

**Rebuilding Hope and Confidence -
Moving forward in Hope**

Welcome and Opening Prayer

The word 'hope' has been our constant companion over the past 12 months. Hope for something better; hope for a return to how things were; hope for a reunion, hope for an easing of restrictions; hope for a vaccine.

How we experience hope and how we embody hope are different for each of us but hope is not the same as optimism; it is not based on human assurances, instead it is based on the promise and word of God. It calls us to accept what is difficult for us to understand in God's plans and true hope does not disappoint.

For St Paul, hope came in the human and physical form of Christ. It is more than a simple desire to change things or a longing for better existence. Hope for St Paul is a desire to be with Jesus. In his letter to the Romans, Paul writes, "For in hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope for who hopes for what is seen."

Jesus used the image of the kingdom of God in parables, images and symbols to express the content of our hope and this is a reminder to us that we must not place our hope in earthly things. Instead we must place it in Jesus who has gone to prepare a place for us in heaven and whose love sustains and comforts us in our daily lives.

So let us take a moment to recall something that gives each of us hope as we pray to God to strengthen our hope in times of darkness and to help us be a source of hope to others.

God, we thank you that in a world of despair,
You are our Hope.

In a world of darkness, You are our Light.

In a world of sorrow, You are our joy.

Help us to share the Hope of our hearts with one another

Enable us to give Hope to others

through Your work amongst us.

Use us to transform our nation

and to spread Your Hope to every corner of this nation.

May our land flourish by the preaching of Your word

and the praising of Your name.

In Jesus Name.

Amen.

Hymn: All my hope on God is founded

sung by St Martin's

Written by Joachim Neander(1650-1680)

Paraphrased 1899 by Robert Bridges (1844-1930)

All my hope on God is founded;

he doth still my trust renew,

me through change and chance he guideth,

only good and only true.

God unknown,

he alone

calls my heart to be his own.

God's great goodness aye endureth,
deep his wisdom, passing thought:
splendour, light and life attend him,
beauty springeth out of naught.
Evermore
from his store
newborn worlds rise and adore.

Daily doth the almighty Giver
bounteous gifts on us bestow;
his desire our soul delighteth,
pleasure leads us where we go.
Love doth stand
at his hand;
joy doth wait on his command.

Still from man to God eternal
sacrifice of praise be done,
high above all praises praising
for the gift of Christ, his Son.
Christ doth call
one and all:
ye who follow shall not fall.

Bible Reading: Jeremiah 29: 1, 4-7 (NIV)

This is the text of the letter that the prophet Jeremiah sent from Jerusalem to the surviving elders among the exiles and to the priests, the prophets and all the other people Nebuchadnezzar had carried into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon.

This is what the Lord Almighty, the God of Israel, says to all those I carried into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon:

“Build houses and settle down; plant gardens and eat what they produce. Marry and have sons and daughters; find wives for your sons and give your daughters in marriage, so that they too may have sons and daughters. Increase in number there; do not decrease.

Also, seek the peace and prosperity of the city to which I have carried you into exile. Pray to the Lord for it, because if it prospers, you too will prosper.”

Reflection: on Jeremiah 29: 1, 4-7

written by Ann Bell Worley,

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“Babylon”

Not simply an evil territory

or a dirty word,

as we are prone to believe.

But a place where God’s people were sent

in exile

on purpose

on mission

to offer their culture

to the culture there

in love.

For God so loved the world.

Like Israel in exile, still we hope

for our homecoming in the city of God,

where there will be no more tears.

Let us hope not
in closed communion
in isolated sanctuaries
apart from the Babylon-world.

Rather let us hope
in the fullness of God's love
in the life of the cities and towns
where we work
and love
and worship
and play.

And remember
that God so loved not only us,
but the world.

Let us hope for Babylon
as we hope for ourselves.

Let us embrace
its people
its buildings
its streets
and fill them with the beauty
of God's temple.

Let us hope
with doors wide open,
welcome the city in
and pour ourselves out.

For God so loved the world.

Anthem: Breathe on me, breath of God

Sung by St Martin's Voices

Edwin Hatch (1835-89)

(One License 196394)

Prayer

Spirit God,
blow into our lives,
move us to action,
break down the walls that separate us.
Where our language divides, offer us translation.
Where our fear overcomes, fill us with the fire of courage.
Where our lives are becalmed, fill our sails with wind,
moving us forward into the unknown future.
Fill us with the hope and promise of Pentecost!
Amen.

Mary Sumner prayer

All this day, O Lord,
let me touch
as many lives as possible for thee;
and every life I touch,
do thou by thy Spirit quicken,
whether through the word I speak,
the prayer I breathe, or the life I live.
Amen

Hymn: Lord for the Years sung by St Martin's

Words: Timothy Dudley-Smith, Tune: Revd Michael Baughan

Lord, for the years your love has kept and guided,
urged and inspired us, cheered us on our way,
sought us and saved us, pardoned and provided:
Lord of the years, we bring our thanks today.

Lord, for that word, the word of life which fires us,
speaks to our hearts and sets our souls ablaze,
teaches and trains, rebukes us and inspires us:
Lord of the word, receive Your people's praise.

Lord, for our land in this our generation,
spirits oppressed by pleasure, wealth and care:
for young and old, for commonwealth and nation,
Lord of our land, be pleased to hear our prayer.

Lord, for our world when we disown and doubt him,
loveless in strength, and comfortless in pain,
hungry and helpless, lost indeed without him:
Lord of the world, we pray that Christ may reign.

Lord for ourselves; in living power remake us -
self on the cross and Christ upon the throne,
past put behind us, for the future take us:
Lord of our lives, to live for Christ alone.

Closing prayer and Blessing

Holy God, our only hope is in You.

We thank you for the past,

trust you for today

and believe for the future;

that all Your promises will come to pass

and that we can rest forever in Your love.

Amen

and the blessing of God almighty
the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit
rest upon you this day
and remain with you now and always.
Amen.

Thank you for joining in with Thursday Prayers.

Choral music: The Church of England St Martin in the Fields

Theme music: Catherine Hilton

Readers: Jenni Beaumont, Christine Faulkner, Denise
Smith, Jennifer White, Dave Thompson

CCLI: 5097385

**Next Thursday Prayers will be on 8th July with the
theme of 'Moving forward with Confidence'.**