

## Worship service for 7<sup>th</sup> February 2021

Jehovah Nissi – God is my banner

### Call to Worship – Ann Blundell

Good Morning

Welcome to our Worship Service for the first Sunday in February.

Last year on the first Sunday in February the congregations of Ashkirk, Ettrick and Yarrow and Selkirk met together for the first time in a combined worship service.

So much has happened since then but we are still able to worship together through the marvels of technology.

Let us Pray

Eternal and ever blessed God

We give thanks that we can lift our voices in praise,

bring our prayers to You and hear Your word

So be with us so our minds may be enlightened by Your truth

And our hearts may be warmed by Your love.

Amen

Let us worship our Lord by singing Hymn 167, Guide Me Oh Thou Great Jehovah

### Hymn 167 (CH4) Guide Me Oh Thou Great Jehovah

1. Guide me, O Thou great Jehovah  
Pilgrim through this barren land;  
I am weak, but Thou art mighty,  
Hold me with Thy pow'rful hand.  
Bread of heaven, Bread of heaven,  
Feed me till I want no more;  
Feed me till I want no more.
2. Open now the crystal fountain,  
Whence the healing stream doth flow;  
Let the fire and cloudy pillar  
Lead me all my journey through.  
Strong Deliv'rer, strong Deliv'rer,  
Be Thou still my Strength and Shield;  
Be Thou still my Strength and Shield.
3. Lord, I trust Thy mighty power,  
Wondrous are Thy works of old;  
Thou deliver'st Thine from thralldom,  
Who for naught themselves had sold:  
Thou didst conquer, Thou didst conquer

Sin and Satan and the grave,  
Sin and Satan and the grave.

4. When I tread the verge of Jordan,  
Bid my anxious fears subside;  
Death of death and hell's Destruction,  
Land me safe on Canaan's side.  
Songs of praises, songs of praises,  
I will ever give to Thee;  
I will ever give to Thee.

#### Prayer of adoration and confession – Jane Peers

We join in prayer

Almighty Father, Great Jehovah,

We sing your praises, for you are the rock of our salvation. To you alone belong glory, honour and praise. We join with the host of heaven and your people across the world as we worship. You alone are worthy of adoration from every mouth and every tongue shall sing your praise. You created the earth by your power. You saved the human race by your mercy and renew it by your grace. To you, loving God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit be all glory, honour and praise, now and for ever. Amen.

Loving God,

We come to you burdened by our sinful thoughts, words and actions.

For our foolishness and our thoughtless use of the gifts of your creation, Lord have mercy.

For our neglect of you and our failure to care for others, Christ have mercy.

For our selfishness in prayer and our carelessness in worship, Lord have mercy.

Here is good news for all who put their trust in Christ, "Jesus says 'your sins are forgiven'."

Amen.

Thanks be to God.

We join together in 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 Exodus 3, 10-15 and Exodus 17, 8-16a – Linda White

*Moses approached a burning bush and God spoke to him from the bush saying he has seen the Israelites suffering in Egypt and that he will rescue them and take them to a fine fertile land. In Exodus 3 verses 10 to 15 we read:*

Now I am sending you to the king of Egypt so that you can lead my people out of his country.”

But Moses said to God, “I am nobody. How can I go to the king and bring the Israelites out of Egypt?”

God answered, “I will be with you, and when you bring the people out of Egypt, you will worship me on this mountain. That will be the proof that I have sent you.”

But Moses replied, “When I go to the Israelites and say to them, ‘The God of your ancestors sent me to you,’ they will ask me, ‘What is his name?’ So what can I tell them?”

God said, “I am who I am. You must tell them: ‘The one who is called I AM has sent me to you.’ Tell the Israelites that I, the LORD, the God of their ancestors, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, have sent you to them. This is my name forever; this is what all future generations are to call me.

*Years later, having left Egypt, Moses was leading the people through the desert. We read Exodus 17 verses 8 to 16a.*

The Amalekites came and attacked the Israelites at Rephidim. Moses said to Joshua, “Pick out some men to go and fight the Amalekites tomorrow. I will stand on top of the hill holding the stick that God told me to carry.” Joshua did as Moses commanded him and went out to fight the Amalekites, while Moses, Aaron, and Hur went up to the top of the hill. As long as Moses held up his arms, the Israelites won, but when he put his arms down, the Amalekites started winning. When Moses' arms grew tired, Aaron and Hur brought a stone for him to sit on, while they stood beside him and held up his arms, holding them steady until the sun went down. In this way Joshua totally defeated the Amalekites.

Then the LORD said to Moses, “Write an account of this victory, so that it will be remembered. Tell Joshua that I will completely destroy the Amalekites.” Moses built an altar and named it “The LORD is my Banner.” He said, “Hold high the banner of the LORD!”

