

Sunday January 7, 2024

Service for Swansea & Charlestown Presbyterian Church

Welcome & Prayer

*The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands.
Day after day they pour forth speech; night after night they reveal knowledge.
They have no speech, they use no words; no sound is heard from them.
Yet their voice goes out into all the earth, their words to the ends of the world.
In the heavens God has pitched a tent for the sun. (Psalm 19)*

Almighty God, you are a God who made all things, for the benefit of your glory. In the beginning you made the world around us, and made us to have a special place within your creation. "You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honour and power, for you created all things, and by your will they were created and have their being." Lord, we live in a world where there are many distractions that draw us away from worshipping You. Thank you that even though we are disobedient you continue to love us as your children and continue to show us your mercy. We give you thanks and praise that because of your grace you have redeemed us and displayed a love to us that we cannot earn, and that is not deserved.. We give you thanks that through Christ's obedience, and His death on the cross, that the price for sin has been paid – once, for all so that what was once unclean can be made clean. Thank you Lord that through the resurrection of Christ and his defeat over death, we can be confident that those who place their faith in Jesus will also be raised to eternal life with You. Father God, we pray that as we continue to study your word in the bible today that we will have soft, teachable hearts that yearn to learn how you would have us live as your people. In Christ's name we pray, Amen

Song – Come People of the Risen King

[Come People of the Risen King \(with lyrics\) - Keith & Kristyn Getty - YouTube](#)

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| <p>1. Come, people of the Risen King
Who delight to bring Him praise
Come all and tune your hearts to sing
To the Morning Star of grace
From the shifting shadows of the earth
We will lift our eyes to Him
Where steady arms of mercy reach
To gather children in</p> | <p>3. Come, young and old from every land
Men and women of the faith
Come, those with full or empty hands
Find the riches of His grace
Over all the world, His people sing
Shore to shore we hear them call
The Truth that cries through every age:
"Our God is all in all!"</p> |
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Chorus

*Rejoice, rejoice! Let every tongue rejoice!
One heart, one voice; O Church of Christ, rejoice!*

2. Come, those whose joy is morning sun
And those weeping through the night
Come, those who tell of battles won
And those struggling in the fight
For His perfect love will never change
And His mercies never cease
But follow us through all our days
With the certain hope of peace

Bible Reading – Psalm 145:1-13

A psalm of praise. Of David.

1
I will exalt you, my God the King.
I will praise your name for ever and ever.

2
Every day I will praise you
and extol your name for ever and ever.

3
Great is the Lord and most worthy of praise;
his greatness no one can fathom.

4
One generation commends your works to another;
they tell of your mighty acts.

5
They speak of the glorious splendor of your majesty—
and I will meditate on your wonderful works.^[b]

6
They tell of the power of your awesome works—
and I will proclaim your great deeds.

7
They celebrate your abundant goodness
and joyfully sing of your righteousness.

8
The Lord is gracious and compassionate,
slow to anger and rich in love.

9
The Lord is good to all:
he has compassion on all he has made.

10
All your works praise you, Lord:
your faithful people extol you.

11
They tell of the glory of your kingdom
and speak of your might,

12
so that all people may know of your mighty acts
and the glorious splendor of your kingdom.

13
Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom
and your dominion endures through all generations.

Announcements

January - Rest and Relax. Please take the opportunity to spend more time with God, read a good Christian book or two. Find more time each day to pray. And look for opportunities to spend time with friends and family.

NSW School Holidays

Now that NSW public schools are on holiday, most of the activities of the church will close down until the start of February 2024. There will be a cut down version of Kids Church for our younger kids, while our older kids will stay in church with a kids pack that we will supply.

Mission Team Trip to Vanuatu

The mission team of 12 (Nic, Aimee and Cheryl Gillard, Archie Wilkinson, Grace Baker, Elissa Baker, Sam Wilson, Peter Hyslop, Charlotte McLaren, Ruby Cooper and Josh and Stephen Taylor) headed off on Wednesday. Please pray for an attitude of service from each of the team. A desire to give of themselves to the Lord and the people we meet. That God will help them to grow in their faith and they will see the value of being disciple making disciples.

Church Redevelopment.

The Construction Working Group is about to finalise the DA that will go into Lake Macquarie Council early in January. Please pray that the DA will be accepted with minimal changes and that 2024 will see us starting and completing our Church redevelopment. The current plan is that the DA application should take most of term 1. Term 2 will be putting the project out for tender. Term 3 hopefully will see the build start and finish, with fingers crossed completion sometime in term 4. God might have other plans though!

Prayer Points

Pray for Algeria: Pray for God's Word to get into the hands, homes, and hearts of Algerians. Pray for intensifying persecution to embolden and multiply this growing Church. Pray for equipped and compassionate Algerian believers to proclaim Jesus throughout the country.

PY Summer Camp and NTE. Many of our young people have recently been recently attended training camps. Please pray they would retain the great truths and God would continue to use them this year for the growth of His kingdom.

