

Mothering Sunday



Sunday 14th March 2021

Sunday worship on is on  **YouTube**

The easiest way to find the link to the YouTube meeting each Sunday is to find the link on the Corps web page. Type.....

www.salvationarmy.org.uk/ramsgate and select **Church on YouTube**

You can also find us by searching on YouTube and on the Ramsgate Facebook page.

But we want to still “meet together” and share our thoughts and prayers and testimonies. It will give a chance to share how God has spoken to us during the meeting – and allow us to encourage each other.

<https://us04web.zoom.us/j/8651865167>

Ramsgate ZOOM 8651865167

And you can **ring into Zoom by phone!** If you ring 02034815240, followed by 8651865167# then you will hear the meeting! Calls charged at the normal UK rate.

If you have no internet we are providing each week's service on a DVD which we will deliver to you. Please let us know if you **do not want** a DVD each week. Also tell us if you **need help** watching the DVDs we are sending



What's happening next week at Ramsgate Salvation Army?

Sunday 14 th 10 am	Ramsgate Worship at Home on YouTube
Sunday 14 th 11.15 am	ZOOM fellowship
Sunday 14 th 12 noon	ZOOM Youth Group
Sunday 14 th 4.30 pm	ZOOM Children's Church Kids Club (up to 11 years)
Monday to Friday (6.30am-9am)	Breakfast Drop-in (street homeless only)
Monday 15 th 7.30pm	APEST (by ZOOM)
Tuesday 16 th (10am - 12 noon)	Food Bank
Tuesday 16 th 7pm	ZOOM Bible Study
Wednesday 17 th 7.30 pm	ZOOM In conversation – See below
Friday 19 th (10am - 12 noon)	Food Bank
Sunday 21 st March	Divisional Worship. See below. The link will be on our web page

Wellbeing

"It's time to sing your song again!"

Shaping together mission possibilities for 2021

The South East Division
"in conversation"

with Captain (Dr) Will Pearson
Wednesday 17 March 2021 – 7:30pm
Zoom meeting id: 827 0502 7154
Passcode: 881446

A Christian Church and registered charity - No. 214779 and in Scotland SC009359

THE SALVATION ARMY

Zoom Code 827 0502 7154

Passcode 881 446

DIVISIONAL WORSHIP

with the South East Division

*with our Divisional Leaders:
Majors Mark and Linda Herbert*

Our next Online Meeting:

Sunday 21st March

www.youtube.com/ChathamSalvationArmyUK

LIVE from 09:55am | via @ChathamSA YouTube



<https://www.fortressradio.online/listen-now.html>

And don't forget Songs of Praise Sundays at 13.15pm

There is a full day of activities on Fortress Radio.



Maggie is available with the constant prayer line where you can call or text for prayer. You can contact her on 07840 753 603

Daily Hope offers music, prayers and reflections as well as full worship services from the Church of England at the end of a telephone line.



Birthdays

Cherie Neale Wednesday 17-March
Joy Watson Friday 19-March
Kay Tocci Sunday 21-March

Prayers please for

For the family and friends of **Captain John Garbutt** who was promoted to Glory this morning Saturday 13th March. We thank God for allowing us to be with a great man of God

For **Joyce Hill** as she awaits test results.

Jean Mayton, whilst there has been a slight improvement from her recent brain bleed, we understand Jean is still far from well. She has been moved to a nursing home.

For **Melvin Harris** in Canterbury Hospital.

We continue to pray for **Grant** and **Al** and **David** and **John** McCairn all waiting for medical treatment. For Tracy's dad **Ivan**. Continued prayers for **Paul**, son of Hazel, who has two more treatment sessions and for **Archie**, Lisa and Scott.

Chris, a friend of Gay, who is unwell at this time. For the peace and healing that only God can give.

For **Ingrid** Davis moving to live with her son in Welwyn Garden City.

Prayer for Heart Revival

Heavenly Father, pour out Your Holy Spirit like a mighty flood into the hearts of all Your people, those who are called by Your name. May our hearts be washed by the water of the Word and may the purifying light of the Holy



Spirit cleanse the thoughts, wash the hearts and purify the minds of those who are part of the church, which is Your Body.

Lord, we pray that You would purify the hearts and minds of all Your people so that our thoughts are ever turned toward the Lord Jesus. May we as individual members and also as a body of believers, learn to seek Your will in our lives, so that our prayers are filtered through the light of Your will, so that they are tuned into Your perfect plans and purposes. May the desire of all believers be to lift up Your name so that You are honoured in the fellowships and local churches in His rightful position as Head, and may the Lord Jesus remain the central focus of the intent of our hearts

Lord, we pray that You would revive the hearts of all believers and especially those who have left their first love, become involved in a distorted gospel, fallen into legalism or become lukewarm toward You. Draw each one back into a right relationship with You and with each other. Revive Your people we pray, and turn the hearts of all Your people back to Yourself. In Jesus' name,

Amen.

