

This short act of worship has been produced for you by Isata Jalloh.

If you are well enough and able, why not spend a few moments with God, perhaps at a time when you would normally be sharing with others in church and pray for them as they pray for you.

Hello, and welcome to today's service.

We thank God that although most of us are still unable to meet physically in our church buildings, He has made it possible for us to fellowship together online. Throughout this short service if you wish to follow along and sing with the hymns at the appointed time the links are available on the website.

At this moment, I ask if we can please come into a time of worship and centre our focus on the Lord. Whether we are in our homes or some place else, let us invite the Holy Spirit to come. To come into our dwelling place to speak to us, to come into our hearts and touch us, to come into His temple and reside in us. **Amen.**

**Hymn: O Lord, My God, When I In Awesome Wonder
(Singing the Faith 82)**

Sing/ Read /pray /proclaim the words or listen to it

https://youtu.be/bLz3Xv2Hr_4

O Lord, my God, when I in awesome wonder
consider all the works thy hand hath made,
I see the stars, I hear the mighty thunder,
thy power throughout the universe displayed:

*Then sings my soul, my Saviour God, to thee:
how great thou art, how great thou are!
Then sings my soul, my Saviour God, to thee:
how great thou art, how great thou art!*

When through the woods and forest glades I wander
and hear the birds sing sweetly in the trees;
when I look down from lofty mountain grandeur,
and hear the brook, and feel the gentle breeze:

*Then sings my soul, my Saviour God, to thee:
how great thou art, how great thou are!
Then sings my soul, my Saviour God, to thee:
how great thou art, how great thou art!*

And when I think that God, his Son not sparing,
sent him to die, I scarce can take it in
that on the cross, my burden gladly bearing,
he bled and died to take away my sin:

*Then sings my soul, my Saviour God, to thee:
how great thou art, how great thou are!*

*Then sings my soul, my Saviour God, to thee:
how great thou art, how great thou art!*

When Christ shall come with shout of acclamation
and take me home – what joy shall fill my heart;
then shall I bow in humble adoration,
and there proclaim: my God, how great thou art:

*Then sings my soul, my Saviour God, to thee:
how great thou art, how great thou are!*

*Then sings my soul, my Saviour God, to thee:
how great thou art, how great thou art!*

Stuart K Hine (1899-1989)

vv1, 2 & 4 based on *O store Gud* 1885 by Carl Gustaf Boberg (1859-1940)

Prayer of Adoration - Psalm 145

I will exalt you, my God the King;
I will praise your name for ever and ever.

² Every day I will praise you
and extol your name for ever and ever.
³ Great is the LORD and most worthy of praise;
his greatness no one can fathom.
⁴ One generation commends your works to another;
they tell of your mighty acts.
⁵ They speak of the glorious splendour of your majesty—
and I will meditate on your wonderful works.
⁶ They tell of the power of your awesome works—
and I will proclaim your great deeds.
⁷ They celebrate your abundant goodness
and joyfully sing of your righteousness.
⁸ The LORD is gracious and compassionate,
slow to anger and rich in love.
⁹ The LORD is good to all;
he has compassion on all he has made.
¹⁰ All your works praise you, LORD;
your faithful people extol you.
¹¹ They tell of the glory of your kingdom
and speak of your might,
¹² so that all people may know of your mighty acts
and the glorious splendour of your kingdom.
¹³ Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom,
and your dominion endures through all generations.
The LORD is trustworthy in all he promises
and faithful in all he does.

¹⁴ The LORD upholds all who fall
and lifts up all who are bowed down.
¹⁵ The eyes of all look to you,
and you give them their food at the proper time.
¹⁶ You open your hand
and satisfy the desires of every living thing.
¹⁷ The LORD is righteous in all his ways
and faithful in all he does.
¹⁸ The LORD is near to all who call on him,
to all who call on him in truth.
¹⁹ He fulfils the desires of those who fear him;
he hears their cry and saves them.
²⁰ The LORD watches over all who love him,
but all the wicked he will destroy.
²¹ My mouth will speak in praise of the LORD.
Let every creature praise his holy name
for ever and ever. **Amen.**

Prayer of Confession

Gracious and merciful God, we humble ourselves in your Divine presence asking for your forgiveness. We are sorry for all the wrong things that we have said, thought about, acted upon whether knowingly or unknowingly.
O merciful Father **forgive us**

We ask for your forgiveness when we have carried anger in our hearts and refused to let go of what others have done to us.
O merciful Father, **forgive us**

Forgive us Lord for leaning on our own understanding, continuously putting others or things before you and not including you in our plans.
O merciful Father, **forgive us**

We are sorry for having a part time relationship with you and at times not worshipping you whole-heartedly and only calling on you when we are going through sad times.
O merciful Father, **forgive us**

Help us to have a more intimate relationship with you that through the sunshine and the storm we will lift up Your name in praise.

