

“Within these walls let no-one be a stranger”

23rd August 2020

Call to Worship and Approach to God. *You are invited to light a candle.*

O God who called all life into being,
the earth, the sea, the sky are yours.

Your presence is all around us,
the whole creation proclaims your glory.

Your Spirit enlivens all who walk the earth,
and groans within us for freedom and release;

for captives to be released,
for the weary to be given strength,
for your reign of peace to come on earth

❖ Hymn 172

1. Sing for God's glory that colours
the dawn of creation,
racing across the sky, trailing
bright clouds of elation;
sun of delight succeeds the velvet of night,
warming the earth's exultation.
2. Sing for God's power that shatters
the chains that would bind us,
searing the darkness of fear and despair
that could blind us,
touching our shame with love that will not
lay blame,
reaching out gently to find us.
3. Sing for God's justice disturbing
each easy illusion,
tearing down tyrants and putting
our pride to confusion;
lifeblood of right, resisting evil and slight,
offering freedom's transfusion.
4. Sing for God's saints who have travelled
faith's journey before us,
who in our weariness give us their hope
to restore us;
in them we see the new creation to be,
spirit of love made flesh for us.

❖ **Prayer of approach** ending with the Lord's Prayer:
(say this in whichever language or version you prefer.)

The Word of God

❖ **Children's address**

❖ **Holy Scripture:** Exodus 1:8 – 2:10

⁸ Now a new king arose over Egypt, who did not know Joseph. ⁹ He said to his people, "Look, the Israelite people are more numerous and more powerful than we. ¹⁰ Come, let us deal shrewdly with them, or they will increase and, in the event of war, join our enemies and fight against us and escape from the land." ¹¹ Therefore they set taskmasters over them to oppress them with forced labour. They built supply cities, Pithom and Rameses, for Pharaoh. ¹² But the more they were oppressed, the more they multiplied and spread, so that the Egyptians came to dread the Israelites. ¹³ The Egyptians became ruthless in imposing tasks on the Israelites, ¹⁴ and made their lives bitter with hard service in mortar and brick and in every kind of field labour. They were ruthless in all the tasks that they imposed on them.

¹⁵ The king of Egypt said to the Hebrew midwives, one of whom was named Shiphrah and the other Puah, ¹⁶ "When you act as midwives to the Hebrew women, and see them on the birthstool, if it is a boy, kill him; but if it is a girl, she shall live." ¹⁷ But the midwives feared God; they did not do as the king of Egypt commanded them, but they let the boys live. ¹⁸ So the king of Egypt summoned the midwives and said to them, "Why have you done this, and allowed the boys to live?" ¹⁹ The midwives said to Pharaoh, "Because the Hebrew women are not like the Egyptian women; for they are vigorous and give birth before the midwife comes to them." ²⁰ So God dealt well with the midwives; and the people multiplied and became very strong. ²¹ And because the midwives feared God, he gave them families. ²² Then Pharaoh commanded all his people, "Every boy that is born to the Hebrews^[a] you shall throw into the Nile, but you shall let every girl live."

² Now a man from the house of Levi went and married a Levite woman. ² The woman conceived and bore a son; and when she saw that he was a fine baby, she hid him three months. ³ When she could hide him no longer she got a papyrus basket for him, and plastered it with bitumen and pitch; she put the child in it and placed it among the reeds on the bank of the river. ⁴ His sister stood at a distance, to see what would happen to him.

⁵ The daughter of Pharaoh came down to bathe at the river, while her attendants walked beside the river. She saw the basket among the reeds and sent her maid to bring it. ⁶ When she opened it, she saw the child. He was crying, and she took pity on him. "This must be one of the Hebrews' children," she said. ⁷ Then his sister said to Pharaoh's daughter, "Shall I go and get you a nurse from the Hebrew women to nurse the child for you?" ⁸ Pharaoh's daughter said to her, "Yes." So the girl went and called the child's mother. ⁹ Pharaoh's daughter said to her, "Take this child and nurse it for me, and I will give you your wages." So the woman took the child and nursed it. ¹⁰ When the child grew up, she brought him to Pharaoh's daughter, and she took him as her son. She named him Moses, ^[b] "because," she said, "I drew him out^[c] of the water."

❖ **Music in worship** *I Waited for the Lord* - Felix Mendelssohn
Patricia Gonçalves, Judi Haynes-Smart - sopranos

❖ **Sermon** *followed by pause for reflection*

Response to God's Word

❖ Hymn 250

1. Sent by the Lord am I;
My hands are ready now
To make the earth a place
In which the kingdom comes.
(Repeat)

2. The angels cannot change
A world of hurt and pain
Into a world of love,
Of justice and of peace.

3. The task is mine to do,
To set it really free.
O help me to obey;
Help me to do your will.

❖ Prayers of intercession

❖ Prayer of dedication

God of life,
God of abundance and plenty,
God of the midwives who defied Pharaoh;
**use us, we pray, to bring to birth
your kingdom of justice, peace and joy,
and so to bring new life to the world. Amen,**

❖ Hymn 617

1. Great and deep the Spirit's purpose,
hidden now in mystery;
Nature bursts with joyful promise,
ripe with what is yet to be.
In a wealth of rich invention,
still the work of art unfolds -
barely have we seen, and faintly,
what God's great salvation holds.

2. Great and deep the Spirit's purpose
making Jesus seen and heard.
Every age of God's creation
grasps new meanings from the Word.
Show us, Holy Spirit, show us
your new work begun today;
eyes and ears and hearts are open,
teach us what to do and say.

3. Great and deep the Spirit's purpose
all God's children brought to birth,
freed from hunger, fear and evil
every corner of the earth.
And a million million voices
speak with joy the Saviour's name;
every face reflects his image,
never any two the same.

4. Great and deep the Spirit's purpose
nothing shall be left to chance.
All that lives will be united
in the everlasting dance.
All fulfilled and all perfected,
each uniquely loved and known,
Christ in glory unimagined
once for all receives his own.

❖ Blessing:

Go in peace to love and to serve God;
**and the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,
and the love of God,
and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit,
be with us and unite us, now and always. Amen.**