Source: <https://prayer.knowing-jesus.com/Prayers-for-Spiritual-Revival>

A brief history of Mothering Sunday



Everyone celebrates Mother's Day in their own way, from children preparing mum a much-deserved breakfast in bed, to older children treating their mother to a quintessentially British afternoon tea. But while we see it as a

universally beloved day of affection and celebration, Mothering Sunday isn't technically what you think it is. It's not even the same thing as Mother's Day.

THE ORIGINAL "MOTHERING SUNDAY"

Mothering Sunday began as an explicitly religious event of the 16th Century, with no connection to mothers at all. The word "mothering" referred to the "mother church", which is to say the main church or cathedral of the region. It became a tradition that, on the fourth Sunday of Lent, people would return to their mother church for a special service. This pilgrimage was apparently known as "going a-mothering", and became something of a holiday event, with domestic servants traditionally given the day off to visit their own families as well as their mother church.

SAVING MOTHERING SUNDAY

Despite its long existence in British culture, Mothering Sunday eventually fell out of fashion at the dawn of the 20th Century. This is where a lady named Constance Penswick-Smith enters the picture. The daughter of a vicar, she thought the loss of Mothering Sunday was a great shame, and worked hard to rekindle interest, even writing a book whose title clearly laid out her ambition - it was called *The Revival of Mothering Sunday*. As if that wasn't enough, she also founded the Society for the Observance of Mothering Sunday. Her determination paid off, and the fading festival was restored to the culture of the country, only with much more of a focus on celebrating motherhood. And this was due to an American influence...

MOTHER'S DAY

So if our event is properly called Mothering Sunday, what is "Mother's Day"? Technically speaking it's a completely unrelated American event, invented by a woman called Anna Jarvis in 1908. Her initial inspiration was a desire to honour her own mother, who had been a militant peace activist during the US Civil War. Anna Jarvis's growing ambition to create a formal "Mother's Day"

for all American mothers was literally laughed out of the room at first, with officials jokingly saying that it might lead to a "Mother-in-Law's Day". Anna Jarvis wasn't easily put off, though, and in 1914 US President Woodrow Wilson officially signed Mother's Day into existence.

THE REVOLT AGAINST MOTHER'S DAY

It was Anna Jarvis who inspired our own Constance Penswick-Smith to revive the more religiously-flavoured Mothering Sunday over here, although the two separate events have since become conflated in most people's minds. Interestingly, Anna Jarvis herself was the first person to condemn the growing commercialisation of Mother's Day, and started organising boycotts of the event she herself created. One of her anti-Mother's Day protests even led to her arrest for disturbing the peace, and she was particularly appalled by ready-made Mother's Day cards, saying "A printed card means nothing except that you are too lazy to write to the woman who has done more for you than anyone in the world." Buying chocolates was a no-no as well. "You take a box to Mother," she scoffed, "and then eat most of it yourself. A pretty sentiment!" (BBC Website 2021)

OK, we stand condemned, who gave a shop bought card, and a shop bought present? Make this prayer your own as you give thanks for mothers.

God our Mother: Mother's Day Prayer

Loving God, we give thanks today for mothers!

Thank you for mothers who gave birth to us, and women who have treated us as their own children. You teach us how to be good mothers, cherishing and protecting the children among us.

Help us mother lovingly, fairly, wisely and with great joy.

Help us raise our children to be the people they are born to be.

We need your comfort today, God, because some are missing mothers, some are missing children, some are parted by distance or death.

Comfort those who have given up their child for adoption, or who chose not to give birth, and had an abortion.

Comfort those who longed to be biological mothers, and could not.

We give thanks for those who chose not to be mothers in order to serve you in different ways; often by caring for family members or to devote themselves to their calling. We think especially of those in ministry in the Salvation Army as single female officers.

We pray for those whose mothers have disappointed them; we ask for grace in relationships where there is pain and bitterness, for healing in relationships where there is abuse and violence.

Help this corps and all churches to be a space where people can feel mothered, their gifts and talents appreciated and nurtured.

Finally, we pray today for mothers around the world;

mothers who cannot feed their children,
mothers who are homeless or without a homeland;
mothers who must teach their children about the dangers of bombs and bullets.

Help us create a world where mothers can raise their children in peace and plenty.

God of mothers, who created mothers, who came as a child and had a mother, God our Mother, loving us with a sweeter and deeper love than we have ever known,

Hear our prayer this day, Amen.

