

Wednesday Worship
2nd June 2021
Summer

Opening words and lighting of a candle

All God of power, as the countryside reveals opening buds and ripening grain:
we celebrate your purpose in creation.

All God of salvation, as the countryside provides tranquility and timelessness:
we celebrate your grace in creation.

All God of wholeness, as the countryside sparkles with running, living water:
we celebrate your healing in creation.

All Father, Son and Holy Spirit, help us to preserve all that gives and enhances life:
in celebration of your creation.

Hymn: All creatures of our God and King

All Thank you, Creator God, for summer's warmth and light, your gift.
Help us to rejoice in the promise of each day.

All Thank you, Jesus, for summer's peace and stillness, your gift.
Help us to rest in the beauty of each day.

All Thank you, gentle Spirit, for summer's colour, and life, your gift.
Help us to thrive in the hope of each day.

All Holy Trinity, dynamic and loving, we thank you for seasons and cycles.
But especially for today in this season of summer.

1st Reading: Song of Songs 2.10-13

My beloved speaks and says to me:

'Arise, my love, my fair one,
and come away;

for now the winter is past,
the rain is over and gone.

The flowers appear on the earth;
the time of singing has come,
and the voice of the turtle-dove
is heard in our land.

The fig tree puts forth its figs,
and the vines are in blossom;
they give forth fragrance.

Arise, my love, my fair one,
and come away.

Prayer of response

Gracious and merciful God,
you have given us so many precious gifts.
The clarity of day gladdens us from dawn until dusk.
The lights of the night enable us to see your world differently,
set as it among the stars and the planets of space.

All **Amen.**

Psalm 84

How lovely is your dwelling place,
O Lord of hosts!
My soul longs, indeed it faints
for the courts of the Lord;
my heart and my flesh sing for joy
to the living God.
Even the sparrow finds a home,
and the swallow a nest for herself,
where she may lay her young,
at your altars, O Lord of hosts,
my King and my God.
Happy are those who live in your house,
ever singing your praise.

Happy are those whose strength is in you,
in whose heart are the highways to Zion.
As they go through the valley of Baca
they make it a place of springs;
the early rain also covers it with pools.
They go from strength to strength;
the God of gods will be seen in Zion.
O Lord God of hosts, hear my prayer;
give ear, O God of Jacob!

Behold our shield, O God;
look on the face of your anointed.
For a day in your courts is better
than a thousand elsewhere.
I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God
than live in the tents of wickedness.
For the Lord God is a sun and shield;
he bestows favour and honour.
No good thing does the Lord withhold
from those who walk uprightly.
O Lord of hosts,
happy is everyone who trusts in you.

Prayer of response

Holy and life-giving Creator
of so much variety and so many dimensions,
continue to guide us towards that enlightenment which only you can give us
to value the great and the small,
the immensity of your vision for us,
the limitations of our human views
and the ability to appreciate difference.

All **Amen.**

2nd Reading: Matthew 11.28-30

‘Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.’

Prayer of response

God of light, foresight and insight,
you have revealed to us your gift of a perfect humanity in Christ
and invite us by your grace to be completed by him in rest and quietness.
We offer to you our burdens so that we may enter into your peace.

All **Amen.**

Hymn: Be still for the presence of the Lord

Reflection

Words taken from “A spirituality of Summer” by Dr Gemma Simmonds.

One of the delights of an English summer lies in being able to shed layers and carry round fewer protective barriers between our bodies and the cold and damp of the external world. Behaviour becomes less guarded: people sit in parks picnicking over lunch breaks, take coffee outside, sit at pavement cafes instead of huddling indoors. Summer becomes a time for reconnecting with the natural light, the greater opportunities for communal living afforded by being able to sit out of doors for longer, watching children playing and people talking outside instead of sitting enclosed. There is a sense of a general relaxing into the present, a willingness to linger over meals or encounters, savouring the moment, allowing the time to flow by. Summer takes us into holiday time, when in families the rhythms of work change, children and adults may spend more time together, positively or negatively as such an experience may be. Holidays can take us into different environments, give opportunities for exploration and expansion of horizons.

