

Church at home
Sunday 13th June 2021

Hymn: StF 102 For the beauty of the earth

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xIBkpAm3fhw>

Opening prayers

Let us pray,

**Almighty God,
To whom all hearts are open,
All desires known,
And from whom no secrets are hidden:
Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts
By the inspiration of your Holy Spirit,
That we may perfectly love you,
And worthily magnify your Name;
Through Christ our Lord, Amen.**

Let us confess our sins to God

**Most merciful God,
We confess that we have sinned against you
In thought and word and deed.
We have not loved you with our whole heart.
We have not loved our neighbours as ourselves.**

Silence

In your mercy,

**Forgive what we have been,
Help us to amend what we are,
And direct what we shall be;
That we may delight in your will
And walk in your ways;
Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen**

If we confess our sins,
God is faithful and just
And will forgive our sins,
And cleanse us from all unrighteousness.
Amen. Thanks be to God.

Gracious God,
Whose love for the world is revealed in your Son our Saviour:
Grant that he may live in our hearts by faith,
And be proclaimed in our lives by love;
Through the same Jesus Christ our Lord,
To whom with you and the Holy Spirit
Be Glory and praise, now and for ever. **Amen.**

The Lord Prayer

**Our Father who art in heaven,
Hallowed be thy name,
Thy kingdom Come,
Thy will be done,
On Earth as it is in Heaven,
Give us this day our daily bread,
And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us,
And lead us not into temptation,
But deliver from evil,
For thine is the kingdom,
The power and the glory,
For ever and ever,
Amen**

Bible Readings – NIV online version

Philippians Chapter 1 verses 3-6, 12-26

I thank my God every time I remember you. In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now, being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.

Now I want you to know, brothers and sisters, that what has happened to me has actually served to advance the gospel. As a result, it has become clear throughout the whole palace guard and to everyone else that I am in chains for Christ. And because of my chains, most of the brothers and sisters have become confident in the Lord and dare all the more to proclaim the gospel without fear.

It is true that some preach Christ out of envy and rivalry, but others out of goodwill. The latter do so out of love, knowing that I am put here for the defence of the gospel. The former preach Christ out of selfish ambition, not sincerely, supposing that they can stir up trouble for me while I am in chains. But what does it matter? The important thing is that in every way, whether from false motives or true, Christ is preached. And because of this I rejoice.

Yes, and I will continue to rejoice, for I know that through your prayers and God's provision of the Spirit of Jesus Christ what has happened to me will turn out for my deliverance. I eagerly expect and hope that I will in no way be ashamed, but will have sufficient courage so that now as always Christ will be exalted in my body, whether by life or by death. For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain. If I am to go on living in the body, this will mean fruitful labour for me. Yet what shall I choose? I do not know! I am torn between the two: I desire to depart and be with Christ, which is better by far; but it is more necessary for you that I remain in the body. Convinced of this, I know that I will remain, and I will continue with all of you for your progress and joy in the faith, so that through my being with you again your boasting in Christ Jesus will abound on account of me.

John Chapter 12 verses 1-11

The Death of Lazarus

Now a man named Lazarus was sick. He was from Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha. (This Mary, whose brother Lazarus now lay sick, was the same one who poured perfume on the Lord and wiped his feet with her hair.) So the sisters sent word to Jesus, "Lord, the one you love is sick."

When he heard this, Jesus said, "This sickness will not end in death. No, it is for God's glory so that God's Son may be glorified through it." Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus. So when he heard that Lazarus was sick, he stayed where he was two more days, and then he said to his disciples, "Let us go back to Judea."

"But Rabbi," they said, "a short while ago the Jews there tried to stone you, and yet you are going back?"

Jesus answered, "Are there not twelve hours of daylight? Anyone who walks in the daytime will not stumble, for they see by this world's light. It is when a person walks at night that they stumble, for they have no light."

After he had said this, he went on to tell them, "Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep; but I am going there to wake him up."