Amended from Copyright material from Carol Penner www.leadinginworship.com

Quotes About Mothers

“I learned more about Christianity from my mother than from all the theologians in England.” ~ John Wesley

“Only God Himself fully appreciates the influence of a Christian mother in the moulding of character in her children.” ~ Billy Graham

You are as much serving God in looking after your own children, and training them up in God’s fear, and minding the house, and making your household a church for God, as you would be if you had been called to lead an army to battle for the Lord of hosts.
-Charles Spurgeon

Your greatest contribution to the kingdom of God might not be something you do, but someone you raise. -Andy Stanley

“Children are not a distraction from more important work. They are the most important work.” - C. S. Lewis

“The homemaker has the ultimate career. All other careers exist for one purpose only - and that is to support the ultimate career. ” -C. S. Lewis

SAINT ETHELBERT AND SAINT GERTRUDE CHURCH
THE OPENING CEREMONY, SUNDAY 17, AUGUST 1902

His Lordship the Bishop of Southwark presided at the opening ceremony a numerous body of clergy, not only local. also taking part in the sacred rites. Among these were the Abbot of St. Augustine's, Fr. Fox, Fr. Bruno, and Fr. Power. The interior of St. Ethelbert.



Thoughts from Major John

Bless the Lord

Psalm 34 verses 1-3. (AV)

I will bless the Lord at all times: his praise shall continually be in my mouth.
My soul shall make her boast in the Lord: the humble shall hear thereof and
be glad. O magnify the Lord with me and let us exalt his name together.

I mentioned in my contribution recently that I have been enjoying watching morning prayers from Canterbury Cathedral on YouTube. Weather permitting the prayers are recorded outdoors in the Deanery gardens and the orchard. The first stanza of the opening prayer caught my attention on Monday morning...

'O Lord, open our lips and our mouths shall proclaim your praise.'

The first eight verses of Psalm 34 are favourite verses of mine. The verses above remind me of a bottle of pop that has been shaken and when the top is taken off the fizz and the bubbles just come spurting out, or like the Grand Prix winner spraying the crowd with champagne from the grandstand. The Psalmist cannot contain his praise and encourages others to join in too. Perhaps we don't feel quite like that in the morning, but it is right and good for us to bless and praise the Lord for all his goodness to us.

The words of the chorus 369 in our songbook might be a suitable prayer that we could make...

I love you, Lord, and I lift my voice
To worship You, O my soul rejoice.
Take joy, my King, in what you hear,
May it be a sweet, sweet sound in Your ear.

Time to Smile

The vicar announced that they would be having an additional font placed in the church so that babies could be baptised at both ends.

Notice in the kitchen of a Church Hall.

'Ladies when you have emptied the teapot please stand upside down in the sink'.

On a dual purpose church notice board with a section for a wayside pulpit text, and another section for service details, it read... 'The Bishop will preach here next Sunday at 10.30 a.m.'

On the other side were the words...

'DON'T WORRY IT MAY NEVER HAPPEN'

Answers given on TV Quiz shows...

Q. Name an occupation where you might need a torch?

A. Burglar.

Q. Name a word beginning with Z?

A. Xylophone.

Q. Name a judge on Strictly Come Dancing?

A. Darcy Brussels

Q. What name is given to the condition where the sufferer can fall asleep at any time?

A. Nostalgia.

Quizmaster: On which street did Sherlock Holmes live?

Contestant: Er....

Quizmaster: He makes bread.

Contestant: Er...

Quizmaster: He makes cakes.

Contestant: Kipling Street?

Quiz

1. To which mammal family does the ocelot belong?

2. Who was nominated for a Turner Prize for her unmade bed?

3. What controversial exhibit was transformed into the O2 Arena in 2007?

4. Which motor manufacturer produced literally 'the peoples wagon'?

5.What was the BT directory enquiry service number prior to deregulation?

Books

1.Who wrote about the Spanish Civil War in 'For Whom the Bell Tolls?

2.Which character appeared in all of Raymond Chandler's novels?

3.How did barrister Rumpole refer to his wife Hilda?

4.Who on the Booker Prize for 'Midnight's Children'?

5.Aunt Agatha and Bingo Little feature in the escapades of which man about town?

- | | | | | | |
|-------|---------------------|-------------------|---------------------------|-------------------|--------------------|
| Books | 1. Ernest Hemingway | 2. Philip Marlowe | 3. She who must be obeyed | 4. Salman Rushdie | 5. Bertie Wooster. |
| Quiz | 1. Cat | 2. Tracey Emin | 3. The Millennium Dome | 4. Volkswagen | 5. 192 |

Answers

Back to Church

Last week we started the conversation about a return to the hall. We have received an indication that we should be able to meet in the hall for worship for the Easter Weekend. There will still be no singing and we will need to distance the seats – but we are exploring the possibility of opening the hall on Good Friday and Easter Sunday where we can share the worship we will have prepared on YouTube and share in the ZOOM service.

