**Our Dancing God**

This week’s worship has been prepared by John Green of Berkley Street Methodist Church, Eynesbury, St Neots

**Entering God’s presence**

Lord God, faithful and loving, we do not always feel like rejoicing. Even as we gather to worship you, our minds are sometimes distracted and elsewhere, weighed down by the burdens of our lives. Help us, in this moment, to find it within our hearts to REJOICE in your constancy and loving care for us. As your People of God, let us rejoice. **Amen.**

**Be Thou my vision, O lord of my heart** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3lgeOLmoNIY>

**4.Riches I heed not, nor man's empty praise,
Thou mine inheritance, through all my days:
Thou and Thou only, the first in my heart,
High King of Heaven, my treasure Thou art.

5.High King of Heaven when the battle is done,
Grant Heaven's joy to me, bright heaven's sun!
Christ of my own heart, whatever befall,
Still be thou my vision, O Ruler of all**

**1.Be Thou my vision, O lord of my heart;
Nought be all else to me, save that Thou art;
Thou my best thought, in the day and the night,
Waking or sleeping, Thy presence my light.

2.Be Thou my wisdom, be Thou my true word;
I ever with Thee, and Thou with me Lord;
Thou my Great Father, and I Thy true son;
Thou in me dwelling and I with Thee one.

3.Be Thou my breast-plate, my sword for the fight;
Be Thou my armour, and be Thou my might.
Thou my soul's shelter, and Thou my high tower:
Raise Thou me Heavenward, O power of my power.**

**Prayer**

Eternal God, so often we give up if something goes wrong or doesn’t go our way. So often we are overwhelmed by our own problems that we forget to look out for others. So often we are consumed with negatives and endings that we lose sight of the positives and beginnings. Eternal God, forgive us for our self-centredness, our blindness and our deafness, and reawaken your Spirit within us

Lord God, we never know what the future holds or where life will take us next. We never know what is just around the corner and what the outcomes of things will be. But we know that whatever follows on from this moment, you are here with us, by our side, above and beneath us, entwining your life with ours, surpassing all human understanding. In this moment, bless us and awaken us to your abiding presence.

For eternal hope that comes from you, almighty God, **we give you thanks and praise.**
For your gentleness and compassion… **we give you thanks and praise.**
For your peace within… **we give you thanks and praise.**
For your light in the darkness… **we give you thanks and praise.**
For hope when all seems hopeless… **we give you thanks and praise.**
For love beyond measure… **we give you thanks and praise.**
**Amen**.

**God’s word:** Read one or more of these passages: Amos 5.6-7, 10-15, Psalm 90.12-17, **Hebrews 4. 12-16 Mark 10.17-31** Undoubtedly, currently, we live in worrying and challenging times. If it is not the Coronavirus, or Brexit, daily we hear of wars, flooding, fires, or demonstrations. However, throughout time there have been disasters of wars of one kind or another perhaps because of mass communication it arrives on our television screens or doorsteps almost immediately.

Yes, we have seen huge technological advances but has that made us happier, or contented? “The Dalai Lama when asked what surprised him most about humanity he answered: “Man’ because he sacrifices his health to make money, then sacrifices money to recuperate his health. And then, he is so anxious about the future, that he does not enjoy the present or the future; he lives as if he is never going to die, and then dies having never really lived”.

As Christians we can still feel vulnerable even overwhelmed with what is going on around us, perhaps even asking ourselves where is God? Yet it is these same experiences, with God’s help,by facing times of darkness provide the tools in which to grow; without them there would be no depth as a human being, no humility, no compassion. Suffering, cracks open the shell of our ego and then comes the point when it has served its purpose. Suffering is necessary until we realise it is unnecessary.

Although sometimes it can be a lonely journey it is one which is shared with Jesus who has travelled the journey ahead of us on the cross.

We also have God’s word not only in written form but his personal pledge and commitment as the writer from Hebrews confirms when he impresses upon his readers the reality of God by repeating the phrase ‘the living God’.