Pray for Vanuatu: Praise God that He is the God of all nations and commands people everywhere to repent. Pray the mission team would know God's presence with them. Pray it would be a time of real spiritual growth; of deeper trust and love for the Lord Jesus. Pray they would share the love of Christ through word and deed.

Bible Reading – Psalm 145:14-21

The Lord is trustworthy in all he promises
and faithful in all he does.[c]

14

The Lord upholds all who fall
and lifts up all who are bowed down.

15

The eyes of all look to you,
and you give them their food at the proper time.

16

You open your hand
and satisfy the desires of every living thing.

17

The Lord is righteous in all his ways
and faithful in all he does.

18

The Lord is near to all who call on him,
to all who call on him in truth.

19

He fulfills the desires of those who fear him;
he hears their cry and saves them.

20

The Lord watches over all who love him,
but all the wicked he will destroy.

21

My mouth will speak in praise of the Lord.
Let every creature praise his holy name
for ever and ever.

Song – Amazing Grace <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Tvt6E9N7AQw>

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| <p>1. Amazing grace how sweet the sound
That saved a wretch like me
I once was lost, but now I'm found
Was blind but now I see</p> <p>2. It was grace that taught my heart to fear
And grace my fears relieved
How precious did that grace appear
The hour I first believed</p> | <p>3. Through many dangers, toils, and snares
I have already come
This grace that brought me safe thus far
And grace will lead me home</p> <p>4. When we've been here ten thousand years
Bright, shining as the sun
We've no less days to sing God's praise
Than when we first begun</p> |
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Sermon – Psalm 145 (Jon B)

The final five psalms in the book of Psalms finish with a bang, calling all of creation to sing praise to God. Psalm 145 begins this call to praise. Everything is moving towards praise.

Praising God is a big deal in the Bible. That's the first thing Jesus taught us to ask for isn't it? "Our Father in Heaven, Hallowed be they name." The Apostle Peter tells us it's the purpose of the church: "You are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a peculiar people; that you should *show forth the praise* of him who called you out of darkness into his glorious light." (1 Pet. 2:9). Praise is how God is made known to a lost and needy world. When we tell people how good and great God is, we are praising him. Did you notice how praising God and speaking about God are woven together? It's doxological evangelism.

The trouble with praise (and evangelism) is that you can't just tell someone to do it. "Praise God!" I don't feel like it. I feel sad. My heart feels like grumbling not praising. Just telling me to do it won't change me. You need to *show me* why I should praise. Give me the reasons. And that's what the Bible does. It shows us. It gives us reasons. Three praise points:

1. The Greatness of God

We're such self-centred creatures. We are like tourists with selfie sticks. Here I am at the Sydney Opera House, Or the Grand Canyon. The wonders of the world. But it's not about you. The real wonder of the world is not you, it's what's behind you! Turn around and see the greatness of God. And get out of the way. It's not about us. It's about our great God and Saviour, Jesus Christ!

It's about the greatness of God. John Piper said: "People are starving for the greatness of God. But most of them would not give this diagnosis of their troubled lives. The majesty of God is an unknown cure."

In this psalm we have the cure: get out of the way and see the greatness of God. From verse 3, David speaks of God's unfathomable greatness. "Great is the Lord and greatly to be praise, and his greatness is unsearchable." Humans are great, we do great things. But we got nothing on God! David said about God, "You have searched me and known me..." God can search out David and know him. But David can't search out God, and fully comprehend him. There is someone much greater than us. Much greater than all of our problems. And this great God deserves great praise. The greater something or someone is, the more the more praise they deserve. We all know this, that's why we give out awards and applause to people. The greatness of God warrants a standing ovation, from one generation to the next. God is so great, his greatness can't be searched out. There's no bottom to the ocean of God's greatness.

Augustine tells of a vision of seeing a little boy at a beach scooping up the ocean thimbleful by thimbleful and emptying it out on the sand. Then he sees an angel who tells him that this boy will have emptied out the entire ocean long before Augustine has exhausted what can be said about God.

That's what the psalmist says here in verse 4 isn't it? "One generation will declare your works to the next and proclaim your mighty acts." There's no end to what God has done for us in Christ. The Apostle Paul talks about preaching the unsearchable riches of Christ (Ephesians 3:8). There's something wrong with you if you get sick of looking at a sunset. There's something wrong if a Christian gets tired of looking and speaking Christ. That means there's something wrong with us! There's something wrong with the beholder, not the beauty. If you're in need of some inspiring, go read the story. Read the gospels. Look at his works and his words.

And notice, coupled with God's greatness, is his goodness? It's there in verse 6, "They shall abundantly utter the memory of your great goodness, and shall sing of your righteousness." God has unlimited power. And that on its own is terrifying. But there's more to it.

Aslan is a lion- the Lion, the great Lion." "Ooh" said Susan. "I'd thought he was a man. Is he quite safe? I shall feel rather nervous about meeting a lion"..."Safe?" said Mr Beaver ..."Who said anything about safe? 'Course he isn't safe. But he's good. He's the King, I tell you.

