

Christ Church, Ipswich

Sunday 12th July 2026

Family Worship

Led by Neil

Guest Organist: Mr Nicholas Jardine

Hello, I hope you are well. Let us worship God together:

Psalm 65

65 O God, it is right for us to praise you in Zion
and keep our promises to you,

² because you answer prayers.

People everywhere will come to you

³ **on account of their sins.**

Our faults defeat us,

but you forgive them.

⁴ Happy are those whom you choose,
whom you bring to live in your sanctuary.

**We shall be satisfied with the good things of your house,
the blessings of your sacred Temple.**

⁶ You set the mountains in place by your strength,
showing your mighty power.

⁷ **You calm the roar of the seas**

and the noise of the waves;

you calm the uproar of the peoples.

⁸ The whole world stands in awe
of the great things that you have done.

Your deeds bring shouts of joy

from one end of the earth to the other.

⁹ You show your care for the land by sending rain;
you make it rich and fertile.

You fill the streams with water;

you provide the earth with crops.

This is how you do it:

¹⁰ **you send abundant rain on the ploughed fields**

and soak them with water;

you soften the soil with showers
and cause the young plants to grow.

¹¹ **What a rich harvest your goodness provides!**

Wherever you go there is plenty.

¹² The pastures are filled with flocks;
the hillsides are full of joy.

¹³ **The fields are covered with sheep;**

the valleys are full of wheat.

Everything shouts and sings for joy.

A prayer of approach

As we come before you, Lord God, we prepare ourselves to receive your Word. May we be fertile soil for you, the mighty sower, ever casting your seed where it might take root. We seek to rid our souls of stones and thorns and all that hinders or chokes growth; may we dig deep, and be open and nurturing to receive your message to us today. **Amen.**

R&S 40 Come, ye thankful people, come

1 Come, ye thankful people, come,
raise the song of harvest-home!
All is safely gathered in,
ere the winter storms begin:
God, our Maker, doth provide
for our wants to be supplied;
come to God's own temple, come,
raise the song of harvest-home!

2 All the world is God's own field,
fruit unto his praise to yield,
wheat and tares together sown,
unto joy or sorrow grown:

first the blade, and then the ear,
then the full corn shall appear;
grant, O harvest Lord, that we
wholesome grain and pure may be.

3 Even so, Lord, quickly come
to thy final harvest-home;
from thy field upon that day
all offences purge away:
gather thou thy people in,
free from sorrow, free from sin,
there for ever purified,
in thy glory to abide.

Henry Alford (1810-71) altd.*

A prayer of adoration

God, you are the mighty sower, the good gardener, life-giving, constant in creation. Christ, you are the face of the Father, casting wisdom across the ages, your arm outstretched to sow. Holy Spirit, you are the wind that carries the seed and causes the fruit to flourish. Trinity of creation and salvation, we worship and adore you. **Amen.**

A prayer of confession

Lord, we confess we are slow to tend the soil of our souls.

Help us to prepare ourselves as we would prepare our gardens for planting.

Let us contemplate the rocks that hinder growth.

We gather them and cast them out, digging deep for fertile soil.

Let us consider the thorns that choke new growth.

We root out all the things that smother God's Word in us.

Like soil turned over and ready to receive,

we have confessed our shortcomings and await the sowing of your seed.

We turn to you in penitence and expectation. Amen.

An assurance of forgiveness

We thank you, God, that we can turn ourselves around at any time; like bad soil made good by turning it over and tending, we can be ready to receive you. You forgive us and return to us in your constant striding of creation, ever casting widely, sowing your seed. We wait to see what will happen when we have tasted your forgiveness and the grace of your wild wisdom, a super bloom of surprise. **Amen.**

A prayer of praise and thanksgiving

God, we give thanks that you are ever on the move even when we feel stagnant. Your word is not static, your wisdom not sealed and silent; like one who walks constantly, casting seed broadly, your whispers fall around us as seeds on soil. We praise you for Jesus' teaching, which helps us to prepare ourselves to be good soil, fertile for growing the fruits of goodness and grace. **Amen.**

The Lord's Prayer

Family Talk

R&S 42 For the fruits of all creation

1 For the fruits of all creation,
 thanks be to God;
 for his gifts to every nation,
 thanks be to God;
 for the ploughing, sowing, reaping,
 silent growth while we are sleeping,
 future needs in earth's safe-keeping,
 thanks be to God.

