

**Garston Park Church, St James Church and Hub 361 are all saddened by being unable to come together and worship in our buildings this week. However, our denominations have offered us some prayers to use. As we hold one another in our thoughts and prayers, may God lead us safely through this difficult time.**

**God Bless and keep us all, Peter**

**From the United Reformed Church**

**‘God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.’ Psalm 46:1, NRSV**

Let us pray with people left unwell, beckoned by death or bereaved;

people providing professional health care and advice, looking after loved ones at home or working to create treatments and cures;

people shaping the response of nations and neighbourhoods, of commerce and industry, of service and voluntary organisations and of communities of faith; people who are anxious or afraid, alone or isolated.

Living, loving God, we praise you, and through times of peril we lean into you,  
for in Jesus Christ you have trodden paths as difficult as ours,  
revealing there a love that nothing defeats, a love that bears us through.

Even as we strive to behave responsibly, and to care reliably,  
so we feel after you that in these uncertain times we might trust you are with us,  
our refuge and strength, and our faith, hope and love might be renewed, through Jesus Christ,  
**Amen.**

**From the Methodist Church**

**We should not be afraid “For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love.”  
2 Timothy 1:7.**

God of all hope we call on you today.

We pray for those who are living in fear:

Fear of illness, fear for loved ones, fear of other’s reactions to them.

May your Spirit give us a sense of calmness and peace.

We pray for your church in this time of uncertainty.

For those who will feel more isolated by not being able to attend Worship.

Holy God, we remember that you have promised that

Nothing will separate us from your love – demonstrated to us in Jesus Christ.

Help us turn our eyes, hearts and minds to you.

**Amen**

**Worship Services can be found on line at:**

**Worship from Wesley’s Chapel:**

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCUAUqhmhevz5sqhh72LIMxA>

**Worship From the URC:**

<https://devotions.urb.org.uk/devotions/2020/03/17/sunday-worship-during-the-pandemic/>

## A Service you can use at home:

**Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2020**

This short act of worship has been prepared for you to use if you are unable to attend church. 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**

As I come before you Jesus, open my eyes that I might truly see you as my shepherd, comforter, and redeemer. I want to be with others worshipping you but this is not possible, yet I know that I am being prayed for as part of the community of faith. Thank you for this time where I remember you are with me. Amen.

### **Hymn: Amazing Grace (Singing the Faith 440)**

Sing/ Read /pray /proclaim the words or listen to it here <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Tvt6E9N7AQw>

- 1 **Amazing grace -- how sweet the sound --  
that saved a wretch like me!  
I once was lost, but now am found,  
was blind, but now I see.**
- 2 **God's grace has taught my heart to fear,  
his grace my fears relieved;  
how precious did that grace appear  
the hour I first believed!**
- 3 **Through many dangers, toils and snares  
I have already come;  
God's grace has brought me safe thus far,  
and grace will lead me home.**
- 4 **The Lord has promised good to me,  
his word my hope secures;  
he will my shield and portion be  
as long as life endures.**
- 5 **And, when this heart and flesh shall fail  
and mortal life shall cease,  
I shall possess within the veil  
a life of joy and peace.**
- 6 **When we've been there ten thousand years  
bright shining as the sun,  
we've no less days to sing God's praise  
than when we first begun.**

John Newton (1725-1807) (alt.)  
Reproduced from Singing the Faith Electronic Words Edition, number 440

Let us pray together

Lord, I worship you today. Help me to see your calling in my life.  
Open my eyes to what is possible when I see things through the eyes of your Son.  
Forgive what is passed, protect me from all that is to come

**Today's Reading from the Old Testament** 1 Samuel 16: 1-13

**Today's Gospel Reading:** John 9:1-41

"Jesus heard that they had thrown him [the blind man] out, and when he found him, he said, "Do you believe in the Son of Man?" "Who is he, sir?" the man asked. "Tell me so that I may believe in him." Jesus said, "You have now seen him; in fact, he is the one speaking with you." Then the man said, "Lord, I believe," and he worshiped him " John 9:35-38