Hymn 755 (CH4) Be still and know that I am God

Be still and know  
That I am God  
Be still and know  
That I am God  
Be still and know  
That I am God

I am the Lord  
That healeth thee  
I am the Lord  
That healeth thee  
I am the Lord  
That healeth thee

In thee, O Lord  
I put my trust  
In thee, O Lord  
I put my trust  
In thee, O Lord  
I put my trust  
In thee, O Lord  
I put my trust

Reflection: Jehovah Nissi – God is our Banner Nora Hunter

In the current series of worship services, we are thinking about the different names given to God throughout the Bible. Today we have two of these “Yaweh - I Am”, which Jane will talk about later, but also “Jehovah Nissi - God is our Banner” which we think about now.

In Biblical times a banner would have been a signal flag, erected on a mountain or other high place to be clearly seen by fighters in battle, to inspire them. Many of us today are uncomfortable reading about warfare and violent death in the Bible so seeing God as this kind of banner is an idea which can be hard to understand.

However, when Israel faced the Amalekites in battle at Rephidim it wasn't with overwhelming force or an experienced army. It was as a transient tribe of herdsmen escaping slavery in Egypt and travelling uncertainly to a promised land their people hadn't seen in over four hundred years. They were trespassers going through the lands of fierce fighting peoples and forced to defend themselves. They travelled: men, women, children, herds of animals, and all their possessions. Their battle, therefore, was for survival, for hope, for a future.

But they travelled with something else too, the very presence of God. No matter how desperate they felt they were never at a loss because the perfect protector, the Lord, was with them.

On a mountain therefore, Moses used his staff as a banner, holding it up high as a sign of God's power and goodness, calling on God's strength and the Israelites were inspired and fought well.

After the fighting, we read that Moses made an altar and named it, “Jehovah Nissi – The Lord is my banner”. It is for remembrance of God's support for His people, but what else is it, and what does it mean for God to be our banner today? Consider how banners are used today, and it will I hope begin to be clearer what this means.

Under banners folk will march to remember and commemorate an event, or to protest about what they see as an injustice, to try to encourage others to join their endeavour.

Banners announce names and images which people can recognize from a great distance and know that they are part of the same group. Perhaps passers-by will be attracted to them, be interested, ask questions and maybe join in.

The whole point of a banner is to be seen, unmistakable and un-ignorable. It is both an invitation and a gathering place.

**God is our banner** because we live to celebrate and honour His love for us, shown in myriad ways, from the rising sun to the risen Christ.

**God is our banner** because we remember all His deeds and His words given to us in scripture.

**God is our banner** because He gives us identity of "God's children," because of the saving work of Jesus.

**God is our banner** because we are His representatives, making Him visible and showing the beauty of His transforming love.

**God is our banner** because the banner is an invitation, a gravitational pull, a summons, a wee tug to any who would like to believe but do not yet know what it means or how to do so.

When Moses built the altar and called it, "The Lord is my banner," he was creating a place of remembrance, a celebration of victory, an expression of thanks. He was making a declaration, one that any follower of Jesus can share in today: The Lord is my banner and we are the Lord's. It was a declaration not just of who God is and what He has done, but of those who were, and continue to be, His people.

Amen

#### Hymn We want to see Jesus lifted high

We want to see Jesus lifted high  
A banner that flies across this land  
That all men might see the truth and know  
He is the way to heaven

We want to see Jesus lifted high  
A banner that flies across this land  
That all men might see the truth and know  
He is the way to heaven

We want to see, we want to see  
We want to see Jesus lifted high  
We want to see, we want to see  
We want to see Jesus lifted high

Step by step we're moving forward  
Little by little we're taking ground  
Every prayer a powerful weapon  
Strongholds come tumbling down  
And down and down and down

We're gonna see, we're gonna see  
We're gonna see Jesus lifted high  
We're gonna see, we're gonna see  
We're gonna see Jesus lifted high

Source: [Musixmatch](#)

Songwriters: Doug Horley

We Want to See Jesus Lifted High lyrics © Thank You Music Ltd.

### Reflection : Yahweh – Jane Peers

One of my family's tales is from my Father. He was teaching and heard the teacher in the next classroom saying "We are going to learn about the four 'for's today. They are F-O-R, F-O-U-R, F-I-R and F-U-R." My father was shocked! Fir and Fur were not meant to sound the same as four. Many of you would use a beautifully rolled 'R' which I have never achieved. Over time the pronunciation, spelling and meaning of words changes.

The name 'Yahweh' was written in Hebrew without any vowels, YHWH. This was because vowels were not written in Hebrew. The original pronunciation has been lost because later Israelites thought it was too holy to use. This follows from Exodus chapter 20 verse 7, an injunction not to misuse the name of the Lord your God, or as you may know it, 'Do not take the name of the Lord your God in vain.'

