



**Welcome to Blackburn Baptist Church, on January 29th 2023 at 10:45, meeting at Bethesda Chapel.**

Whilst some are able to meet in person, others we know are still at home. We hope and pray that you will find this outline of our service helpful, as we seek to worship God as a Church family, wherever we are.

**Our service today is being led by Alec, and Trevor is playing the piano before and during the service. As we gather, he plays We've a story to tell to the nations, and Wonderful grace, amongst other hymns and songs:**

Wonderful grace that gives what I don't deserve,  
pays me what Christ has earned then lets me go free.  
Wonderful grace that gives me the time to change,  
washes away the stains that once covered me.  
And all that I have I lay at the feet  
of the wonderful Saviour who loves me.

Wonderful love that held in the face of death,  
breathed in its final breath forgiveness for me.  
Wonderful love whose power can break every chain  
giving us life again setting us free.  
And all that I have I lay at the feet  
of the wonderful Saviour who loves me.

**Alec welcomes everyone: and prays for a neighbour called Michelle, whose mother died recently, and prays for peace for Michelle and her sister, as he had promised.**

**And reads from Lamentations 3, 22-24;**

"Because of the Lord's great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail.  
They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.  
I say to myself, "The Lord is my portion; therefore I will wait for him."

**He leads in prayer;**

Loving Heavenly Father, we pray that this day in our little church will be a day that everybody remembers. We pray that this day will bring great glory and honour to the name of you our loving Lord. We pray that you may be so mightily present with us today that no-one here will be unaware of how real, how great and how near to us you are. We pray that you bless us all anew each day from this day forth, that Galligreaves is truly the place from which people speak saying "That is where the living God and his praising people are." The Lord says: "It is not by might, it is not by power, but by his spirit." Amen.

**Alec introduces a time of worship beginning with:**

"Great is Thy faithfulness," O God my Father,  
there is no shadow of turning with Thee;  
Thou changest not, Thy compassions, they fail not  
as Thou hast been Thou forever wilt be.

"Great is Thy faithfulness!" "Great is Thy faithfulness!"  
Morning by morning new mercies I see;  
all I have needed Thy hand hath provided—  
great is Thy faithfulness," Lord, unto me!

Summer and winter, and springtime and harvest,  
sun, moon and stars in their courses above,  
join with all nature in manifold witness  
to Thy great faithfulness, mercy and love.

"Great is Thy faithfulness!" "Great is Thy faithfulness!"....

Pardon for sin and a peace that endureth,  
thine own dear presence to cheer and to guide;  
strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow,  
blessings all mine, with ten thousand beside!

"Great is Thy faithfulness!" "Great is Thy faithfulness!"...

Authors: Thomas Obediah Chisholm, William Marion Runyan CCLI SONG # 18723 Cop copyrights © Words and music: 1923. Renewed 1951 Hope Publishing Company CCL no 5664

**Tony share the announcements for this week:** you are still able to donate to Open Doors using the envelopes available, refreshments are available as usual after the service, we will continue with a 5 minute prayer time in the sanctuary immediately after the service, please complete the prayer chain response slips (either paper or email) by Feb 12th, when we will be having our next Church lunch and Way Forward meeting.

**We sing again:**

My Jesus, my Saviour, Lord there is none like you:  
all of my days, I want to praise the wonders of your mighty love.  
My comfort, my shelter, tower of refuge and strength,  
let every breath, all that I am never cease to worship You.

Shout to the Lord, all the earth let us sing  
power and majesty, praise to the King:  
mountains bow down and the seas will roar  
at the sound of Your name.

I sing for joy at the work of your hands,  
forever I'll love you, forever I'll stand,  
nothing compares to the promise I have in you.

Author: Darlene Zschech CCLI SONG # 1406918 Copyright©1993 Wondrous Worship (Admin. by Song Solutions [www.songsolutions.org](http://www.songsolutions.org))  
CCL No 5664

Lord I lift Your name on high, Lord I love to sing Your praises.  
I'm so glad You're in my life, I'm so glad You came to save us.  
You came from heaven to earth to show the way  
from the earth to the cross, my debt to pay;  
from the cross to the grave, from the grave to the sky  
Lord I lift Your name on high.