And as we are in your presence, we also petition these same prayers and stand in the gap for our loved ones and our governing bodies. When the ones that are put in authority make wrong decisions that affect our society especially the innocent and the poor, when they fail to seek your face, your counsel and your wisdom especially in this time of uncertainty and turmoil, when we fail to speak up or help those who are unable to help themselves.

O merciful Father, **forgive us**

When we have caused destruction on our planet by failing to look after the environment, our animals and causing global warming.

O merciful Father **forgive us**

God of endless love even when we are constantly falling short of grace and mercy, your arms remains wide open to receive us, letting us know that all is forgiven. That you would send your only son all those years ago to die for us, the whole of mankind, and that your son Jesus Christ willingly sacrificed His life so that we can be reconciled with you.

Through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, you remember our sins no more and until He returns you have given us a comforter, the Holy Spirit.

Father God, you give us hope and peace; Lord we love you so much and because we love you, you said you will rescue us and protect us.

When we call on you, you will answer us.

You will be with us in times of trouble.

You will deliver us and honour us.

With long life will you satisfy us and show us your salvation.

In Jesus name we pray, **Amen.**

The 1st Gospel Reading: Matthew 16:21-28 NIV

Jesus Predicts His Death

21 From that time on Jesus began to explain to his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things at the hands of the elders, the chief priests and the teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life.

22 Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. “Never, Lord!” he said. “This shall never happen to you!”

23 Jesus turned and said to Peter, “Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me; you do not have in mind the concerns of God, but merely human concerns.”

24 Then Jesus said to his disciples, “Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me.

25 For whoever wants to save their life[a] will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will find it.

26 What good will it be for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul? Or what can anyone give in exchange for their soul?

27 For the Son of Man is going to come in his Father’s glory with his angels, and then he will reward each person according to what they have done.

28 “Truly I tell you, some who are standing here will not taste death before they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom.”

This is the word of the Lord (**thanks be to God**)

Our 2nd Gospel Reading: Romans 12:9-21 NIV
Love in Action

9 Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good.
10 Be devoted to one another in love. Honour one another above yourselves. 11 Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervour, serving the Lord. 12 Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer. 13 Share with the Lord's people who are in need. Practice hospitality.

14 Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. 15 Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn. 16 Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited.

17 Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everyone. 18 If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone. 19 Do not take revenge, my dear friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: "It is mine to avenge; I will repay," says the Lord.

20 On the contrary:

"If your enemy is hungry, feed him;

if he is thirsty, give him something to drink.

In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head."

21 Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

This is the word of the Lord (**thanks be to God**)

Father God, let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in you sight, speak through me Lord and may the words that I speak bless the hearts of those that are listening. **Amen.**

Reflection

It must have been really difficult for Peter to hear Jesus utter those words, that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things at the hands of the elders, the chief priests and the teachers of the law, and that He must be killed, and on the third day be raised to life. After he had just recently declared to Jesus that he believed that He was the Messiah, the son of God and Jesus confirmed that to be true.

Peter must have thought what is going on; is Jesus having a bad day, is He feeling low and why would he say that it would be at the hands for the Sanhedrin, the supreme court of the Jews? Peter forgetting that the prophet of the past, Isaiah, had predicted Jesus's suffering as it reads in Isaiah 53: 4 – 6:

4 Surely, he took up our pain and bore our suffering, yet we considered him punished by God, stricken by him, and afflicted.

5 But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was

on him, and by his wounds we are healed.

6 We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to our own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all.

So, Jesus predicting His death to His disciples shouldn't have been a shock to them, but they struggled to understand that the Messiah that they have been waiting for all this time has just told them, in order to fulfil His purpose, He would have to die first, then on the third day be raised to life which is a key point that they overlooked.

The disciples cared for Jesus so much so, that Peter had the decency to take Jesus aside and was mindful that what he had to say to Him was not on public display. From vs 22 – 23
22 Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. "Never, Lord!" he said. "This shall never happen to you!"

23 Jesus turned and said to Peter, "Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me; you do not have in mind the concerns of God, but merely human concerns."

A stumbling block - what a statement. I'm sure we have all faced a few stumbling blocks in our time. It could be things, circumstance or even people, loved ones. They can love you so much and want to protect you from the unknown, that they do not realise the care and love that they are showing you is actually hurting, stopping or slowing down what has been predestined for you by God. For it states according to Romans 8:29 - For those God foreknew he also predestined to be

conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters. So not to conform to this world but to be Christ-like.