We would then continue this each week until we are allowed to return normally in June. We recognise not everyone will be happy or able to meet in the way – so we will continue to record a meeting on YouTube and share fellowship over ZOOM.



Mothering Sunday 14th March

Open our hearts to his love

On Mothering Sunday, many of us thank God for the women who have had the greatest impact on our lives and celebrate their unconditional love and care. For others, however, Mothering Sunday is a difficult day that brings mixed emotions. We remember those who are struggling today. We pray that God will comfort and support them.

One of my favourite verses is 1 John 3:1

*'How great is the love the Father has lavished on us,
that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are!'*

We come to worship our heavenly Father with full and thankful hearts because we belong to his family and are all equally loved by him. He lavishes his love on us all. We are all favourites in this family! Be loved today.

Gather us now before you, O God, as a hen gathers her brood to protect them.

Like a mother you gather your people to you;
you are gentle with us as a mother with her children.

As we meet today and follow your example, protect us, support us, and feed us with your unconditional love.

Amen

(Adapted from St Anselm of Canterbury)

Song number 332

Come, now is the time to worship,
Come, now is the time to give your heart.
Come, just as you are to worship,
Come, just as you are before your God.
Come.

One day every tongue will confess you are God.

One day every knee will bow.

Still, the greatest treasure remains for those
Who gladly choose you now.

Come, now is the time to worship,
Come, now is the time to give your heart.
Come, just as you are to worship,

Come, just as you are before your God.

Come.

Brian Doerksen

Heavenly Father, we rejoice with thanks for all those who have mothered us in our lives.

In a world that is broken and in need of your motherly love, please use us to help others. We ask that as we worship you that you will open our hearts so that we grow in compassion, love and understanding and are able to generously share your love with those around us. Help us to celebrate your goodness with others...even through our own brokenness.

We ask this in Jesus' name,

Amen

Song Number 45

Now thank we all our God
With hearts and hands and voices,
Who wondrous things hath done,
In whom his world rejoices;
Who from our mother's arms
Hath blessed us on our way
With countless gifts of love,
And still is ours today.

2 O may this bounteous God
Through all our life be near us,
With ever-joyful hearts
And blessedèd peace to cheer us,
And keep us in his grace,
And guide us when perplexed,
And free us from all ills
In this world and the next.

3 All praise and thanks to God
The Father now be given,
The Son and him who reigns
With them in highest Heaven.
The one eternal God,
Whom earth and Heaven adore;

For thus it was, is now,

And shall be evermore.

Martin Rinkart (1586-1649), trs Catherine Winkworth (1827-1878)

How would you define a mother?

Here are some definitions of a mother that people have written:
Which do you like best? Can you write a better one?

A person who loves unconditionally

A character builder and heart healer

The maker and keeper of wonderful memories

The person with extraordinary superhuman abilities who can survive on 4 hours sleep.

Skilled professional with expertise in finance, medicine, negotiation and the culinary arts.

Person who believes in you

Best friend

Superwoman in normal clothes

Loving, caring, devoted

One deeply loved and admired

One person who does the work of twenty, for free

Someone who sees the best in her children

Someone who finds lost toys and clothes

Someone who always has hugs ready

Someone who nurtures and protects children

An inspirational teacher

A person with the ability to detect a lie, hear the smallest noises and see out of the back of her head

An angel

A peacemaker

Someone who loves you even when you fail.

A presentation of greeting for our mums.

We thank God for all our wonderful mums in the church.

Song Number 14

For the beauty of the earth,

For the beauty of the skies,

For the love which from our birth

Over and around us lies,
Father, unto thee we raise
This our sacrifice of praise.

2 For the beauty of each hour
Of the day and of the night,
Hill and vale and tree and flower,
Sun and moon and stars of light,
Father, unto thee we raise
This our sacrifice of praise.

3 For the joy of ear and eye,
For the heart and mind's delight,
For the mystic harmony
Linking sense to sound and sight,
Father, unto thee we raise
This our sacrifice of praise.

4 For the joy of human love,
Brother, sister, parent, child,
Friends on earth, and friends above,
For all gentle thoughts and mild,
Father, unto thee we raise
This our sacrifice of praise.

5 For each perfect gift of thine
To our race so freely given,
Graces human and divine,
Flowers of earth and buds of Heaven,
Father, unto thee we raise
This our sacrifice of praise.

