

## Welcome and Notices

Pat Cuttings great grandson Joshua Luke born on 13<sup>th</sup> May  
Wish people celebrating birthdays and anniversaries.

### Gathering Prayer

Mighty God, we gather in humility to worship you.  
Caring God, we bring to you our concerns.  
Glorious God, we exalt your holy name.  
Unite us – make us one in you,  
that your love may strengthen and empower us.  
Amen.

**Praise:** Christ triumphant ever reigning

<https://youtu.be/0r3EogSdfPU>

1 Christ triumphant, ever reigning,  
Saviour, Master, King!

Lord of heaven, our lives sustaining,  
hear us as we sing:

Yours the glory and the crown,  
the high renown, the eternal name.

2 Word incarnate, truth revealing,  
Son of Man on earth!

power and majesty concealing  
by your humble birth:

Yours the glory...

3 Suffering servant, scorned, ill - treated,  
victim crucified!

death is through the cross defeated,  
sinners justified:

Yours the glory...

4 Priestly king, enthroned for ever  
high in heaven above!

sin and death and hell shall never  
stifle hymns of love:

Yours the glory...

5 So, our hearts and voices raising  
through the ages long,

ceaselessly upon you gazing,  
this shall be our song:

Yours the glory...

### All Age reflection

On Thursday we marked Ascension Day, the day when Jesus when back up into heaven. In today's service we are going to be looking at the prayer that he prayed as he left his disciples to carry on his work here on earth.

He prayed that as followers of Jesus that they would continue to bring glory to God (in other words show God how special he is) through their actions and their relationship with one another.

This would echo the relationship between the Trinity (F,S and HS) – as Jesus prayed: 'that they would be one, as we are one'.

Lots of us have been able to make the first letter of our name with different objects in our homes that James has used to compile a video.

This shows that in the church, each of us is very special, we are all part of one family doing our best to do what Jesus asked us to do in that prayer. Through each one of us using our words and actions, we can help other people see how amazing Jesus is.

So let's enjoy watching this together....

## **Video**

**Praise:** Our God is a great big God

<https://youtu.be/1mMZy05ooFY>

## **Prayers**

Lord of all glory, we come before you  
seeking your wisdom,  
that we may glorify you through our thinking;  
seeking your love,  
that we may glorify you through our emotions;  
seeking your strength,  
that we may glorify you at all times;  
seeking your perseverance,  
that we may glorify you in all places.  
Show us how to live,  
that our lives shine with your glory,  
and those who encounter us may know you  
and that you are at work in your world.

When our actions are not loving,  
and we think of just ourselves –  
your name is not glorified.  
Forgive us, God of Glory.

When our words bring hurt to others  
and we do not even notice –  
your name is not glorified.  
Forgive us, God of Glory.

When the way we live is selfish  
and we find no time for you –  
your name is not glorified.  
Forgive us, God of Glory.

When we do not see you or reveal your love –  
your name is not glorified.  
Forgive us, God of Glory.

Forgive and renew us,  
and let your glory be seen in our lives.

God of majesty and might,  
your glory shines throughout the universe:  
from the highest heaven to the deepest sea;  
in all the creatures you have made;

in the seasons that shape our living.  
Your glory shines through who you are  
and through what you do.  
The power of your glory  
touches your creation and exalts it.  
To you we offer our worship;  
to you we offer our praise;  
before you we come in adoration.  
Amen.

## Offering

**Reading:** John 17:1 - 11

After Jesus said this, he looked toward heaven and prayed:

“Father, the hour has come. Glorify your Son, that your Son may glorify you. 2 For you granted him authority over all people that he might give eternal life to all those you have given him. 3 Now this is eternal life: that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent. 4 I have brought you glory on earth by finishing the work you gave me to do. 5 And now, Father, glorify me in your presence with the glory I had with you before the world began.

