercession

Lord, we come before you in prayer, sharing our concerns for our world, our church, our neighbours and friends and ourselves. We don't ask lightly; we accept you may call us as part of the answer, and we trust that you will give us strength and courage to stand up for justice and to make a difference.

Creator God, you formed this earth, with all its beauty and abundance, ensuring provision for all and charging humankind to be stewards of creation. We pray for all who go hungry or thirsty or who are impoverished through the greed of others; for those close to home needing food banks and those further away needing emergency aid. The rising cost of living, natural disaster, climate change, war, governmental policy – all may contribute to increasing poverty. We remember those who are homeless or living in unsatisfactory accommodation. We pray that those who have enough may receive your spirit of generosity. Equip us to speak out and act for a more equitable distribution of resources.
Lord, where there is injustice, **grant us courage to make a difference.**

Loving God, you created humankind in all its diversity, calling all to live in relationship with you and with one another. Nationality, ethnicity, appearance, sexuality, gender, age, economic status, mental health: there are so many ways we judge and label people as different. Lord, we pray for those who experience prejudice or persecution, hostility or isolation. We pray for places where there is division, especially where those with power or influence use the media and social media to promote distrust or hatred between neighbours. At this time we pray especially for Iran, Sudan, Gaza, America and we pray for our own country.
Lord, where there is injustice, **grant us courage to make a difference.**

Parent God, you welcome all to be part of your family, the church. Through their faith, equip people to work together to fulfil your calling to justice, mercy and love. We pray for the work of those Christians and others who take brave steps to protect the rights of others, whether at risk of ridicule or at risk to their own lives. We pray for the persecuted church in countries such as North Korea, Somalia and Iran, and for those imprisoned for their faith.
Lord, where there is injustice, **grant us courage to make a difference.**

Compassionate God, who cares for each one of us and whose plans are to prosper and not to harm us, we pray for all those in need of your loving care this day. We name before you in our hearts those known to us who are in any kind of trouble (*silence*). We pray for all those whose needs are known only to themselves and to you (*silence*). And, trusting in your mercy and love, we bring before you our own needs and concerns (*silence*). We ask our prayers in the name of Jesus.

Amen.

R&S 740 Tell out, my soul

1 Tell out, my soul, the greatness of the Lord!
Unnumbered blessings give my spirit voice;
tender to me the promise of his word;
in God my Saviour shall my heart rejoice.

2 Tell out, my soul, the greatness of his name!
Make known His might, the deeds his arm has done;
his mercy sure, from age to age the same;
his holy name—the Lord, the mighty One.

3 Tell out, my soul, the greatness of his might!
Powers and dominions lay their glory by;
proud hearts and stubborn wills are put to flight,
the hungry fed, the humble lifted high.

4 Tell out, my soul, the glories of his word!
Firm is his promise, and his mercy sure.
Tell out, my soul, the greatness of the Lord
to children's children and forever more!

Timothy Dudley-Smith. (1926-) based on Luke 1:46-55
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A sending out prayer

Light of the world, shine through us.
Like salt of the earth,
scatter us where there is need.
Help us work together
to repair and renew,
to rebuild and rejoice
throughout this place.
In Jesus's name. **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.**