



# Heaton Moor United Church

The United Reformed Church and The Methodist Church  
working together in partnership



## Church Services

Due to current COVID restrictions there will be no services at the Church building.

Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup> November – Private Prayer

The Church will be open for private prayer from 11:00 am until 12:00 pm

Sunday Reflection

Raj will be doing a short reflection which will be available on our YouTube channel

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCyhynK2FIPDTbOuqBiO6D9A>

## Zoom Services and Meetings

Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup> November Circuit Service 3.00pm service

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87212246881?pwd=VXpyMzRYV21UZ1ZoYlkc2R4dmV1QT09>

Meeting ID: 872 1224 6881

Passcode: 974333

Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> November Coffee and Prayer 11.00am

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/95327541668?pwd=ekU2QWgzZjVKWTBFTjZsb0tERVQrdz09>

Meeting ID: 953 2754 1668

Passcode: 794265

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Joining by telephone

Step 1)

Dial any of the following numbers. If one doesn't work try another and another until you are able to connect:

0330 088 5830

0131 460 1196

0203 481 5237

0203 481 5240

0208 080 6591

0208 080 6592

Step 2)

Follow the prompts you hear on the phone.

You may be prompted to enter 3 different things:

1 -- Meeting ID followed by hash #

2 -- Password followed by hash #

3 -- Participants ID -- You will not have one of these, don't worry, all you need to do is enter "Hash" #

You should then be entered into the service.

Dear Heaton Moor United Church,

The grace of our Liberator Jesus Christ, the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all. Hope you are all doing well and are staying safe during this lockdown.

As I heard from our friends, I understand that the worship experiences during the lockdown have been very interesting. Thanks to all who are watching the video reflections on a Sunday morning, to those who are going to the church building for private prayer, to those going on a prayer walk, to those attending the zoom services and to those following the written reflections. We really appreciate your co-operation, support and encouragement to all our efforts.

I was really pleased to know that 46 families have registered to take part in Jesus the light walking trail organised by JoAnne and it is so good to know that there are many families who are participating in it very actively. Thank you, JoAnne, for organising this event. I also want to place on record for all those supporting Space at the Table programme every Wednesday, where I gathered has been serving as a great source of encouragement to people receiving the food.

As a circuit we are organising a virtual pilgrimage to Bethlehem called "Come and see Bethlehem this Christmas" on Thursday, the 10<sup>th</sup> of December 2020 at 7pm on Zoom and I encourage you to participate in it to support the cause of justice and peace initiatives in Palestine. The circuit is also organising 'Carols in the Car' event on Saturday, the 19<sup>th</sup> December 2020. Kindly pencil this date in your diary and do participate in it. The flyers are attached in this newsletter.

Herewith I am sending you the reflection and the worship resources for this week for your kind perusal.

*I will be leading the funeral service for Peter Garner on Tuesday, the 24<sup>th</sup> November at 4pm at Stockport Crematorium and request you to light a candle for Peter on that day.*

*May you all have a blessed week and may God's grace go with each of us in all the walks of our lives.*

*Stay safe and stay blessed,*

*Regards,*

*Raj*

*20<sup>th</sup> November 2020*

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## **REMINDER OF WAYS TO WORSHIP DURING LOCKDOWN**

Our Church building is still closed for worship but there are three ways we can be united in time on Sunday;

- 1) ***Private Prayer and Reflection in Church***  
Church will be open from 11:00am for an hour this Sunday for private reflection. You can turn up at any time and stay for as long as you require.
- 2) ***Prayer Walk***  
During the period 11:00 am - 12:00am take a walk. Use this time for prayer or to reflect on this week's reflections / worship notes.  
If you're on social media tag us #hmuc #churchonthewalk
- 3) ***Worship At Home***  
In addition to the Methodist Worship at Home material our YouTube channel will have a pre-recorded message each week for you to watch.  
<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCyhynK2FIPDTbOuqBiO6D9A>

## MESSAGE FROM THE CO-EDITOR

I haven't got a pedometer but if I did I'm pretty sure it would show that I had walked a lot more than the recommended 10'000 steps per day this week! I have walked the light trail every day, even in the rain, and it has been great to socially distance chat with families who were taking part. I handed out 10 goodie bags on Thursday to children who had completed the trail, they were well received, and we had some interesting discussions about what it meant to Be The Light.