The Prison Phoenix Trust is an organisation which supports prisoners in their rehabilitation through meditation, yoga, silence and use of the breath all of which is sensitively tailored to student’s needs. In their monthly newsletter they mention about “spotting the true yogi” which is not what they do on their mats or what their body shape is like, but rather how they are doing in everyday life particularly when in some cases in lockdown for 23 hours.

Our reading from Hebrews also confirms God’s word is ‘living and active’, bringing about the fulfilment of God’s will. Confirming that whilst God is ever near it is all searching penetrating like the sharpest sword into our innermost being, and in so doing judges the thoughts of our hearts and lays bare (literally, ‘grips by the neck’) our faithlessness. In this position of utter vulnerability, we are to be held accountable for our responses to God’s word. In this situation, we might well despair, but fortunately for us, we have ‘a great high priest Jesus’ who through the atonement on a cross ministers to us in our vulnerability. Also, because he has experienced it himself and passed through this human life without falling into sin enables us if we have been true to our allegiance to God and Jesus in word and truth we can stand before God not in judgement but in Grace.

Although God’s living word and presence can be “all searching” it can also be “comforting and reassuring” as it helps strengthen rather than decrease our faith, it is too, where we begin to view things from a different perspective as we gain greater insight about ourselves, others and Jesus.

As mentioned at the beginning we live in difficult and troubling times. Subsequently many have found different ways to deal with the stresses and strains of a hectic life by finding a panacea to cope. For example, signing up for a range of classes, yoga, keep fit, weight training, bike training, with the sole purpose through the activity to eliminate or reduce the stress. For others, their goal is directed towards creating the perfect body or alternatively to see how much pain they can tolerate, by pushing themselves to extremes. Even yoga, where they think you must become some sort of human pretzel or to enter out of body experiences. There is also the idea that you should suppress all your emotion and only radiate peacefulness and calm and that Yoga will make all your troubles go away. Yes, it is about bringing balance and harmony, working at your own pace and level to bring a sense of calm and peace so you can acknowledge and cope with the troubled and difficult times we all have to face.

There is a cue there for us, rather than looking inwards to look outwards by creating a sense of gratitude, thankfulness, joy, having a sense of humour. And, instead of us taking ourselves too seriously, being prepared to laugh more particularly with ourselves.

Creating a sense of “Freefall” where we are more light-hearted about things, not wanting to control things and where we stay with the moment without our own preconceived ideas. Being kind to ourselves and not being frustrated at what we cannot do.

Put in shorthand - putting ourselves on the “backburner” without denigrating or de-valuing ourselves. Our reading from Mark, the rich man highlights how he has missed the point as he puts all his emphasis on his riches in his belief that eternal life can be attained by his own endeavours by way of good deeds. Having said that, Jewish culture regarded riches as evidence of God’s favour. Jesus explains that although eternal life is available to the wealthy, only on condition that they turn their wealth into a source of blessing to the poor. By his own admission it was his wealth which stood between himself and eternal life. Peter’s protestation suggests that the disciples too, missed the point, by wondering what recompense would be given for all that they had sacrificed to follow Jesus. Jesus teaches them that Christian self-denial will result not in worldly wealth but in spiritual blessings in this present age – albeit with persecutions – and eternal life in the new age. His final warning is against being motivated by the hope of reward, rather than love. God sees through every false appearance of righteousness, measuring our statements of belief against our treatment of poor and vulnerable people. None of us is worthy of eternal life on our own merits; but if we genuinely seek to follow Jesus Christ, matching our words with our deeds, eternal life is ours by his grace.