Author: Rick Founds CCLI SONG #117947 Copyrights © 1989 Universal Music - Brentwood Benson Publishing (Admin. by Brentwood-Benson Music Publishing, Inc.) CCL No 5664

Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine! Oh, what a foretaste of glory divine!  
Heir of salvation, purchase of God, born of his Spirit, washed in his blood.  
This is my story, this is my song, praising my Saviour all the day long.  
This is my story, this is my song, praising my Saviour all the day long.

Perfect communion, perfect delight, visions of rapture now burst on my sight.  
Angels descending bring from above echoes of mercy, whispers of love.  
This is my story, this is my song....

Perfect submission, all is at rest. I in my Saviour am happy and bless'd,  
watching and waiting, looking above, filled with his goodness, lost in his love.  
This is my story, this is my song....

Authors Fanny Jane Crosby, Phoebe Palmer Knapp Ccli Song # 22324 Copyrightswords: Public Domain Music: Public Domain Ccl No 5664

**We are this week able to listen to Nadia's Testimony** - remember she was going to share it last week but wasn't well - which Karen translates for us as she speaks in Russian.

**Following this, we watch a video of a prayer**, written by Tatyana Vasilishin (2/2/2021) and sung in Ukrainian by a small group, one male and 2 females, called Rooted in Christ. (This is the link should you have internet access and wish to watch it. )  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-NKPreTNI+O>

**Janet now read for us: Isaiah 43, 14-28.**

This is what the Lord says— your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel:  
"For your sake I will send to Babylon and bring down as fugitives all the Babylonians,  
in the ships in which they took pride.

I am the Lord, your Holy One, Israel's Creator, your King.

This is what the Lord says— he who made a way through the sea,  
a path through the mighty waters, who drew out the chariots and horses,  
the army and reinforcements together, and they lay there, never to rise again,  
extinguished, snuffed out like a wick:

"Forget the former things; do not dwell on the past.

See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it?

I am making a way in the wilderness and streams in the wasteland. The wild animals honour

me, the jackals and the owls, because I provide water in the wilderness and streams in the wasteland, to give drink to my people, my chosen, the people I formed for myself that they may proclaim my praise.

"Yet you have not called on me, Jacob, you have not wearied yourselves for me, Israel.

You have not brought me sheep for burnt offerings,  
nor honoured me with your sacrifices.

I have not burdened you with grain offerings nor wearied you with demands for incense.

You have not bought any fragrant calamus for me,  
or lavished on me the fat of your sacrifices.

But you have burdened me with your sins and wearied me with your offences.

"I, even I, am he who blots out your transgressions, for my own sake,  
and remembers your sins no more.

Review the past for me, let us argue the matter together;  
state the case for your innocence.

Your first father sinned; those I sent to teach you rebelled against me.

So I disgraced the dignitaries of your temple;

I consigned Jacob to destruction and Israel to scorn."

**We are invited to stand and sing once more, this time accompanied by Trevor:**

I, the Lord of sea and sky, I have heard my people cry.

All who dwell in deepest sin my hand will save.

I who made the stars of night, I will make their darkness bright.

Who will bear my light to them? Whom shall I send?

Here I am Lord. Is it I Lord?

I have heard you calling in the night.

I will go Lord, if you lead me.

I will hold your people in my heart.

I, the Lord of snow and rain, I have borne my people's pain.

I have wept for love of them, they turn away.

I will break their hearts of stone, give them hearts for love alone

.I will speak my word to them, whom shall I send?

Here I am Lord. Is it I Lord?...

I, the Lord of wind and flame, I will tend the poor and lame.

I will set a feast for them, my hand will save.

Finest bread I will provide till their hearts be satisfied.

I will give my life to them. Whom shall I send?

Here I am Lord. Is it I Lord?....

Writer: Daniel Schutte Copyright ©1985 New Dawn Music, Kingsway Music CCL no 566

**Alec shares his message: Connect.**

In our church we now have an interim constitution which is a great help and guides us as to how we are to function so we all know where we are.

And of course more significant and even more all-embracing than that we have the Word of God and the Spirit of God in our hearts to guide us and to lead us. Reading the Word of God and listening to God's Spirit speaking to our hearts may lead us to the understanding that we need a reset.

We all know that it is sometimes necessary to do a reset. Like with my work mobile. Sometimes it behaves as if it's got indigestion because it has taken too much information, too many calls and too many needs on board in too short a period of time and needs a reset.

