Cheshire South Circuit

Worship at Home service 15th November 2026

Call to Worship

We all have skills and talents which are gifts from God:
All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he distributes them to each one, just as he determines. Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ. (1 Corinthians 12:11-12)
So let us now come to worship the One who gifts each of us to serve and glorify God.

Hymns & Psalms no. 632 *Awake my soul and with the sun*

1 Awake my soul, and with the sun
Thy daily stage of duty run;
Shake off dull sloth, and joyful rise
To pay thy morning sacrifice.

2 Redeem thy misspent moments past,
And live this day as if thy last;
Improve thy talent with due care;
For the great day thyself prepare.

3 Let all thy converse be sincere,
Thy conscience as the noonday clear;
Think how all-seeing God thy ways
And all thy secret thoughts surveys.

4 Wake, and lift up thyself, my heart,
And with the angels bear thy part,
Who all night long unwearied sing
High praise to the eternal King.

5 Direct, control, suggest, this day,
All I design, or do, or say,
That all my powers, with all their might,
In thy sole glory may unite.

6 Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;
Praise him, all creatures here below;
Praise him above, ye heavenly host;
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

CCL 821965 Thomas Ken

A prayer of praise and adoration
Creator of all, Sustainer of all, Saviour of all, Your glory and majesty are beyond our understanding, Your power too awesome to behold. And yet Your love enfolds us as a gentle breeze. Saviour of all, Sustainer of all, Creator of all, we bless your holy name. **Amen**

A prayer of thanksgiving
Father God, today we thank you for the provisions of our lives. We thank you for the people in our lives. We thank you for the opportunities you have given to us in our lives. We thank you for the acceptance and forgiveness you have lavished upon us in spite of our sinful actions and choices.
God, sometimes life gets us down and we find it hard to see things to be thankful for. Open our eyes to see the gifts you've given us in our lives. We thank you for loving us enough to come to earth and die so we can live together forever. **Amen.**

A prayer of Confession
Merciful God, forgive us when we invest our energies into increasing our personal prosperity rather than enriching people's lives with the good news of Jesus Christ, and when we squander our gifts by failing to use them to build people up.
Forgive us when we conceal the wideness of your mercy by our lack of compassionate behaviour.
Forgive us when we fail to be adventurous in spreading the gospel around. Increase our capacity to proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ in word and deed even if this means taking risks and expending whatever energy we may have.
Help us to hear Jesus' words addressed to us about being eager to share the spiritual treasure that we have, knowing that as we do, more, much more, will be given. This we pray in Jesus' name. **Amen**

Assurance of Forgiveness

9 For God did not appoint us to suffer wrath but to receive salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ. 10 He died for us so that, whether we are awake or asleep, we may live together with him. 11 Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing.
(1 Thessalonians 5:9-11)
In the knowledge that in Jesus Christ we are enriched, we are loved, we are forgiven.
Thanks be to God. **Amen**

Psalm 90:1-17 *_A prayer of Moses the man of God.*

1 Lord, you have been our dwelling place throughout all generations. 2 Before the mountains were born or you brought forth the whole world, from everlasting to everlasting you are God. 3 You turn people back to dust, saying, "Return to dust, you mortals." 4 A thousand years in your sight are like a day that has just gone by, or like a watch in the night. 5 Yet you sweep people away in the sleep of death - they are like the new grass of the morning: 6 In the morning it springs up new, but by evening it is dry and withered. 7 We are consumed by your anger and terrified by your indignation. 8 You have set our iniquities before you, our secret sins in the light of your presence. 9 All our days pass away under your wrath; we finish our years with a moan. 10 Our days may come to seventy years, or eighty, if our strength endures; yet the best of them are but trouble and sorrow, for they quickly pass, and we fly away. 11 If only we knew the power of your anger! Your wrath is as great as the fear that is your due. 12 Teach us to number our days that we may gain a heart of wisdom. 13 Relent, LORD! How long will it be? Have compassion on your servants. 14 Satisfy us in the morning with your unfailing love that we may sing for joy and be glad all our days. 15 Make us glad for as many days as you have afflicted us, for as many years as we have seen trouble. 16 May your deeds be shown to your servants, your splendour to their children. 17 May the favour[a] of the Lord our God rest on us; establish the work of our hands for us - yes, establish the work of our hands.

Matthew 25:14-30 *The Parable of the Bags of Gold*

14 "Again, it will be like a man going on a journey, who called his servants and entrusted his wealth to them. 15 To one he gave five bags of gold, to another two bags, and to another one bag, each according to his ability. Then he went on his journey. 16 The man who had received five bags of gold went at once and put his money to work and gained five bags more. 17 So also, the one with two bags of gold gained two more. 18 But the man who had received one bag went off, dug a hole in the ground and hid his master's money. 19 "After a long time the master of those servants returned and settled accounts with them. 20 The man who had received five bags of gold brought the other five. 'Master,' he said, 'you entrusted me with five bags of gold. See, I have gained five more.' 21 "His master replied, 'Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!'