Greatness and goodness rarely meet. You might have one without the other. But not in God. In the gospels we see Jesus showing complete control over the natural world. And over the spiritual world. Over sickness. And even over death! He's always uses his great power for great good isn't he? He is in complete control. And so you don't need to fear, but have faith. Trust in him.

2. The Goodness of God

We're on to our second praise point here. God is good, all the time, all the time God is good. God does good because he is good. Notice in verse 8, "The Lord is gracious, and full of compassion; slow to anger and of great mercy." That's an echo of the most quoted description of God's character in the OT. And timing was everything. Remember the Lord was making a covenant with the Israelites. And they were making a golden calf and worshipping that instead. Someone has said, it's like committing adultery on your wedding night. And what did the Lord do? He forgave them! We all know how good it is to be forgiven. God is a forgiving God.

God is good. Not just to some, but to all. notice in verse 9, "The Lord is good to all, and his mercy is over all that he has made." You see it in creation and you see it on the cross. You see it in the garden and you see it in the gospel. You see it in creation: God isn't stingy. When he created us, "everything was good..." And God said, we could eat of the fruit of every tree in the garden, except one. It was the devil who cast doubt on that. He made it seem like God was holding out on us.

You see it on the cross: "God so loved the world that he gave his begotten Son, that whoever believes in him will not perish but have everlasting life." The good news is for everyone. God commands all people everywhere to repent. If you miss out on being saved. It won't be because God isn't good. But because you turned your back on a good God.

And notice, from verses 10-13 the focus shifts back to God's power? Notice the words, "Kingdom, might mighty acts, everlasting kingdom, dominion." How can God be all good and all powerful? If he is all

good, why would he make a world where bad things happen? If he is all powerful, why doesn't he deal with evil? You see the answer on the cross don't you? Here was the greatest evil ever committed by human beings. And yet it was God's sovereign plan. He used it for the ultimate good! Rescuing sinners!

And this brings us to our last praise point:

3. The Faithfulness of God

Notice in verse 13 and 17. Both mention God's faithfulness. "The Lord is faithful in all he does," "He is trustworthy." Again we see it in creation. The sun comes up every day. The season rolls on. That's God keeping his promise he made to Noah.

But there is another, deeper faithfulness. It has to do with God rescuing people. Notice in verse 19, "The Lord is near to all who call on him, to all who call on him in truth." That's a promise of the gospel that "All who call on the name of the Lord Jesus will be saved." The Lord has promised that anyone who cries out to him for help. That if you do that with a sincere heart. Truly realising you're a sinner who need forgiveness, he will come near to you. He will hear your cry and rescue you. And the Lord preserves all who love him. If you're still a Christian, it's because God is faithful. He has preserved you. And carry you safely through to heaven.

"But all the wicked he will destroy." If God is truly and ultimately good to his whole creation, he has to get rid of whatever spoils and destroys goodness. He does this by turning people to repent, like the Apostle Paul. But if you won't turn and repent, you will face the judgment.

Three praise points: The greatness of God. The goodness of God. And the faithfulness of God. Won't you join in and say: "My mouth will speak the praise of the Lord, and let all flesh bless his holy name forever and ever."

In 2018 I went to see John Prine at the Espy in St Kilda. It was probably the best concert I have ever been to. We were witnessing one of the greats of country music. And at the end there was a standing ovation. That was one of the most enjoyable parts. Giving praise where praise is due. You've probably been to concerts like that? Imagine if you just walked out without clapping? That wouldn't be right would it? It would be wrong not to applaud. C.S Lewis pointed out, "Praise completes the enjoyment." We read books, we gotta tell someone. Watch that film, gotta share it. Go to that place, we gotta tell someone what we saw. Hear a joke, you gotta share it.

How much more with God! The Westminster Shorter Catechism's first question is: What is the chief end of man? Answer, to glorify God and enjoy him forever. Praise and enjoyment go together. A great God deserves great praise!

Song – Chorus of the Saved

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ilpVNCSOH8k>

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| 1. See the radiance of God Risen Son
All the angels rejoice at his name
All creation sustained by the power of his word
And his throne will endure for now and ever | 3. Through his blood our forgiveness is sure
By his Spirit within we'll endure
Holding on to this hope as an anchor for the soul
And our eyes fixed on Jesus the one who saves us |
| 2. Perfect Son sacrificed once for all
Power of sin, fear of death now destroyed
Raised to life, raised on high, Jesus name above all names
His acclaim will resound beyond the ages | Bridge. Now let us draw near the holiest place
Our hearts full of faith, our lips full of praise
So let us draw near the holiest place
Now pure through his blood, our sins washed away |

Chorus

Come join the song in earth and heaven voices raised
In the chorus of the saved
Come shout his name, come lift a sacrifice of praise
With the chorus of the saved

Benediction. *"Yes, I am coming soon." Amen. Come, Lord Jesus. ²¹ The grace of the Lord Jesus be with God's people. Amen." (Revelation 22:20-21)*