The same thing might happen with my desktop or with your laptop or whatever. Something is not working properly so after a while you go for a reset.

Normally speaking doing a reset doesn't mean throwing the device out and buying a new one. Often it means getting the device to recall the functions or data that it seems to have lost or whatever.

So here we are at last at the start line. We all know that the starter traditionally says, "On your marks. Set." So are we set to start? Sometimes there has to be a restart. When there is a restart the starter used to say once again, "On your marks. Set. Go." So metaphorically speaking are we ready to go?

In the passage that Janet so kindly read for us we read about a reset.

Isaiah 43:18 says: "Forget the former things; do not dwell on the past. See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it?"

As I read right at the beginning of the gathering the Bible tells us that God's mercies are new every morning. What God wants to do in our lives is fresh and new every day. Maybe it's new things in our marriages and families, new things in our hearts, new things in our relationship to Jesus Christ or just new things in general. God maybe teaches us something that we've never known before. He maybe takes us to places that were unexpected.

When we read the gospels, we find that where Jesus appears things begin to shake and this shaking is a good thing. In Matthew 21 we read when he entered Jerusalem on Palm Sunday, the whole city was shaking, saying who is this? And the crowds kept saying, "This is the prophet, Jesus of Nazareth." The entire city of Jerusalem was turned upside down when Jesus showed up. We know that an earthquake happened when Jesus was crucified. We know that an earthquake happened, when Jesus rose from the grave and the stone was rolled away. And this same Jesus is right here with us. Dynamite.

He has blessed us and is blessing us so that we can continue to do new things in our community here in Galligreaves and Wensleyfold and of course throughout the borough and further afield. I believe God has and is challenging us and is encouraging us to continue to trust Him as we move forward together; as we connect together with God and with one another.

How does God do new things in our lives? How does God do new things in our church? He says we have to forget the past. We have to forget it. Now I don't mean we shouldn't be holding a Remembrance Day service. I don't mean that we should stop remembering and not be thankful for all the way the Lord has led us so far. No. The Bible says: "Remember how the LORD your God led you all the way in the wilderness these forty years, to humble and test you in order to know what was in your heart, whether or not you would keep his commands."

The very first words the prophet says are, "Forget the former things."

Now really this shouldn't be difficult for us to grasp. Because many of us perhaps go into a different room or climb up the stairs to get something and when we reach the other room or have climbed the stairs we cannot remember why we came and what we came for. That's kind of par for the course so to speak when you are a little bit older.

But if we are honest with ourselves we probably have some junk in our past and in order to get in touch with our future, we cannot live in the past. We can learn from the past, but we cannot live in the past. This church has a very long history; like it began with God in 1895. Not one of us here today was there right at the beginning when God started it. Not even Barbara was here then! Even before I came here and then particularly but not only in the time before the pandemic broke out I learned as much as I could about the history of this church, about God's dealings with you and about your responses to what God was saying. The past is a great place to learn from. We may have some wonderful memories. But the past is a terrible place in which to live. If we live in the past we will never move forward on to where God is aiming to move us.

We know that God has some things to say to us today like He does every day and I hope that as we look at our spiritual journey, that our spiritual development, the greatest days of our heart for God and the greatest things God did in our lives were not five years ago, or ten years ago, but right now. I really hope that it is now and in the days ahead. Because I am in all humility absolutely certain that God is speaking to me and the leadership team of this church as I hope He is to each one of us and He is turning our hearts and lives upside down and inside out as He continues preparing us for the ongoing work of leading this church forward and we are waiting and looking to see what He is about to do. For we can do nothing; but with God all things are possible. There is nothing, absolutely nothing, which our God cannot do!

Speak and pray with Janet and Jane. Speak and pray with Colin and Tony. Speak and pray with me. We are your servants for Christ's sake; but what we are experiencing sometimes amazes us.

Sometimes my schedule recently has looked like an attempt to shovel up and move all the sand of the Sahara desert into the Atlantic or other oceans until I have once again realised that God actually put the sand there Himself for a purpose. So then I stopped trying to move the sand. I also stopped looking at the sand and aimed just to look at God. He is enough. He is everything to me. Well of course I've done this and known this experience before; but not like this; not in this way; not with this timing.