Folliott Sandford Pierpoint (1835-1917)

Prayer for Mothers from Pete Greig:

Lord, for mothers today,
we pray for joy.
For orphans, comfort.
For not yet mothers, hope.
For single mothers, grace.

For those who are lonely, family.
We ask for grace today
For the mothers of prodigals,
And for those who have lost children,
And for those who don't know where their children are.
May the embrace of grace displace shame
For mothers in prison,
For those who can't feed a baby,
For those who miscarried
Or had an abortion.
And Lord, may those who never held their own child,
For whom today is sadder than it is happy,
Know the love and joy of parenting
In the family of God.
Amen.

For 'as a mother comforts her child,' says the Lord, 'so will I comfort you; and you will be comforted.' Isaiah 66:13

Thought 1 The Mother Heart of God

In God we have the perfect parent. We often hear of God described as the perfect father but throughout scripture we see that God also as having a mother heart.

Jesus towards the end of his earthly life as he looks over the city of Jerusalem cries out,

"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing!"

His mothering heart wants to gather, shelter, protect, to care for the people of the city. We see this in the Old Testament in Isaiah 66:13

This is what the Lord says;

"As a mother comforts her child, so will I comfort you; and you will be comforted over Jerusalem."

There is a special connection between a mother and children that is about closeness, intimacy, loving, caring, nurturing, protecting, comforting.

Isaiah 49:15 we read,

"Can a mother forget the baby at her breast and have no compassion on the child she has borne? Though she may forget, I will not forget you!"

God the Father is comparing himself—not only to a mother but to a *nursing* mother. He is expressing the kind of love that gets up throughout the night, the kind of love that gives everything. Perfect motherhood could be a picture of the true heart of God, loving unconditionally and giving all. Sadly, we know that human motherhood, however, is not perfect. God cries out, “*Even though she may forget, I will not forget you!*”

This means that ‘whatever could go wrong in this mother child relationship, I am not like that.’

Verse 16 says “*See, I have engraved you on the palms of my hands;*”

The Hebrew word for engraved means permanently marked, inked.

God has our names permanently written on his palms. He will not forget us.

He will never abandon us. He will never stop loving us. He will never give up on us. He is always there for us.

God the perfect expression of motherhood always there,

In Hosea 11: 3-4 we see God acting in a motherly role of teaching, cuddling, and nourishing when he says,

“It was I who taught Ephraim to walk; taking them by the arms; but they did not realize it was I who healed them. ⁴I led them with cords of human kindness, with ties of love. To them I was like one who lifts a little child to the cheek, and I bent down to feed them.”

Motherhood at its best is a place where children’s deepest human needs are met. Yet we know, especially those of us who are mothers, that mothering is such a difficult thing and we, sadly, do fail. God, however, with the perfect mother heart welcomes us into his arms, he knows us, he knows our needs and desires to meet them. He loves us always. In fact, he desires to care and nurture us, to protect us.

It is quite enlightening to consider just how much God yearns to look after us and care. In the words of John Gowans;

‘Ours is not a distant God, remote, unfeeling,God himself is close beside you....God himself will hear the whispers of your prayers’

I pray today you know that love of God for you. We are all children of God and he cares for every one of us. There is no one who he does not love.

Remember that verse which is so beautifully illustrated by William Holman-Hunt’s Light of the World painting where Jesus Stands knocking at the doors of our hearts.



Revelation 3: 20

*'Here I am! I stand at the door and knock.
If anyone hears my voice and opens the door,
I will come in and eat with that person, and they with me.'*

Do you know that love of God?

If you do make sure you continue to spend time with

Him? Make sure your heart is always open?

If you do not know God and have not experienced his overwhelming love, believe that he is with you,

he knows you and loves you perfectly.

In fact, there is nothing that can stop him loving us.

He knows the best and the worst things about us and

still loves us. The mother heart of God that loves and loves and loves.

Romans 8:38

For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers,³⁹ neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Nothing can stop him loving us.

So if you want to know his love, invite him in. Tell him that you want him to be in your life, tell him you want to be cared for by him and feel his love and be part of his family. Then see what happens.

Let us pray

God, with a mother's heart, you gather us as your children.

You comfort and hold us in your warm embrace.

When we hurt your arms enfold us.

When we are afraid your wings protect us.

When we are hungry you feed us with the bread of life.

God with a mother's heart, your love surrounds and supports us, in good times and tough, in the midst of joy and pain, always and everywhere.

You will never leave nor abandon us.

God eternal and loving one, God with a mother's heart, we thank you this day that we can be part of your family.