My walking days are not over as the trail is up for another week and I will be out on Sunday on my Prayer Walk so if you see me please give me a shout!

Whilst this newsletter doesn't contain as much as previous if you have any queries/comments or something you'd like included in a later edition please do not hesitate contact me.

*JoAnne*

[community@heatonmoorunitedchurch.org.uk](mailto:community@heatonmoorunitedchurch.org.uk)

07340 269 354



We still have some masks to sell to raise funds for our School Pantry Project supporting Mersey Vale School. The masks have been made by Raj's friend Tabitha and are £4 each. If you would like to purchase please contact Sharon in the office.

*THANK YOU* 

*Many thanks to everyone who donated to Christian Aid at our Harvest Thanksgiving. The amount raised was £199.00 and £125 gift aided.*

*A very generous donation from the church family*

# HAPPY BIRTHDAY

Eddie who will be celebrating his birthday on the 25<sup>th</sup> November

Lily has made these photo candles with the church window on to raise money for Ian's Christie fundraiser. They would make lovely Christmas gifts at £4 each with all profits going to the Christie. They can be delivered in Stockport or to church after 2nd Dec. For more information or to order please contact Sharon Shore on 0161 432 5411



## ADVENT PARTNERSHIP EVENTS

with Greater Manchester South & Cheshire URC

### Advent Retreat

28<sup>th</sup> November 10:30 – 12:00 and repeated at 14:30 – 16:00

### Weariness & Wonder

Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup>, and 16<sup>th</sup> December at 19:30

### Advent Bible Study

Monday 30<sup>th</sup> November 7<sup>th</sup>, 14<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> December at 10:00

### Messy Christmas Family & Children's Event

19<sup>th</sup> December at 15:00



### Scratch Carol Service

19<sup>th</sup> December at 19:00

### Christmas Eve Communion

24<sup>th</sup> December at 11:30

### Christmas Day Service

25<sup>th</sup> December at 9:00

For venues and zoom links please contact Dave Fraser at  
[davefraser24@gmail.com](mailto:davefraser24@gmail.com)

# Charity News

Hi All

Normally at this time of year we would be getting ready to do the Christmas Fair, adding extra toys to our shopping lists in preparation for the Toy Service, singing a carol or two to raise much need funds for our Church Charities.

Unfortunately, these things won't be happening this year, well they won't be happening in the same way as before.

The Fundraising committee would like to pass on their thanks for the massive support you all showed earlier in the year for the Church Gift Day, we managed to raise a similar figure to previous years and send much needed funds to charities we had chosen to support.

The chosen charities have yet to be chosen at the moment, I will inform you of them next week.

There are new and exciting ways being adopted by charities for their fundraising.

Wood Street Mission who we normally support through the Toy Service has put a wish list on Amazon where you can buy toys from which are then delivered directly to Wood Street Mission.

<https://www.woodstreetmission.org.uk/our-projects/christmaswishlists/>

Clicking this link will take you to their page and then you select the age range you want to buy from and you are directed to Amazon to choose what you want to buy.

Next week I will give you details on how we can raise funds for Charities that can't do things like this.

Also if you have any ideas please get in touch.

On another note, at a meeting this week between the team (Jo, Raj, Jonnie, Linda, Tracy & I) it was decided to call our support for Mersey Vale School, The School Pantry Project. We have been calling it the FRESH project however whilst FRESH supported us, in advice how to set up the project we felt it was best to come up with another name that we could use to save confusion.

Thank you Sharon



## DATED EVENTS FOR YOUR DIARY

### **28th November Family Light Trail Closes**

The family light trail is up and around Heaton Moor. If you would like a trail map please contact JoAnne.