6 “I have revealed you[a] to those whom you gave me out of the world. They were yours; you gave them to me and they have obeyed your word. 7 Now they know that everything you have given me comes from you. 8 For I gave them the words you gave me and they accepted them. They knew with certainty that I came from you, and they believed that you sent me. 9 I pray for them. I am not praying for the world, but for those you have given me, for they are yours. 10 All I have is yours, and all you have is mine. And glory has come to me through them. 11 I will remain in the world no longer, but they are still in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them by the power of[b] your name, the name you gave me, so that they may be one as we are one.

**Sermon:** Make us one

On this last Sunday of the Easter season, we look both backward and forward. We have heard about Jesus’ appearances to his disciples; we have gloried in his ascension; we have received hints of the coming of the promised Holy Spirit.

Next week, we will celebrate the birth of the new church, exploding into mission with the gifts of the Spirit. Today, we pause for a moment to hear again the prayer Jesus prayed for his disciples, a prayer we claim as his prayer for us.

There is assurance and certainty in Jesus’ prayer. Jesus has made his Father’s name known to the disciples. He has given them knowledge of the truth. Now he prays for their protection. Later he will elaborate on the need for the Father’s protection: the disciples have been hated by the world, and they are endangered by evil or the evil one (vv. 14–15). Here he asks protection for them for a particular purpose, “so that they may be one, as we are one” (v. 11).

Livingstone House, Rhodes University was the official residence of those studying for the ministry from 3 or 4 of the mainline denominations in South Africa. A place set apart for those who had been set apart, a place of learning, a place of holy living adhering to strict spiritual discipline.

Our motto, “ina osin hen” – that they may be one, shone through everything we said and did, including when it came to the hatching of our most cunning plan to raid our neighbouring Anglican College St. Pauls, about a mile up the road.

It was like a military operation as the advanced party gained access to the toilets and showers, tastefully decorating the seats and mirrors, while the engineers got to work on removing all the tap handles.

It was then the turn of the kitchen team who with great expertise piled every single pot and pan they could find against the main entrance. After setting up one or two other surprises we beat a hasty retreat back to Livingstone House for our debrief just 30 minutes later.

The following morning our Senior Student was woken fairly early by our Warden. The warden at St. Paul's had been on the blower – his boys had just completed a 2 day fast and were looking forward to their first meal in 48 hours and guess what – kitchen in chaos, and no taps to turn! Could it possibly be that the holy crew, the angel factory could possibly be responsible?

Finally we relented, returned our booty, made our apologies, and waited for the backlash from our Anglican brethren. It came in the form of an invitation for 2 representatives to attend evensong and a meal at the college.

Yours truly and the now moderator of the United Church of Canada Revd. Dr. Andrew Stirling were nominated to attend. Greetings were exchanged, a peace pact was signed, and we returned with a tie having been presented by the warden Duncan Buchanan, who became Bishop of Johannesburg.

Because it is part of Jesus' prayer, that prayer for unity can also offer us assurance and certainty, but for many of us, it may also raise questions. Can we see any evidence that Jesus' prayer was answered?

What does Jesus mean anyway, when he says, "one, as we are one"?

Think about the way John's Gospel starts: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." From the very first verse, John struggles to express the mystery of Jesus—that he was God and distinct from God at the same time.

We look at Jesus and say, "That is what God looks like." When Jesus prays that his followers may be one as he and the Father are one, he is praying all of us into this mystery too. Not just that we should each become one with God, or one with Christ, but that we should become one with each other in the way Jesus and the Father are one.

In some ways, the first part of that mystery is the easy part. We all have our ways to grow in our oneness with God. We may ground our own growth in corporate worship. We may follow a spiritual discipline of private prayer, study, and service in God's name.

We may dedicate ourselves to a particular ministry in a cause of justice, or healing, or pastoral presence. No matter which path we follow toward oneness with God, the Holy Spirit can act in our lives to draw us closer, and to reveal to us the presence of God that is already nearer to us than our own heartbeats.

We have only to open our eyes and our ears, and remain willing to receive and respond.

Jesus is also praying that his followers may be one with one another. One with one another – some may say that's what we used to do back before lockdown.

Then it was so much easier wasn't it, easier to reach out, easier to commune, easier to share, easier to be with each other in the moment.