It's easy isn't to look back and say, "I remember when I did this and I remember when God ...", and that's awesome, but that's not where we live and we can't continue to live on former blessings or former disappointments. Maybe for some of us today, the greatest enemy to the future that God has for us is mistakes that we've made in the past. You can't run the race that is set before you if you're always looking over your shoulder at the past. It's easy to look back and say, "well you see, I've always been discouraged. How could life be different? I've made these mistakes. How could God love me? I've struggled in this area. I guess I'm always going to struggle here because I've always struggled here".

You know Jesus didn't hibernate amongst us; He lived and lives amongst us.

It's easy to look back into the past and if you're going to embrace new things, there are certain things in the kingdom of God we may have to forget about, at least not dwell on them, and not have them in the forefront of our hearts and minds.

In one translation we read: "But forget all that— it is nothing compared to what I am going to do" says God. That's what God says in Isaiah 43:18 (NLT) He says: "But forget all that— it is nothing compared to what I am going to do; for I am about to do something new."

Are we connected to this? Are we relating to this? The simple question is, are we connected to Jesus? Is He living in our hearts? Is He Lord of our hearts? We have given Him once again week after week all authority over this church which is His body.

God says to you and to me; to us as individuals and to us as a church: "See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it?" Well to see it we need faith; faith which is the assurance of things hoped for; the assurance of things not seen."

Maybe you look around here this morning and you see lots of empty chairs? Really! They are places waiting to be filled when God opens up the hearts of people in this borough to come here to worship Him. There are still 130,000 people in this borough of Blackburn with Darwen. They won't all fit in here. Only God can bring them here. Yes we have our strategies; yes we have our ideas; but let's put them on the back-burner so to speak. Let's make sure they are not burdening us down with often unnecessary planning meetings. Let's get together to pray and read the Word of God together. This is God's challenge to me and to you; to us all.

"If my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and I will forgive their sin and will heal their land." (2 Chronicles 7:14)

The Lord Jesus Christ says: "I will build my church, and the gates of Hell will not overcome it." It is absolutely impossible to destroy the true church of God.

It won't be easy moving forward. It isn't easy. But we know for God's Word teaches us that what it calls our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal (2 Corinthians 4:17)

"For I am about to do something new; see, I have already begun! Do you not see it? I will make a pathway through the wilderness. I will create rivers in the dry wasteland." Isaiah 43:19 (NLT)

You see I didn't need and I don't need to shovel all the sand of the Sahara to the ocean. For God is making a pathway through the wilderness; through the wilderness of our pride and excessive self-esteem, through the valleys of depression and anxiety. He is creating rivers in the dry wasteland of an area which is crying out for the water of Life, for Living Water.

So we forget the past, we do not dwell on the past, we anticipate what God is about to do and indeed has begun to do, and we see, perceive and build the kingdom of God under God here in these places where we are.

10 days ago as many of you know I attended the Evangelical Baptists Leadership Day at Gold Hill Baptist church in Buckinghamshire. I met together with over 200 ministers with whom with one exception I had previously had no contact. The exception was the pastor of the Gate Church in Reading, a member of the Baptist Union Council as a co-opted member of the core leadership team.

According to the Baptist Times in Reading in 2016 more than 700 people had prayed to give or re-dedicate their lives to Christ in the first 10 days of a mission outreach. This number then increased to more than 1,200.

The pastor believes what happened in Reading is transferable, as it's 'not a technique, it is not a programme; it is not a church growth plan but something holy from the Lord.'

“He says it is simply the empowering of ordinary believers to be able to share the gospel on the streets and that is where the power to transform our cities lies. If we will humble ourselves, not try and control it and allow the Holy Spirit to flow we will see incredible things on the streets of every city in this nation.” He could have added, “and every borough”.

Leaders in Reading had been meeting every week to pray for revival. It is through prayer in our pleading to God from the heart in showing our dependence on Him and the Spirit-filled and God-obedient teaching of the Word that each and every renewal movement and revival that has ever happened in God’s church on earth has taken place and is continuing to take place.

You may not be able to run around Galligreaves or indeed any part of Blackburn or Darwin but you can pray; and I know you do pray. Pray to the Lord of the harvest that He will send workers into His harvest for the harvest is ready, it is all around us, but as we know, the workers are few.