### **2<sup>ND</sup> December – 10:00**

More Than A Good Read

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81384676720?pwd=VW15U0QxMGxrNFFaWUs3N2ZmMGNXZz09>



### **25<sup>th</sup> November – Topsy Turvy Coffee Evening 19:00**

House of Cards, contact JoAnne for further information

### **2<sup>nd</sup> December Loving Remembrance Service 18:00**

Zoom service further details to follow

### **2<sup>nd</sup> December – Bible Study Group 19:00**

Peace, Panic and Pandemic : Advent Bible Study Group See text box for further information

**Peace, Panic and Pandemic**  
Advent Bible Study Group 2020

2nd December: The vision of peaceful kingdom - Isaiah 11  
9th December: The vision of a just Kingdom - Amos 8  
16th December: The vision of an anti-empire Kingdom - Kingdom of God  
23rd December: The vision of a Kingdom of hope - Revelation 21

Zoom details to follow.





## Prayers from Linda



### Keep Us Strong

Keep us strong and good Lord, keep us under the shadow of your love in this time of uncertainty and distress. Help and support the anxious and fearful, and lift up all who are feeling low, that we may rejoice in your comfort knowing that nothing can separate us from your love in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Amen.

### This is our Prayer

Lord God thank you for all you do in our lives. We are truly grateful for all you have provided for us. From are friends to our family and work colleagues, you are always blessing us in ways we cannot imagine or completely understand. God of compassion, be close to those who are ill, afraid or in isolation. In their loneliness, be there in their anxiety, be their hope; in their darkness, be their light; through him who suffered alone on the cross, but reigns with you in glory, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

If anyone would like to share a Prayer with the church family, please call Linda on 07564839380 or E-mail [lindawfling625@gmail.com](mailto:lindawfling625@gmail.com).



No names required because God Knows.



THE MAYOR of STOCKPORT (Cllr Dean Fitzpatrick)  
Invites you and friends to the  
**ANNUAL PRAYER BREAKFAST(on line)**  
**THURSDAY 26<sup>th</sup> NOVEMBER 2020, 8.00am – 8.30am**

**Why?** We will pray for both the physical and spiritual regeneration of the Town Centre and wider borough in these uncertain and challenging times.

**Who** is speaking?

- Caroline Simpson, Deputy Chief Executive Stockport Borough Council
- Rev Pete Horlock, Ministry to Business.
- Jonathan Reynolds MP for Stalybridge and Hyde, and Shadow Secretary for Work and Pensions.

**Who** is being invited and **what** is the cost? For this online “free to attend event” is open to all. We would love to encourage even more guests from the wider Stockport community – **please do spread the word and invite others!**

**How to access:**

Soul City Church Youtube <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCyp7u2aeybLqkUTeHrpEOog>

Soul City Church Facebook [www.facebook.com/soulcityhome](https://www.facebook.com/soulcityhome)

We are using this opportunity to [donate](#) towards the Mayor’s Charity, which this year is Beacon Counselling.





# Service of Loving Remembrance



HEATON MOOR UNITED  
CHURCH



Wednesday, 2nd December @ 6.00pm  
on Zoom



For the zoom link please contact  
[office@heatonmoorunitedchurch.org.uk](mailto:office@heatonmoorunitedchurch.org.uk)



## **Christ the King's Reverse Kingship: A Curtain-raiser to the Story of Christmas**

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### **Reflecting on Matthew 25:31-46**

It is again that time of year, when people are getting ready for Christmas by putting up Christmas trees and lights in this bleak winter, hoping against hope this Christmas is going to bring cheer and happiness amidst the pandemic and the lockdowns. Whilst the Government is discussing the possibilities of families meeting for Christmas following the guidelines of medical experts, there are different Christmas adverts taking over the social media, preparing people into the festive Christmas spirit. As churches we have been discussing about the plans for Christmas, thinking about carols, Advent study, Christmas day services etc. All of these can be summed up in this saying, "this Christmas might not be the same, but the story remains the same," for it brings us to understand that the real reason for Christmas is the birth of Jesus Christ, who was born to offer hope and peace to a world of hopelessness and peacelessness. I know some of you might be thinking is this not too early to talk about Christmas in November.

