

**Transformation – NOW!
New Heavens and a New Earth**

Gathering:

Welcome to our Thursday Prayers for February. Our prayers today will be following the theme for 2022 – Transformation NOW! As we pray we will be looking ahead with fresh vision, asking God to transform us personally, and spiritually; to transform Mothers' Union and the churches and communities we work with and of which we are a part.

Hymn: O for a thousand tongues to sing

sung by St Martin's Voices

O for a thousand tongues to sing
my dear Redeemer's praise,
the glories of my God and King,
the triumphs of his grace.

Jesus - the name that charms our fears, we work
that bids our sorrows cease;
'tis music in the sinner's ears,
'tis life, and health, and peace.

He speaks; and, listening to his voice,
new life the dead receive;
the mournful, broken hearts rejoice;
the humble poor believe.

My gracious Master and my God,
assist me to proclaim
and spread through all the earth abroad
the honours of thy name.

Charles Wesley (1707-1788)

Opening prayer:

Loving Lord, transform our lives that we may reflect the glory of Christ. Continue in us the work of your Spirit; the miracle of transformation from the gloom of sin to the glory of Christ that we may shine with his love.

Amen

Bible Reading: Isaiah 65: 17-25

New Heavens and a New Earth

“Behold, I will create new heavens and a new earth. The former things will not be remembered, nor will they come to mind. But be glad and rejoice forever in what I will create, for I will create Jerusalem to be a delight and its people a joy.

I will rejoice over Jerusalem and take delight in my people; and the sound of weeping and of crying will be heard in it no more. “Never again will there be in it an infant who lives but a few days, or an old man who does not live out his years; the one who dies at a hundred will be thought a mere child; the one who fails to reach a hundred will be considered accursed.

They will build houses and dwell in them; they will plant vineyards and eat their fruit. No longer will they build houses and others live in them, or plant and others eat.

For as the days of a tree, so will be the days of my people;

my chosen ones will long enjoy the work of their hands.
They will not labour in vain, nor will they bear children
doomed to misfortune;
for they will be a people blessed by the Lord, they and their
descendants with them. Before they call I will answer; while
they are still speaking I will hear.
The wolf and the lamb will feed together, and the lion will
eat straw like the ox, and dust will be the serpent's food.
They will neither harm nor destroy on all my holy
mountain," says the Lord.

Reflection:

This passage gives a picture of God's intention for the kingdom of God to be about the whole of life – not just our spiritual life but our overall wellbeing in terms of how we relate to one another, exist as a community of mutual support and also have livelihoods that provide an income and sense of purpose and wellbeing. The themes of joy and life and just reward for labour shine through this passage. It is unrealistic to think we can find the perfect community but we can aspire to some of the key elements of this vision.

To consider:

What aspects of this vision would you like to see as a reality in your own community?

What might your Mothers' Union group do to bring this about?

Hymn: I am a new creation

© *written & sung by Dave Bilbrough.*

I am a new creation,
no more in condemnation,
here in the grace of God I stand.
My heart is overflowing,
my love just keeps on growing,
here in the grace of God I stand

And I will praise you, Lord,
yes I will praise you, Lord,
and I will sing of all that you have done.
A joy that knows no limit,
a lightness in my spirit
here in the grace of God I stand.

Prayers:

If we had a fraction of the faith in you that you have in us
then this world would be transformed, Lord.

If we showed a fraction of the love that you show to us
then this world would be transformed, Lord.

If we possessed a fraction of the patience that you display
with us
then this world would be transformed, Lord.

If we shared just a portion of the blessings that we have
received from you
then this world would be transformed, Lord.

If we showed as much trust in others as you have shown in us

then this world would be transformed, Lord.

If we claimed just a fraction of the power you promised to your Church

then this world would be transformed, Lord.

Transform us first, Lord,
that we might transform this world
through your love and your power.

Amen

© *John Birch*

Mothers' Union Prayer

Loving Lord,

We thank you for your love so freely given to us all.

We pray for families around the world.

Bless the work of the Mothers' Union

as we seek to share your love through the encouragement, strengthening and support of marriage and family life.

Empowered by your Spirit, may we be united in prayer and worship, and in love and service reach out as your hands across the world.

In Jesus' name.

Amen

Hymn: Will you come and follow me
sung by St Martin's Voices

Will you come and follow me
if I but call your name?
Will you go where you don't know
and never be the same?
Will you let my love be shown,
will you let my name be known,
will you let my life be grown,
in you and you in me?

Will you leave yourself behind
if I but call your name?
Will you care for cruel and kind
and never be the same?
Will you risk the hostile stare
should your life attract or scare?
Will you let me answer prayer
in you and you in me?

Will you let the blinded see
if I but call your name?
Will you set the prisoners free
and never be the same?
Will you kiss the leper clean,
and do such as this unseen,
and admit to what I mean
in you and you in me?

Will you love the 'you' you hide
if I but call your name?
Will you quell the fear inside
and never be the same?
Will you use the faith you've found
to reshape the world around,
through my sight and touch and sound
in you and you in me?

Lord, your summons echoes true
when you but call my name.
Let me turn and follow you
and never be the same.
In your company I'll go
where your love and footsteps show.
Thus I'll move and live and grow
in you and you in me.

John L Bell (born 1949) and Graham Maule (1958-2019)
© 1987 WGRG, c/o Iona Community,
www.wildgoose.scot

Blessing

May all that we are,
everything we think, say and do,
be blessed by God,
renewed and daily transformed
through his awesome power
and unfailing love.

© Nick Fawcett

And the blessing of God the Father,
the Son and the Holy Spirit
be upon you and remain with you for ever.

Amen

Thank you for joining in with Thursday Prayers.

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

Material: Mothers' Union, unless otherwise stated

Theme music: Catherine Hilton

Theme image: Aarn Giri on Unsplash.com

Readers: Ross Garner, Barbara Pye, Kirsty Screeton,
Aurelia Walsh, Denise Smith

CCLI: 5097385

**Next Thursday Prayers will be on 10th March 2022,
“The emergence of hope”**