

Sunday 2nd May 2021

Welcome

The worship today is led by Hilary and later Jane Wright will lead us in Prayers for the World. David Binns will be speaking from 2 Corinthians 4: 7 – 12. His sermon title is 'God of the broken'.

Mark Hutchings, who preached last week on 'Conflict', has sent some questions for any who want to reflect. These are given at the end of the service.

Notices:

Please let me encourage you to give to the Thank Offering, preferably by bank transfer (email me for account details) or put your gift aside until we are able to meet up. Ideally this will be in addition to your normal weekly offering. Our total is £740 so still a way to go to our target of £5,000. Hopefully the work on the roof will start soon – more details at the Church Members Meeting on Wednesday 26th May.

In Isaiah chapter 6 we read about the angels singing

'Holy, holy, holy is the LORD Almighty;
the whole earth is full of his glory.'

And in 1 Samuel chapter 2 Hannah prays

'There is no one holy like the LORD;
there is no one besides you;
there is no Rock like our God.'

In Revelation chapter 4 we read

“Each of the four living creatures had six wings and was covered with eyes all round, even under its wings. Day and night they never stop saying:

“Holy, holy, holy
is the Lord God Almighty,”^[b]
who was, and is, and is to come.’

⁹ Whenever the living creatures give glory, honour and thanks to him who sits on the throne and who lives for ever and ever, ¹⁰ the twenty-four elders fall down before him who sits on the throne and worship him who lives for ever and ever. They lay their crowns before the throne and say:

¹¹ ‘You are worthy, our Lord and God,
to receive glory and honour and power,
for you created all things,
and by your will they were created
and have their being.’”

We worship a holy God.

What does 'holy' mean? The dictionary definition is “exalted or worthy of complete devotion as one perfect in goodness and righteousness” Surely that describes the God we worship.

Psalm 99 tells us

**“Exalt the LORD our God
and worship at his holy mountain,
for the LORD our God is holy.”**

Let us exalt our God, our holy God.

Song: Holy, holy, holy Lord

https://resoundworship.org/song/holy_holy_holy_lord

Psalm 99

**“The LORD reigns,
let the nations tremble;
he sits enthroned between the cherubim,
let the earth shake.
² Great is the LORD in Zion;
he is exalted over all the nations.
³ Let them praise your great and awesome name –
he is holy.**

Song: The greatness of our God

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Gf8qQLGZ3o8>

John chapter 12

¹² The next day the great crowd that had come for the festival heard that Jesus was on his way to Jerusalem. ¹³ They took palm branches and went out to meet him, shouting,

**‘Hosanna!’^[c]
‘Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!’^[d]
‘Blessed is the king of Israel!’**

Song: Hosanna

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t1qdfngXKYk>

Song: Blessed be your name

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PnWKehsOXu8>

Jane will lead us in Prayers for the World

Praying for India-information from the BBC

A devastating second wave of coronavirus in India has seen hospitals and crematoriums overwhelmed and widespread shortages of oxygen and medicines. Case numbers and deaths in India are continuing to rise fast, fuelled by a new variant.

The country hit a record number of cases on Monday - the fifth time in a row - as well as its highest daily number of deaths.

But the true numbers of cases and deaths are likely to be higher than the numbers

provided by authorities, with many people avoiding testing or struggling to access it. Many deaths in rural areas also go unregistered.

Doctors in India's capital Delhi have described how people are dying on the streets outside hospitals as the country struggles to cope.

In total, India has confirmed more than 17 million infections and 200,000 deaths. Virologists say they expect the rate of infections to continue to increase for another two to three weeks.

The country has a chronic shortage of space on its intensive care wards, with many patients' families forced to drive for miles to try to find a bed for their loved one.

In Delhi - a region of about 20 million people - hospitals are full and are turning away new patients.

On Monday, the government announced military medical infrastructure would be made available to civilians and retired medical military personnel would be helping out in Covid health facilities.

Hospitals across India are also experiencing oxygen shortages, with some forced to put up signs warning of a lack of supplies.

The country now has the greatest demand for oxygen out of all other low, lower-middle and upper-middle-income countries, according to the PATH Oxygen Needs Tracker. The government has said it will be releasing oxygen supplies from armed forces reserves and has approved plans for more than 500 oxygen generation plants across the country to boost supplies.

International efforts are under way to help India as the country suffers critical oxygen shortages amid a devastating surge in Covid cases.

The UK has begun sending ventilators and oxygen concentrator devices. EU members are also due to send aid.

The US is lifting a ban on sending raw materials abroad, enabling India to make more of the AstraZeneca vaccine.

India's capital Delhi has extended its lockdown as overcrowded hospitals continue to turn patients away.

The government has approved plans for more than 500 oxygen generation plants across the country to boost supplies. India's neighbour Pakistan - which has tense relations with Delhi amid territorial disputes - offered medical equipment and supplies and its Prime Minister Imran Khan tweeted prayers for a "speedy recovery". The country's Edhi foundation has also offered to send a fleet of 50 ambulances to India.

Meanwhile neighbouring Bangladesh has announced that it will close its border with India from Monday to prevent the spread of the virus.

Almighty God,

We pray for the people of India, this morning and ask that, in your mercy, this devastating second wave of corona virus will begin to be successfully overcome in the coming days and weeks.

