

**Winchester Eastleigh and Romsey Circuit  
Service at Home - Sunday 26 October 2025**

Prepared by Rev John Archer

**Call to Worship**

Grant us the grace, O God, to surrender the grievance that separates and the forgiveness that is withheld. Assure us that no sin is so great that it cannot be confessed, no wound so deep it cannot be healed, and no sinner so lost that grace cannot bring them home.

*William Booth (1829 – 1912)*

**Read pray or sing STF 34**

[O worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness StF 34](#)

1 O worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness,  
bow down before him, his glory proclaim;  
with gold of obedience and incense of  
lowliness,  
kneel and adore him: the Lord is his name.

2 Low at his feet lay your burden of  
carefulness,  
high on his heart he will bear it for you,  
comfort your sorrows, and answer your  
prayerfulness,  
showing the pathway your feet should  
pursue.

3 Fear not to enter his courts in the  
slenderness  
of the poor wealth you would count as your  
own;  
truth in its beauty, and love in its tenderness,  
these are the offerings to bring to his throne.

4 These, though we bring them in trembling  
and fearfulness,  
he will accept for the name that is dear;  
mornings of joy give for evenings of  
tearfulness,  
trust for our trembling, and hope for our fear.

5 O worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness,  
bow down before him, his glory proclaim;  
with gold of obedience and incense of  
lowliness,  
kneel and adore him: the Lord is his name.

*John Samuel Bewley Monsell (1811-1875)*

**Prayers**

Our heavenly Father

we gather as your people to worship you  
to praise you for being here with us  
and to thank you that, for all your goodness,  
you welcome us into your presence.

We come in all our weakness and with all our  
failings,

rejoicing that in Christ we have been made  
clean.

That through him, you have set your mark  
upon us,  
and called us to be your people.

Forgive us when we fail you

our lives betraying our calling and your love.

Forgive us when people look at us,

and, instead of seeing something of you  
see only ourselves.

Forgive us when the things we say and do

obscure and deny the gospel,

rather than proclaim its message to all

Receive what we are and direct what we shall  
be

In Jesus name

Amen

**Let us pray the Lords 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 forever.

Amen.

## Read Luke 18 : 9 – 14

### Read pray or sing STF 355

#### Jesus lover of my soul StF 355

- 1 Jesus, lover of my soul,  
let me to thy bosom fly,  
while the nearer waters roll,  
while the tempest still is high;  
hide me, O my Saviour, hide,  
till the storm of life is past;  
safe into the haven guide,  
O receive my soul at last!
- 2 Other refuge have I none,  
hangs my helpless soul on thee;  
leave, ah, leave me not alone,  
still support and comfort me.  
All my trust on thee is stayed,  
all my help from thee I bring;  
cover my defenceless head  
with the shadow of thy wing.
- 3 Thou, O Christ, art all I want;  
more than all in thee I find;  
raise the fallen, cheer the faint,  
heal the sick, and lead the blind.  
Just and holy is thy name,  
I am all unrighteousness;  
false and full of sin I am,  
thou art full of truth and grace.
- 4 Plenteous grace with thee is found,  
grace to cover all my sin;  
let the healing streams abound,  
make and keep me pure within.  
Thou of life the fountain art;  
freely let me take of thee;  
spring thou up within my heart,  
rise to all eternity.

*Charles Wesley (1707-1788)*

### Sermon

The story is told about a weary traveller asking a railway porter, why on earth did they build the railway station 3 miles from the village? I suppose, came the reply, they must have thought it a good idea to have it next to the railway lines!

Even the most modern railway station built 3 miles from the track, is as much an absurdity as a religion out of touch with God. Maybe this was in Jesus' mind when he told the parable about the Pharisee and the tax collector. A gentle dig at those whose religion had become an end in itself rather than a way to God. This theme is found elsewhere in Luke's Jesus story. His concern was directed at the Pharisees (not all of them). There were those who had become so wrapped up in the minutia of the law that it drained all the joy out of their religion. About as useful as a railway station 3 miles from the track!

Two men went to the temple to pray – afternoon prayer time. They stood apart from the assembly. One took a prominent position for everyone to see, the other on the edge hardly daring to come in. The Pharisee was “not like other people”, fasting on additional days, tithing all that he had and it could be seen. Good for his holier than thou reputation but not for the good of his soul!