## Time to Reflect

*“Through many dangers, toils, and snares I have already come; God’s grace has brought me safe thus far, and grace will lead me home. The Lord has promised good to me, his word my hope secures; he will my shield and portion be as long as life endures”.*

When I was a teenager, I went through Confirmation Exercises in the local Anglican Church. I remember thinking how wonderful that Jesus would go through what he went through for the whole world. I was saddened and shocked by the way he was treated by not only his fellow Jews but also by the Romans. It wasn’t until several years later that I realized Jesus died for me personally, not just the whole world. It was for my sin too that Jesus had died. It was as if the scales fell off my eyes and I could finally see clearly. The Pharisees were becoming increasingly hostile toward Jesus, so hearing of this miracle, they cross questioned the man who was born blind. In verse 24 and 25, they summon the man and say, “Swear to God to tell us the truth! We know the man who healed you is a sinful man! Do you agree?” The healed man replied, “I have no idea what kind of man he is. All I know is that I was blind and now I can see for the first time in my life!”

Our youngest grandchild, Theo was diagnosed with many health-related problems. Developmentally he was delayed and although almost two years old now, he is not speaking, although making noises. He is beginning to pull himself up and walk holding on to the sidewalls. However, what made the biggest difference in Theo’s life was finding out he needed glasses. My daughter, Joyce sent us a video of Theo donning his red framed plastic glasses. We saw him seeing and focusing on his mother’s face. His countenance beamed, as he was able to register what he was looking at for probably the first time in his young life.

The blind man looking at Jesus’ face said, “Lord, I believe.” He could now see not only others and the world around him, but he could see Jesus clearly. Contemplate on when you have seen Jesus, not just as a good teacher, or as an historical person but as the One who knows you, loves you, and hears your every prayer.

Take a time to sit quietly

## A time of prayer

*All seeing, all knowing God I call on you today. May your Spirit give your world a sense of calm and peace in these difficult times.*

*On this Mothering Sunday, we pray for all Mums. The good ones and the not so good. We remember all those who would have liked to have children but for whatever reason could not.*

*We pray for your church in this time of uncertainty:*

*For those people who are worried about leaving their home and those who cannot.*

*For those needing to make decisions in order to care for other.*

*We pray for carers, doctors and nurses.*

*We continue to pray for those who will feel more isolated by not being able to attend and act of worship today.*

**I especially want to pray for .....**

*Holy God,*

**Present with us now, guide me in all I do and say – that it might reflect your love for the world.**

**Through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen**

*The Lord’s Prayer*

*Our Father .....*

*Hymn: Listen to <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1Hrh4IMgn-g> or sing a verse of a hymn that comes to mind*

## A prayer of blessing

Lord, I commit myself to you today. At the end of this day, may I see you more clearly and love you more dearly, and follow you closer. **Amen.**

Original Materials by Heather Wilson and Paul Wood

### 1 Samuel 16: 1-13

The Lord said to Samuel, 'How long will you grieve over Saul? I have rejected him from being king over Israel. Fill your horn with oil and set out; I will send you to Jesse the Bethlehemite, for I have provided for myself a king among his sons.' Samuel said, 'How can I go? If Saul hears of it, he will kill me.' And the Lord said, 'Take a heifer with you, and say, "I have come to sacrifice to the Lord." Invite Jesse to the sacrifice, and I will show you what you shall do; and you shall anoint for me the one whom I name to you.' Samuel did what the Lord commanded, and came to Bethlehem. The elders of the city came to meet him trembling, and said, 'Do you come peaceably?' He said, 'Peaceably; I have come to sacrifice to the Lord; sanctify yourselves and come with me to the sacrifice.' And he sanctified Jesse and his sons and invited them to the sacrifice.

