

**WORSHIP SHEET FOR
2ND MAY 2021**

As we still ourselves ready for worship, to focus on God and his loving presence with us, you may wish to light a candle.
Christ is the light of the world.

CALL TO WORSHIP

As we gather in your name,
listen to us and bring us peace;
be our rock and our refuge, that we may be made strong;
let your face shine upon us, that we may show your love.

HYMN StF 335 Rejoice the Lord is King

[Rejoice, the Lord is King \[with lyrics for congregations\] - YouTube](#)

- 1 Rejoice, the Lord is King!
Your Lord and King adore;
mortals, give thanks, and sing,
and triumph evermore:
*Lift up your heart, lift up your voice;
rejoice! Again I say: rejoice!*
- 2 Jesus the Saviour reigns,
the God of truth and love;
when he had purged our stains,
he took his seat above:
- 3 His kingdom cannot fail,
he rules both earth and heaven;
the keys of death and hell
are to our Jesus given:
- 4 He sits at God's right hand
till all his foes submit,
and bow to his command,
and fall beneath his feet:
- 5 Rejoice in glorious hope;
Jesus the Judge shall come,
and take his servants up
to their eternal home:
*We soon shall hear the archangel's voice;
God's trumpet-call shall sound: rejoice!*

Charles Wesley (1707-1788)

PRAYERS

Creator God,
maker of all that is seen
and all that is hidden;
we gather
to worship and adore you.

May our homes on earth
be a reflection of your heavenly home.
May our doors
always be open in welcome,
may our love be shared with all people,
may our worship be inclusive
and may our praise be honest and true.

As we seek to follow in the way of Jesus,
may others see you in us
as the disciples saw you in Jesus.

Merciful God, we are sorry
for the times when we fail you,
for the times when we turn from your way
to follow our own path.
We are sorry
for the times that we misunderstand
or disregard your will for us.

We come humbly before you today
and ask for your forgiveness.

Silence

Help us to accept
your free offer of forgiveness
and put us back on the right pathway.
Lead us to your kingdom here on earth
help us as we assist you in its creation.
In the name of Jesus we pray.

May the living God
raise us from despair,
give us victory over sin
and set us free in Christ. **Amen.**

READING Psalm 31:1-5, 14 -15a.

- ¹ In you, O LORD, I seek refuge;
do not let me ever be put to shame;
in your righteousness deliver me.
- ² Incline your ear to me;
rescue me speedily.
Be a rock of refuge for me,
a strong fortress to save me.
- ³ You are indeed my rock and my fortress;
for your name's sake lead me and guide
me,
- ⁴ take me out of the net that is hidden for me,
for you are my refuge.
- ⁵ Into your hand I commit my spirit;
you have redeemed me, O LORD, faithful
God.
- ¹⁴ But I trust in you, O LORD;
I say, "You are my God."

¹⁵ My times are in your hand;

READING

Acts 7 : 55 – 60 **The Stoning of Stephen**

Filled with the Holy Spirit, he gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. ⁵⁶“Look,” he said, “I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God!” ⁵⁷ But they covered their ears, and with a loud shout all rushed together against him. ⁵⁸ Then they dragged him out of the city and began to stone him; and the witnesses laid their coats at the feet of a young man named Saul. ⁵⁹ While they were stoning Stephen, he prayed, “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.” ⁶⁰ Then he knelt down and cried out in a loud voice, “Lord, do not hold this sin against them.” When he had said this, he died.

REFLECTION by Jenny Benfield

Are we ready for anything?

‘You have to be ready for anything these days’ is a phrase we sometimes hear, but maybe we don’t actually ask ourselves ‘How can we be ‘ready for anything?’

The story of the stoning of Stephen may help us to find some answers to the question. Firstly, Stephen looked up into heaven and there he saw the glory of God. Secondly, he committed himself into God’s hands, ‘Lord Jesus, receive my spirit’, he said. Finally, he fell asleep and, just as when he had to defend himself in front of the Sanhedrin, people would have seen that his face was like the face of an angel. Stephen was ‘ready for anything’!