Let’s go back to Hebrews 11:1-2. You know where God says “Now faith is being sure of what we hoped for and certain of what we do not see. This is what the ancients were commended for.” And then follows like a long list of the “ancients”. Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses and the rest.

You see God has done it before. He has given His servants the faith they need to see, to perceive what He is doing and to wait and work for what He is doing. Do you remember the story of Abraham? Look with me at Hebrews 11: 8-12.

“By faith Abraham, when called to go to a place he would later receive as his inheritance, obeyed and went, even though he did not know where he was going. By faith he made his home in the Promised Land like a stranger in a foreign country; he lived in tents, as did Isaac and Jacob, who were heirs with him of the same promise. For he was looking forward to the city with foundations, whose architect and builder is God; and by faith even Sarah, who was past childbearing age, was enabled to bear children because she considered him faithful who had made the promise, and so from this one man, and he as good as dead, came descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and as countless as the sand on the seashore.”

What do you say to that? God hasn’t changed. He is still doing things like that. All over God’s earth, God is working.

In my home village there is a lady who had some difficulties with her sight. Since birth she had had some real challenges. She was a pharmacist, so it was quite natural when I was collecting medicines that I was able to speak with her in her pharmacy where she told me about this. She said she had been to so many eye doctors and so on but one well-qualified optician had apparently at last been given the gift to identify the problem she had. Do you know what she then said? Like I went out and looked up at the night sky and for the first time I could see the stars clearly. She could see clearly what God had done! For the first time!

Maybe you and I have not been able to see what God is doing? I don’t mean in the heavens but on the earth. Maybe you are beginning to see that for the first time this morning?

Can you imagine Abraham’s conversation with his wife at breakfast time as he let her know they were going to move? “Am I going to get to live in my dream house this time?” Is that what Sara said? OK Ab where are we going this time? Like we seem to have a really nomadic lifestyle... And Abraham says to his wife “I have no idea where we are going but God says we are to go, so we go.”



I have a blank piece of paper in my hand. There is nothing written on it. When God says to the members at BBC "Do this, do that", He also says, "I am with you wherever you go." But we have to be following Him first.

Do we need a reset? Are we connected to the living God? Are we growing together as a praying, bible-believing fellowship?

Or do we say what God did for Moses, what God did for Joshua, what God did for Gideon, what God did for Daniel indeed what God did for all these followers of His is really fine, but He can't or won't do that anymore. No, no, no; God has not changed. He is waiting for us to continue to trust Him as we move forward; He is encouraging us to look at the fields, to see the harvest, to pray for workers and to perceive, to understand the new thing that He is doing here.

Did you enter this building this morning with a spirit of hope and expectation? God, do something in me today. God, speak to me. Change me. Do something in our church today, God. We're not looking back at the past. We've got to forget it; we are not to dwell on it.

"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future." (Jeremiah 29:11)

It's time to finish. Jesus began with twelve disciples. He had chosen them all Himself individually and personally. One of them betrayed Him and His Life "ended" so to speak on a Cross. But God knew what He was doing. He always knows what He is doing. He is not a defeated God. He never was and He never will be.

You know these disciples were kind of slow starters. When Jesus died they were scared out of their wits and hid themselves away behind locked doors. Then in the Gospel of John 20:19-20 we read,

"On the evening of that first day of the week, when the disciples were together, with the doors locked for fear of the Jewish leaders, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!" After he said this, he showed them his hands and side. The disciples were overjoyed when they saw the Lord."

Their Lord had died and they had been in despair. They weren't even talking of the way forward; but then they saw Jesus, the resurrected Lord and then the Spirit came. This group of 11 basically very different people but individually and collectively very frightened people were completely transformed, completely transformed. The church of God was born and grew. We read about it in the Acts of the Apostles; but I think that that is what we may be about to experience here in Blackburn. With God's help and in God's time.

"Forget the former things; do not dwell on the past. See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the wilderness and streams in the wasteland. The wild animals honour me, the jackals and the owls, because I provide water in the wilderness and streams in the wasteland, to give drink to my people, my chosen, the people I formed for myself that they may proclaim my praise."

**We join in our final hymn, which is also the Offering hymn:**

The Lord's my shepherd, I'll not want. He makes me down to lie  
in pastures green; He leadeth me the quiet waters by.

