

Call to worship from Psalm 16: v8, 11

I have set the Lord always before me. Because he is at my right hand, I shall not be shaken.  
You have made known to me the path of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence.

**Hymn** H&P 504

1 O Heavenly King, look down from above;  
Assist us to sing thy mercy and love:  
So sweetly o'erflowing, so plenteous the store,  
Thou still art bestowing, and giving us more.

2 O God of our life, we hallow thy name;  
Our business and strife is thee to proclaim.  
Accept our thanksgiving for creating grace;  
The living, the living shall show forth thy praise.

3 Our Father and Lord, almighty art thou;  
Preserved by thy word, we worship thee now;  
The bountiful donor of all we enjoy,

Our tongues, to thine honour, and lives we employ.

4 But O above all thy kindness we praise,  
From sin and from thrall which saves the lost race;

Thy Son thou hast given the world to redeem,  
And bring us to heaven whose trust is in him.

5 Wherefore of thy love we sing and rejoice,  
With angels above we lift up our voice;  
Thy love each believer shall gladly adore,  
For ever and ever, when time is no more.

Prayer of Adoration & Thanksgiving

We praise you, Lord Jesus, that in turmoil and in trouble, we can trust you.  
For you are the peace beyond war, the hope beyond despair,  
the light beyond darkness, the stability amid chaos.  
Your love is indestructible and eternal; it surrounds us, day by day.  
Thank you for being our strength and our Saviour. **Amen.**

The Lord's Prayer

**Readings:**

Daniel is writing for God's people in exile, encouraging them not to worship the foreign gods but to remain faithful to the One true God. Despite the trials and tribulations of exile, Daniel proclaims that ultimately, Israel's God is in control and protecting his faithful ones. However, the people have a choice whether they are faithful to God or not....what path will they follow and what are the consequences of the choice they make? The peoples' ultimate destiny lies with God; the wisdom of the faithful leads to everlasting life whilst others who are not faithful reap everlasting shame.

**Daniel 12: 1-3** NIV translation

"At that time Michael, the great prince who protects your people, will arise. There will be a time of distress such as has not happened from the beginning of nations until then. But at that time your people—everyone whose name is found written in the book—will be delivered. <sup>2</sup>Multitudes who sleep in the dust of the earth will awake: some to everlasting life, others to shame and everlasting contempt. <sup>3</sup>Those who are wise will shine like the brightness of the heavens, and those who lead many to righteousness, like the stars for ever and ever.

**Mark 13: 1-8** NIV translation

As Jesus was leaving the temple, one of his disciples said to him, "Look, Teacher! What massive stones! What magnificent buildings!"

<sup>2</sup>"Do you see all these great buildings?" replied Jesus. "Not one stone here will be left on another; every one will be thrown down."

<sup>3</sup> As Jesus was sitting on the Mount of Olives opposite the temple, Peter, James, John and Andrew asked him privately, <sup>4</sup> “Tell us, when will these things happen? And what will be the sign that they are all about to be fulfilled?”

<sup>5</sup> Jesus said to them: “Watch out that no one deceives you. <sup>6</sup> Many will come in my name, claiming, ‘I am he,’ and will deceive many. <sup>7</sup> When you hear of wars and rumours of wars, do not be alarmed. Such things must happen, but the end is still to come. <sup>8</sup> Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be earthquakes in various places, and famines. These are the beginning of birth pains.

**Reflection** What do we rely on?

There are some things that we always expect to be there...they will last for ever! The disciples gave Jesus the example of the Temple; it was always going to be there! To them, it was unimaginable that one day it would be gone. But all things come to an end. What might be your modern day equivalent?

It makes us think about what we rely on for our future. Do we rely on things? Being in control? Our own understanding? Where does our ultimate hope lie?

Jesus prophesied that the Temple, which the disciples looked to for permanence and stability, would one day be gone, and eventually it was destroyed by the Romans in 70 AD.

Jesus also told them of times of uncertainty and upheaval which lay ahead. Events which would be out of their control.

It is very apparent today that times of uncertainty and upheaval have not come to an end!

We can well sympathise with the disciples who wanted to know from Jesus when all these things would happen; how will life turn out.....we like to know, to be in control but often, these things are not for us to know!

We are called to trust God in uncertain times...trust in God’s purposes for his people and all creation and that those purposes will come to fruition, because it is God who is sovereign and rules over all.

Jesus, in the next few verses of the gospel reading, warns the disciples of the suffering they will face on account of the gospel and the birthing of God’s kingdom but that at the end, salvation will come to those who stand firm in their faith and in the gospel. (Mark is really encouraging early Christian disciples as they faced suffering and persecution).