Seeing the glory of God was an awe-inspiring and strengthening experience for Stephen. It was possibly like the vision we might have from the top of Snowdon or Ben Nevis. What do we see? Nothing but thick cloud! However, suddenly the mist lifts and we see the tiny village of Llanberis in the valley, or the town of Fort William in the distance. They have been there all the time, but we can only see them when the mist lifts and we are granted that vision. In Stephen’s story he suddenly sees the God of glory Himself. He is now ‘ready for anything’ because he has seen the place where heaven and earth meet, and he is at

peace. I’m reminded of an old communion hymn we used to sing:

*‘Here, O my Lord, I see Thee face to face,
Here would I touch and handle things unseen.
Here grasp with firmer hand the eternal grace,
And all my weariness upon Thee lean’.*

MHB 772

In using the words ‘Lord Jesus, receive my spirit’, Stephen is quoting from Psalm 31. The people of Israel looked on helplessly as troubles overtook them and they had little alternative but to say to God ‘Into Your hands I commit my spirit – my times are in Your hands’. They remembered the past when God brought about a rescue, so looking to the future, they were able to say, ‘But I trust in You, O Lord’. We, too, are able to concur with the hymn writer of old, who wrote ‘Your love in time past forbids me to think You’ll leave me at last in trouble to sink’. Whatever happens, our times are in His hands. Thus we are made ‘ready for anything’. Finally Stephen faced everything with the face of an angel. Perhaps, like Moses when he came down from the mountain after talking with God, the people saw a kind of light illuminating Stephen from the inside, a kind of confident serenity. He was ‘ready for anything’ the Jews would throw at him because he had seen the glory of God, he had committed himself into God’s hands and he was at peace.

Many down the years have suffered for their faith, and continue to do so, but remained serene. Most of us won’t be called to that kind of ‘martyrdom’, but our troubles are no less real and hard to cope with. Thank God that He still shows us His glory, when we lift our eyes to Him and acknowledge that our times are in His hands. Then we, too, shall be given that inner radiance and peace, which means we are ‘ready for anything’. Praise the Lord!

HYMN **StF 312 The head that once**

[The head that once was crowned with thorns \(Hymn\) - YouTube](#)

- 1 The head that once was crowned with thorns
is crowned with glory now ;
a royal diadem adorns
the mighty Victor's brow.
- 2 The highest place that heaven affords
is his, is his by right,
the King of kings and Lord of lords,
and heaven's eternal light.
- 3 The joy of all who dwell above,
the joy of all below

to whom he manifests his love
and grants his name to know.

4 To them the cross, with all its shame,
with all its grace, is given,
their name an everlasting name,
their joy the joy of heaven.

5 They suffer with their Lord below,
they reign with him above,
their profit and their joy to know
the mystery of his love.

6 The cross he bore is life and health,
though shame and death to him ;
his people's hope, his people's wealth,
their everlasting theme.

Thomas Kelly (1769–1855)

PRAYERS

Jesus said ask in my name and I will do it,
so we offer our prayers for people
and places in the world
in the name of Jesus.

Jesus we pray that you would bring
peace to our world,
we ask for an end to violent uprisings
and civil warfare.

Jesus we pray that you would
bring justice to our world
we ask for leaders to be honest
to turn away from corruption and bribery.

Jesus we pray that you would
eradicate poverty in our world
we ask that the rich would be
persuaded to share more
and that we could all learn
to live a simpler life.

Jesus we pray that you would
heal the sick in our world.
We ask that you would help us
discover more about disease and illness
and how to treat them,
so that people can have a
better quality of life.
We pray for those countries who are still
without vaccinations for Covid 19.

Jesus we pray now in a moment's silence
for the people and places known to us...

stillness

we ask for your answer to our prayers.