The Sunday, before the season of Advent, which is the last Sunday in the Christian liturgical calendar is observed as "Christ the King" Sunday, where churches across the nations seek the relevance of Christ the king in the journey of faith. The text from the lectionary for this Sunday is from Matt 25:31-46, which is about the Son of Man as the king judging the nations. I recognise this text serves as the curtain-raiser to the story of Christmas, where God in Jesus was born as a baby, pitching God's tent among the creation, particularly those on the margins to identify with and be with the creation. This text provides some pointers in understanding Christ the king as a king offering alternative and even reverse kingship, radically very different from the then Roman emperors and even today's political kings and kingmakers. This text is the last speech of Jesus Christ about sheep and goats before his passion, where he becomes the scapegoat of the empire, for preaching about the kingdom of God as against the kingdom of Rome. Allow me to share three significant pointers in understanding Christ the king's reverse kingship from this given text.

#### **1. Christ the king reverses kingship by serving as a shepherd:**

The role of a king is to exercise power and authority over people, and history speaks voluminously of how kings have (mis)used power, (ab)used their thrones and have upheld hierarchy in their positions. Christ the king, on the other hand reverses his kingship by not engaging in ceremonial celebrations of pomp, rather serves as a shepherd, being on the ground working with the sheep and the goats, dirtying his hands. Christ the king is a king who has a deep love for his people, and wants to identify with the common people, and chose to be a shepherd in that agrarian pastoral society. Christ the king could command any job to be done just by an order, live a life comfortably in the citadels of palaces, yet he chose to get down and do the job of a shepherd by himself, only to express his care for his people. Christ the king, "did not consider equality with God something to be exploited, but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness. And being found in human form, he humbled himself, and became obedient to the point of death (became a scapegoat), even death on a cross." (Philippians 2: 6-8). Christ the king reverses his kingship and serves as a shepherd in solidarity with his community.

## **2. Christ the king reverses kingship by offering God's kingdom as a free inheritance:**

In the early first century Palestine, who were living under the occupation of the Roman empire, kingship was based on the family succession to the throne. It was more of a dynasty rule, where the son inherits the throne after the father's rule and it continued for generations. Kingship had always been a family inheritance, and the kingdom belonged to the kings as part of the inheritance. In contrast to this norm of kingship and kingdom as a dynasty rule, Christ the king reverses kingship by offering the kingdom of God to people who have addressed the needs of the people who have been quenching and hungry for food and justice. In verse 34, Christ the king invites all those who served the weak and the vulnerable and offers, "come, you that are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." Christ the king offers his kingdom of God based on God's grace to people who challenged the structures and offered hope by sharing food, water, clothing, shelter and care. It is important to recognise that it is God's grace that chooses people to inherit the kingdom of God, because it is God's grace that helps them to serve the vulnerable in the society and not by their own strength and merit. When they were offered this kingdom, the recipients were surprised, asking "Lord when was it that we gave you water..." for they were chosen to inherit the kingdom of God purely by the grace of God. It is the grace of God that leads people to serve the weak and the poor, and not that one serves the weak and poor the grace of God is on them. In offering his kingdom as an inheritance to people demonstrating love in action, Christ the king did not follow the book of rules and commandments, and offered it as a surprise package to those who did not even think of inheriting it. Christ the king is a God of surprises, for he surprised all the nations by defying the norms and rules and followed the principle of love in action.