Hymn: StF 76 Give me joy

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K0V9WvA8W_w

Address

Sometime ago Network's Easter Offering's theme was "Discover joy" but even before that an American Minister on Exchange to Peterlee (Ellinor's home town) left a pair of banners which encapsulated that theme at the conclusion of his time there. That phrase means a lot to both of us.

A Scots poet, May Gorrie, succinctly put her thoughts about joy in this poem:

You can be blessed and have joy to the full

If you will follow this simple, wise rule -

Give Jesus first place in all that you do;

Let others come next and finally you.

This surely spells joy, joy, joy. Lasting and true

This has and is our major approach to what true joy is all about – Jesus first, others second and self last. This is how we might discover joy together today.

Firstly – discover Jesus. How have you done that in your life? Do you already know Jesus in a real and exciting way? Or is He just a figure from the Bible to you? Could it be that He is more real to you than you are to yourself? Many people go through their whole life without getting to know Jesus. OK they may know about him from School or even Sunday School, they might share about his birth, life and death, even his resurrection. They could possibly tell you stories, even recount them better (in their eyes), speak of healing stories. Yet Jesus is as distant for them as Napoleon, Wellington, Queen Victoria, Alexander the Great, Alfred or any other figure of history. Do you want to discover Jesus in a more real way in your life today or will you continue to put it off?

So how do you start? That's the big question folk want to know How about reading the bible – I mean really reading it – using the various helps that are around such as William Barclay's Daily Study Bible (highly recommended and easy to follow). What about Praying? How often do you really pray? How often do you put heart and soul into communing with the Lord? Has prayer become a ritual? Do you expect God to answer your prayer? If not, why not? Do you expect God to answer your prayer with power? Then also try talking to other Christians about Jesus – particularly those who already know him as a friend.

Secondly – discover others. Discovering others can be a hugely exciting time, it can also be hard work. It takes time to get to know someone, it doesn't happen overnight. That's often a mistake that some folk in high flying circles tend to make – forgetting it takes time and patience to really form good relationships. Talking to others is the beginning of a long journey being careful not to be too nosy or pushy as this can frighten possible friends away. Another great danger is always assuming the other person knows everything/one you know. My mother was one of the worst for that, 20 years after leaving home she assumed I knew friends she'd made in the meantime! We need to allow others to speak at their own speed, letting them feel comfortable to open up of their needs and then introducing them to Jesus who will guide them to find their answers they require.

Thirdly – discover yourself. How well do you know yourself? Do you know your own limits? How often have you found yourself saying I never thought I'd say/do that? Or even gosh I sound like my mother/father/grandparent/teacher/officer? Do you try to stretch yourself on

a regular basis? Even if you don't succeed! When was the last time you tried something new? Maybe you're the sort of person who always likes to know what is around the corner?

How well do you know yourself spiritually? Does prayer and bible study play an important role in your life? Are there parts of your life that you've not handed over to the Lord? If there is – why? We rely on the Lord to help us in our daily lives. One of the many duties I perform is to take Communion to the housebound, one of the things I hear so often is “I couldn't cope without the Lord to help me day by day”. Many of us can cope with a certain amount of stress in our lives but when the going gets tough we turn to the Lord.

Remember:

Discover Jesus + discover others + discover yourself = discover joy

Prayers of Intercessions

Let us pray.

God, most gracious and most holy,
Grant us the help of your Spirit
As we pray for the Church and the world.

We pray for the Church in every land
For this church and for other local churches
That we may worship and serve you
With reverence and joy.

Silence

Lord, hear us.
Lord, graciously hear us.

We pray for the peoples of the world
And for the leaders of the nations
That all may work together for justice and peace.

Silence

Lord, hear us.
Lord, graciously hear us

We pray for those who are ill or distressed
For the lonely and the bereaved
And for those in any other need or trouble
That they may be comforted and sustained.

Silence

Lord, hear us.

Lord, graciously hear us

Father, we remember before you

All your servants who have died in the faith of Christ

We pray that we may lead faithful and godly lives in this world,

And finally share with all the saints in everlasting joy;

Through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

Hymn: StF 465 Guide me o thou great Jehovah

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VFZOOP9BXx8>