Now that's just not possible, at least not in the same way.

And yet this God of ours has amazing ways to turn the most difficult of situations into something so positive. Reaching out and being with each other albeit remotely, has become a far more regular event in these past weeks. Sharing with people has not only become more regular, there is a depth of sharing now that perhaps wasn't there two months ago.

We've experienced moments of frustration, loneliness and yes depression, and sometimes it has been so hard to pick up the phone or make that call. But midst all of what we are going through, God has spoken.

God has spoken through the telephone conversation. God has spoken through the morning devotion that perhaps that morning just hit home like no other. God has spoken through the rose bush in your garden that has just burst into flower, and who's scent hits you as you step out your back or front door.

In so many ways, God seems closer now than he has ever been before, wanting so much to enfold each and everyone of us in the oneness of his loving arms.

Jesus prayed this prayer for oneness and unity days before his ascension, days before he was to pass on the reigns to his disciples.

They might have felt more than just alone and overwhelmed at the moment. They would most certainly have felt scared out of their wits.

But there was more to come, and that was the assurance of a comfort they had never before experienced. The assurance of challenge and inspiration of their faith that would result in lives transformed and the birth of a movement of which you and I remain a part of today.

What we as a Christian community are going through right now is not easy, but let's not lose heart. Let's place our trust in that prayer of Jesus. The disciples Jesus loved, and the community he loves now, lived and still live—enveloped by that prayer.

**Praise:** In my life Lord, be glorified

<https://youtu.be/e5bpU3hzMXs>

In my life Lord be glorified, be glorified

In my life Lord, be glorified today.

In my song Lord be glorified, be glorified

In my song Lord, be glorified today.

In Your church Lord be glorified, be glorified

In Your church Lord, be glorified today.

### **Prayers of intercession**

We bring before God our concerns for our world:

where there is war we pray for peace;

where there is sickness we pray for health;

where there is despair we pray for hope.

Cast all your anxiety on him,

because he cares for you.

We pray that you would be active in health care:

in the work of doctors and dentists, psychiatrists and psychologists, nurses and administrators, pharmacists and researchers.

Cast all your anxiety on him,

because he cares for you.

Guide our activity in the church:

may we find ways to grow;

may we always honour you;

may we serve our communities.

Cast all your anxiety on him,

because he cares for you.

We hold in your love those whom we love:  
those who are sick;  
those who are sorrowful;  
those who need guidance and direction.  
Cast all your anxiety on him,  
because he cares for you.

Come to us, God of glory.  
Hear us, heal us and shine through our lives.  
Cast all your anxiety on him,  
because he cares for you. Amen.

### **A sending out prayer**

Go into the world to show God's glory,  
and may you always know God's blessing  
and God's peace.

**Amen.**

**Praise:** To God be the glory

<https://youtu.be/-15v9iworAU>

To God be the glory! Great things He has done!  
So loved He the world that He gave us His Son;  
Who yielded His life an atonement for sin,  
And opened the life-gate that all may go in.

Praise the Lord! Praise the Lord! Let the earth hear His voice!  
Praise the Lord! Praise the Lord! Let the people rejoice!  
Come to the Father, through Jesus the Son:  
Give Him the glory! Great things He has done!

O perfect redemption, the purchase of blood!  
To every believer the promise of God;  
The vilest offender who truly believes,  
That moment from Jesus a pardon receives.  
Praise the Lord! Praise the Lord! Let the earth hear His voice!  
Praise the Lord! Praise the Lord! Let the people rejoice!  
Come to the Father, through Jesus the Son:  
Give Him the glory! Great things He has...

### **In the garden.....**

Next Sunday is Pentecost Sunday (Acts 2:1 - 21). **The unifying power of the Spirit**

We are going to ask people to record the words "Holy Spirit, we welcome you" on their phones,  
using a range of different languages for example, in Afrikaans, French, Italian, German etc.

Janine will put together a video presentation using all the sound clips that have been submitted.

Everyone will need to make a list of all the languages heard, and how many of each (there may be some repeats!)