

Winchester, Eastleigh and Romsey Circuit
SERVICE AT HOME:
Sunday 06 October 2024
Prepared by Graham Hepburn

Call to worship

Grant us, O God, to pass each day in gladness and peace, without stumbling and without stain, that reaching the eventide victorious over all temptation, we may again praise you, the eternal God, blessed over all things now and forever.

Amen.

Mozarabic Sacramentary (10th Century) (From 2024/25 Methodist Prayer Handbook)

Listen, read, pray or sing along

We begin with the hymn of creation, 'In the beginning, God played with the planets' (StF 108),

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CbP8vB3FDBQ>

In the beginning God played with the planets,
Set them a-spinning in time and in space,
Stars in the night sky, while sun lit the
daytime,
Blue was the globe that was formed for our
race.

God saw the seas and the fish that swam in
them,
Formed the dry land where the trees soon
would grow.
Animals now could inhabit the countries,
Warmed by the oceans or covered in snow.

After the animals people were coming,
Made in God's likeness to live on the earth;
Big the blue planet God gave them to live on,
Sharing its riches, its wonder and worth.

Andrew Pratt (b1948)

Our prayers today are taken from Roots on the web.

A prayer of approach

God who is older than time,
God who is deeper than the oceans,
God who is higher than the heavens,
as we come together to worship you,
may we sense eternity flooding in to fill this
time to overflowing,
washing clean all that lies in the past,
filling with your Spirit every corner of this
place,
every nook and cranny of our hearts and
minds,
enabling us to praise you as we should and
serve you as we ought,
bearing us onward, upward, on the rising tide
of your coming kingdom.
In Jesus name.

Amen.

A prayer of praise

God of creation, the world is yours!
You have made the earth
and all that grows and flourishes.
We praise you, God of creation. Alleluia.

You have made the waters and the seas,
the lakes and rivers that flow.
We praise you, God of creation. Alleluia.

You have made air and sky,
the clouds and the winds that blow.
We praise you, God of creation. Alleluia.

In chaos and in calm,
in storm and tranquillity,
We praise you, God of creation. Alleluia.

In risk and in safety,
in confusion and peace,
all authority is yours.
We praise you, God of creation. Alleluia.
Amen.

A prayer of confession

God of all creation:
forgive us when we sow seeds of destruction
by our lack of concern for the world you have
made;
forgive us when we sow seeds of doubt,
by failing to see your likeness in the people

we meet;
forgive us when we sow seeds of despair,
when our lack of faith causes us to give up or
we fail to act;
forgive us when we sow seeds that would be
better not sown,
by our thoughtless actions, words and
thoughts.
In your mercy, forgive us
and help us to change our ways.
Amen.

The Lord's Prayer.

Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who sin against us.
Save us from the time of trial
and deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours
now and for ever.

Amen.

Bible Reading, Psalm 104, v 14-30

He makes grass grow for the cattle, and plants
for people to cultivate –bringing forth food from
the earth:

**wine that gladdens human hearts, oil to
make their faces shine, and bread that
sustains their hearts.**

The trees of the Lord are well watered, the
cedars of Lebanon that he planted.

There the birds make their nests; the stork has
its home in the junipers.

The high mountains belong to the wild goats;
the crags are a refuge for the hyrax.

He made the moon to mark the seasons, and
the sun knows when to go down.

You bring darkness, it becomes night, and all
the beasts of the forest prowl.

The lions roar for their prey and seek their
food from God.

The sun rises, and they steal away; they
return and lie down in their dens.

Then people go out to their work, to their
labour until evening.

How many are your works, Lord! In wisdom
you made them all; the earth is full of your
creatures.

There is the sea, vast and spacious, teeming
with creatures beyond number – living things
both large and small.

There the ships go to and fro, and Leviathan,
which you formed to frolic there.

All creatures look to you to give them their
food at the proper time.

When you give it to them, they gather it up;
when you open your hand, they are satisfied
with good things.

When you hide your face, they are terrified;
when you take away their breath, they die and
return to the dust.

When you send your Spirit, they are
created, and you renew the face of the ground

Reflection

The felling of the Sycamore Gap tree in
Northumberland on 28 September 2023 was a
terrible act of pointless vandalism. Since then,
people of all ages have shared their memories
of what that tree meant to them. One of the
results is that the National Trust have taken 100
saplings and nine clones (grafting together
material from the original tree and two year old
seedling acer trees). The National Trust are
currently deciding on the allocation of the
saplings, although the first one has already
been allocated to King Charles III and will be
planted in Windsor Great Park.

That illustration reminds me of the bounty of
creation, of how many trees can grow just from
one tree. That bounty was shared, in a sense
of awe, by the writer of Psalm 104. They marvel
at the abundance of God's creation and how
that abundance provides food and shelter for
every living creature.