## **3. Christ the king reverses kingship by choosing the vulnerable as his family members:**

When Meghan Markle married Prince Harry, there were several racist comments made against Meghan that she was "polluting" the royal family with her African American biracial identity. Less than two years after their wedding this royal couple quit as fulltime royals, for they were driven by toxic coverage in the media, which often veered into racial harassment and bullying. For some people an "outsider" joining the royal family was a matter of disgrace and couldn't take that as 'normal.' Christ the king in this text, surprised everyone not only by offering his kingdom as an inheritance to people outside of his kingship, but the greater surprise came when he said to those surprised inheritors, "Truly, I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me." (v40) Christ the king reverses his kingship by choosing 'the vulnerable,' 'the least in the society,' 'the outsiders' as his family members, as his brothers and sisters, and said anything done to such people is done unto him. There was every possibility for Christ the king to choose many other good kings in the history, the rich people, the powerful ones, the prosperous people to be his family members, for it would suit a king to make relationships with other kingly families. But reversing such norms, Christ the king chooses the hungry people, the thirsty people, the poor people, the sick people, the strangers, the imprisoned people, who are the invalids in the society as his family members. It takes a great courage and guts to choose such vulnerable people as valuable people, and even unto making them a family, and it takes only Christ the king who could do such a radical reversal from the norm of power.

The message that Christ the king offers is, all matters in this life is that, it is only love that thrives. Love for the 'other' particularly the 'outsiders', the 'powerless' and the 'vulnerable'

is the yardstick to demonstrate the grace of God in each of our lives. There are many inferences that can be drawn from this text as a relevance for us today. Allow me to share three particular points of relevance for us as a Church: Firstly, how much of our church's mission mandate matches with this text, where love for the 'other' in actions thrives? As churches we have been busy trying to keep up the status quo of our churches memberships and have been engrossed in putting our energies for the survival of the church and its properties. Feeding the hungry, giving a drink to the thirsty, welcoming the stranger, clothing the naked, caring the sick and visiting the imprisoned, these hexagonal representative acts of love in action to the vulnerable people, should be the mission mandate of our churches. When our mission engagements are in such a direction, we are truly serving Christ the king, who has come to reverse the norms of kingship. Church is all about serving in love the community, outside the walls of our church building, particularly the vulnerable people.

Secondly, the calling for us as a church is to align with Christ the king who reverses his kingship, for he chose not to be with the powers but consciously chose the powerless as his family members. In that alignment with Christ, we are called to give up our pride, privilege, positions, and power and seek to identify with the weak and the vulnerable in our communities. On how many occasions did we not exhibit our superiority and supremacy as a church? The call is clear and loud, to give up our privilege and supremacy. It is time that we relocate our churches to the margins of the society from the centres of powers, for among such people does Christ reside pitching his tent. As a church if we want to encounter Christ today, it is pitching our tents with Jesus on such sites of margins and vulnerability. Thirdly, in this text all we see Christ the king distinguishes is those that demonstrate love in action to the 'outsiders' and those who don't demonstrate love in action to the 'outsiders.' The calling from this text for us is to move from not demonstrating love in action to demonstrating love in action, for Christ the king is a God of love and justice, and would not want anyone to be lost. This text serves as an encouragement in that direction to submit ourselves to the grace of God who receives any one and everyone into her fold. Rather than titling this text as 'judgement of the nations' as it is titled in most versions of the Bible, for me there are two titles that I want to give to this given text. First is "Christ the king's reverse kingship, from power to love," and second title I give is "Love alone thrives, for love to the 'outsider' is all that matters." This text, thus serves as a curtain-raiser to the story of Christmas, where God in Jesus Christ reverses the kingship and is pitching his tent with the margins by being born as a baby in Bethlehem. For God in order to demonstrate God's love in action to this world comes down as a child born of mother Mary, identifying with the weak and the vulnerable and the 'outsiders.'

As we enter into a new Church liturgical calendar from next week as we begin the season of Advent, let me pray and wish you all a meaningful season. Let us strive in keeping Christ the reason for this season, and if Christ is the reason, then his family members, the vulnerable, the weak, the powerless and the 'outsiders' should be the focus of our mission and ministry. May God's grace go with each of us so that we can serve the community God has placed us in. Amen.