My soul He doth restore again; and me to walk doth make  
within the paths of righteousness, even for His own Name's sake.

Yea, though I walk in death's dark vale, yet will I fear no ill;  
for Thou art with me; and Thy rod and staff my comfort still.

My table Thou hast furnishèd in presence of my foes;  
my head Thou dost with oil anoint, and my cup overflows.

Goodness and mercy all my life shall surely follow me;  
and in God's house forevermore my dwelling place shall be.

Author: Francis Rous, Public domain. CCL No 5664

### **Alec gives a prayer of thanks:**

Thank you Lord for all your gifts you give to us. Please accept and use the gifts that we bring now for the extension of your kingdom we pray. Amen.

### **Shirley leads our Prayers of Intercession:**

'Living God, on this fifth Sunday of another year we come to praise you, conscious that you have watched over us in the months gone by.

You have blessed us in so much that is past, teach us to trust you for the future.

We praise you for the countless ways we have experienced your love, the faith you have nurtured, the strength you have given, the guidance you have offered.

You have blessed us in so much that is past, teach us to trust you for the future.

Living God you have always been by our sides, your love constantly surrounding us, your hands supporting us whatever we have been called to face.

You have blessed us in so much that is past, teach us to trust you for the future.

Grant now your blessing on the days ahead. Help us to make the most of the opportunities that lie before us, to live each day to the full and to stay faithful to you through good and bad, serving Christ in all we say and do.

You have blessed us so much that is past, teach us to trust you for the future, for in his name we pray. Amen.

So much to pray for dear Lord. We pray particularly for our friends in the Ukraine after the recent bombing. Comfort those who mourn and give strength and sustenance in every way to those who remain in Kyiv and wisdom to the leaders and every country who seek to give them aid. We pray too for Adelina and Nikolai and Nadia and their family as they remember their loved ones still in the Ukraine.

As we here in the UK have experienced some extremely, to us, cold weather recently, we think of Afghanistan where people are suffering in an Arctic winter with temperatures as low as -28. We pray too that the ban to not allow women aid workers will be lifted and that agencies who have stopped helping because of this, will return swiftly to help all who are struggling with cold and famine. Women are so persecuted in this country, been banned from secondary schools, Unis, and parks. We pray that Taliban leaders will uphold and preserve

human life and turn from hate to love. As we think of the persecuted and as Jesus tells us to pray for our enemies let us now pray this prayer for the persecutors.

Lord Jesus,

There are many people who persecute your church. Sometimes they are militants who want to see the church destroyed. Often they are the very people meant to offer protection: governments, communities, even families. We ask you to thwart all evil plans and soften hardened hearts. Especially work in the lives of influential figures, to change the way others view and treat Christians.

You died for those who target your people. May the reality of this dawn on them - through dreams, visions and signs, or the powerful witness of your people. May those who seek to destroy your church, become your disciples; and may those who live in darkness, see your light. Amen.

As we think and pray for other countries we remember all who are struggling with lack of food, heat and many other problems in the UK. Give wisdom and guidance dear Lord to our government at this time with decisions especially regarding the NHS and the demands in many areas for extra pay and better conditions. May many turned to you at this time and seek to know you, the one true God who loves them and has the answer to all things.

And last but not least we bring before you our families and our church family especially those who need a special touch from you. Those in hospital, those bereaving loved ones, those are unwell at home and those waiting for hospital decisions. Dear Father may they know your peace and comfort at this time. We pray too for the Chilvers our BMS partners in Chad. Be with them in every way as they continue to serve you.

As we remember all our activities here at BBC, thanking you for the commitment of Alec and the deacons, we pray that in the weeks and months ahead we will keep our eyes on Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith who died that we might be forgiven and receive fullness of life. In finishing, I have been and still am, challenged by reading which quoted the 18th-century Anglican John Newton saying 'If the Lord be with us we have no cause to fear. His eye is upon us, his arm over over us, his ear open to our prayer, his grace is sufficient and his promises unchangeable.' BUT, it all depends on how big your God, and my God, is. Amen.'

**We close as we are invited to stand and say together:**

'Now to him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to make you stand in the presence of his glory blameless with great joy, to the only God our Saviour, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion and authority, before all time, now and forever, and now may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with us evermore. Amen.'