When they came, he looked on Eliab and thought, 'Surely the Lord's anointed is now before the Lord.' But the Lord said to Samuel, 'Do not look on his appearance or on the height of his stature, because I have rejected him; for the Lord does not see as mortals see; they look on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart.' Then Jesse called Abinadab, and made him pass before Samuel. He said, 'Neither has the Lord chosen this one.' Then Jesse made Shammah pass by. And he said, 'Neither has the Lord chosen this one.' Jesse made seven of his sons pass before Samuel, and Samuel said to Jesse, 'The Lord has not chosen any of these.' Samuel said to Jesse, 'Are all your sons here?' And he said, 'There remains yet the youngest, but he is keeping the sheep.' And Samuel said to Jesse, 'Send and bring him; for we will not sit down until he comes here.' He sent and brought him in. Now he was ruddy, and had beautiful eyes, and was handsome. The Lord said, 'Rise and anoint him; for this is the one.' Then Samuel took the horn of oil, and anointed him in the presence of his brothers; and the spirit of the Lord came mightily upon David from that day forward. Samuel then set out and went to Ramah.

### John 9: 1-41

As he walked along, he saw a man blind from birth. His disciples asked him, 'Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?' Jesus answered, 'Neither this man nor his parents sinned; he was born blind so that God's works might be revealed in him. We must work the works of him who sent me while it is day; night is coming when no one can work. As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.' When he had said this, he spat on the ground and made mud with the saliva and spread the mud on the man's eyes, saying to him, 'Go, wash in the pool of Siloam' (which means Sent). Then he went and washed and came back able to see. The neighbours and those who had seen him before as a beggar began to ask, 'Is this not the man who used to sit and beg?' Some were saying, 'It is he.' Others were saying, 'No, but it is someone like him.' He kept saying, 'I am the man.' But they kept asking him, 'Then how were your eyes opened?' He answered, 'The man called Jesus made mud, spread it on my eyes, and said to me, "Go to Siloam and wash." Then I went and washed and received my sight.' They said to him, 'Where is he?' He said, 'I do not know.'

They brought to the Pharisees the man who had formerly been blind. Now it was a sabbath day when Jesus made the mud and opened his eyes. Then the Pharisees also began to ask him how he had received his sight. He said to them, 'He put mud on my eyes. Then I washed, and now I see.' Some of the Pharisees said, 'This man is not from God, for he does not observe the sabbath.' But others said, 'How can a man who is a sinner perform such signs?' And they were divided. So they said again to the blind man, 'What do you say about him? It was your eyes he opened.' He said, 'He is a prophet.'

The Jews did not believe that he had been blind and had received his sight until they called the parents of the man who had received his sight and asked them, 'Is this your son, who you say was born blind? How then does he now see?' His parents answered, 'We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind; but we do not know how it is that now he sees, nor do we know who opened his eyes. Ask him; he is of age. He will speak for himself.' His parents said this because they were afraid of the Jews; for the Jews had already agreed that anyone who confessed Jesus to be the Messiah would be put out of the synagogue. Therefore his parents said, 'He is of age; ask him.'

So for the second time they called the man who had been blind, and they said to him, 'Give glory to God! We know that this man is a sinner.' He answered, 'I do not know whether he is a sinner. One thing I do know, that though I was blind, now I see.' They said to him, 'What did he do to you? How did he open your eyes?' He answered them, 'I have told you already, and you would not listen. Why do you want to hear it again? Do you also want to become his disciples?' Then they reviled him, saying, 'You are his disciple, but we are disciples of Moses. We know that God has spoken to Moses, but

as for this man, we do not know where he comes from.' The man answered, 'Here is an astonishing thing! You do not know where he comes from, and yet he opened my eyes. We know that God does not listen to sinners, but he does listen to one who worships him and obeys his will. Never since the world began has it been heard that anyone opened the eyes of a person born blind. If this man were not from God, he could do nothing.' They answered him, 'You were born entirely in sins, and are you trying to teach us?' And they drove him out.

Jesus heard that they had driven him out, and when he found him, he said, 'Do you believe in the Son of Man?' He answered, 'And who is he, sir? Tell me, so that I may believe in him.' Jesus said to him, 'You have seen him, and the one speaking with you is he.' He said, 'Lord, I believe.' And he worshipped him. Jesus said, 'I came into this world for judgement so that those who do not see may see, and those who do see may become blind.' Some of the Pharisees near him heard this and said to him, 'Surely we are not blind, are we?' Jesus said to them, 'If you were blind, you would not have sin. But now that you say, "We see", your sin remains.

## Opening Prayer

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