By way of contrast Jesus introduces the tax collector. The Romans outsourced this to local people who also “took their cut” - not the most popular people in the community. On this occasion he was standing on the fringes – perhaps feeling unworthy. There was no greater contrast – the one puffed up with self-importance, the other overwhelmed by self-knowledge.

The pharisee reminds me of Tony Hancock in “The Blood Donor”. In the waiting room he was boasting of his good works

*It's all here in my diary  
Congo relief 2 shillings and 6 pence  
Self-denial 1 shilling and 8 pence  
Lifeboat Day 6 pence  
Arab refugees 1 shilling and 2 pence  
(All old money!)*

*And when I'm finally called by the great architect and he says, “What did you do?” I shall just bring out my book and say “Here you are mate – add that lot up!”*

The prayer of the tax collector however had echoes of the Psalmist. Then Jesus delivered the punch line “I tell you this man went down to his house justified rather than the other” He added “for all who exalt themselves will be humbled and those who humble themselves will be exalted” Jesus turned conventional wisdom upside down. To be justified, be in a right relationship with God, is not achieved by clocking up holiness hours or sticking to religious traditions. God comes to us compelled by love and the only response is to confess our unworthiness. In old fashioned terms we have to recognise that we are sinners and have faith in God's power to forgive and heal. However, educated we are; however sophisticated theologically; however much we can heal. Actualise our faith, we are still brought back to faith and trust. The deep mysteries of life may still remain mysteries. Christianity isn't a series of pat answers to ultimate questions. It is a questing and seeking pilgrimage and it is based on trusting faith in the sacrifice of Christ on our behalf and on his ability to take the weakest life and enable it to reach its fullest potential.

Paul wrote to the Ephesians

“For by grace are you saved and that not of yourselves – it is the gift of God, not of works lest any man should boast”

We seek to reward high achievers and admire go getters. They are lauded by society. Upward mobility is a sign of success and the size of our house or bank balance indicators of our worth. Jesus took an entirely different view, and he took it all the way to the cross. In his upside-down value system Jesus, through word and deed, sought to show that vulnerability and humility, love and compassion, service and sacrifice are the strengths upon which God's kingdom is built. Any other foundation is as much use to seekers after the kingdom as is a railway station built 3 miles from the track!

Amen

## Read sing or pray StF 546

### Behold The Servant Of The Lord StF 546

- 1 Behold the servant of the Lord!  
I wait thy guiding eye to feel,  
to hear and keep thy every word,  
to prove and do thy perfect will,  
joyful from my own works to cease,  
glad to fulfil all righteousness.
- 2 Me if thy grace vouch safe to use,  
meanest of all thy creatures, me,  
the deed, the time, the manner choose;  
let all my fruit be found of thee;  
let all my works in thee be wrought,  
by thee to full perfection brought.
- 3 My every weak though good design  
o'errule or change, as seems thee meet;  
Jesus, let all my work be thine!  
Thy work, O Lord, is all complete,  
and pleasing in thy Father's sight;  
thou only hast done all things right.
- 4 Here then to thee thine own I leave;  
mould as thou wilt thy passive clay;  
but let me all thy stamp receive,  
but let me all thy words obey,  
serve with a single heart and eye,  
and to thy glory live and die.

*Charles Wesley (1707-1788)*

## Prayers of Intercession

We pray now for the people in our world who are fearful for the future  
for those in the troubled places of our world, especially Palestine and Ukraine  
for those who long for peace and an end to conflict

We pray for those who face trauma and upheaval in their lives, what seemed secure swept from under them, their hopes denied  
We pray for those who doubt their ability to cope with what life may bring, overwhelmed by pressures or crushed by sorrows.

Heavenly father

reach out to all for whom the future seems uncertain or unwelcome and bring assurance that even in the darkest moments, the greatest challenges, the most worrying of times, you are

there working out your purpose able to bring  
light out of darkness, hope out of despair, joy  
out of sorrow and good out of evil.

Grant the confidence that there is nothing in  
heaven or earth, in life or death, in the present  
or the future, that is finally able to separate us  
from your love.

Through Jesus our Lord          Amen

### **Read pray or sing StF440**

[Amazing Grace, How Sweet the Sound \(Singing  
the Faith 440 / StF 440\)](#)

- 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.)*

### **Blessing**

Remember all God has done.

Rejoice in all that he is doing

Receive all that he shall yet do

Put your hand in his,

the God of past present and future,

and walk with him wherever he may lead

knowing that he will walk with you,

this day and always

**Amen**

### *Acknowledgement*

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Nick Fawcett*

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