**Text

Description automatically generatedWorship sheet for Sunday 27th December 2020 Compiled by Pauline Zahner of Hilton Methodist Church**

**Call to Worship**: Meet us, O God, and open our eyes  
to see the eternal truths all around us,  
calling us into love and things that are everlasting. **Amen.**

# Hymn: Through all the changing scenes of life

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yBkorDtz1nU>

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**Today’s Theme:** **Reflecting on Worship**

**Opening Prayers of Praise and Confession**

We lift up our hands, our voices, our hearts and our lives to you in adoration.

God in your wisdom, you draw us in.

God in your compassion, you walk alongside us and give us hope

God in your love, you give us strength, perseverance and resilience for the journey of our life,

We praise you.

Forgive us Lord,

when we have failed to recognise you in others

when we have failed to share your love with those whom we meet

when we prefer to live a comfortable life than a life of service to you.

Forgive us and help us to know that those who are truly sorry can be forgiven.

Amen

A picture containing person, indoor, person, ceiling

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**Say the Lord’s Prayer:** Our father …

**Reflection**: Does this picture represent worship for you? Why (not)?

**Read:** Psalm 96 and reflect on how you worship.

**Read:** Luke 2: 22-38 and as you read the text ask yourself which kinds of worship we see here.

# Hymn: "Simeon's Song"  <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SHP-mMZVwUo>

The text from Luke 2 invites us to reflect on worship and gives us 3 models.

Mary and Joseph, both people of great faith, carry out the rituals of the Jewish laws. In accordance with the laws of Moses, they take their firstborn son to be presented at the Temple. They make the required sacrifice in accordance with their social status and financial circumstances and offer what is expected of poorer people: 2 doves or pigeons. As Jews presented their firstborn, they recall the moment of the deliverance of the Israelites from slavery. They follow the Jewish laws diligently and they ensure carefully that the rites are performed and rituals conducted in the required manner. This is a Jewish family who obey the rules and laws.

Simeon is open to and urged on by the Holy Spirit. He is righteous and devout, we are told. As he responds to God the Son and speaks to God the Sovereign Lord and Father, he seeks the deliverance of Israel and recognises in Jesus not just the Salvation of the Israelites but also the revelation for the Gentiles. The promise to him to see Christ before he died had been fulfilled. His receptiveness of the encouragement and direction by the Holy Spirit enables him, in his time of expectation, to seize the moment he has been waiting for.

Anna is a prophetess who expresses her worship in practical ways and lives out her faith in word and deed: in fasting and praying. She has lost everything: her husband, her way of life, her status. All that remained was her faith and diligent worship. Indeed, her life was worship and she devoted all day and night to her sacrificial worship which included fasting and prayer. She prays for the deliverance or redemption of Jerusalem whose Temple was in one piece at the time of the account of Jesus’s presentation but in pieces by the time Luke was writing his gospel. In her worship, Anna responds to Jesus in action: she thanks God and speaks of the child to all she meets.

We might like to claim that we are dutiful in applying the rituals of our tradition like Mary and Joseph, led by the Holy Spirit and responding in praise to God like Simeon and that we live out our faith in practical ways in our ordinary, everyday lives like Anna. As we look forward to the new year, this may be the time to ask ourselves which is the most important to us: rituals, being open to the Holy Spirit or living out our faith in our words and actions? Have we got the balance as God wants it or as it is most convenient to us? And if the latter, are there opportunities to help us redress the balance in the year ahead?

**Prayers of Thanks and Prayers for Others**

Lord we thank you for those, over many years, who have helped us to worship you: ministers, local preachers, parents, friends or members of the congregation of our own church. We thank you for their help and encouragement and pray that their work will be blessed.

We also pray for a blessing on those whom we help, by praying for them or by actions we take and support we give. We pray for those unable to worship as they would wish and pray for creativity and perseverance for them. Finally, we say a special pray for those persecuted for worshipping you. We pray for their security and freedom. Amen

**Hymn:** Brother, sister let me serve you: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ttW9oQ-yiuU>

**Final Prayer**: Lord, as we look forward to the year to come.  
Give us energy to seize its opportunities,  
the resilience to bear its disappointments,  
and openness to accept the more abundant life  
which you have promised to us in Jesus Christ our Lord.

Help us to live lives full of worship and service to you and our fellow people,

So that all may see, through us, your love.

Amen.