


Cheshire South Methodist Circuit
Worship at Home – Sunday 9th February 2025

Call to Worship

Lord God, through our hymns, our prayers and meditation, and the joining of our lives in fellowship we worship you, Father Son and Holy Spirit. Enfold us in your love, and empower our worship that your name might be glorified today and always in our lives. **Amen.**

A prayer of praise and adoration

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

For the love you have shown us as sometimes reluctant disciples,
your patience in being with us when we decide to go our way,
your hand that is there for us as we stumble or are anxious,
your gentle whisper reminding us that you will never let us go,
for all of this and more besides what can we do but offer you the worship of our hearts and lives.

Amen

A prayer of thanksgiving

Heavenly Father, with a heart overflowing with gratitude, we come before you today to thank you for the incredible journey of faith you have guided us through. For every step, every triumph, every trial, and every moment of doubt, we praise your unwavering love and faithfulness. Thank you for the strength you give to us to persevere, the wisdom to navigate difficult paths, and the comfort you provided in times of darkness. As we reflect on the growth in our faith, we are humbled by your grace and amazed by your constant presence in our lives. May we continue to walk with you, trusting in your guidance and sharing your love with the world. In Jesus' name. **Amen.**

A prayer of Confession

Gracious and loving God, open our hearts so that we are able to admit to you the fullness of our lives - that which is beautiful and good, and that which is hurtful and hateful. We confess that we do not follow Jesus in all that we do. We love with condition. We judge and condemn. We cast the first stone, and keep the logs in our own eyes. We do not turn to you as the source of our strength. Forgive us we pray. Forgive our sin and empower us to be imitators of Christ in love and service. **Amen.**

Assurance of Forgiveness

Brothers and sisters in Christ, know this: the mercy of God is from everlasting to everlasting, and we are reminded of this surpassing grace - in Jesus Christ, we are forgiven. **Amen.**

Hymns & Psalms no. 691 *Come let us sing of a wonderful love*

1 Come, let us sing of a wonderful love,
Tender and true;
Out of the heart of the Father above,
Streaming to me and to you:
Wonderful love
Dwells in the heart of the Father above.

2 Jesus, the Saviour, this gospel to tell,
Joyfully came;
Came with the helpless and hopeless to dwell,
Sharing their sorrow and shame;
Seeking the lost,
Saving, redeeming at measureless cost.

3 Jesus is seeking the wanderers yet;
Why do they roam?
Love only waits to forgive and forget;
Home, weary wanderer, home!
Wonderful love
Dwells in the heart of the Father above.

4 Come to my heart, O thou wonderful love,
Come and abide,
Lifting my life, till it rises above
Envy and falsehood and pride;
Seeking to be
Lowly and humble, a learner of thee.

Charles Wesley

Reading: Isaiah 6:1 - 8

Isaiah's Commission

6 In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord, high and exalted, seated on a throne; and the train of his robe filled the temple. **2** Above him were seraphim, each with six wings: With two wings they covered their faces, with two they covered their feet, and with two they were flying. **3** And they were calling to one another:

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

4 At the sound of their voices the doorposts and thresholds shook and the temple was filled with smoke.

5 “Woe to me!” I cried. “I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips, and my eyes have seen the King, the LORD Almighty.”

6 Then one of the seraphim flew to me with a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with tongs from the altar. **7** With it he touched my mouth and said, “See, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away and your sin atoned for.”

8 Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, “Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?”
And I said, “Here am I. Send me!”

Luke 5: 1 - 11

Jesus Calls His First Disciples

5 One day as Jesus was standing by the Lake of Gennesaret, the people were crowding around him and listening to the word of God. **2** He saw at the water's edge two boats, left there by the fishermen, who were washing their nets. **3** He got into one of the boats, the one belonging to Simon, and asked him to put out a little from shore. Then he sat down and taught the people from the boat.

4 When he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, “Put out into deep water, and let down the nets for a catch.”

5 Simon answered, “Master, we've worked hard all night and haven't caught anything. But because you say so, I will let down the nets.”

6 When they had done so, they caught such a large number of fish that their nets began to break. **7** So they signaled their partners in the other boat to come and help them, and they came and filled both boats so full that they began to sink.

8 When Simon Peter saw this, he fell at Jesus' knees and said, "Go away from me, Lord; I am a sinful man!" **9** For he and all his companions were astonished at the catch of fish they had taken, **10** and so were James and John, the sons of Zebedee, Simon's partners. Then Jesus said to Simon, "Don't be afraid; from now on you will fish for people." **11** So they pulled their boats up on shore, left everything and followed him.