Jesus you have promised
to answer our requests,
give us patience to wait for your timing
and strength to be the answers
when you call us to do your will.

Jesus in your name
we ask all these prayers.
Amen

THE LORD'S PRAYER

We say together the prayer that Jesus gave us:
Our Father who art in heaven

BLESSING OF OUR GIFTS

Generous God,
here are our gifts of time;
here are our gifts of talents;
here are our gifts of money;
building stones for Your Kingdom,
awaiting shaping and placing
within Your loving purpose. **Amen.**

THE PEACE

The risen Christ came and stood among his
disciples and
said: 'Peace be with you!'

Then they were glad when they saw the Lord.

Alleluia! The peace of the risen Christ be
always with you.

And also with you. Alleluia!

A METHODIST LOVEFEAST

Charles Wesley only wrote one hymn for a love feast,

HYMN STF 646

[COME AND LET US SWEETLY JOIN hymn Text Lyrics](#)

[Words Sing along song Music Gibbons - YouTube](#)

1 Come, and let us sweetly join
Christ to praise in hymns divine ;
give we all with one accord
glory to our common Lord.

2 Hands and hearts and voices raise,
sing as in the ancient days,
antedate the joys above,
celebrate the feast of love.

3 Jesu, dear expected Guest,
thou art bidden to the feast ;

for thyself our hearts prepare,
come, and rest, and banquet there.

4 Sanctify us, Lord, and bless,
breathe thy Spirit, give thy peace ;
thou thyself within us move,
make our feast a feast of love.

Charles Wesley (1707–1788)

We come to share in this Love Feast as we recall the many meals Jesus shared with his disciples during his ministry.

Jesus said “People will come from east and west and north and south, and will take their places at the feast in the kingdom of God.” The first shall be last and the last shall be first, but we are invited.

Heavenly Father as we share in this feast we praise You for Your provision for us. You have been generous to us, you have heard our cry, you have provided food for all.

Father of earth and heaven,
your hungry children feed,
your grace be to our spirits given,
that true immortal bread.
Grant us and all our race
in Jesus Christ to prove
the sweetness of your pardoning grace,
the manna of your love.
(Written by John and Charles Wesley for a love feast)

*Please take the cake/ bread
or biscuit as we eat together*



We remember the fellowship
enjoyed within the body of Christ

We drink the water



Silence as we recall God’s grace and
goodness

Let us pray.

**God of our salvation,
we thank you that we share again with the
risen Christ
and with all who love him in earth and
heaven.
We pray that, strengthened by his grace,
we may serve you faithfully all our days;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

HYMNStF 690 The Church’s one foundation

[The church's one foundation - YouTube](#)

- 1 The Church's one foundation
is Jesus Christ her Lord ;
she is his new creation
by water and the word ;
from heaven he came and sought her
to be his holy bride ;
with his own blood he bought her,
and for her life he died.
- 2 Called out from every nation,
yet one through all the earth,
her charter of salvation
one Lord, one faith, one birth ;
one holy name she blesses,
and shares one holy food,
as to one hope she presses
with every grace endued.
- 3 In toil and tribulation,
and tumult of her war,
she waits the consummation
of peace for evermore ;
till with the vision glorious
her longing eyes are blest,
at last the Church victorious
shall be the Church at rest.
- 4 Yet she on earth has union
with God the Three in One,
and mystic, sweet communion
with those whose rest is won.
O happy ones and holy !
Lord, give us grace that we,
with them, the meek and lowly,
in heaven your face shall see.

Samuel John Stone (1832–1900)

BLESSING

As we end our time of worship,
as we step outside the door
and choose which direction to head in,
whichever way we go
we go there with
the blessing of God,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit,
guiding, loving and inspiring us
today, tomorrow and always. Amen

THE GRACE

We say together...
**May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,
the love of God
and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit
be with us all ever more. Amen.**

Some prayers adapted from
Spill the beans

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