

The Parish Church of St Mark
Serving the people of Broomhill & Broomhall
Living Thinking Loving Faith

Good God!
Sexuality and Gender Equality in the Church
Impossibility or Imperative?



Worship Booklet

www.stmarkssheffield.co.uk

*As we move from the plenary session
into a time of worship
you are invited to share in a time of quiet reflection.*

*During this time
you may wish to light a candle
as a sign of prayer and hope.*

May the nourishment of the earth be yours.
May the clarity of light be yours.
May the fluency of ocean be yours.
May the protection of the ancestors be yours.
And so may a slow
wind work these words
of love around you,
an invisible cloak
to mind your life.

John O'Donohue

Closing Worship

Introduction and Opening Responses

God is good
all the time.
All the time
God is good.

Hymn

We dream of a church that will live as a movement
set free from the boundaries and walls we create,
and move towards Jesus who moves beyond borders
to liberate people who dream as they wait.
We dream of a church that will live out its story,
proclaiming new life for earth's people this day;
a church that re-learns its traditions of justice
by sharing as equals and friends on the way.

We dream of a church that will nurture potential,
identify prejudice, conflict and fear,
and strive for a world where we all work as partners
by building God's future-koinonia right here.
We dream of a church that will join with God's passion:
may earth be restored and its peoples at peace!
We trust as we journey without all the answers
that God's love will guide us and hope shall not cease.

*Words: G. Adams (b.1975)
Tune: Ash Grove*

Opening Prayer

Vulnerable God,
you challenge the powers that rule this world
through the needy, the compassionate
and those who are filled with longing.
Make us hunger and thirst to see right prevail,
and single minded in seeking peace;
that we may see your face
and be satisfied in you,
through Jesus Christ, **Amen.**

Janet Morley

Matthew 5. 1-11 - NRSV

When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up the mountain; and after he sat down, his disciples came to him. Then he began to speak, and taught them, saying:

‘Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

‘Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.

‘Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.

‘Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.

‘Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy.

‘Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.

‘Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.

‘Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

‘Blessed are you when people revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account.

Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

We hold a time of quiet together.

Matthew 5. 1-11 – The Message

When Jesus saw his ministry drawing huge crowds, he climbed a hillside. Those who were apprenticed to him, the committed, climbed with him. Arriving at a quiet place, he sat down and taught his climbing companions. This is what he said:

“You’re blessed when you’re at the end of your rope. With less of you there is more of God and God’s rule.

“You’re blessed when you feel you’ve lost what is most dear to you. Only then can you be embraced by the One most dear to you.

“You’re blessed when you’re content with just who you are—no more, no less. That’s the moment you find yourselves proud owners of everything that can’t be bought.

“You’re blessed when you’ve worked up a good appetite for God - food and drink in the best meal you’ll ever eat.

“You’re blessed when you care. At the moment of being ‘care-full,’ you find yourselves cared for.

“You’re blessed when you get your inside world—your mind and heart—put right. Then you can see God in the outside world.

“You’re blessed when you can show people how to cooperate instead of compete or fight. That’s when you discover who you really are, and your place in God’s family.

“You’re blessed when your commitment to God provokes persecution. The persecution drives you even deeper into God’s kingdom.

“Not only that—count yourselves blessed every time people put you down or throw you out or speak lies about you to discredit me. What it means is that the truth is too close for comfort and they are uncomfortable. You can be glad when that happens—give a cheer, even!—for though they don’t like it, *I do!* And all heaven applauds. And know that you are in good company. My prophets and witnesses have always gotten into this kind of trouble.

Responding

*We hold a time of quiet together
lasting approximately 5 minutes*

Who has blessed you today -
or who might you want to bless?

*You are invited to write your own Beatitudes,
words of blessing, on the paper provided -
please take them home or leave beside the lit candles.*

Prayers of Solidarity and Concern

will be interspersed by the verses of the song:

*God of life and love, bless us as the people you have made us, and in the
loving relationships we have or hope for.*

May your breath of love warm our hope,
may your breath of love warm our hope,
may your breath of love warm our hope
and heal our broken world.

*God of brokenness and love, bless us when people try to put us down or
discredit us.*

May your whispered love quell our fears

God of inclusivity and love, bless us in our standing for justice and equality, and against all discrimination.

May your spark of love fire our dreams

God of conversation and love, bless us through our attention to how you speak to us in scripture and in the voice of your Spirit unbounded in your world; and bless us in our striving to model our lives on the life of the one who loves us to death and beyond.

May your raging love stir our wills....

God of power and love, bless us in the power of our powerlessness and vulnerability, in the power of our love, in the power of our resolve to see equality for all in your church.

May your flagrant love fuel our power

God of goodness and love, whose life is a dance of mutual gift, may our lives dance with your goodness and love and be a blessing to all whom we love and for all whom we find hard to love.

*We make these prayers in the power of the Life-Giver, Pain-Bearer, Love-Maker, our glorious and good God. **Amen.***

Words: M.Hamilton (b.1953)

Tune: Kum by yah

Praying with Christ

based on Louis Evely's meditative book, Our Father

Dear God, our Creator

**Beloved Companion and Guide upon the Way,
Eternal Spirit within us and beyond us:**

**let us honour your name
in lives of costly giving love;**

**let us show that we and all whom we meet
deserve dignity and respect,
for they are your dwelling place and your home;**

let us share in action your deep desire

for justice and peace among the peoples of the world;

**let us share our bread with one another,
the bread that you have shared with us;**

**let us in the spirit of your forgiving us
make friends with those we've hurt
and failed to love;**

**let us overcome our trials and temptations,
our suffering and dying,
in the strength and courage
which you overcame them too;**

**let us in your love free the world from evil,
transforming darkness into light.**

**For the whole world is yours,
and you invite us to be partners
in the work of your creating.**

Amen.

So be it.

So we will do it.

Jim Cotter

Hymn

1. We rejoice to be God's chosen
not through virtue, work or skill,
but because God's love is generous,
unconformed to human will.
And because God's love is restless,
like the surging of the sea,
we are pulled by heaven's dynamic
to become, not just to be.

2. We rejoice to be God's chosen,
to be gathered to God's side,
not to build a pious ghetto
or be steeped in selfish pride;
but to celebrate the goodness
of the One who sets us free
from the smallness of our vision
to become, not just to be.

3. We rejoice to be God's chosen,
to align with heaven's intent,
to await where we are summoned
and accept where we are sent.
We rejoice to be God's chosen
and, amidst all that we see,
to anticipate with wonder
that the best is yet to be.

*J.L. Bell (b.1949)
Tune: Nettleton*

Closing Responses

God is good
all the time.
All the time
God is good.

The Grace

**The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,
the love of God
and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit
be with us all, evermore.
Amen.**

With courage and with hope
let us continue on the journey.
Amen. Thanks be to God.

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