



# Church Alive

## Worship

### for Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> September



Welcome to our Church Alive service. Whilst we are not all together in church, we are together in spirit. We have tried to adapt our normal service from screen to paper and have provided links to music where possible if you would like to sing. *A big thank you to Debbie Thomson for recording the songs for us. These can be found on our YouTube channel with the links under the title – just hover and click on it*

Paul explains his personal struggles to the Philippians. He says that their struggles are like his. He wants to appear encouraging and commends them for their approach to life in the faith.

**Opening Song:** Holy Spirit, Living Breath of God  
<https://youtu.be/wmO2EwpKKNc>

1. Holy Spirit, living breath of God,  
Breathe new life into my willing soul.  
Let the presence of the risen Lord,  
Come renew my heart and make me whole.  
Cause Your Word to come alive in me;  
Give me faith for what I cannot see,  
Give me passion for Your purity;  
Holy Spirit, breathe new life in me.

2. Holy Spirit, come abide within,  
May Your joy be seen in all I do.  
Love enough to cover every sin,  
In each thought and deed and attitude.  
Kindness to the greatest and the least,  
Gentleness that sows the path of peace.  
Turn my strivings into works of grace;  
Breath of God show Christ in all I do.

3. Holy Spirit, from creation's birth,  
Giving life to all that God has made,  
Show Your power once again on earth,  
Cause Your church to hunger for your ways.  
May the fragrance of our prayers arise;  
Lead us on the road of sacrifice,  
That in unity the face of Christ  
May be clear for all the world to see.

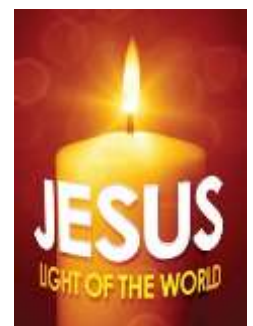


### Thanksgiving

What would you like to say thank you to God for today and this week?  
Take a moment to say thank you now.

**Opening Prayer:** *If you are able, and it is safe to do so, light a candle at this point*

Lord, we light this candle, to remind  
us that you are the light of the world.  
As we gather together in spirit,  
make our voices ready to sing your praise;  
our hearts open to receive your love  
and our minds alive to your Spirit.  
Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.



## **We seek God's healing and forgiveness**

We come to God as one from whom no secrets are hidden, to ask for his forgiveness and peace.

Almighty God, we don't always know how we got to where we are, and we certainly don't always know where we are going; we don't always choose the right path, and we certainly don't always follow it;  
**Forgive us, reassure us and cradle us within your forgiveness.**

we don't always deal well with the struggles of life, and we don't always give thanks for the joys of life either;

**Forgive us, reassure us and cradle us within your forgiveness.**

we don't always think of the effects that our choices cause to others, near and far. We are too often selfish, wanting what we want no matter what the cost to others.

**Forgive us, reassure us and cradle us within your forgiveness**

## **We hear words assuring us of God's forgiveness**

May almighty God have mercy on us,  
forgive us our sins, and bring us to everlasting life,  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

**Amen.**

**Bible Reading** – Philippians 1:21-30, **Life worthy of the gospel**, New International Version - UK (NIV-UK).

<sup>21</sup> For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain. <sup>22</sup> If I am to go on living in the body, this will mean fruitful labour for me. Yet what shall I choose? I do not know! <sup>23</sup> I am torn between the two: I desire to depart and be with Christ, which is better by far; <sup>24</sup> but it is more necessary for you that I remain in the body. <sup>25</sup> Convinced of this, I know that I will remain, and I will continue with all of you for your progress and joy in the faith, <sup>26</sup> so that through my being with you again your boasting in Christ Jesus will abound on account of me.

<sup>27</sup> Whatever happens, conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ. Then, whether I come and see you or only hear about you in my absence, I will know that you stand firm in the one Spirit,<sup>[a]</sup> striving together as one for the faith of the gospel <sup>28</sup> without being frightened in any way by those who oppose you. This is a sign to them that they will be destroyed, but that you will be saved – and that by God. <sup>29</sup> For it has been granted to you on behalf of Christ not only to believe in him, but also to suffer for him, <sup>30</sup> since you are going through the same struggle you saw I had, and now hear that I still have.

**Introducing the Theme & Learning Spaces** *Not being able to break out into our learning spaces, here are a few thoughts about the theme for today prepared by Brenda. For young people you can use the Children's and Youth sheets that are being sent out separately.*

Today's story finds Paul writing his letter to the Philippians from his prison cell. He had been imprisoned for preaching the gospel and this situation makes his words particularly vivid. He sees death, far from being an evil, to be a welcome passport to complete salvation and glory in Christ. Death would free him from the life he had in prison and he wishes that he could choose death.