All these things heighten our senses and make us feel more alive.

[Using] the senses is a way of praying that allows what has surfaced [in our minds and hearts] to be savoured and tested through the medium of the senses. It is a more contemplative type of prayer and one that allows the body to confirm what the mind and heart have groped towards during the day. The warmth and light of summer bring so much enrichment in sight and scent and touch and taste. Perhaps part of the spirituality of summer is an invitation to a more contemplative approach to ordinary things: the feel and

scent and taste of food, of flowers and plants, sea air, sunlight and warmth, fresh wind and the sound of cities, streets and gardens unusually alive.

Whether in the country or just passing neighbours' gardens or public parks, summer reminds us of the insane generosity of God. Trees and plants flower and fruit in a way that can seem almost criminally wasteful. Bumble bees amble past, drunk on nectar. Neither animals nor humans can eat and use all the fruit that emerges from the trees and bushes. If a spirituality of summer tells us anything, it is that the fruition of the earth, the fruit of time spent contemplatively going about our daily tasks, is always going to be more than we can calculate and make use of in obvious ways. A sense of the sacrament of the present moment can liberate us from the tyranny of time, dominated by market forces and the idolization of work, of cost effectiveness, of productiveness as value. Wasting time with the God whose times and seasons are full of generous wastefulness can remind us of what truly matters. The God who is with us always to the end of time is not limited to any season. God is both within and beyond times and seasons, but invites us in the summer, perhaps more vividly than at other times, to savour the beauties of creation. This includes ourselves, the other, whether family, friend or stranger, and the earth in full flower and fruit, as the power of the risen Christ liberates all creation from bondage.

Intercessions

Father, as we bring to you our prayers of intercession,
we ask you to open our ears to hear your voice,
open our eyes to behold your glory, open our hearts to receive your grace,
open our lips to show forth your praise.

All Lord, receive our praise
and hear our prayer.

Father, as we enter into summer,
we thank you for the refreshment that summer brings.
You have given us a wonderful world in which wherever we go
we are surrounded by things which please our eyes and open our minds.
Help us to use the summer to see your glory in creation.
Help us to understand more clearly the fullness of life you are constantly offering us.
Help us to hold out your words of hope and renewal to others.
Accept our thanks for the rich variety of life which is your gift,
and refresh us with a new vision of your will for us.

All Lord, receive our praise
and hear our prayer.

Father, we praise you that you came to this world to bring peace on earth.
We pray that the leaders of the nations and people everywhere
may turn to you, the Prince of Peace,
so that war and terror, cruelty and hatred may end
and peace and justice, kindness and love may reign.
We pray that you will give courage and wisdom to all
to do what is right and to act in accordance with your will.

All Lord, receive our praise
and hear our prayer.

We pray for all those who are suffering,
the sick in body and mind,
those dying from hunger and disease,
those struggling to find work, and those who mourn.
Father, we pray that you will surround the frightened
with your tenderness, give strength to those in pain,
hold the weak in your arms of love
and give hope and patience to those on the road to recovery.
Jesus Christ is the light of the world,
a light which no darkness can quench.
We remember before you those who have died.
You turn our darkness into light, in your light shall we see light.

Lord, receive our praise
All **and hear our prayer.**

Gathering our prayers and praises into one,
let us pray as our Saviour taught us

All **Our Father, who art in heaven...**

Hymn: Great is thy faithfulness

Closing prayers

Creator God
who breathed this world into being,
who is discernible within the harmony of nature,
the perfection of a butterfly's wing,
the grandeur of a mountain range,
the soaring eagle and humming bird,
thank you for this world which you have created.
Thank you for summer sun,
which reminds us that your creative breath
is still alive and active.
Thank you for the warmth of your love,
sustaining this world, your garden.

All **Amen.**

May birds fill the dawns of our days with song,
may the midday sun caress our faces with warmth,
may honeysuckle scent the evening breeze around us
and may the summer stars shine bright above us.

And may God,
the giver of summer song and scent,
the Creator of the sun and stars,
touch our lives with beauty
and fill our hearts with joy.

All **Amen.**