Jesus never promised that bad things wouldn’t happen. Indeed he spends much time trying to teach his disciples about suffering and death, both his own and eventually their own. What he did promise was that he would always be with them, in every part of their lives, whatever the circumstances.....

**Prayer of confession**

Lord Jesus, you have taught us that things can be destroyed and broken,  
but that love and truth never can be.

when we get overwhelmed by the enormity of suffering – strengthen us;

when we lose faith in your love for our world – forgive us;

when we struggle to believe that your hands hold us – reassure us;

when we collude with the negativity of our world – uplift us;

when we are paralysed with fear – free us;

that we may be voices for peace and bringers of hope to those who are afraid.

We ask this in Jesus’ name. Amen

**Reading** Hebrews 10: 11-14 NIV translation

Day after day every priest stands and performs his religious duties; again and again he offers the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. <sup>12</sup> But when this priest had offered for all time one sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God, <sup>13</sup> and since that time he waits for his enemies to be made his footstool. <sup>14</sup> For by one sacrifice he has made perfect forever those who are being made holy.

**Reflection**                      Jesus, the reason for confidence

So where does the confidence come from that we can trust God for the future despite the troubles of the present?

Jesus prophesied about the destruction of the Temple, and with it went the sacrificial system for sins, by which the Jewish people ritually made themselves right with God. What Hebrews tells us is that by his death & resurrection, Jesus established a new order. By Jesus' once and for all sacrifice on the cross, death and sin has been defeated, no more sacrifice is needed. Jesus sat down at God's right hand, his work completed, victory won.

We live in the times between that victory and Jesus' return. Jesus' enemies are still being made a footstool for his feet as, day by day, the resistance to the rule of God's kingdom is overcome. The writer of Hebrews assures us that we can have confidence in the effectiveness of Jesus' sacrifice. We can approach God's throne of grace and stand in the hope of everlasting life.

All God's people are called to work now in helping God's kingdom to grow by sacrificial living and serving, enabled by God's Holy Spirit..... and our discipleship is not in vain!

'Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised IS faithful!! Amen!

**Song StF 628** by Brian Doerksen

Faithful one, so unchanging	You are my rock in times of trouble
Ageless one, you're my rock of peace	You lift me up when I fall down
Lord of all I depend on you	All through the storm
I call out to you, again and again	Your love is, the anchor
I call out to you, again and again	My hope is in You alone.

**Prayers for others**

We pray for leaders everywhere:  
for the leaders of the world's most powerful nations...  
for the leaders of the poorest nations...  
for the leaders of our own nation...  
for the leaders of our churches...  
May they be blessed with wisdom, humility and compassion.

We pray for those entrusted with great responsibilities:  
in government, in hospitals, in schools, in care homes  
May they be blessed with wisdom, humility and compassion.

We pray for those who influence and inspire others:  
pop stars...actors...sports men and women...writers...artists...storytellers...  
May they be blessed with wisdom, humility and compassion.

And we pray for one another and for ourselves, that as we live out our lives,  
we too may be blessed with wisdom, humility and compassion.

God who moves beyond the stone walls of temples and churches,  
where people are victims of war or political manipulation;  
Where Christians suffer persecution and violence for the sake of the gospel;  
remind us we are brothers and sisters.

Where your children are hurt by abuse, broken by disease or burdened by disability;  
give us compassion to care for each other.

Where communities are destroyed by the forces of nature, help us to be good neighbours.  
Today we gift our lives to you. Tomorrow you gift to us the future. **Amen.**

**Hymn**

StF 526 Lord of all hopefulness

Jan Struther

Lord of all hopefulness, Lord of all joy,  
Whose trust, ever childlike, no cares could  
destroy,  
Be there at our waking, and give us, we pray,  
Your bliss in our hearts, Lord,  
At the break of the day.

Lord of all eagerness, Lord of all faith,  
Whose strong hands were skilled at the plane and  
the lathe,  
Be there at our labours and give us, we pray,  
Your strength in our hearts, Lord,  
At the noon of the day.

Lord of all kindness, Lord of all grace,  
Your hands swift to welcome, Your arms to  
embrace.  
Be there at our homing, and give us, we pray,  
Your love in our hearts, Lord,  
At the eve of the day.

Lord of all gentleness, Lord of all calm,  
Whose voice is contentment, whose presence is  
balm,  
Be there at our sleeping, and give us, we pray,  
Your peace in our hearts, Lord,  
At the end of the day.

**Blessing & sending**

May the peace of the Lord Jesus Christ go with you, wherever He may send you.

May He guide you through the wilderness, protect you through the storm.

May He bring you home rejoicing at the wonders He has shown you.

May He bring you home rejoicing once again into our doors.

Amen.