**Worship sheet for Sunday 17th January 2021**

**Compiled by Pauline Zähner of Hilton Methodist Church**

**Be Thou My Vision**

**Call to Worship**

O Lord, as we come to you, renew our vision, the way we see you and the way we see others.

**Hymn:** SthF 136/ H&P 635 - Morning has broken <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=we-n-Zmglt0>

**Prayers of Praise, Confession and Thanksgiving**

Gracious God, Creator, who saw to it that our world is fruitful, good and beautiful, we praise you for your generosity in creation, your joy at creating and your abundance in provision for us.

Forgive us when we have failed to appreciate the beauty we can look at in the world and the hope we can see in nature and in your love. Forgive us when we fail to take care of your world and miss the opportunity to look after your creatures. Forgive us and help us to know that those who are truly sorry can receive forgiveness.

Lord, we pray for those we see around us who have helped us on our way, who have comforted us when we were grieving, guided us when we were lost and enabled us up when we were full of doubt. We thank you for their help and pray for them. Amen

The Lord’s Prayer: Our father …



**Readings:**

1. 1 Samuel 3 verses 1-10
2. John 1 verses 43-51

**Hymn:** SthF 666/ H&P 535 - Master speak! Thy servant heareth <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=raPJHiezEhw>

**Reflection**

Amongst the many achievements of Marie Curie was the wider use of mobile X-ray machines during the first world war. Men with shrapnel in their bodies were dying unnecessarily because surgeons and doctors were not always able to see where in the men’s bodies the offending shrapnel was. The mobile X-ray machines, sometimes called “petits Curies”, could be placed in the casualty clearing areas near the front line and allow medical teams to find out where the shrapnel lay and from where it needed to be removed. Through the use of such mobile units, doctors were able to save over 900,000 lives. X-rays, as we know, create images of the inside of the body. We might say that they bring light into the darkness and illuminate the issues of the patient.

Our Old Testament story of Samuel, set at night but also in a dark time in the history of God’s people, shows how even here God’s light can show up not just the failings of the past but God’s way forward for the future. The text is laced with irony. Eli has weak eyes and is nearly blind and yet he, eventually, sees that God is calling Samuel and the need and the way to teach Samuel how to respond to God. The lamp of God had not yet gone out but the reader is left with the impression that the light might go out at any moment. This is an indication of the reality that Eli, though he has not stopped worshipping God, has failed, for years, to see God’s work or visions or lead the people well. Sitting, as he does, near the light enables him to see what is happening when Samuel hears God’s call. The final irony is that the revelation which Eli has helped Samuel to hear and which Eli will subsequently expect Samuel to share with him will mark the undoing of Eli’s own family, including the sons who have committed terrible deeds.

John’s gospel also highlights not just physical sight but insight and seeing into the future. We hear of Jesus catching sight of Nathanael sitting under a fig tree, a spot of symbolic well-being in the Bible but we also experience Jesus seeing into the heart of Nathanael and knowing him and explaining to him that greater things will be revealed to Nathanael. When Nathanael gets close to Jesus physically and spiritually, he realises who Jesus is “Rabbi, you are the Son of God; you are the King of Israel”.

Both our Bible stories suggest to us that we will see more, develop our faith and understand better how to please God if we stand in his light, or to put it another way, if we get closer to God. Only then will we truly see who Jesus is. We can get closer to God by being attentive to God’s word in Scripture, by obeying his commands of love, by praying, by watching and waiting and by sharing his love with others.

**Prayers for Others**

We pray for those around us we see who are struggling, in pain, suffering or recently bereaved. We ask for healing, comfort and strength for them.

We pray for those whom we cannot see, who are working behind the scenes and often beyond their limits to care for others: those in hospitals, emergency services and in education and pray for relief for them from the strain of their work.

We pray for those whose insight, understanding and dedication has brought us solutions to alleviate the ferocity of Covid 19 and for those who have developed and produced the various vaccines. May they continue to receive the resources they need and continue to use their ingenuity, their inspiration and their creativity to continue to find further solutions to health issues. Amen

**Hymn:** SthF 545/ H&P 378 – Be thou my vision <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LY54pCBs-1o>

**Closing Prayer**

**Let us go i**n the love and strength of God, make a conscious effort to see God’s presence in our lives, to seek ways to enable and encourage others and to speak words that will inspire others. May we know that God loves us abundantly and see how to share generously the love we have received with those we encounter each day.

 **Amen.**