We pray for all those who are sick. We think especially of those people who are ill but who have no access to any health care. We ask that they will somehow be looked after and will know compassion, even in these unimaginable circumstances, when there will be fear around and others may not want to tend to them because of worries about their own health.

We thank you for all the medical staff: for their commitment to caring for others, for their skill and stamina. How very hard it must be for them when they are facing equipment shortages, and cannot offer beds and health care to everyone, as the entire system is overwhelmed. Please protect them physically, emotionally and psychologically as they go about their work.

We pray that the strategies the government are putting into place, on such a massive scale, will be completely effective. We pray that, if further lockdowns are necessary in other cities and states, the government will be wise and go ahead with these and that people will stay put and not travel.

We pray for the poor to be provided for by the government, charities, philanthropy and international

aid.

We think especially of all those who live on the streets and the street children.

Lord, in your mercy and love, hear our prayer.

We thank you for those in the international community who are sending ventilators, oxygen and vaccines. We ask that all such assistance will get to those who need it and we pray against any delay. May the support from Pakistan, in the light of decades of hostility and tension, be the start of improved diplomatic relations between the two countries.

Please give wisdom to other countries, who share borders with India, to know what is the right thing to do regarding closing their borders in order to stop the spread of this disease.

Ps 46 v1-3 and v10

'God is both refuge and strength for us,

A help always ready in trouble;

So we shall not be afraid though the earth be in turmoil,

Though mountains tumble into the depths of the sea,

And it's waters roar and seethe,

And the mountains totter as it heaves.'

'Be still and acknowledge that I am God,

Supreme over nations, supreme over the world.'

We close by praying that your presence, love and power will, Holy God, be the source of wisdom, courage, tenderness, healing, comfort, hope and the eventual overcoming of this virus for India, at this time.

Amen.

Talk: David Binns 'God of the broken.' 2 Corinthians 4: 7 -12. The reading is within the talk.

<https://youtu.be/q-BebqEmwN8>

In Philippians chapter 2 we read

"In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus:

⁶ who, being in very nature^[a] God,
did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage;

⁷ rather, he made himself nothing
by taking the very nature^[b] of a servant,
being made in human likeness.

⁸ And being found in appearance as a man,
he humbled himself
by becoming obedient to death –
even death on a cross!

⁹ Therefore God exalted him to the highest place
and gave him the name that is above every name,

¹⁰ that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow,
in heaven and on earth and under the earth,

¹¹ and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord,
to the glory of God the Father."

Are there friends and family that are not following Jesus?

Do you pray for them to come close and recognise God's love for themselves?

To come into relationship with Christ the Messiah?

Paul felt the same. He tells us in Romans 9 of his huge sorrow for his family, the Israelites.

God Is Calling His People

9¹⁻⁵ At the same time, you need to know that I carry with me at all times a huge sorrow. It's an enormous pain deep within me, and I'm never free of it. I'm not exaggerating—Christ and the Holy Spirit are my witnesses. It's the Israelites . . . If there were any way I could be cursed by the Messiah so they could be blessed by him, I'd do it in a minute. They're my family. I grew up with them. They had everything going for them—family, glory, covenants, revelation, worship, promises, to say nothing of being the race that produced the Messiah, the Christ, who is God over everything, always. Oh, yes!"

As we sing our next song, let us remember in prayer those we long to know Jesus and take comfort from
2 Peter 3

⁹The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. Instead he is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance."

Song: At the name of Jesus

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_7w-tDjIpgk

Blessing:

The Blessing UK — At this unique and challenging time in the United Kingdom over 65 churches and movements, representing hundreds of others, have come together online to sing a blessing over our land. Standing together as one, our desire is that this song will fill you with hope and encourage you. But the church is not simply singing a blessing, each day we're looking to practically be a blessing. Our buildings may be closed but the church is very much alive!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PUtI3mNj5U>

The Lord bless you and keep you
Make His face shine upon you
And be gracious to you
The Lord turn His Face toward you and give you peace
As we receive, we agree, Amen
Amen, amen, amen.

May His favour be upon you and a thousand generations
And your family and your children and their children, and their children
May His presence go before you and behind you, and beside you
All around you, and within you He is with you, He is with you

Mark Hutchings, who preached last week on 'Conflict', has sent the following questions for any who are interested.

Conflict as Opportunity Reflection Questions VPBC

Thank you for giving me another opportunity to speak at VPBC recently. As a follow up, consider a situation in which there is conflict for you, however seemingly, big or small. In the light of this situation, here are some questions that you can use in your own reflections, study and prayer:

- Where might the opportunity in this situation lie?
- In what way does this situation take you beyond your comfort zone?
- What might you be able to learn?
- How might this situation help you understand the other party and their perspective more deeply?
- Might there be an opportunity within this for deeper intimacy or connection? If so, what might that opportunity be?
- How might you grow or change or gain insight about yourself?
- If this situation was a gift in disguise, where might the benefit lie?
- Thinking beyond your individual needs and wants, if there was an opportunity or a gift within this situation for your family/community/workplace, what would it be?

Source: *Conflict Coaching, St Ethelburga's Centre for Reconciliation and Peace*

Bible Passages to reflect on:

Luke 7: 36-50; 1 Peter 3:8-18; Colossians 1: 15-23; 2 Corinthians 5: 11-21

"The LORD bless you and keep you; 25 The LORD make His face shine upon you, And be gracious to you; 26 The LORD [a]lift up His countenance upon you, And give you peace." '

In Christ, Mark