Rev. Dr. Raj Bharat Patta,  
19<sup>th</sup> November 2020

**Sunday 22nd November 2020**

This short act of worship has been prepared for you to use whilst we are unable to use Methodist Church premises. If you are well enough why not spend a few moments with God, knowing that other people are sharing this act of worship with you.

**Opening Prayer**

Loving God we come before you today to worship you. Wherever we may be may we know your presence with us. Amen.

**Hymn: StF 264 Make way, make way for the King of Kings**

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

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aICQ7fb0hEA>

Make way, make way, for Christ the King  
in splendour arrives;  
fling wide the gates and welcome him  
into your lives.

Make way (Make way), make way (make way),  
for the King of kings (for the King of kings);  
make way (make way), make way (make way),  
and let his Kingdom in.

He comes the broken hearts to heal,  
the prisoners to free;  
the deaf shall hear, the lame shall dance,  
the blind shall see.

And those who mourn with heavy hearts,  
who weep and sigh,  
with laughter, joy and royal crown  
he'll beautify.

We call you now to worship him  
as Lord of all,  
to have no gods before him,  
their thrones must fall!

*Graham Kendrick (b. 1950)*

Let us pray together

Loving God we come before you in adoration and praise for all that you have done for us. At this difficult time it can sometimes feel that we are alone and that you are not with us. But you have promised you will always be there and will never abandon us and for that we praise you.

We are truly sorry for the times that we have let you down. When we have failed to help those we ought to help, when we have passed by on the other side instead of helping people who need our help. Forgive us Lord and help us to share your love with others.

We give you thanks for all your gifts to us. Help us to share them with others that they too may come to know you more and more, that they will learn who you are and the impact that you can have on their lives.

We ask these and all our prayers in the name of Jesus. Amen.

**Today's Reading from the Old Testament:**  
Psalm 100

**Today's Gospel Reading:** Matthew 25:31-46

**Time to Reflect**

Next week Advent begins. It's only 5 weeks till Christmas. The time when we celebrate the coming of that tiny baby into the world, the coming of Jesus, the King of Kings. During this time of Advent let us reflect on who Jesus is for us. We call him King but he certainly

wasn't the king that the Jewish people at the time were expecting him to be. He is our King. He is the Light of the World and we are called to share with others who he is, the Light of the World and the King of Kings.

Our reading talks about helping those in need. By helping those in need we are sharing the love and good news of Jesus with other people. By doing this we are enabling others to come to know him for themselves. In the midst of the pandemic it can be difficult to know how we can help others at the moment. Verse 40 of our reading says this "And the king will answer them, "Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me." Perhaps at the moment we can help others by donating food, or clothes or just simply phoning someone up for a chat. All these ways of helping others enable us to do what he asked us to do and to share the love and good news of Jesus which is needed more than ever at the moment.

There are people out there on our streets who have missed out on the opportunity of finding the King of Kings, of finding out for themselves what the real meaning of Christmas is. To them Christmas is just another holiday. They have never known what it is all about, they have never known the difference that this tiny baby will have on their lives if they only take the opportunity to look for him. We know the difference that he has made and it's up to us to give people that opportunity to find him for themselves. Let us take the opportunity to share with others who this King of Kings is and what difference he can make in their lives.

Take a time to sit quietly

### **A time of prayer**

Loving God we come before you now to pray for our world. The world which you created, in which there is so much trouble. Help us to mend your broken world that all may live in peace. We pray for world leaders as they seek to do the best they possibly can in leading us through the pandemic. Give them guidance

and wisdom in all their decision-making as they seek to bring the virus under control.

We pray for the church across the world as it seeks to serve and to share the good news amidst the pandemic. Give strength and peace to our church leaders as they seek to guide us throughout this difficult time. May they find rest and renewal in you when they need it. We pray for our own churches and for the day in which we can all safely meet together for worship once more.