Message

The passage from Isaiah - Isaiah's Commission - is an amazing image. The seraphs attending God, calling to one another "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord Almighty..." really emphasise the holiness of God. In Isaiah's time there was a great deal of moral and spiritual decay. Some might argue that to a degree today's world is in a similar state. Because the state of moral and spiritual decay had reached such a peak, it was important for Isaiah to see God's holiness. Holiness means morally perfect, pure and set apart from all sin. We, like Isaiah, need to discover God's holiness. We need to see God high and lifted up - to know that through his holiness, he can empower us to deal with our problems and our own concerns. It is God's moral perfection which, when we see it and understand it, will purify us from sin. God's moral perfection can cleanse our minds from our daily problems and frustrations, protect us from society's pressures and enable us to worship and to serve.

This scene, with the seraphs calling to one another of God's holiness, deeply moved Isaiah, and he became acutely aware of his own condition. Isaiah stood before God knowing that he was unclean and had no way of measuring up to God's standard of holiness. However, when Isaiah's lips were touched by the live burning coal, he was told that his sins were forgiven - he was cleansed. And in response to receiving God's forgiveness, Isaiah submitted himself entirely to God's service. The burning coal would have inflicted pain; the pain of the cleansing process was necessary before Isaiah could fulfil the task God was calling him to. Letting God purify us may be painful. Perhaps you have felt pain, discomfort or distress in your own journey of cleansing and forgiveness. The more closely Isaiah saw God, the more he became aware of, and understood, that in himself he was powerless to do anything of lasting value without God. But he was willing to be God's spokesman.

Are we willing to accept cleansing and empowerment from God so that we too can be servants of the Lord? In today's passage from Luke's gospel we read of Jesus calling his disciples - for the second time. After the first call (Matthew 4:18-22 and Mark 1:16-20), Peter, Andrew, James and John had gone back to fishing, but they had continued to watch Jesus. They saw how Jesus had established his authority in the synagogue, and how he had healed the sick and had driven out demons. In this passage Jesus was meeting them on their level - helping them with their work. It's at this point that Jesus was establishing his authority in the lives of the disciples, and from this point on they left their nets and followed Jesus. Where are we in this story? Are we the disciples after the first call - believing and acknowledging Jesus as our Saviour? Or are we also ready to leave our past and commit our future to him? The Lord calls us to worship him and to serve him. The service we are called to can be as varied as our gifts. Life and faith is a unique journey for each one of us, but there are discernible stages we must all pass through. We must all acknowledge our own lack of holiness, and seek forgiveness and cleansing from sin. And like Isaiah, we must be willing to accept that the power to do works of value comes from God. We are each unique and each will journey at their own pace. Like the disciples, we may hear an initial call and take some time to commit. God loves each and every one of his children, and he is patient; when we take our first steps he will guide us forward in our journey until we are ready to leave the past and commit our future to him. **Amen.**

A prayer for our journey of faith

Lord, no matter what happens, we are moving towards a beautiful eternity with you as you bless our journey of faith. We thank you, and we love you. We pray that you to watch over us each step of the way. May each day be filled with reminders of your blessings, wisdom, and love as we grow in knowledge, and walk by faith. **Amen.**

Hymns & Psalms no. 697 *Just as I am, without one plea*

1 Just as I am, without one plea
But that you died to set me free,
And at your bidding, 'Come to me!'
O Lamb of God, I come!

2 Just as I am, though tossed about
With many a conflict, many a doubt,
Fightings within and fears without,
O Lamb of God, I come!

3 Just as I am, you will receive,
Will welcome, pardon, cleanse, relieve:
Because your promise I believe,
O Lamb of God, I come!

4 Just as I am – your love unknown
Has broken every barrier down-
Now to be yours, yes, yours alone,
O Lamb of God, I come!

5 Just as I am, of that free love
The breadth, length, depth and height to prove,
Here for a time and then above,
O Lamb of God, I come!

CCL 821965 Charlotte Elliott

A prayer of intercession

You call us to service, to be your eyes and ears, hands and voice in this your world.

- To open our eyes not only to the beauty and love which you create, but to the injustice, hate and suffering that mankind generates.
- To open our ears not only to the chattering of this coming week, but also to the searching, fears and questioning of all those whom we shall meet.
- To open our hands not only to those we choose to share our lives, but in welcome, love and fellowship to all who you draw near.
- To open our mouths not only to speak platitudes and simple words, but to speak the truths you lay upon our hearts - your Word for this your world.

You call us to service, to be your eyes and ears, hands and voice in this your world.

- For each step that we might take, be our guide, O Lord of life.
- For each load that we might bear, be our strength, O Lord of life.
- For each mountain we might face, be our power, O Lord of life.
- For each river that might impede, be our safety, O Lord of life.
- For each place where we might rest, be our peace, O Lord of life.
- For each sunrise and sunset, be our joy, O Lord of life. **Amen**

The Lord's Prayer

Closing Prayer

Gracious God, increase our faith and confidence, so when you call - our response is in the knowledge that you will equip us for tasks laid out before us, and together we can sow precious seeds into soil prepared and waiting, that will, in your perfect timing, blossom and produce much fruit. **Amen.**

This worship service has been prepared by Mrs Sally Graham