

Sunday 4th July 2021

WELCOME

God said world

God said, God said world,
God said world and the world spun round.
God said, God said light,
God said light and the light beamed down.
God said night and the sky went black,
God said land and the sea rolled back.
God said, God said world,
God said world and the world spun round.
God said leaf and the shoot pushed through,
God said fin and the first fish grew,
God said beak and the big bird soared,
God said fur and the jungle roared.
God said breath and Adam stood there,
God said life and Eve breathed air,
God said good and the world was great,
God said rest and they all slept late.

HYMN 127 O worship the king all glorious above

O worship the king all glorious above, O gratefully sing his power and his love
Our shield and defender the Ancient of Days pavilioned in splendour and girded with praise

O tell of his might I sing of his grace whose robe is the light whose canopy space
His chariots of wrath the deep thunder clouds form and dark is his path on the wings of the storm

The earth with its store of wonders untold almighty thy power hath founded of old
Hath stablished it fast by a changeless decree and round it hath cast like a mantle the sea

Thy bountiful care what tongue can recite it breathes in the air it shines in the light
It streams from the hills it descends to the plain and sweetly distils in the dew and the rain

Frail children of dust and feeble as frail in thee do we trust nor find thee to fail
Thy mercies how tender how firm to the end our maker defender redeemer and friend

O measureless might ineffable love while angels delight to hymn thee above

The humbler creation though feeble their lays with true adoration shall sing to thy praise.

Robert Grant (1779 – 1838) from Psalm 104

PRAYER OF ADORATION AND CONFESSION

Steve Turner's hymn, which I read, is based on the Genesis story of God giving the gift of life to all creation. But all new beginnings are connected, The new life of our church community and our own new lives too. All new life comes from God. Life is the fruit of God's imagining and reimagining. God is reimagining the church and the world, our part is to imaginatively put Go's dream into action.

Metanonia is an important word in the New Testament, usually translated as 'repentance'. But repentance has a backward looking emphasis, while metanonia is about a community or individual being willing and praying to have a consciousness about God and their current place and time.

The prayer we are about to share uses the phrase 'new mind we need to serve the world in it's need today'. This is 'Metanoia' in English.

Prayer by Rt Rev Dr Marc Handley Andrus from Rage and hope, a book celebrating Christian Aid.

We pray:

Loving God, who is ever brining forth the new, sending your Spirit over the earth to give the gift of new life, we pray to you to work in our hearts. We are open, O God of Creation, to receive the new mindwe need to serve the world in its need today. Letting go of all that we have known in the past that has comforted us and made us feel secure, we face the moment we are in with simple trust in you. Breathe new life into us, O God, remake us and you world to fulfil your dream for all life. Amen

Our Father who art in Heaven Hallowed be Thy name, Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done On earth as it is in Heaven. Give us this day our daily bread Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom the power and the glory forever.

Amen

HYMN 516 We are marching in the light of God

We are marching in the light of God x 4

We are marching, marching we are marching oh ho

We are marching in the light of God x 2

We are living in the love of God x 4

We are living, living we are living oh ho

We are living in the power of God x 2

We are moving in the power of God x 4

We are moving, moving we are moving oh ho

We are moving in the power of God x 2

Xhosa (South African) traditional hymn adapted Anders Nyberg (b1955)

READING Mark 5:21-43. A Girl restored to Life and a Woman healed Read by Cath Henderson

When Jesus had crossed again in the boat to the other side, a great crowd gathered round him; and he was by the lake. Then one of the leaders of the synagogue named Jairus came and, when he saw him, fell at his feet and begged him repeatedly, 'My little daughter is at the point of death. Come and lay your hands on her, so that she may be made well, and live.' So he went with him.

And a large crowd followed him and pressed in on him. Now there was a woman who had been suffering from haemorrhages for twelve years. She had endured much under many physicians, and had spent all that she had; and she was no better, but rather grew worse. She had heard about Jesus, and came up behind him in the crowd and touched his cloak, for she said, 'If I but touch his clothes, I will be made well.' Immediately her haemorrhage stopped; and she felt in her body that she was healed of her disease. Immediately aware that power had gone forth from him, Jesus turned about in the crowd and said, 'Who touched my clothes?' And his disciples said to him, 'You see the crowd pressing in on you; how can you say, "Who touched me?"' He looked all round to see who had done it. But the woman, knowing what had happened to her, came in fear and trembling, fell down before him, and told him the whole truth. He said to her, 'Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace, and be healed of your disease.'