Be welcome in our lives now and always. Amen

Song Number 772

Lord of all hopefulness, Lord of all joy,
Whose trust, ever childlike, no cares could destroy,
Be there at our waking, and give us, we pray,
Your bliss in our hearts, Lord, at the break of the day.

2 Lord of all eagerness, Lord of all faith,
Whose strong hands were skilled at the plane and the lathe,
Be there at our labours, and give us, we pray,
Your strength in our hearts, Lord, at the noon of the day.

3 Lord of all kindliness, Lord of all grace,
Your hands swift to welcome, your arms to embrace,
Be there at our homing, and give us, we pray
Your love in our hearts, Lord, at the eve of the day.

4 Lord of all gentleness, Lord of all calm,
Whose voice is contentment, whose presence is balm,
Be there at our sleeping, and give us, we pray,
Your peace in our hearts, Lord, at the end of the day.

Jan Struther (1901-1953)

Major Eileen Parkin shares about her works as a Salvation Army officer and midwife in Africa.

Loving God, we give thanks today for mothers!
Thank you for mothers who gave birth to us,
and women who have treated us as their own children.
You teach us how to be good parents.
cherishing and protecting the children among us.
Help us all mother and father lovingly, fairly, wisely and with great joy.
Help us raise our children to be the people they are born to be.

We need your comfort today, Lord,
because some are missing mothers, some are missing children,
some are parted by distance or death.
Comfort those who have given up their child for adoption,
or who chose not to give birth, and had an abortion.
Comfort those who longed to be biological mothers, and could not.

We pray for those whose mothers have disappointed them;
we ask for grace in relationships where there is pain and bitterness,
for healing in relationships where there is abuse and violence.
Help our church be a place where people can feel mothered,
their gifts and talents appreciated and nurtured.

Finally, we pray today for mothers around the world;
mothers who cannot feed their children,
mothers who are homeless or without a homeland;
mothers who must teach their children about the dangers of bombs and bullets.
Help us create a world where parents can raise their children in peace and plenty.
Our loving God, who gives us deeper love than we have ever known,
hear our prayer this day,
Amen.

Song Number 483

When I was lost, you came and rescued me;
Reached down into the pit and lifted me.
O Lord, such love, I was as far from you as I could be.
You know all the things I've ever done,
But Jesus' blood has cancelled ev'ry one.
O Lord, such grace to qualify me as your own.

*There is a new song in my mouth,
There is a deep cry in my heart,
A hymn of praise to Almighty God, hallelujah!
And now I stand firm on this rock,
My life is hidden now with Christ in God.
The old has gone and the new has come, hallelujah!
Your love has lifted me.*

(After second chorus)
*Your love has lifted me.
Your love has lifted me.*

2 Now I have come into your family,
For the Son of God has died for me.
O Lord, such peace, I am as loved by you as I could be.
In the full assurance of your love,

Now with ev'ry confidence we come.
O Lord, such joy to know that you delight in me.
Kate and Miles Simmonds

Colossians 3:12-17

¹² Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. ¹³ Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. ¹⁴ And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.

¹⁵ Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful. ¹⁶ Let the message of Christ dwell among you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom through psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit, singing to God with gratitude in your hearts. ¹⁷ And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

Thought 2

As we continue our Lent theme about opening up, we consider what it means to open our hearts to the love of God.

The human heart weighs less than 450g. It beats 100,000 times a day and over 2.5 billion times in the average lifetime. Apparently, the system of blood vessels – arteries, veins and capillaries – is over 60,000 miles long – enough to go around the world more than twice. There is much advice about keeping the ‘heart’ of human life healthy yet, even with the pandemic, heart disease is the number one cause of death in the Western world.

In the Bible, however, references to the heart, are not referring to our amazing pumping organ but is a metaphor. The heart is seen as the source of the whole inner life – thinking, feeling, and willing. Yet, keeping it spiritually healthy is just as important as our physical heart. We know that God places much emphasis on the condition of our heart. He said to the prophet Samuel, *‘The Lord does not look at the things people look at. People look at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart’* (1 Samuel 16:7).

Our world is such a broken place. Even in our own neighbourhood, we see so many people struggling. During this pandemic people have suffered with ill

health, bereavement, mental health issues, anxiety, loneliness, boredom, poverty, loss of jobs, family breakdowns...and the list could go on. Some of these people are us.

First, I want to assure you that our God is not distant and uncaring, he is here and cares. He loves his people, and he wants them all to know they are loved and to experience his comfort and help. He wants us to live in a communities that demonstrates this love. He wants to see good relationships and happy communities.

In our reading from Colossians we see the virtues that a heart that is full of God's love would show.

Compassion,

Kindness,

Humility,

Gentleness,

Patience,

Forgiveness.

