

Order of Service 13<sup>th</sup> February 2022

***Pray Without Ceasing***

Welcome

Hello, and welcome to Hearsall at Home for 13th February 2022. Today we have a guest preacher, Mr Robert Saviou, who is about to start his training as a Baptist minister. We're grateful to Robert for coming to share God's word with us and we pray for him as he pursues God's call on his life. He will be encouraging us in our prayer life.

Call to Worship

Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; the one who seeks finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened.

Matthew 7: 7 - 8

Song (WT 365 - missing out verses 4 & 5) **Seek Ye First the Kingdom of God**

Seek ye first the Kingdom of God,  
and His righteousness,  
and all these things shall be added unto you; allelu – alleluia!  
*Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia, allelu – alleluia!*

Man shall not live by bread alone,  
but by every word  
that proceeds from the mouth of God; allelu – alleluia!  
*Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia, allelu – alleluia!*

Ask and it shall be given unto you;  
seek and ye shall find;  
knock and the door shall be opened unto you; allelu – alleluia!  
*Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia, allelu – alleluia!*

Trust in the Lord with all thine heart,  
he shall direct thy path,  
in all thy ways acknowledge him; allelu – alleluia!  
*Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia, allelu – alleluia!*

## Prayer of Worship and Confession

Mighty and merciful God  
we bow before you in prayer  
and humbly acknowledge our need of grace.  
We confess how frequently  
we become distracted from your purpose in our lives;  
our resolve weakens;  
we forget our calling;  
and we fall into self-serving attitudes;  
for we are sinners.  
For these and all our sins  
forgive us for the sake of  
Jesus, our Lord and Saviour. Amen.

Heavenly Father, we praise and adore your holy name,  
for you made us in your image;  
and through your Son's death on the cross  
and his resurrection to life,  
you save us from our sins  
and open the gateway to glory;  
and through your Holy Spirit,  
you invite us into a deeper sense  
of your loving presence with us now.  
The magnificence of your Name  
and the Majesty of your love  
and the Mystery of your wisdom  
are all beyond the comprehension of our minds;  
and yet, you draw us into loving communion with you  
in the blessed experience of prayer.  
Teach us to walk with you  
in ever more close fidelity,  
that we may live and work  
to your praise and glory. Amen.

### The Lord's 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 for ever.  
Amen

### Offertory Prayer

Lord, your gifts flow to us with astounding abundance every moment of our lives. We thank you for air to breathe, food to eat and houses in which we dwell. Make us generous with others and use our gifts to church and charity to share your wonderful love. Amen.

### Song (WT 96) For the Joys and for the Sorrows

For the joys and for the sorrows  
The best and worst of times,  
For this moment, for tomorrow  
For all that lies behind;  
Fears that crowd around me,  
For the failure of my plans,  
For the dreams of all I hope to be,  
The truth of what I am:

*Chorus*

*For this I have Jesus*

*For this I have Jesus*

*For this I have Jesus, I have Jesus*

*(Repeat)*

For the tears that flow in secret,  
In the broken times,  
For the moments of elation,  
Or the troubled mind;  
For all the disappointments,  
Or the sting of old regrets,  
All my prayers and longings  
That seem unanswered yet:

*Chorus*

For the weakness of my body,  
The burdens of each day,  
For the nights of doubt and worry,  
When sleep has fled away;  
Needing reassurance,  
And the will to start again,  
A steely-eyed endurance,  
The strength to fight and win:

*Chorus*

Feature Sarah Lewis brings us up to date on the City of Culture.

**Coventry is the UK City of Culture** – I'll say it again – Coventry is STILL City of Culture but only for another 13 weeks ... so if you've looked at the programme and thought 'I'll do it tomorrow; do it now!

I'm just going to give an overview of a few of the many events happening before the end May. Do check out the website ([www.coventry2021.co.uk](http://www.coventry2021.co.uk)) or go into the helpful City of Culture shop in Hertford Street for more details, as new events are being announced almost daily.

For lovers of pictorial art there are two great exhibitions beginning this month: open already at the Old Grammar School is **'Pioneering Coventry'**: the post war photography of Richard Sadler'. Whilst from February 18<sup>th</sup> at the Herbert see Daniel Lismore's **'Be Yourself – everyone else is already taken'**. Both are FREE.