In Latin, J is a variant of I and there is no Y so YHWH became JHWH when written by early Latin speaking Christians. Latin W is pronounced, v, like V in English. Add some vowels and English pronunciation and we get Jehovah.

A convoluted route through translation of the Greek New Testament gives the name "Lord". How confusing!

Scholars believe that YHWH was pronounced Yahweh and meant "I am". To our ears "I am" doesn't sound like a name. But we heard that the Lord said at the burning bush "*I am* the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob". The Lord, our God, the *living* God, *is* the God of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses and the Israelites.

"I am" is the eternal God and those early heroes are living too. "I am" takes us beyond this life to eternity. Moses didn't know Jesus, as we do, but spoke with the living Lord. "I am" gave Moses a glimpse of eternity. "I am" is God present across our bit of the Scottish Borders and across the world and beyond. Unbound by time or space.

The names we use for God reflect the characteristics of God. The use of 'Yahweh' in the bible conveys the thought that God is ever present with his people to save, help, deliver,

redeem, bless, and keep covenant. Our first hymn, "Guide me, O thou great Jehovah" reflects this as it is often sung as "Guide me, O thou great Redeemer".

Going back to the pronunciation of Yahweh. Today many Jews will say "The name" rather than pronounce Yahweh. But earlier Israelites may have taken a breath in as they read "Yah" and out as they said "weh". So a deep breath in and out was a time to think of God without naming him out loud.

When we pray we generally start "Our Father" or "Almighty God" or "Saviour" or whichever name of God helps us to focus our heart and mind on God. After all God knows with whom we are conversing. God is not in need of a shout to draw his attention. We are drawing *our* attention *to* God. This may be done by breathing in, and out.

In 1 Thessalonians 5:17 Paul urges us to "pray without ceasing". Jesus told the story of a widow who pestered a judge and persisted to show how we should persist in prayer.

Is it possible that as we breath we can focus on God and pray? Maybe this will help us to pray without ceasing. Let's try it. As I say some of the two syllable names, try breathing in and out.

Fa-ther, Fa-ther, Je-sus, Spi-rit, Sav-iour.

You may like to breath your chosen name of God as Ann leads our prayers of intercession.

#### Prayer of Intercession – Ann Blundell

Almighty God, we lift our prayers to You this morning.  
At a time when there are so many restrictions on our lives,  
we thank You that whether we are worshipping alone or with others You promise to hear our prayers and answer them, as You are our Banner, and we are Your people.

We give thanks for Your unrestrictive love which gives us hope in these troubled times,  
courage in the face of our fears and light in the darkness of our despair.  
We pray for those whose loved ones are ill, those who are in pain, those who are distressed and those who are grieving.

*Silence*

We pray for all those who are lonely or isolated. May they be conscious of Your presence.

*Silence*

We pray for all who look after the sick, the doctors, nurses and the many people who work in hospitals, for those who care for the elderly, vulnerable and the dying.  
May they use their skills to bring healing and comfort.

*Silence*

We pray for schools, colleges and universities, living with considerable disruption, all those who teach and all those who learn.

*Silence*

We pray for our World, often damaged by violence, oppression and hunger. We pray for all communities, asking that food is given to the hungry, justice to the oppressed, healing to those hurting and peace for those caught up in war.

*Silence*

We pray for our church. May it find courage to always point to the hope, comfort and peace You offer, especially in times of difficulty and sorrow.  
Lord in Your mercy, hear our prayers.

Amen

Our closing hymn is hymn 533      Will you come and follow me

Hymn 533 (CH4) Will you come and follow me

Will you come and follow me  
if I but call your name?  
Will you go where you don't know  
and never be the same?  
Will you let my love be shown,  
will you let my name be known,  
will you let my life be grown  
in you and you in me?

Will you leave your self behind  
if I but call your name?  
Will you care for cruel and kind  
and never be the same?  
Will you risk the hostile stare  
should your life attract or scare,  
will you let me answer prayer  
in you and you in me?

Will you let the blinded see  
if I but call your name?  
Will you set the prisoners free  
and never be the same?  
Will you kiss the leper clean  
and do such as this unseen,

and admit to what I mean  
in you and you in me?

Will you love the 'you' you hide  
if I but call your name?  
Will you quell the fear inside  
and never be the same?  
Will you use the faith you've found  
to reshape the world around  
through my sight and touch and sound  
in you and you in me?

Lord, your summons echoes true  
when you but call my name.  
Let me turn and follow you  
and never be the same.  
In your company I'll go  
where your love and footsteps show.  
Thus I'll move and live and grow  
in you and you in me.

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### Blessing – Ann Blundell

Until we can gather face to face,  
Until we can sing side by side,  
Until we can recover something of our normality,  
May God reveal himself to each of us in the love we have for one another.  
And in that love may we find peace.  
And may God bless us all, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.  
Amen