It was St Symeon who said: Seek to know that at all times 'the Word is made flesh and dwells 'among us.' I know the Immoveable comes down: I know the Invisible appears to me. I know he is far outside the whole creation, Takes me within himself and hides me in his arms.   See then that he always comes in all places, and that He comes often in human form. We are discovering how everything that exists in this world is interlinked. Sometimes the links are there to see but more often they are to be sought out with great sensitivity. We need to discover that we are all part of one great whole. Seek to discover that God, Himself, dances in and through His creation, the very universe is dancing to rhythms set by Him: He is the Lord of the Dance.

There is no place whatsoever where God is not, He is to be found everywhere in all His fullness. Seek  not only to affirm his presence but to experience it; Learn to join the dance of the Lord of the Dance. Seek to experience the dynamic movement of God in our lives and in the world around us, continuously discovering that we are part of the dance of God and not to stop until we can say that we share in the dance of the Dancing God. Take time out to see some of the interlacing patterns and see them as to how God interweaves himself into our lives and our world.

Also take some time to think over the words from “The Lord of the Dance.”

I danced in the morning when the world was begun, I danced in the moon and the stars and the sun, and I came down from heaven and I danced on earth, at Bethlehem I had my birth Dance then wherever you may be; I am the Lord of the dance, said he, and I’ll lead you all in the dance,' said he. and l’ll lead you all wherever you may be.

Some of the early fathers described creation as the ‘Game of God'. Seek to discover the wisdom and word of God at play in and upon creation. Findout for yourself, that this hide and seek God waits for you to discover him. Respond to the divine, to' the numinous, that nods to you throughout creation. Let all your senses reverberate to his presence. Let your taste, touch, smell, hearing, and sight all seek to take part in the ‘game’. Develop your sensitivities that you may be able to say, “I have seen the Lord.” *Source: Eyes of the Eagle David Adam*

**Intercessory Prayers**

O God, we come to pray not for ourselves, but for each other – for those we know and those we don’t, for situations we understand and for those that confound us. The news tells us of trauma and heartache across the world and we try to grasp the intensity of it all.
**Bless, O Lord, all involved in the hurting and the healing**.
We hear of death and dying, of grieving and weeping **Bless, O Lord, all involved in the hurting and the healing**.
We hear of pain, scarring and disfigurement… **Bless, O Lord, all involved in the hurting and the healing**.
We hear of anguish and confusion… **Bless, O Lord, all involved in the hurting and the healing**.
We hear of those in need of help, and those who struggle to find it… **Bless, O Lord, all involved in the hurting and the healing**.
We hear of the grieving and the sorrowful… **Bless, O Lord, all involved in the hurting and the healing**.
We hear of the lost and the alone… **Bless, O Lord, all involved in the hurting and the healing**.
And we know, Lord, there are myriad others known only to you. **Bless, O Lord, all involved in the hurting and the healing**. **Amen. (Rootes) Lord’s Prayer:**

**Listen and Sing: Hymn** Give to me Lord a thankful heart <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o-xYrM8UVVA> **Alternative Hymn:** When my love grows weak <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pxi0iuoa5fc>

**1. Give to me, Lord, a thankful heart
And a discerning mind;
Give, as I play the Christian’s part,
The strength to finish what I start
And act on what I find.

2. When, in the rush of days, my will
Is habit bound and slow,
Help me to keep in vision, still,
What love and power and peace can fill
A life that trusts in you.**

**3. By your divine and urgent claim,
And by your human face,
Kindle our sinking hearts to flame,
And as you teach the world your name
Let it become your place.

4. Jesus, with all your church I long
To see your kingdom come:
Show me your way of righting wrong
And turning sorrow into song
Until you bring me home.**

**A closing thought**

“We all need to create and give life to our own personal relationship with God for then it will feel more like a voice or companion, just for you”.

**Blessing**:

We go our separate ways, Lord – perhaps with smiles or frowns; with our hopes and with fears; with answers but also questions; maybe crying and with heavy hearts; or with anxieties, or relief. We go our separate ways, Lord, but we never go alone. With thankful hearts, we share the journey of life with each other and with you. Be with us as we go. **Amen.**