

Imagine you are in Glenorchy church and it is Sunday January 17, 2021 – but you can listen and share in this short service at any time. Please sit comfortably and feel that you are ready to worship God.

Welcome to our on-line service, reflecting on our belief that Jesus of Nazareth shows us what God is like. There will be three hymns – the words are printed on this service sheet as they are in Rejoice and Sing, though occasionally the recorded singers use some different words.

So let us worship God in the name and spirit of Jesus, called Emmanuel, God with us. Our first hymn echoes the story in Matthew of the coming of the wise men.

Worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness,
bow down before him, his glory proclaim:
gold of obedience and incense of lowliness
bring and adore him, the Lord is his name.

2 Low at his feet lay thy burden of carefulness,
high on his heart he will bear it for thee,
comfort thy sorrows and answer thy prayerfulness,
guiding thy steps as may best for thee be.

3 Fear not to enter his courts in the slenderness
of the poor wealth thou would'st reckon as thine:
truth in its beauty and love in its tenderness,
these are the offerings to lay on his shrine.

4 These, though we bring them in trembling and fearfulness,
he will accept for the name that is dear:
mornings of joy give for evenings of tearfulness,
trust for our trembling and hope for our fear.

5 Worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness,
bow down before him, his glory proclaim:
gold of obedience and incense of lowliness
bring and adore him, the Lord is his name.

J. S. B. MONSELL (1811-75)

Now let us pray together.

(The prayers will conclude with the Lord's Prayer in the traditional form)

At this point in the service we would have brought up the offertory and we shall offer a prayer.

Now we shall listen for God's word in a reading from Paul's first letter to the church in Corinth:

For the message about the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. For it is written, 'I will destroy the wisdom of the wise and the discernment of the discerning I will thwart.'

Where is your wise man now? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, God decided, through the foolishness of our proclamation, to save those who believe. For Jews demand signs and Greeks desire wisdom, but we proclaim Christ crucified, a stumbling-block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. For God's foolishness is wiser than human wisdom, and God's weakness is stronger than human strength.

Thanks be to God.

The sermon: the text is available here: <https://glenorchychurch.org.uk/?p=5700>

Our next hymn continues the theme – who would think that Jesus was what was needed to reveal God?

Who would think that what was needed
to transform and save the earth
might not be a plan or army
proud in purpose, proved in worth?
Who would think, despite derision,
that a child should lead the way?
God surprises earth with heaven,
coming here on Christmas Day.

3 Centuries of skill and science span
the past from which we move,
yet experience questions whether
with such progress we improve.
In our search for sense and meaning,
lest our hopes and humour fray,
God surprises earth with heaven,
coming here on Christmas Day.

2 Shepherds watch and wise men wonder,
monarchs scorn and angels sing;
such a place as none would reckon
hosts a holy, helpless thing;
stabled beasts and passing strangers
watch a baby laid in hay:
God surprises earth with heaven,
coming here on Christmas Day.

*John Bell and Graham Maule
Iona Community*

Now we offer our prayers for others with the refrain

‘Father God, bless those for whom we pray, in the name of Christ Jesus, Amen.’

(After the prayers you are invited to pause the play-back for a few minutes of quiet reflection and prayer.)

Our final hymn offers praise to the Lord’s anointed, the Christ, the Messiah, whose name to us is Love.

Hail to the Lord's Anointed,
great David's greater Son!
Hail, in the time appointed,
his reign on earth begun!
He comes to break oppression,
to set the captive free,
to take away transgression,
and rule in equity.

2 He comes with succour speedy
to those who suffer wrong;
to help the poor and needy,
and bid the weak be strong;
to give them songs for sighing,
their darkness turn to light,
whose souls, condemned and dying,
were precious in his sight.

3 He shall come down like showers
upon the fruitful earth;
and love, joy, hope, like flowers,
spring in his path to birth:
before him on the mountains,
shall peace the herald go,
and righteousness in fountains
from hill to valley flow.

4 Kings shall fall down before him,
and gold and incense bring;
all nations shall adore him,
his praise all people sing,
for he shall have dominion
o'er river, sea, and shore,
far as the eagle's pinion
or dove's light wing can soar.

5 O'er every foe victorious,
he on his throne shall rest;
from age to age more glorious,
all-blessing and all-blest:
the tide of time shall never
his covenant remove;
his name shall stand for ever;
that name to us is Love.

*James Montgomery
(1771-1854)
from Psalm 72*

The blessing

*Thanks for sharing in this service – we are, remember, still the church even when denied use of our building.
But, as though we were now leaving the Glenorchy building, listen to the late Chris Trinder playing us out.*