2 In the just reward of labour,
 God's will is done;
 in the help we give our neighbour,
 God's will is done;
 in our world-wide task of caring
 for the hungry and despairing,
 in the harvests we are sharing,
 God's will is done.

3 For the harvests of the Spirit,
 thanks be to God;
 for the good we all inherit,
 thanks be to God;
 for the wonders that astound us,
 for the truths that still confound us,
 most of all, that love has found us,
 thanks be to God.

F. Pratt Green (1903-2000)*
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Old Testament Reading**Isaiah 55:10-13****OT page 624**

¹⁰ For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven,
 and do not return there until they have watered the earth,
 making it bring forth and sprout,
 giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater,
¹¹ so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth;
 it shall not return to me empty,
 but it shall accomplish that which I purpose,
 and succeed in the thing for which I sent it.
¹² For you shall go out in joy,
 and be led back in peace;
 the mountains and the hills before you
 shall burst into song,
 and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands.
¹³ Instead of the thorn shall come up the cypress;
 instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle;
 and it shall be to the Lord for a memorial,
 for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off.

R&S 72 Now thank we all our God

1 Now thank we all our God,
 with hearts and hands and voices;
 who wondrous things has done,
 in whom his world rejoices;
 who from our mother's arms
 has blessed us on our way
 with countless gifts of love,
 and still is ours today.

2 O may this bounteous God
 through all our life be near us,
 with ever joyful hearts
 and blessed peace to cheer us;
 and keep us in his grace,

and guide us when perplexed,
 and free us from all ills
 in this world and the next.

3 All praise and thanks to God
 the Father now be given,
 the Son, and him who reigns
 with them in highest heaven,
 the one eternal God,
 whom earth and heaven adore;
 for thus it was, is now,
 and shall be ever more.

Martin Rinkart. (1586-1649)
 tr. Catherine Winkworth. (1827-78)

The Parable of the Sower

13 That same day Jesus went out of the house and sat beside the lake. ²Such great crowds gathered around him that he got into a boat and sat there, while the whole crowd stood on the beach. ³And he told them many things in parables, saying: 'Listen! A sower went out to sow. ⁴And as he sowed, some seeds fell on the path, and the birds came and ate them up. ⁵Other seeds fell on rocky ground, where they did not have much soil, and they sprang up quickly, since they had no depth of soil. ⁶But when the sun rose, they were scorched; and since they had no root, they withered away. ⁷Other seeds fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked them. ⁸Other seeds fell on good soil and brought forth grain, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. ⁹Let anyone with ears listen!'

The Parable of the Sower Explained

¹⁸'Hear then the parable of the sower. ¹⁹When anyone hears the word of the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what is sown in the heart; this is what was sown on the path. ²⁰As for what was sown on rocky ground, this is the one who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy; ²¹yet such a person has no root, but endures only for a while, and when trouble or persecution arises on account of the word, that person immediately falls away. ²²As for what was sown among thorns, this is the one who hears the word, but the cares of the world and the lure of wealth choke the word, and it yields nothing. ²³But as for what was sown on good soil, this is the one who hears the word and understands it, who indeed bears fruit and yields, in one case a hundredfold, in another sixty, and in another thirty.'

Reflection*A moment for reflection***R&S 200 The kingdom of God**

1 The kingdom of God
is justice and joy,
for Jesus restores
what sin would destroy;
God's power and glory
in Jesus we know,
and here and hereafter
the kingdom shall grow.

2 The kingdom of God
is mercy and grace,
the prisoners are freed,
the sinners find place,
the outcast are welcomed
God's banquet to share,
and hope is awakened
in place of despair.

