



Southern Synod of the United Reformed Church

Synod Service 7 June 2020

Led by Revd George Watt, Reigate Park URC

Dear friends,

We are looking forward to having you join us for our Synod Service on Sunday which will include Holy Communion. Please find attached the order of service in booklet format and a fuller order which includes Bridget's reflection. Please distribute if that is your usual practice and feel free to edit e.g. add prayers or notices. Also please change the copyright licence number.

As previously indicated the two ways you can join in are:

Live on Reigate Park Church YouTube Channel (you don't need an account) from 10.25 am

[CLICK HERE](#)

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCFZoGU6sFvF9pgl2lDKglHW?view_as=subscriber

Zoom Telephone dial in 020 34815237 ID 849 8602 7990

The service will include Holy Communion. Please have some juice/wine and bread ready.

There will be the opportunity to join for coffee afterwards via Zoom, details will be shared at the end of the service on Sunday.

We hope that the service will remain on our channel as a recording after we have finished.

Please find the Order of Service below.

Regards,

Revd G D Watt

(Moderatorial Cover)

Southern Synod Office

East Croydon URC

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Croydon CR0 5LP

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Call to Worship

Opening prayers

Hymn

I lift my eyes

to the quiet hills
in the press of a busy day;
as green hills stand
in a dusty land
so God is my strength and stay.

I lift my eyes
to the quiet hills
to a calm that is mine to share;
secure and still
in the Father's will
and kept by the Father's care.

I lift my eyes
to the quiet hills
with a prayer as I turn to sleep;
by day, by night,
through the dark and light
my Shepherd will guard his sheep.

I lift my eyes
to the quiet hills
and my heart to the Father's throne;
in all my ways

to the end of days
the Lord will preserve his own.

Timothy Dudley-Smith © T Dudley-Smith

Collage of Churches in Lockdown accompanied by Be bold, be strong played by Emily Watt

Readings by Young People from West Thamesmead

Psalm 137 New International Version

- ¹ By the rivers of Babylon we sat and wept
when we remembered Zion.
- ² There on the poplars
we hung our harps,
- ³ for there our captors asked us for songs,
our tormentors demanded songs of joy;
they said, 'Sing us one of the songs of Zion!'
- ⁴ How can we sing the songs of the LORD
while in a foreign land?

Luke 22 New International Version

Jesus prays on the Mount of Olives

³⁹ Jesus went out as usual to the Mount of Olives, and his disciples followed him. ⁴⁰ On reaching the place, he said to them, 'Pray that you will not fall into temptation.' ⁴¹ He withdrew about a stone's throw beyond them, knelt down and prayed, ⁴² 'Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will, but yours be done.' ⁴³ An angel from heaven appeared to him and strengthened him. ⁴⁴ And being in anguish, he prayed more earnestly, and his sweat was like drops of blood falling to the ground.^[c]

⁴⁵ When he rose from prayer and went back to the disciples, he found them asleep, exhausted from sorrow. ⁴⁶ 'Why are you sleeping?' he asked them. 'Get up and pray so that you will not fall into temptation.'

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Reflection by Revd Bridget Banks, Minister of Crawley URC and Moderator Elect
Good morning everyone. It's lovely to share worship with you today.

I wanted to share some thoughts with you this morning because we all know life isn't exactly normal at the moment - whatever 'normal' ever was. We have been in lockdown for 10 weeks now and some of us are getting frustrated and can't wait to be set free and some of us have found our day less frantic and full.

In our reading from Psalm 137 we see the exiles in Babylon feeling isolated and reminiscing about Jerusalem. They were remembering the way their life had been before. Their captors are asking them to perform songs for them and act happy - but they weren't feeling happy at all! Everything had changed and they were missing all that gave them comfort.

Maybe you are feeling like that - you miss church, your friends, your place - the usual rhythm of Words, prayers and songs....many of us will miss singing together. Gosh, I love a good sing. It's a pattern we felt comfortable with, its a pattern we knew our place in. But now everything has changed and we feel unsettled.

Then looking at the reading from the gospel of Luke we see Jesus about to face his own death. He would often go to the mount of olives but this time would be his last. He left his disciples so he could pray alone - but he tells them to stay awake. Of course by the time he came back to them they were dozing because it was late in the day. But there is something about Jesus's command not to fall into that temptation of sleep that intrigues me. It's not so much about the physical sleeping. It's more about accepting the mental act of dozing safely in a rut. Sometimes I think we expect life to be easy and predictable, that Jesus only came to give us a good life rather than to challenge us. But then we remember Pentecost from last Sunday. That the work of the Holy Spirit we celebrated last week at Pentecost is only to comfort and not to unsettle us or stir our hearts into new action!

It is easy to fear change - it shakes our roots. We don't like that. The trouble is fear doesn't stop the bad things coming, it just stops us enjoying the present.