**'Where there is Light'**, an immersive exhibition of lights and voices of people who have found sanctuary in our country. Happening in the Cathedral Ruins from 10-26<sup>th</sup> Feb 4-9pm FREE.

**Winter Wanderland** is returning to the streets of Cov **from** 19<sup>th</sup> Feb - 29<sup>th</sup> March. Look out for details of when your area is taking part; decorate your front window – see what others have done. It's such a joyous occasion.

**Deliaphonic** is a four-day festival celebrating the legacy of a Coventry woman, Delia Derbyshire, and her pioneering work with electronic music. From 3<sup>rd</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup> March with tickets from £1, all in the Cathedral.

### **Coventry City of Culture Orchestra – Celebration Concert**

On April 2<sup>nd</sup> at the Central Hall there is a big one-off orchestral and choral concert, featuring over 150 local musicians celebrating music ranging from The Specials to Dvořák. Tickets are £5-8 and are available from [www.coventryorchestra.co.uk/concert](http://www.coventryorchestra.co.uk/concert) or from Fran or Seb

From April 21<sup>st</sup> – 24<sup>th</sup> 8 -10pm, go to **'Pirates of the Canal Basin'** “we have transformed the canal basin into a lively pirate harbour, full of strange and wonderful characters, telling their stories with aerial acrobats and lots of singing”

And finally, if you don't live in Coventry or missed any earlier events, many are now available as podcasts at no cost. Head to the website – [www.coventry2021.co.uk](http://www.coventry2021.co.uk)

### Prayers of Intercession Jan Clemons

Our intercession prayers today will cover many aspects of lives around the world, as well as our country and our concerns for families, friends, and neighbours. We especially pray for countries, communities and individuals that need help.

Dear Lord, our world is beset with war and violence, and we pray that you will provide us with the peace that is only found in you. We pray especially for the people of Ukraine that are experiencing extreme pressures as Russian troops amass on

their borders. We pray for the world leaders involved in the diplomatic meetings to resolve this issue.

Dear Lord, we pray for families in Afghanistan, as pneumonia and hunger take their toll especially on children who are struggling to survive this winter. The health system is collapsing. Doctors and nurses are at breaking point as clinics are closing and pharmacies are empty. We pray that the international community can step up to provide more humanitarian funding and frozen international assets belonging to the Afghanistan people are unlocked.

Dear Lord, we pray for our country and for a culture in which political disagreements don't lead to hatred and violence, and an end to the divisions between devolved nations, communities, and individuals. We bring our concerns about what is happening around us with the rise in the cost of living underpinned by rising energy costs. It is tragic that there seems to be an increase in the number of families and individuals in our city, and nationwide, having to go to food banks. Lord, we pray for them and pray for the volunteers who give up their time to help in shelters for the homeless and food bank distribution centres.

Lastly, dear Lord, we pray for our planet, its biodiversity and ecology. We pray for endangered species and their precious habitats that seem to shrink in size with every passing year. Dear Lord, with your wisdom, show us how we can all become better custodians of this world that supports us, by using the earth's resources more wisely and sustainably, for example by reducing our meat intake so releasing more land for plant crops to sustain us.

We will now silently pray for those people and those concerns that are in our hearts and minds.

In Jesus's name,

AMEN

### Bible Reading

#### **1 Thessalonians 5:12-24**

*Final instructions*

<sup>12</sup> Now we ask you, brothers and sisters, to acknowledge those who work hard among you, who care for you in the Lord and who admonish you. <sup>13</sup> Hold them in the highest regard in love because of their work. Live in peace with each other. <sup>14</sup> And we urge you, brothers and sisters, warn those who are idle and disruptive, encourage the disheartened, help the weak, be patient with everyone. <sup>15</sup> Make sure that nobody pays back wrong for wrong, but always strive to do what is good for each other and for everyone else.

<sup>16</sup> Rejoice always, <sup>17</sup> pray continually, <sup>18</sup> give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.

<sup>19</sup> Do not quench the Spirit. <sup>20</sup> Do not treat prophecies with contempt <sup>21</sup> but test them all; hold on to what is good, <sup>22</sup> reject every kind of evil.

<sup>23</sup> May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. <sup>24</sup> The one who calls you is faithful, and he will do it.

#### Hymn (BPW 603) **What a Friend we have in Jesus**

What a friend we have in Jesus,  
All our sins and griefs to bear!  
What a privilege to carry  
Everything to God in prayer!  
O what peace we often forfeit,  
O what needless pain we bear,  
All because we do not carry  
Everything to God in prayer!