While he was still speaking, some people came from the leader's house to say, 'Your daughter is dead. Why trouble the teacher any further?' But overhearing what they said, Jesus said to the leader of the synagogue, 'Do not fear, only believe.' He allowed no one to follow him except Peter, James, and John, the brother of James. When they came to the house of the leader of the synagogue, he saw a commotion, people weeping and wailing loudly. When he had entered, he said to them, 'Why do you make a commotion and weep? The child is not dead but sleeping.' And they laughed at him. Then he put them all outside, and took the child's father and mother and those who were with him, and went in where the child was. He took her by the hand and said to her, 'Talitha cum', which means, 'Little girl, get up!' And immediately the girl got up and began to walk about (she was twelve years of age). At this they were overcome with amazement. He strictly ordered them that no one should know this, and told them to give her something to eat.

Hymn - God's Delight

Woman stooping, bent and burdened,

Eyes downcast towards the ground,

Jesus beckons you to freedom,

Lift your head and gaze around.

Sister, you are God's delight,

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Tall and grace-full in God's sight!

Woman, drained of life's sweet forces,
Ebbing vital strength away,
Touch his robe, soak in his power,
Jesus makes you whole today.
Sister, you are God's delight,
Health and dignity your right!

Woman, trapped by expectations,
Plaster saint or dutious slave,
Jesus offers choice and challenge,
Break the mould, be bold and brave.
Sister, you are God's delight,
Live the life and fight the fight!

Woman, self-abasing, fearful,
Clinging to your Master's feet,
Set him free – he longs to raise you,
In new life your Lord to greet.
Sister, you are God's delight,
Shout God's praise with all your might!

Text: © 2002 Gillian Collins Metre: 87.87.77. Suggested tunes: All Saints (StF 725; H&P 60ii); Fortunatus New (StF 643)

REFLECTION

“Life is a gift.” The words of a patient I met in hospital. She told me how on realising how ill she was she set about finding her father. When she eventually succeeded, she said she had come to say thank you.

“What for? I was rubbish. Foul for the brief time I was around.” “You gave me the gift of life, so thank you for my life.”

As we were married for 10 years before our first child put in an appearance, I would say that conception doesn't just require an egg and sperm, but also the gracious gift of life from God. That gracious gift of life continues through growth in the womb, birth, infancy, childhood, adolescence, adulthood and on into old age. We almost expect this to happen, and life to continue to three score years and ten. However, all of life is a gift.

The patient's father was not, for whatever reason, in a position to appreciate something Jairus really understood. The gift of life is not just for the baby, but also for all those who will love and share that life.

Have you watched a child approach a cliff and wanted to scream at them “come back! Don't go near the edge!” Maybe like me you have been told “Mum, I'm miles away. Stop fussing.” Jairus wasn't fussing.

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He wanted the gift of his daughter's life to continue. He understood that Jesus could bring God's gracious gift to his family.

That Life is a Gift from God is shown in the impossible happening, the dead daughter got up and was hungry. Desperation and desolation were replaced by joy and wonder.

In John 10:10 we read that Jesus said, "I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full."

We tend to think of this as life in the Spirit, of Jesus work of redemption and salvation. Today's story of a woman who had been bleeding for 12 years, is about physical and social life. She had been feeling rough for 12 years. She had been cut off from society for 12 years. She had spent all her money trying to get well, and failed. Life had not felt like a gift, more a battle. She had been alive, but after Jesus said to her, 'Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace, and be healed of your disease.' She could walk tall and enjoy life. She could chat with her neighbours face to face. She had energy and could look forward in confidence. Life had a new social and physical fullness.

These two encounters in Jesus earthly life hold out a promise of healing, but beg the questions, "Why them?" "What about me?" "What about my loved one?"

And the answers are not easy, sometimes unknowable, sometimes healing.

There were other children dying in the places Jesus walked through. There were other people with life restricting diseases.

Jesus did and does have the power to heal.