22 "The man with two bags of gold also came. 'Master,' he said, 'you entrusted me with two bags of gold; see, I have gained two more.' 23 "His master replied, 'Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!' 24 "Then the man who had received one bag of gold came. 'Master,' he said, 'I knew that you are a hard man, harvesting where you have not sown and gathering where you have not scattered seed. 25 So I was afraid and went out and hid your gold in the ground. See, here is what belongs to you.' 26 "His master replied, 'You wicked, lazy servant! So you knew that I harvest where I have not sown and gather where I have not scattered seed? 27 Well then, you should have put my money on deposit with the bankers, so that when I returned I would have received it back with interest. 28 "'So take the bag of gold from him and give it to the one who has ten bags. 29 For whoever has will be given more, and they will have an abundance. Whoever does not have, even what they have will be taken from them. 30 And throw that worthless servant outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'

Reflection

God is unfathomably great. God spoke and everything was created. God created the universe – everything. Within that massive creation brought forth by the word of our omnipresent, omnipotent and eternal God is mankind. In God's timescale we are a mere jot, but oh so very, very important. His love for each and every one of his created children is immense. God is eternal and unrestricted by time; our lifespan limits us. But just think for a moment – God's love for us is so great that he has given us all gifts, skills, talents and abilities. With these gifts comes the privilege of being a part of his kingdom, and we are able to work with him. This might sound a little scary, but we really shouldn't be frightened of our heavenly Father. He knows everything there is to know about us – even the secret things – and he still loves us so very dearly. Yes, as mortal we know our days are finite, but we are loved, and so we want our work whilst we are on earth to count and be worthwhile, effective and productive. We as believers desire to see God's eternal plan revealed, and our work should reflect this. Our gifts, skills, abilities and talents are our tools for kingdom work. And the work is to love God and serve him by loving others.

God has given us all abilities, and with that he calls us to use our skills for his kingdom. Not all are to become clergy or live a monastic life, or even have a formal lay role in the church. We must use our talents in our ordinary, everyday lives – working to make the world a better place for those around us. We love God, and should work diligently using the gifts he has given to us to show love and care for our neighbours – for all those around us who are all also known and loved by God.

In our reading today, the parable of the bags of gold in Matthew's Gospel, we see the master dividing his wealth amongst his servants for safekeeping whilst he was away. They did not all receive the same amount of bags of gold. Each of them received more or less according to how their abilities would enable them to deal with the task, which meant failure could only be because of laziness or lack of respect for the master. The bags of gold, or talents, represent any kind of resource we are given. God gives us time, skills and other resources according to our abilities; sometimes pushing us outside our comfort zone to discover our gifts. It's up to us to use the gifts we are given. The issue is not how much we have, but how well we use what we have. The first two servants used the resources they were given wisely and did their best for the master. The last man was thinking only of himself. He hoped to play it safe and protect himself from his harsh master, but he was judged for his self-centredness. Our time, abilities and money aren't ours in the first place; we are caretakers, not owners. We should not ignore squander or abuse what we are given.

This parable shows us two attitudes to Christ's return. Those who prepare and diligently invest their time and talent to serve God will be rewarded, whilst those with no heart for the work of the kingdom will not. God rewards faithfulness.
May our faith guide us in realising our gifts. May we always be open to the direction of the Holy Spirit and never forget the enormity of the love that God has for each of us. **Amen**

A prayer for guidance to see and use our gifts and talents
Give us, O Lord, the perception we need to look within ourselves and discover the beauty and gifts we possess, and guide us to use our gifts and talents wisely for the glory of your kingdom. And give us the courage to show others the talents they have.
Lord, thank you for the gifts you've given each one of us; we pray that as we continue growing in our faith that we will always seek your heart and desire to serve you with the incredible gifts you knit within us. Lord, help us to see the ways we can use our gifts in the season you have us in, and we pray for a heart that is attentive to your leading. In Jesus' name, **Amen**.

Hymns & Psalms no. 785 *A charge to keep I have*

[1] A charge to keep I have:
A God to glorify;
A never-dying soul to save,
And fit it for the sky.

[2] To serve the present age,
My calling to fulfil: -
O may it all my powers engage
To do my Master's will!

[3] Arm me with jealous care,
As in thy sight to live;
And O thy servant, Lord, prepare,
A strict account to give!

[4] Help me to watch and pray,
And on thyself rely,
So shall I not my trust betray,
Nor love within me die.

Charles Wesley

A prayer of Intercession

Creator God, you call us to love and serve you with body, mind, and spirit through loving your creation and our sisters and brothers. God of salvation, who sent your Son to seek out and save what is lost, hear our prayers on behalf of those who are lost in our day. Holy One, hear our prayers and make us faithful stewards of the fragile bounty of this earth so that we may be entrusted with the riches of heaven.

We praise your abiding guidance, O God, for you sent us Jesus, our Teacher and Messiah, to model for us the way of love for the whole universe.

We offer prayers of love on behalf of ourselves and our neighbours, on behalf of your creation and our fellow creatures. Redeeming Sustainer, visit your people and pour out your strength and courage upon us, that we may hurry to make you welcome not only in our concern for others, but by serving them generously and faithfully in your name. **Amen.**

The Lord's Prayer

Hymns & Psalms no. 767 *Give me the faith which can remove*

1 Give me the faith which can remove
And sink the mountain to a plain;
Give me the childlike praying love,
Which longs to build thy house again;
Thy love, let it my heart o'erpower,
And all my simple soul devour.

2 I would the precious time redeem,
And longer live for this alone:
To spend, and to be spent, for them
Who have not yet my Saviour known;
Fully on these my mission prove,
And only breathe, to breathe thy love.

3 My talents, gifts and graces, Lord,
Into thy blessed hands receive;
And let me live to preach thy word,
And let me to thy glory live;
My every sacred moment spend
In publishing the sinners' friend.

4 Enlarge, inflame, and fill my heart
With boundless charity divine:
So shall I all my strength exert,
And love them with a zeal like thine;
And lead them to thy open side,
The sheep for whom their Shepherd died.

Charles Wesley

Benediction

God of gifts, thank you for the blessings you have given us. May we always use our gifts and talents in a way that demonstrates kindness, humility, and compassion, as we go about our everyday living in the days and weeks to come, for we know you are always with us. **Amen**.

This act of worship compiled Mrs. Sally Graham