Have we trials and temptations?  
Is there trouble anywhere?  
We should never be discouraged —  
Take it to the Lord in prayer!  
Can we find a friend so faithful,  
Who will all our sorrows share?  
Jesus knows our every weakness;  
Take it to the Lord in prayer!

Are we weak and heavy-laden,  
Cumbered with a load of care?  
Precious saviour still our refuge —  
Take it to the Lord in prayer!  
Do thy friends despise, forsake thee?  
Take it to the Lord in prayer!  
In His arms He'll take and shield thee,  
Thou wilt find a solace there.

Blessed Saviour, Thou hast promised  
Thou wilt all our burdens bear.  
May we ever, Lord, be bringing  
All to Thee in earnest prayer.  
Soon in glory, bright, unclouded  
There will be no need for prayer;  
Rapture praise and endless worship  
Will be our sweet portion there!

Sermon (Robert Saviou)

### ***Pray Without Ceasing***

Today's reading is going to be from 1 Thessalonians 5:12-18. There and other verses in the Bible, that instruct us about the topic, that I want to discuss about today, which is the topic of prayer. And coming from an orthodox background, I never really knew how I was supposed to pray, you see we always had these sort of typical books that you would have to follow if you wanted to pray about a specific thing, so if you wanted to pray for your family, you could find those kind of prayers in a book, or if you want to pray about health, you could also find those prayers in a book. If you wanted to pray about anything, there's definitely a topic in a book about how to pray about that specific thing, and although I don't have a problem with that, because there are people out there who struggle to pray to God and to connect with Him in that way, I personally sometimes, in my prayer time, like to approach God's throne in prayer by reading psalms out loud, but what I think makes our relationship personal with our creator, is using our own words and feelings when praying.



And if there's one thing, at least, that I hope you would go home with today, it's this: that prayer is not only us communicating with God, but as instructed in 1 John 5:14 – where it says that 'This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us.' it is God listening to us, but also God responding to us through His Holy Spirit that dwells in us. It's about talking to our Father, but also listening to what He has to say.

Prayer is something we have to do, it's a choice, but it is something we have to do in order to grow that relationship that we have with Christ, which we have begun growing when we became saved and accepted Him in our lives as our Lord and Saviour.

One thing I noticed in my own life about prayer is that, in time, prayer does change you. It might not always change the circumstances or the things we are praying for, but spending time with the Lord will definitely change your character as a person.

I saw changes in my own daily life that were made through Christ after me praying, but what I also noticed was a change in the way I prayed, in time.

I used to start my prayer time and just ask God for different things, sometimes even forgetting to thank Him for the things He already has given me.

I used to be so selfish in the beginning and pray just about my personal circumstances all the time, and just ask Christ to change my circumstances when in fact I was the one that needed to change, and that did happen, but not by my own strength, but through Jesus Christ who strengthens me daily.

The way I pray changed from prayer being mainly about me, into making it about God and about the people around me that I know, but of whose situation I might not always know. If I was saying something like 'Lord, please bless that person and help them with whatever You know they need', I would be interceding for them.

You see, a growing prayer life changes you inevitably, by just being in the Presence of God daily, by just approaching His Throne of Grace boldly because of His Son's sacrifice that allows us to approach His Throne without any appointment needed.

Your prayers you will notice change from what you need and want and wish for, into actual prayers that are done conforming to God's will and purpose. You will find yourself in the middle of praying to God and praising His Holy name, realizing that you're praying according to His will.

Why do we get to pray according to His will? Who knows the will of our Creator? We certainly don't. But He knows His own will, and through His Holy Spirit, with whose help we pray, we are being revealed Christ's will for us and the people around us.

I used to think I am really not that good at praying, and I'm not talking about praying in English, I still believe there's room for improvement there! I used to think that I don't pray well enough in my own native language either which is Romanian, why? Because of the way I thought prayer should sound like, remember how I said about those prayer books? I used to think that's how prayer should sound, in order to be accepted by my Creator.

I mean Jesus teaches us in the Lord's Prayer in Matthew 6:9 and says pray to the Father: 'Your will be done'

And again, before Christ goes to the cross on that night in Gethsemane in Matthew chapter 26 verse 39, He says 'My father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as You will.'