Love,

Wisdom,

Gratitude,

A list that we could attribute to Jesus and perhaps even, a perfect mother. It is a list that God wants to see in all of us. You see these qualities form lasting relationships and build up healthy and happy communities. People will be attracted to a church that demonstrate these because it is a place which is positive and happy and where everyone is loved, valued and cared for.

We could do a bit of a heart check-up here.

How well are we doing at those qualities?

Compassion -this is a deep empathy with others.

Kindness – showing that care to others through actions

Humility – having confidence in God's power

Gentleness – quietly confident to do God's will

Patience – not upset by difficult people or situations

Forgiveness – putting right differences and reconciliation with others. C S Lewis says, 'To be a Christian means to forgive the inexcusable because God has forgiven the inexcusable in you.'

Love – A deep caring concern.

Wisdom – God's guidance

Gratitude – always thankful for everything.

A healthy heart is active, not passive so are these qualities evident in our lives? A healthy heart will be open to growth and change and desires God's way. Paul compares how our actions, thoughts change when God is in our hearts. He likens the change to putting on new clothes. Instead of the bad stuff, we are called to clothe ourselves with 'compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience' (v.12) Does God reign in our lives or does 'self' still have a hold?

When our hearts are open to God's love in our lives, we become more like Jesus and the way Christians relate to each other and others should draw people to God. We discover peace in our hearts. Paul, the writer to the Colossians suggests that the feeling of peace is the guide as to how well we are doing. Have you peace in your life?

Earlier we heard how Major Eileen showed how God uses an open heart. She had open ears and heard him call her to work in Africa and her heart was open, so she obeyed. God used her in a such a mighty way to make a difference to so many people. Her mother heart led her to share God's love with those she met and she still shows and shares God's love today.

We thought about the mother heart of God a little earlier. God loves us so much and desires to mother us all. We, as church and God's family, also have a responsibility to mother each other, our neighbours and all who we meet in whatever way we can and to help them discover the love of God.

Maybe some of you can think of people in your life who have shown you a mother heart and you want to thank God for them. I know that my own faith has been inspired by people who in a Christian sense have mothered me.

Whilst away at university, I was befriended by two elderly Christian ladies who took it upon themselves to invite me to tea frequently. They kept a watchful eye over me. Their hospitality and care made a huge difference.. and there have been many others who have been there to mother me when I have needed. For a new Christian, it is almost essential that they have people who can come alongside to support and mentor them. Without the Christian elderly couple that supported Carl, when he first made a decision to follow Jesus, I wonder if he would be here now.

In a church, there may be many who talk about God's love?
I wonder, how many show it?

Take time now to thank God for those who have mothered you.

Take time to consider how your heart is.
Is it a mother heart? Is it active? Are you showing Jesus?

Are you able to do more mothering for the kingdom?

Are you clothed with - Compassion, Kindness, Humility, Gentleness, Patience, Forgiveness, Love, Wisdom, Gratitude?

Do you need more of God's power to help you with any of these?

Open your heart and ask God to search it.

Psalm 139: 23-24

'Search me, O God, and know my heart! Try me and know my thoughts!
And see if there be any grievous way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting!

Song 578

Christ of Glory, Prince of Peace,
Let thy life in mine increase;
Though I live may it be shown
'Tis thy life and not my own.
Dwell within, that men may see
Christ, the living Christ, in me.

2 Answer now my soul's desire,
Purge my heart with holy fire,
Soothe the hurt with gentle balm,
Breathe within my life thy charm,
Fill me now, so shall there be
Christ, the holy Christ, in me.

3 Gracious Lord, thy grace apply,
Both to save and sanctify;
All my life wilt thou control,
Calmly ordering the whole,
That the world may ever see
Christ, and only Christ, in me.

That the world may ever see
Christ, and only Christ, in me.

Colin Fairclough (1937-2012)

Song Number 34

I believe that God the Father
Can be seen in God the Son,
In the gentleness of Jesus
Love for all the world is shown.
Though men crucify their Saviour,
And his tenderness rebuff,
God is love, the cross is saying,
Calvary is proof enough.

2 I believe in transformation,
God can change the hearts of men,
And refine the evil nature
Till it glows with grace again.
Others may reject the weakling,
I believe he can be strong,
To the family of Jesus
All God's children may belong.

3 In a world of shifting values,
There are standards that remain,
I believe that holy living
By God's grace we may attain.
All would hear the Holy Spirit
If they listen to his voice,
Every Christian may be Christlike
And in liberty rejoice.

4 All the promises of Jesus
Are unchanged in every way,
In my yesterdays I proved them,
I believe them for today.
Still God gives his willing servant
Full equipment for the task;
Power is found by those who seek it,
Grace is given to those who ask.

