

Welcome to our telephone service wherever you are

First, may I say a big thank you to all those who have prayed for me after my stroke. I am doing well. *God is good* and so we praise him in words from Revelation *You are worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power; for You created all things, and by Your will they exist and were created. You are worthy... for You were slain, and have redeemed us to God by Your blood out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation, and have made us kings and priests to our God.* God is our Creator and Carer.

We continue to praise the Lord in **our first Hymn:** Praise to the Lord, the Almighty by Henry Williams Baker

1. Praise to the Lord, the Almighty, the King of creation; O my soul praise him for he is thy health and salvation; All ye who hear, now to his temple draw near; Join me in glad adoration.

2. Praise to the Lord who doth prosper thy work and defend thee Surely his goodness and mercy here daily attend thee . Ponder anew what the almighty can do if with his love he befriend thee.

3. Praise to the Lord, O let all that is in me adore him! All that hath life and breath, come now with praises before him. Let the Amen sound from his people again; gladly for ever adore him

Together we **Pray** using the words of the ancient General Thanksgiving

Almighty God, Father of all mercies, we thine unworthy servants do give thee most humble and hearty thanks for all thy goodness and loving-kindness to us and all men. We bless thee for our creation, preservation, and all the blessings of this life; but above all for thine inestimable love in the redemption of the world by our Lord Jesus Christ; for the means of grace and the hope of glory. And we beseech thee, give us that due sense of all thy mercies, that our hearts may be unfeignedly thankful, and that we show forth thy praise, not only with our lips but in our lives by giving up ourselves to thy service, and by walking before thee in holiness and righteousness all our days; through Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom with thee and the Holy Ghost be all honour and glory, world without end. Amen

Our **first reading** comes from Genesis 2:4-9; then 15-end

This is the history of the heavens and the earth when they were created, in the day that the LORD God made the earth and the heavens,

5 before any plant of the field was in the earth and before any herb of the field had grown. For the LORD God had not caused it to rain on the earth, and there was no man to till the ground;

6 but a mist went up from the earth and watered the whole face of the ground.

7 And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being.

8 The LORD God planted a garden eastward in Eden, and there He put the man whom He had formed.

9 And out of the ground the LORD God made every tree grow that is pleasant to the sight and good for food. The tree of life was also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

15 *Then the LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to tend and keep it.*

16 And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, "Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat;

17 "but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die."

18 And the LORD God said, "It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him a helper comparable to him."

19 Out of the ground the LORD God formed every beast of the field and every bird of the air, and brought them to Adam to see what he would call them. And whatever Adam called each living creature, that was its name.

20 So Adam gave names to all cattle, to the birds of the air, and to every beast of the field. But for Adam there was not found a helper comparable to him.

21 And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall on Adam, and he slept; and He took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh in its place.

22 Then the rib which the LORD God had taken from man He made into a woman, and He brought her to the man.

23 And Adam said: "This is now bone of my bones And flesh of my flesh; She shall be called Woman, Because she was taken out of Man."

24 Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.

25 And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed

This is the word of the Lord **Thanks be to God**

Our **second reading** comes from Luke 8:22-25

22 Now it happened, on a certain day, that He got into a boat with His disciples. And He said to them, "Let us cross over to the other side of the lake." And they launched out.

23 But as they sailed He fell asleep. And a windstorm came down on the lake, and they were filling with water, and were in jeopardy.

24 And they came to Him and awoke Him, saying, "Master, Master, we are perishing!" Then He arose and rebuked the wind and the raging of the water. And they ceased, and there was a calm.

25 But He said to them, "Where is your faith?" And they were afraid, and marvelled, saying to one another, "Who can this be? For He commands even the winds and water, and they obey Him!"

This is the word of the Lord **Thanks be to God**

Reflection

Life is full of unexpected things - some pleasant, and some not so nice. Having a stroke wasn't on my list of expectations when Heather and I went off to Bridport to purchase some last minute Christmas presents.

And on a sunny afternoon I don't think facing a storm was on the list of these seasoned fishermen in this well known account in Luke 8.

Although sudden winds are a feature on the Sea of Galilee, this storm seems to have been something different, so different that a number of commentators think that it was a supernatural attack. Whatever it was, natural or supernatural, it was terrifying. The boat was filling with water as the disciples shook Jesus awake shouting "Master, Master, we are perishing!" or as Fraser would say in Dad's Army "We are doomed!"

Life at times can seem like that when sudden, unexpected storms break over us

But Jesus wasn't phased. He got up and dealt with the problem concisely and confidently Mk4 says with one word "Shh, stop." And chaos became calm

There are however two simple questions I want us to focus our thoughts on.

1st The disciples question "**Who is this?**" Who is this that winds and waves obey him?

Knowing their Bible the answer comes in the first book of the Bible, in Genesis. He is the Creator. The creator of heaven and earth of land and sea, of mortality (man and woman), of morality (right and wrong) and relationship (human and Divine)

Jesus is the Creator, is the Controller of all things. That is why the last book of the Bible, Revelation, says "You are worthy, O Lord, To receive glory and honour and power; For You created all things, and by Your will (your plan and purpose) they exist and were created."

Who is this? What we believe about Jesus makes all the difference to everything we face. Praise God this Jesus is the creator and controller of all things, who commands all chaos to be calm

Which takes us to the second question, this time from Jesus. "**Where is your faith?**"

Storms teach us about the Saviour. Troubles tell us about what trust in.