Part of God's gift of life is the NHS and the great advances that there have been in medicine. The NHS and prayer have seen me through childhood asthma, two emergency caesarean sections and last year's bicycle accident. Both babies are alive and well in their thirties. You all have reason to thank God for the NHS and modern medicine.

Now Jairus, his wife and daughter are long dead as is the woman whom Jesus healed. We want every pregnancy to produce a healthy baby who sails through life to die peacefully at a ripe old age. That is not how life happens.

Let's go back to the beginning, Life is a Gift.

I am sure you have all received a gift, opened it and thought "what am I supposed to do with that!" while smiling and saying, "thank you it's lovely." Life is not a gift to put in a cupboard until you can find a use for it. Life is for living, for enjoying. We need to make the most of it today, tomorrow may be too late.

Jesus came so that we could have full and abundant life. One of the children's activities this week was to make a bookmark with a prayer on it. "Loving God. Thank you that wherever I am, whatever the time, I can pray about anything, no matter how big or small. Amen." When we are wondering how to live the abundant life we are given, we too can talk with God about it.

After periods of activity and excitement in our lives, life narrows. Covid restrictions have meant that life has narrowed for many. Illness and aging may narrow our lives in many different ways. Healing may come in finding meaning and God in a different abundance.

HYMN 530 One more step

One more step along the world I go One more step along the world I go

From the old things to the new keep me travelling along with you

And it's from the old I travel to the new, keep me travelling along with you

Round the corner of the world I turn more and more about the world I learn

All the new things that I see You'll be looking at along with me

And . . .

As I travel through the bad and good keep me travelling the way I should

Where I see no way to go You'll be telling me the way, I know

And . . .

Give me courage when the world is rough keep me loving though the world is tough

Leap and sing in all I do keep me travelling along with you

And . . .

You are older that the world can be You are younger that the life in me

Ever old and ever new keep me travelling along with you

And . . .

Sydney Bertram Carter (1915 -2004)

PRAYER OF INTERCESSION

Susan White

Living God

We thank you for your gracious gift to us of life, for sending Jesus so that we may have life, and have it to the full. You are the alpha and the omega, the beginning and the end, and we praise you.

We bring before you the narrowing of our own lives and of those who are close to us. *Silence*. Help us to find in narrower circumstances the abundance of life known in you.

Healing God

We thank you for modern medicine and all those who contribute to the health of our nation and the world. We thank you for the NHS and for all who work in it. Continue to sustain them as they work through this Covid crisis and the needs that have been met while the crisis was making such demands. May we as individuals and as a nation be clear in our gratitude and praise.

We bring before you those we know who are ill and name them in our hearts. *Silence*. May they know hope, love and peace in their hearts and relief in their bodies.

Creator God,

We thank you for the wonders of your creation, things we see and hear and smell, and people and things we will never experience. You provide abundantly, but we grab for ourselves and squander earth's riches, leaving millions to face hunger.

Open our eyes, hearts and minds to the needs of our sisters and brothers across the world. To be generous to those in need. Help us to join our voices in solidarity with those who suffer poverty or injustice and to work for a kinder world.

Loving God,

We thank you for the fellowship we enjoy in Ashkirk, Ettrick and Yarrow and Selkirk churches. We thank you for the witness of your church, proclaiming in word and action that Jesus came that they may have life, and have it to the full.

May we as individuals, as a church and churches across the country proclaim the abundance of life which is your gift. Put your love in our hearts so we may love you, each other and all our neighbours to your glory.

Amen

HYMN 519 Love divine all loves excelling

Love divine all loves excelling, joy of heaven to earth come down

Fix in us thy humble dwelling all thy faithful mercies crown

Jesus thou art all compassion pure unbounded love thou art

Visit us with thy salvation enter every trembling heart

Come almighty to deliver let us all thy life receive

Suddenly return and never, never more thy temples leave

Thee we would be always blessing serve thee as thy hosts above

Pray and praise thee without ceasing, glory in thy perfect love

Finish then thy new creation pure and spotless let us be

Let us see thy great salvation perfectly restored in thee

Changed from glory into glory till in heaven we take our place

Till we cast our crowns before thee lost in wonder love and praise

Charles Wesley (1707 – 1788)

BENEDICTION

Loving God, As we live the lives you have given us, may we share your love with those we can and find your abundance in life as it is. Amen

We live through the love and grace of God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit, ever with us. Amen