John Gowans (1934-2012)

Dear Father God,

We thank you for welcoming us into your family and loving us without condition.
We thank you that you live within our hearts.

We ask for forgiveness for the times when our hearts have been closed to the love, and need for love, of those in our care.

O God, please forgive us all our failings, and renew us.

We thank you Father, for all those who have shown a mother heart to us, For their example and inspiration, for their love and friendship.

We pray Father that you will give us hearts that care and love.

Give us the compassion to help those who are lonely, the kindness and generosity to support those who struggle. Teach us, O Father, to have a forgiving heart and a heart that loves and gives without conditions.

We ask that you guide us in the right ways with your awesome wisdom,
We ask this in the powerful name of Jesus.

Amen

Song Number 393

Tell out, my soul, the greatness of the Lord!
Unnumbered blessings give my spirit voice;
Tender to me the promise of his Word;
In God my Saviour shall my heart rejoice.

2 Tell out, my soul, the greatness of his name!
Make known his might, the deeds his arm has done;
His mercy sure, from age to age the same;
His holy name, the Lord, the mighty one.

3 Tell out, my soul, the greatness of his might!
Powers and dominions lay their glory by;
Proud hearts and stubborn wills are put to flight,
The hungry fed, the humble lifted high.

4 Tell out, my soul, the glories of his Word!
Firm is his promise, and his mercy sure.
Tell out, my soul, the greatness of the Lord
To children's children and for evermore!

Timothy Dudley-Smith

Benediction

Always be thankful
Let the words of Christ, in all their richness,
Live in your hearts and make you wise.
Use his words to teach and counsel each other
Sing Psalms and hymns and spiritual songs to God with thankful hearts.
And whatever you do or say,
Let it be as a representative of the Lord Jesus,
All the while giving thanks through him to God the Father
And may the blessing of God
The love of Jesus Christ
And the presence of the Holy Spirit
Strengthen and encourage you
As you go out from here
To live lives of gratitude and service.
Amen

Song Number 409

Change my heart, O God,
Make it ever true;
Change my heart, O God,
May I be like you.

You are the potter,
I am the clay;
Mould me and make me,
This is what I pray.

Change my heart, O God,
Make it ever true;
Change my heart, O God,
May I be like you.

Eddie Espinosa

COLOSSIANS 3: 12-17

D D T J F T F X D G W V U C C V J H W S X X X P
H B U S H R T C B V P D E E D Z P G N Q Y G A M
L K X N D I L X H H G P O G T C E F R E P S D S
Y U F S M L A S P O A S C X M Z D M O T W X I J
M T F F A T H E R H S W G T D O A V E L U R W U
I A I Q C T X B C N E E Q Z H Z L B I N D S H V
R O A N Z D O N L J F A N B N M Q C B P L A P F
W I G K U S S X Y B K G R A T I T U D E W F A D
I W I O M O L I H M W K D T V W V X Q V L F T S
O X V R K N M O Q O Z I C S S S Y O F P O E I J
S B W M T G Z T R C L P E U E P E A C E V B E K
S Z S I O S E M V D O Y P H U M X S W I E T N I
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N N Q Y C I R D R O W E P H L O C N K E G A E D
E M F H R R H Y M N S M S S A F R L V V K D N J N
L N I I A D F A I K I V V U S L A C H L P K K E
T T P A F O R G I V E C F R S S P E D K D F J S
N S G M A A N P A R J S Z E K D I J D O Q U Y S
E Y O M T G S P A Y T I L I M U H O S K G L E R
G I L I G K R E R K J R J L B U Y L N V F D M F
B I L B H D B B M O D S I W W W L K A S L T W N
Z I W X B R S I S V R N X Z K V J G H L O V Y N
I L W W F H E V P M U O W H F X A J Z N V J G Y
P H W T I O X Y J P S U W O G P G M M C E S W V

BEAR	BINDS	CHOSEN
CLOTHE	COMPASSION	DEARLY
DEED	FATHER	FORGIVE
GENTLENESS	GOD	GRATITUDE
HEARTS	HOLY	HUMILITY
HYMNS	KINDNESS	LORD JESUS
LOVE	LOVED	NAME
PATIENCE	PEACE	PERFECT
PSALMS	RULE	SONGS
SPIRIT	TEACH	THANKFUL
UNITY	WISDOM	WORD

LET THE
peace
OF
GOD
RULE IN YOUR
hearts
AND BE
thankful

Colossians 3:15

THEREFORE AS

God's chosen people,
holy & dearly loved,

CLOTHE
YOURSELVES

WITH

compassion, kindness,
humility, gentleness
& patience.

- COL. 3:12