However, Paul cares for the people in the church at Philippi and he chooses to stand by them. This is the mark of a true Christian leader, for whom personal desires must take second place.

Both Paul and Jesus experienced the violent reaction to the gospel and this in itself shows the power of the message of the 'good news' to love God and love our neighbour. This powerful message continues to be preached in our churches and many suffer persecution throughout the world for choosing to be Christians today. As fellow Christians we are challenged to stand alongside those who suffer for their faith. Persecution is transformed when it is seen in the context of the gospel. How can we support their choice?

**All Age Creative – Rough with the smooth** to consider how life has smooth and bumpy parts



Set up a sensory walk – if possible outside. If inside, use textures like cardboard, cloth and smooth flooring to walk on. Take off your shoes and socks and walk along the path you have created, experiencing the different sensations of the surfaces you are walking over. Think about the different sensations you felt along the path. Which were their best bits? Which were their worst? Reflect on how, on the path of our lives, we have good, easy times as well as some bumpy, difficult times. Whatever stage we're going through, it's good to know that God and other people are walking with us.

**Picture Reflection** – prepared by Brenda



Spend a few minutes with this strange image.

What comes into your mind when you look at the different possible paths to follow?

Reflect on how this image is like our lives where we are constantly bombarded with a confusion of choices....

When was the last time you had to make a difficult choice?

What can we do to help us make good decisions for the way forward?

How is it helpful to know that Jesus and Paul were also faced with making difficult choices?

**Song:** Father God, I Wonder – we sing it through twice  
<https://youtu.be/Du7WO2cMVoY>

Father God, I wonder  
how I managed to exist  
Without the knowledge of your parenthood  
and your loving care..  
But now I am your child,  
I am adopted in your family,  
And I can never be alone,  
'Cause Father God, you're there beside me.

*I will sing your praises  
I will sing your praises  
I will sing your praises  
Forever more  
Repeat*

**O Lord, Hear Our Prayers** *Here are a few suggested pics for you to pray about. If you have specific prayers you would like included in future weeks then do send them to Linda and she will add them in*

We pray for...

*We pray for....*

*God's world:* We pray for places where intentional and accidental misuse of resources, uprising and violence have led to brokenness, injustice and inequality, especially praying for the people of Lebanon and the Middle East.

*Our communities:* We pray for this parish of West End, Townhill and Harefield.  
For the communities where we live, play, and work.  
We pray for those communities around the UK who are facing further restrictions in the fight against the Coronavirus  
Jesus cared for people of different ethnicities and cultures, may we be open-hearted in our attitudes, thoughts and speech, so sharing Jesus' inclusive love with all.

*God's church:* We pray for the global Church, for all who witness and worship in Jesus' name: Bless this your church of St James', draw others to come and see and know you. Grant all those who on holiday at this time refreshment and fun on their holiday, and through our own lives may we be ready to step out in service and mission.

*All who are sick:* We offer prayers for all who are struggling with frailty and illness. Lord of life, bless with peace of body and mind everyone who calls on your name, and send your mercy on all whose earthly life is drawing to a close.

*For those who have died:* may they rest in peace and rise in glory.  
Comfort those who mourn and all unable to attend funerals to say their farewells because of the restrictions in place, not forgetting all whose world has changed immeasurably following the death of a loved one.

*Thanksgiving:* Lord, we give thanks that you are always there for us and never send us away. Strengthen our faith, teach us to be patient and yet persistent in discovering your will for our lives, grant us your comfort and hope for the future.

Merciful Father, accept these prayers for the sake of your son, our Saviour, Jesus Christ. Amen

**We say 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.  
Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.  
For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours,  
now and for ever. Amen.

**Song:** Sent By the Lord Am I (sang through twice)

<https://youtu.be/VqI2RTgCR2U>

Sent by the Lord am I;  
My hands are ready now  
To make the earth a place  
In which the kingdom comes. (Repeat)

The angels cannot change  
A world of hurt and pain  
Into a world of love,  
Of justice and of peace.

The task is mine to do,  
To set it really free.  
O help me to obey;  
Help me to do your will.

**Sending Out Prayer**

Lord, give us a way to go,  
a path to follow,  
a purpose to fulfil  
and meaning to our deeds.  
**Amen.**

**The Peace**

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord  
**In the name of Christ. Amen**