Prayer for the will of God is inevitable when you spend time with Him, and is revealed in us through the Holy Spirit of Christ that lives in us. It is not us that live but Christ living in us as believers - that's what Paul teaches us.

And that being so, the best person that would know the will of God is the Holy Spirit, so with His help, we can pray according to His will.

Jesus said in Matthew 7:21 - 'Not everyone who says to me 'Lord, Lord' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but those who do the will of my Father who is in heaven.'

We know that there is some part of God's will that is revealed to us already through the teaching of Christ. There are things that He taught us we must do, so that part of fulfilling God's will comes through obedience.

So, we need to understand that doing our Lord's will and finding out His will are two different concepts. One comes from obedience, the other comes from prayer.

Because we already should know in a sense what Christ wants from us and what his will for us as followers of Him is. We know that from His teachings, and obeying those teachings is doing His will.

And we do struggle with that sometimes because we're only humans and sin is in our nature, and we are corrupted by sin; we're not perfect, but we're in a constant battle with ourselves.

There's the Spirit of the Living God that lives in us and guides us and teaches us the will of God already revealed to us, but on the opposite side, we've got our human nature that is drawn to sinning all the time. It's a sad reality, and you can look at it like at a measuring scale.

On one side you've got the Spirit, on the other, our sinful nature. The only way we can tip the balance to the good side, to the Spirit's side, is through prayer. The more involved and consumed we become with prayer, the closer we come to Christ, and become more like Christ.

But if we're not careful, and our prayer life is non-existent or takes only a 5-minute rush in our daily lives, the danger is we will be drawn more into the material; we are more prone to live a sinful life rather than a life doing Christ's will which is obeying Him.

Don't get me wrong, I don't just stay locked away praying all day, it's inefficient for me and for others that have a family and have to also provide for them. I can only give you this sort of advice because of what I live and do. I spend time with God in my private time for as long as I have the possibility in that day]; I set time aside for that. The rest of the time, I still pray because God hears my every thought. So whenever I'm at work peeling onions, I talk to God in my head, sometimes out loud when there's no one there, and God hears that and accepts it.

When I drive around in my car, sorry, but I don't listen to the radio, I have my own playlist with worship music, and I just worship God in my car on every trip. No one can tell me there's not enough time to pray to God throughout the day, and this is

just me, as a working father and husband. Other people have even more time on their hands. You either want to pray or not, it's a choice.

I would like to encourage you today to choose wisely. The end will come like a thief in the night, either our own personal end, or this whole world's end. Either way, we all take that decision every day, living for Christ, or living for the material things.

And what are things? Jesus told us again, in Matthew 6: '19 "Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moths and vermin destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. 20 But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moths and vermin do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. 21 For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.'

Where is your heart at? Is it with the will of God, where your heart should be, thinking about the spiritual things, praying, spending time with the Lord?

Is it with your house, car, assets, bank account statement? I don't think I have to remind ourselves of this, but I will: nothing that we have here, we'll take with us, nothing. Why focus on something you won't take with you once the end comes like a thief in the night?

'Rejoice always, pray continually' so that you would do Christ's will.

Amen.

May God bless you.

### Hymn (BPW 595) **Father God in Heaven**

Father God in heaven,  
Lord most high:  
hear your children's prayer,  
Lord most high:  
hallowed be your name,  
Lord most high -  
O Lord, hear our prayer.

May your kingdom come  
here on earth;  
may your will be done  
here on earth,  
as it is in heaven  
so on earth -  
O Lord, hear our prayer.

Give us daily bread  
day by day,  
and forgive our sins  
day by day,  
as we too forgive  
day by day -  
O Lord, hear our prayer.

Lead us in your way,  
make us strong;  
when temptations come  
make us strong;  
save us from all sin,  
keep us strong -  
O Lord, hear our prayer.

All things come from you,  
all are yours -  
kingdom, glory, power,  
all are yours;  
take our lives and gifts,  
all are yours -  
O Lord, hear our prayer.

### The Grace

May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ;

And the love of God;

And the fellowship of the Holy Spirit

Be with us all, evermore.

Amen

### Sung Blessing

May the peace of the Lord Christ go with you

Wherever he may send you;

May he guide you through the wilderness;

Protect you through the storm;

May he bring you home rejoicing

At the wonders he has shown you;

May he bring you home rejoicing

Once again into our doors.