Or maybe the stumbling block is yourself, choosing to listen to that voice that tells you are too old, you have had your time or I'm too young, I haven't gained much experience in life yet. Whatever the excuse is, if you have breath in your body God has not finished with you yet.

Because according to Ephesians 2:10 ¹⁰ For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

Remember the reading that our brother Reverend Tim read last week from the book of Romans 12:6 - We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us. If your gift is prophesying, then prophesy in accordance with your faith; ⁷ if it is serving, then serve; if it is teaching, then teach; ⁸ if it is to encourage, then give encouragement; if it is giving, then give generously; if it is to lead, do it diligently; if it is to show mercy, do it cheerfully.

We are all chosen for a purpose that we must fulfil even when faced with stumbling blocks.

But if for any reason you're still unsure of what you are called to do, look into the word of God, seek Him and pray for direction, and let us do our best to practice the instruction given to us by Paul from our 2nd bible reading from Romans 12: 9-21.

In those verses Paul lists thirteen behaviours that we should adopt. Therefore, let us show love through those actions to be able to be Christ-like daily. **Amen.**

Prayer of Intercession

For our prayer of intercession when I say Lord in Your mercy, please respond with, hear our prayers.

Almighty God we ask you to guard your church especially when differences amongst us seem to threaten our very existence.

We face each other but often do not see the face. Help us now to look again to see Jesus in the face and to recognise hopes, aspirations, and desires.

Lord in Your mercy, **hear our prayers**

Creator God we are part of the tension and injustice of the world. Heal the resentment between people and intervene in the world's conflict. Help us to walk humbly with you at our side and when we come to the cross road and have to choose which way to go, lead us down the path of justice and righteousness while steering us away from the roads that lead to selfishness and sin.

Lord in Your mercy, **hear our prayers**

Father God help us to be gentle with others and with ourselves. Give us we pray, the calm that makes us considerate

and respectful for others. Take from us hard words and a cynical look. Let us be to others as we would want them to be to us and when we fail, forgive us and when they fail heal us. Lord in Your mercy, **hear our prayers**

Caring God, we pray for those who are inflicted by physical, emotional, or mental illness. Especially the problems caused by the ongoing Covid – 19 pandemic. Help them to keep their eyes fixed on you and give them the courage to face the trials and temptations that may come.

Lord in Your mercy, **hear our prayers**

Holy God, your love reaches beyond the grave. At the end of our days on earth, be with us and with those we love and those we loved who have gone before us. We pray now for those who have recently died, both Covid related and from other causes and for those bereaved by their passing.

Lord in Your mercy, **hear our prayers**

Our God of favour we pray that you are ever present with our young people especially those who have recently received their exam results. We pray that you may grant them hope and boldness and that doors of opportunities will be opened for them, regardless of what grades they have received, because we know You have a purpose for their life.

Lord in Your mercy, **hear our prayers**

Gracious God we thank you for hearing our prayers and as we move into the coming week, help us to remember our Saviour's words as He sent out His disciples into the world as you go, proclaim the good news the Kingdom of Heaven has come near.

Merciful Father accept these prayers for the sake of your son our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father, who art in heaven,
Hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come;
thy will be done; on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory
for ever and ever. **Amen**

Hymn: He Has Risen (Singing the Faith 302)

Sing/ Read /pray /proclaim the words or listen to it here

<https://youtu.be/VwLR1BGmZSw>

He has risen,
He has risen,
He has risen,
Jesus is alive.

When the life flowed from His body,
seemed like Jesus' mission failed.
But His sacrifice accomplished,
victory over sin and hell.

In the grave God did not leave Him,
for His body to decay;
raised to life, the Great awakening
Satan's power He overcame.

If there were no resurrection,
we ourselves could not be raised;
but the Son of God is living,
so our hope is not in vain.

When the Lord rides out of heaven,
mighty angels at his side,
they will sound the final trumpet,
from the grave we shall arise.

He has given life immortal,
we shall see Him face to face;
through eternity we'll praise him,
Christ, the Champion of our faith

Gerald Coates (b1944),
Noel & Tricia Richards (b. 1955 & b.1960)

Blessings

May the grace of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, the love of God and the Fellowship of the Holy Spirit, rest, remain and abide with us all, now and forever more. Amen.

Surely Goodness and mercy shall follow us, all the days of our lives and we shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever and ever. **Amen.**