I have to admit, as your new Moderator I will be saying many prayers as we take on this new 'normal'. However it seems to me that our Lord has given us an amazing opportunity.

We have an opportunity to see a new change in the Church. We are that generation that can bring revival.

Oh that word. CHANGE. None of us like it do we? We all get afraid of it. It's a move from our safe space into the unknown.

I want to encourage you today. Remember Jesus said that He has come to bring us life in all its fullness? Well, a full life has joy, sorrow, challenge and change all mixed up together. So in this mixed up moment, God now gives us an opportunity. What will we do with it?

I do hope your Elders have seen the Moderators discussion document "Ready for the new normal"? There are some excellent resources in there and also some brave questions for us all to face, such as:

- What have you valued in your church life that you would like to continue and develop through this phase of church life?
- Have you have thought, 'I wonder if we could try this... as lockdown continues? Or 'I wish we could try this when we get back together?

Our bible is full of people who have faced challenges and had to move on and in that response to the prompting of God, have been truly blessed. I believe now we are called to move on - as a Synod and as a Denomination. Not moving with fear but with hope and expectation that the Lord is doing something new within us. And if the Lord is with us we will be blessed indeed!

But just how are we supposed to keep 'hope' in a strange land? Well, the bible is clear about this. We need to have hope in our Lord. Hope that overrides our feelings of fear.

Those disciples must have been in awe of Jesus going up in a big cloud. Then just as things felt a bit flat the week afterwards and confusing the Holy Spirit comes to them, just as Jesus said. They were then full of joy and zeal for the gospel and different languages spoken. What a chance they took with a change in their lives.

So don't be afraid of the change that is offered to us. God is doing something new with us and through us. As we see in Isaiah 43: 18/19 God says:

"Forget the former things; do not dwell on the past.

See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the wilderness and streams in the wasteland.

I am not suggesting for one minute that we forget our wonderful reformation history, or our local church story - we can be proud of them. What I am saying is, in the spirit of our traditions, let us be ready to change and make new promises to God. Let us be willing, just as all those who went before us, to be brave and bold. To have a new vision and strength for a new future for our churches and denomination.

Even today, in the biggest change in society since the second world war, God is still at work. In neighbours helping neighbours. In food-banks, kind words, and clapping those at work in the NHS. There is a sea change of thought and kindness. Charities are offering food and support so quickly, so easily - the red tape seems to have disappeared totally. So many of us are helping out with food shopping, sending cards and letters, and making phone calls. And some of us have more time to pray and read God's word.

This is already a new normal.

Last week at Pentecost Peter reminded the crowd at pentecost of the words of the prophet Joel:

And afterwards

I will pour out My Spirit on all people.

Your sons and daughters will prophesy,

your young men will see visions,

your old men will dream dreams. (Joel 2: 28)

We are living in new times. Can you feel the presence of the Spirit among us? Is it touching all our lives, challenging us and stirring us to move forward?

Let's dream dreams and see new visions of the church. And be willing to change. To answer God's call at this time. And from Synod, our thoughts and prayers are with you as you dream your dreams for the future of your churches.

Don't be afraid, for the Lord our God is with us.

Amen.

Prayers of Intercession led by Revd Nadene Snyman

Hymn led by Emily Watt

Bless the Lord O my soul O my soul

Worship His Holy name

Sing like never before O my soul

I'll worship Your Holy name

The sun comes up it's a new day dawning
It's time to sing Your song again
Whatever may pass and whatever lies before me
Let me be singing when the evening comes
Bless the Lord O my soul...

You're rich in love and You're slow to anger
Your name is great and Your heart is kind
For all Your goodness I will keep on singing
Ten thousand reasons for my heart to find
Bless the Lord O my soul....

And on that day when my strength is failing
The end draws near and my time has come
Still my soul will sing Your praise unending
Ten thousand years and then forevermore
Bless the Lord O my soul

Jonas Myrin & Matt Redman

© Thankyou Music/Said and Done Music

Reading *Bread Song* by Gerard Kelly

Communion

Hymn led by Revd Ian Fosten

The Spirit lives to set us free,

Walk, walk in the light.

He binds us all in unity,

Walk, walk in the light.

Walk in the light,

Walk in the light,

Walk in the light,

Walk in the light of the Lord.

Jesus promised life to all,

Walk, walk in the light.

The dead were wakened by his call,

Walk, walk in the light.

Walk in the light...

He died in pain on Calvary,

Walk, walk in the light.

To save the lost like you and me,

Walk, walk in the light.

Walk in the light....

We know his death was not the end,

Walk, walk in the light.

He gave his Spirit to be our friend,

Walk, walk in the light.

Walk in the light...

The Spirit lives in you and me,
Walk, walk in the light;
His light will shine for all to see,
Walk, walk in the light.
Walk in the light...

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Blessing *The Blessing by the Global Choir*

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