When it comes to providing for humans,
however, God doesn't just meet our basic
needs. He creates grapes that we can turn into
wine, which gladdens our hearts; a drink the
Bible often uses to symbolise joy, celebration
and God's blessing, but which we can also

abuse. Why would God take that risk? After all, we could live without wine. It is impossible for me as a Christian not to look at verse 15, '(He makes) **wine that gladdens human hearts, oil to make their faces shine, and bread that sustains their hearts**' without thinking of the way that Jesus took the bread and the wine that were the staple parts of the daily meal going back hundreds of years in the region and turned them into a way that enables all Christians to commemorate and remember Him over the two thousand years since the Last Supper.

Note that this verse talks about wine and bread 'that sustains or strengthens their hearts.' Why hearts? Wouldn't it make more sense for it to read 'bread that sustains or strengthens their bodies?' Jesus said many times, that life is about more than food ('For life is more than food, and the body more than clothes' - Luke 12 verse 23). God does not simply want us to survive, to just get by. He wants us to flourish, to have glad hearts, to live life to the full.

The other part of Psalm 104 verse 15 reads '**(He makes) oil to make their faces shine**'. I don't just interpret that as some external face oil, to improve the skin, which would only have been the preserve of the mega-rich in the days of the psalmist. No, this can relate to oil taken internally which has been used in cooking and as an ingredient in food. The shining face is not a comment on complexion, but on the radiance which can be seen on peoples faces when they realise how blessed we all are by the goodness and abundance of God. When we realise that through the bounty of God's creation, for all creatures, and through his provision for us in our daily bread and wine, we are enabled to flourish and to live our lives to the full.

Let us pray

Lord, thank you for your goodness and abundance. Thank you that you don't just want me to get by; that you want me to flourish and live life to the full. **Amen**

Listen, read, pray or sing along

We share another hymn of creation, 'I sing the almighty power of God,' (StF 107)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2GFuwi_5yqo

I sing the mighty pow'r of God, that made the mountains rise,
That spread the flowing seas abroad, and built the lofty skies.

I sing the wisdom that ordained the sun to rule the day;

The moon shines full at His command, and all the stars obey.

I sing the goodness of the Lord, who filled the earth with food,
Who formed the creatures through the Word, and then pronounced them good.
Lord, how Thy wonders are displayed, where'er I turn my eye,
If I survey the ground I tread, or gaze upon the sky.

There's not a plant or flow'r below, but makes Thy glories known,
And clouds arise, and tempests blow, by order from Thy throne;

While all that borrows life from Thee is ever in Thy care;

And everywhere that we can be, Thou, God, art present there.

Isaac Watts (1874-1748)

Prayers of intercession

You set the earth on its foundations, so that it shall never be shaken.

You cover it with the deep as with a garment; the waters stood above the mountains.

And so we pray for all those whose lives are afflicted when the earth shakes, or when the deep rises up to engulf homes.

Send forth your Spirit
and renew us.

You make springs gush forth in the valleys;
they flow between the hills,

giving drink to every wild animal.
By the streams the birds of the air have their habitation;
they sing among the branches.
We ask for your strength and vision, to enable us to fight to protect this world from greed and abuse.

Send forth your Spirit
and renew us.

You cause the grass to grow for the cattle,
and plants for people to use,
to bring forth food from the earth,
and wine to gladden the human heart,
oil to make the face shine,
and bread to strengthen the human heart.
For everyone that supplies our food,
from farmer to cook,
for the joy of eating well,
we give you thanks.,
We pray for all those for whom the next meal is less certain, and that the world's resources be used and shared fairly.

Send forth your Spirit
and renew us.

You give humans great minds, and the ability to create wonderful things which can be used to create, to heal, to improve, but which can also be used to destroy, to injure and to make worse. We pray for all who make decisions on how to use the things we have created, and we pray that they will be used for good and the improvement of humanity.

Send forth your Spirit
and renew us. Praise the Lord!

Amen.

Offering and Prayer of Dedication

If you give your weekly offering through an envelope scheme or in cash, please set it aside, and pray with those who give using Standing orders.

Gracious God, accept these gifts, our money, and all our offerings, and with them our lives, to

be used in mission and service through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Listen, read, pray or sing along

Our final hymn is 'The day the universe was started, (StF 540)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wtTomcY9nac>

The day the universe was started,
creation's dawn still burning bright,
the smallest parts of you existed
within that energy and light.

And over time, with space expanding,
God let your atoms form above,
in ways beyond our understanding,
while God imagined you in love.

Our Father breathed upon earth's features
and life sprang up in every part:
a home for you and all God's creatures;
a place to grow, and know his heart.

Through many years of preparation
God dreamed your days and saw your face
and paved the way for your salvation
with suffering love and endless grace.

And now you enter this great story:
a work of art by God's own hand,
moulded from all creation's glory,
a life completely loved and planned.

The ways of God remain a mystery
but, child, our Lord has given you
this special place in time and history,
that you may come to love him too.

Andrew T Murphy (b1961)

A sending out prayer

Lord God, you have held our world and everything it contains in your hands, since the dawn of creation. Help us to see afresh the wonder that is around us, as we go out in your name in the week ahead.

Amen

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