So often I hear the mantra '*Trust yourself - anything is possible!*' How many people say: '*I believe in me.*'

And Yes we do need to believe in possibilities, that things can improve, that we can change. But, friends, only faith in Jesus can save us from the past, can help us in the present, and make us more than we are.

The Bible is clear, it's only by faith in Jesus that we can be welcomed into heaven

Faith is not just credal (doctrines), it is commitment (doings); it's not just objective but subjective; it's not just historical (I was baptised, I was confirmed, I gave my heart to Jesus as a child or adult 50 years ago) but contemporary (Today I trust you Jesus with my life in this circumstance)

Let Jesus the Creator and Saviour speak his powerful Word into the core of your being and circumstances

Two questions surfaced in the storm: Who is This? and Where is your faith?

In life's storms we can discover who Jesus is; but then we need to decide to trust him with everything

No wonder when Jesus asked them (as he asks us) *Where is your faith?* they fell before him and worshipped him

Let's do that in the words of our second song

Song In heavenly love abiding by Anna Leiticia Waring

**In heavenly love abiding, no change my heart shall fear;
And safe is such confiding, for nothing changes here;
The storm may roar without me, my heart may low be laid,
But God is round about me, and can I be dismayed?**

**Green pastures are before, which yet I have not seen;
bright skies will soon be o'er me, where dark the clouds have been.
My hope I cannot measure, my path to life is free,
My Saviour has my treasure, and he will walk with me**

Declaration

Jesus asked Where is your faith? Let us affirm our faith in Almighty God

We believe in God the Father who created all things

This is the faith of the church **This is our faith**

We believe in Christ his Son who died for us and rose again to give us life

This is the faith of the church **This is our faith**

We believe in the Holy Spirit who makes us one

This is the faith of the church **This is our faith**

Let us pray

First for ourselves we confess our shortcomings

- For failing to love you, and our neighbour, with all our hearts souls, mind and strength. Forgive us our sins.

Lord in your mercy **Hear our prayer**

- Our hearts are restless 'til they find their rest in you. Come Lord Jesus, live in us that we might live for you. Then help us, and all those in need, to know and to show your peace in all the ups and downs of life

Lord in your mercy **Hear our prayer**

- Father, internationally, nationally and locally we are called to be in the boat with Jesus our Lord - not to cruise in comfort but battle against the winds of change, and to be examples of faith. We believe your Word can change the world. Help us as your church to hear, believe. and proclaim it, that we may magnify you as our Creator and Carer, our Lord and our Saviour

Lord in your mercy **Hear our prayer**

- We pray for our world, so wonderfully made, but at times like a stormy sea of conflicting pressures and currents. Help the leaders of the nations, all international organisations like the UN and NATO seeking to prevent conflict and cope with disasters, and aid agencies and NGOs working to bring relief to the hurting, hungry, and helpless

Lord in your mercy **Hear our prayer**

- We daily pray 'Yours is the kingdom, the power and the glory'. so, first and foremost, we seek your glory, and commit ourselves to see that all glory, honour and powers are yours - for you alone are worthy

With this in mind we share in the prayer that Jesus taught us to pray:

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.

Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive them that trespass against us

And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil

For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory for ever and ever Amen

Closing hymn Eternal Father by William Whiting

Eternal Father, strong to save, whose arm doth bind the restless wave

Who bidd'st the mighty ocean deep its own appointed limits keep.

O hear us when we cry to thee for those in peril on the sea.

O Trinity of love and pow'r, our brethren shield in danger's hour.

From rock and tempest, fire and foe, protect them whereso'er they go,

And ever let there rise to thee glad hymns of praise from land and sea.

Blessing

The Lord bless you and keep you, The Lord make his face to shine upon you and be gracious to you

The Lord turn his face towards you and give you his peace

And the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be upon you and remain with you, and all those for whom you pray, this day and for evermore **Amen**

Common Worship: Services and Prayers for the Church of England,

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Rev4:1 After these things I looked, and behold, a door standing open in heaven. And the first voice which I heard was like a trumpet speaking with me, saying, "Come up here, and I will show you things which must take place after this."

2 Immediately I was in the Spirit; and behold, a throne set in heaven, and One sat on the throne.

3 And He who sat there was like a jasper and a sardius stone in appearance; and there was a rainbow around the throne, in appearance like an emerald.

4 Around the throne were twenty-four thrones, and on the thrones I saw twenty-four elders sitting, clothed in white robes; and they had crowns of gold on their heads.

5 And from the throne proceeded lightnings, thunderings, and voices. Seven lamps of fire were burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God.

6 Before the throne there was a sea of glass, like crystal. And in the midst of the throne, and around the throne, were four living creatures full of eyes in front and in back.

7 The first living creature was like a lion, the second living creature like a calf, the third living creature had a face like a man, and the fourth living creature was like a flying eagle.

8 ¶ The four living creatures, each having six wings, were full of eyes around and within. And they do not rest day or night, saying: "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, Who was and is and is to come!"

9 Whenever the living creatures give glory and honour and thanks to Him who sits on the throne, who lives forever and ever,

10 the twenty-four elders fall down before Him who sits on the throne and worship Him who lives forever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying:

11 "You are worthy, O Lord, To receive glory and honour and power; For You created all things, And by Your will they exist and were created."