The kingdom of God
is challenge and choice,
believe the good news,
repent and rejoice!
His love for us sinners
brought Christ to his cross,
our crisis of judgement
for gain or for loss.

4 God's kingdom is come,
the gift and the goal,
in Jesus begun,
in heaven made whole;
the heirs of the kingdom
shall answer his call,
and all things cry 'Glory!'
to God all in all.

Bryn A. Rees (1911-83)*
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Our prayers of intercession

Life is made up of choices large and small, many of which carry consequences.
Esau chose to give away his birthright for a dish of stew. Did he choose well? Do we choose well?
Lord, we pray today for all who have important choices to make. May they be aware of all consequences.

We pray for parents and their children and for the maternity services in this country
and all who work in this field including doctors, nurses and midwives.

We pray for those having to make difficult decisions. We pray for the mothers whose choice was taken from them as they were forced to give up their children for adoption and have lived for decades with the consequences of other people's actions.

Lord, heal broken hearts and lives. Guide all in their choices.

We pray for all those holding political power in this country.

We pray for the public shortly having to make choices voting in a surprise by-election.

We pray for the person expected to soon move into the position of Prime Minister. Days will be filled with a great many choices to be made. Choices that will affect us all. Choices that will affect the health of this country.

We pray for our country's defences, that they be fortified. We pray too that all in our armed forces will be more than adequately equipped to carry out their duties.

Lord, may your hand guide all in their choices, particularly those in power as they make choices that impact us day by day and that of the safety of our country.

We pray for those choosing to help others, often at risk to their own lives. We think of the International Search and Rescue teams helping in Venezuela. We pray for those miraculously rescued from the earthquakes' destruction, for those still missing and for the huge number grieving loved ones.

Lord, may your love sustain, strengthen and provide for all those impacted by catastrophic events.

We pray for your church, Lord and all who commit to ministry. May we, your people, reach out to all in need, showing your love in action. We pray for all in need, overseas and at home, and particularly those within our own communities.

Lord, guide us, your church, as we shine your light amid the dark uncertainty facing many today. Help us to inform people's choices with the knowledge of your love.

As this country endures a third heatwave we pray for the young, old and all who are vulnerable and susceptible to heat. We pray for those who have previously lost loved ones through cold water shock and ask that you guide those who may be tempted by open water during the hot weather.

Lord, we lift our prayers, looking to you to direct our ways, enabling us with your wisdom to make good choices that will impact well on our lives and the lives of those around us. Amen.

R&S 573 God is working his purpose out

1 God is working his purpose out,
as year succeeds to year;
God is working his purpose out,
and the time is drawing near;
nearer and nearer draws the time,
the time that shall surely be,
when the earth shall be filled
with the glory of God
as the waters cover the sea.

2 From utmost east to utmost west,
where human feet have trod,
by the voice of many messengers
goes forth the voice of God:
'Give ear to me, you continents,
you islands give ear to me,
that the earth may be filled
with the glory of God
as the waters cover the sea'.

3 What can we do to work God's work,
to prosper and increase
love and justice throughout the world,
the reign of the Prince of Peace?
What can we do to hasten the time,
the time that shall surely be,

when the earth shall be filled
with the glory of God
as the waters cover the sea?

4 Let us go out in the strength of God,
with the banner of Christ unfurled,
that the light of the glorious gospel of truth
may shine throughout the world:
sin and sorrow let us fight
to set their captives free,
that the earth may be filled
with the glory of God
as the waters cover the sea.

5 All that we do can have no worth
unless God blesses the deed;
vainly we hope for the harvest-tide
till God awakens the seed;
yet nearer and nearer draws the time,
the time that shall surely be,
when the earth shall be filled
with the glory of God
as the waters cover the sea.

Arthur C. Ainger. (1841-1919)

A sending out prayer

Ever-giving God,
we thank you that you have never stopped
sowing your word among us.
Give us receptive hearts
and make us fruitful for you in the week to come. **Amen.**

The Blessing

And may the blessing of God, Creator, Redeemer and Sustainer,
be with us, and those whom we love, now 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.**