We pray for all those who are in need of our prayers at this time, those in hospital and those who care for them, those struggling with mental health problems, those who feel alone with no one to whom they can turn. We pray for those on the frontline who are working to overcome the virus. May they know your peace, strength and love. We bring before you our concerns for people we know who are in need of our prayers at this time.

We commend to you those who have died, knowing that you welcome them home with open arms. We place them into your care knowing that we will be reunited with them one day. Comfort those who mourn their loss and may they know your presence with them at this difficult time.

We pray for ourselves. You alone know what we need right now. Give us what we need to face the days ahead as we continue to wrestle with this pandemic which affects us all in some way or another. We ask these and all our prayers in Jesus' name. Amen.

### **The Lord's Prayer**

*Our Father .....*

### **Hymn: Listen to StF 693 Beauty for Brokenness**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=08utbDFP9AE>

Beauty for brokenness,  
hope for despair,  
Lord, in your suffering world  
this is our prayer.

Bread for the children,  
justice, joy, peace,  
sunrise to sunset,  
your kingdom increase!

Shelter for fragile lives,  
cures for their ills,  
work for all people,  
trade for their skills;  
land for the dispossessed,  
rights for the weak,  
voices to plead the cause  
of those who can't speak.

God of the poor,  
friend of the weak,  
give us compassion we pray:  
melt our cold hearts,  
let tears fall like rain;  
come, change our love  
from a spark to a flame.

Refuge from cruel wars,  
havens from fear,  
cities for sanctuary,  
freedoms to share.  
Peace to the killing-fields,  
scorched earth to green,  
Christ for the bitterness,  
his cross for the pain.

Rest for the ravaged earth,  
oceans and streams  
plundered and poisoned --  
our future, our dreams.  
Lord, end our madness,  
carelessness, greed;  
make us content with  
the things that we need.

Refrain

Lighten our darkness,  
breathe on this flame  
until your justice burns  
brightly again;  
until the nations  
learn of your ways,  
seek your salvation  
and bring you their praise.

Refrain

*Graham Kendrick (b. 1950)*

## A prayer of blessing

Lord,

As Christmas draws nearer may we share your  
love with others. Help us to show them who  
you are that they may discover you for  
themselves. Amen.

Original Materials by Rebekah Fairhurst, Bolton Methodist Mission  
All Hymns reproduced under CCLi 1144191.  
Local Churches please insert CCCLi No here

## Psalm 100

A Psalm of thanksgiving.

<sup>1</sup> Make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the earth.

<sup>2</sup> Worship the Lord with gladness;  
come into his presence with singing.

<sup>3</sup> Know that the Lord is God.

It is he that made us, and we are his;  
we are his people, and the sheep of his  
pasture.

<sup>4</sup> Enter his gates with thanksgiving,  
and his courts with praise.  
Give thanks to him, bless his name.

<sup>5</sup> For the Lord is good;  
his steadfast love endures for ever,  
and his faithfulness to all generations.

## Matthew 25:31-46

'When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and  
all the angels with him, then he will sit on the  
throne of his glory. 32All the nations will be  
gathered before him, and he will separate  
people one from another as a shepherd  
separates the sheep from the goats, 33and he  
will put the sheep at his right hand and the  
goats at the left. 34Then the king will say to  
those at his right hand, "Come, you that are  
blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom  
prepared for you from the foundation of the  
world; 35for I was hungry and you gave me  
food, I was thirsty and you gave me  
something to drink, I was a stranger and you  
welcomed me, 36I was naked and you gave



me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me.”

37Then the righteous will answer him, “Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food, or thirsty and gave you something to drink? 38And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you, or naked and gave you clothing? 39And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?”

40And the king will answer them, “Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.” 41Then he will say to those at his left hand, “You that are accursed, depart from me into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels; 42for I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, 43I was a stranger and you did not welcome me, naked and you did not give me clothing, sick and in prison and you did not visit me.” 44Then they also will answer, “Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not take care of you?”

45Then he will answer them, “Truly I tell you, just as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me.” 46And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life. ’