

## Scallop service for the web

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\* *MHON: Methodist Hymns Old & New; StF: Singing the Faith*

*The references in italics can be copied and pasted into your browser so that you can listen or join in with the music if you wish to do so.*

*If you wish to join with others for the service at 10:30 on Sunday morning please contact [marian.blyth@btinternet.com](mailto:marian.blyth@btinternet.com)*

This service has been prepared by Mr Chris Fox

Good morning

It is nice to be able to share in worship with you this morning. Even if we are unable to meet together we can still worship God & He is still here with us all, wherever we might be.

Let us start with a good hymn reminding us of the greatness of God.

**O Lord my God (How great thou art)** (MHON 574: StF 82)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3GKhDCsLrUg>

*Stuart K Hine (1899 – 1989)*

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### Let us pray

This morning we want to come & praise you & worship you because you are the great God, the one true God. It is with awesome wonder that we look on all that you have done, the works of your hand. As we look around us we can see the vastness of your creation with the stars in the sky & also the finite details of the flowers that are now coming in our gardens. All we can do is to stand & be amazed at your power. Now as we approach Easter we are reminded & amazed at what you did for each one of us, sending your son to die in our place so that we could have forgiveness. We are so grateful for this because we know that need this forgiveness, each & every day. We know that we make mistakes, don't do what you want us to, don't say the things we should, we get things wrong. So now we come & say sorry for this,

for letting you down. We also come & say thank you for your forgiveness which you give to us each & every time. Amen

Let's say together the Prayer that Jesus taught us.

Our Father who art in heaven Hallowed be they name  
Thy kingdom come Thy will be done, On earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our trespasses  
as we forgive those who trespass against us.  
And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil  
For thine is the kingdom the power and the glory  
For ever and ever Amen

Our reading is **1Cor 1:18-25** (The Message)

The Message that points to Christ on the Cross seems like sheer silliness to those hellbent on destruction, but for those on the way of salvation it makes perfect sense. This is the way God works, and most powerfully as it turns out. It's written,

I'll turn conventional wisdom on its head,  
I'll expose so-called experts as shams.

So where can you find someone truly wise, truly educated, truly intelligent in this day and age? Hasn't God exposed it all as pretentious nonsense? Since the world in all its fancy wisdom never had a clue when it came to knowing God, God in his wisdom took delight in using what the world considered stupid — *preaching*, of all things! — to bring those who trust him into the way of salvation.

While Jews clamour for miraculous demonstrations and Greeks go in for philosophical wisdom, we go right on proclaiming Christ, the Crucified. Jews treat this like an *anti*-miracle — and Greeks pass it off as absurd. But to us who are personally called by God himself — both Jews and Greeks — Christ is God's ultimate miracle and wisdom all wrapped up in one. Human wisdom is so cheap, so impotent, next to the seeming absurdity of God. Human strength can't begin to compete with God's "weakness."

Let's sing again, reminding us the deep love that God has for each one of us. This is a new one for our congregations

### **How deep the Father's love**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tzQj7XvKFmA>

*Songwriters: Stuart Townend*

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### **Reflection**

Paul in the first verse we read from 1 Corinthians makes a very good point about the cross. To those who don't believe it seems like a foolish sign. To those who believe, as The Message puts it, 'it makes perfect sense'. Think back to the time before you became a Christian or try & put yourself in the shoes of a non-Christian. Then yes the cross does seem a silly logo, badge, symbol. Why put so much focus on a rough piece of wood that was used as a hideous form of torture that condemned people nailed to it to a long & painful death. In a way it is the same as having a gallows & noose or an electric chair as our symbol. Add to this the message that we proclaim concerning the cross, & to an unbeliever it will sound silly, crazy.

The person that we say is the son of God, was nailed to a cross of wood, like a common criminal, & left there to die. At this point there isn't much to get excited about is there. If this was the end of the story then we wouldn't be here today, there wouldn't be anything to believe in. But we know what happened next, we know that the story doesn't stop there. We know that Jesus on the 3<sup>rd</sup> day rose from the grave, & appeared to many people before ascending to heaven to sit with God the Father. To a non-believer this sounds totally impossible, this can't happen, people who die are dead, full stop! We know why all of this happened, so it does make sense. Jesus was sinless, without defects, so he could become the perfect sacrifice to pay the price for the sins of all mankind. At this time the sacrificial system meant that a lamb had to be sacrificed to pay the price for your sins. Not just any old lamb though, it had to be lamb that was male & without defect. Only the best would do. So Jesus fitted perfectly into this. But why did God have to sacrifice his son to pay the price for our sins? It must have broken God's heart to have to do this, but there was no other way. There was no other way that the price for our sins could be paid. The price for sin is death. Without this we would all be cut off from God, because of our sin, & God doesn't want this. He wants us to be with him, have fellowship with him now & for eternity. The sadness felt by God at this time would have been balanced by the great love that he has for each one of us, & the joy that would come through knowing that we will be with him for eternity. Yes, to our human minds it does seem a strange way to do this, but God knows best, his ways are not our ways. As The Message puts it V19, 'I'll turn conventional wisdom on its head.'

How many of us would consider ourselves wise? Well perhaps not all the time, but I'm sure there are times when something we do or say could be classed as wise. Whatever it was would seem to be very small & insignificant when put next to the wisdom of God. God's wisdom far outshines ours. God is the source of all wisdom. All we need to do to see God's wisdom is to open our eyes & look around us. All around us points to God, but people don't see it. God has revealed himself through creation, but even so, God has chosen us to reveal him to the world. Compared to God's wisdom all that we can say & do does appear like foolishness, but God can & does use this to bring people to him.

If the Jews demanded miraculous signs, & the Greeks looked for wisdom, what do the people of Sharnbrook need before they can believe in God? Perhaps miraculous signs & wonders would convince some about God, but people would always look for a rational, scientific answer to this. I think a lot of people would respond to something real, something that they could relate to. The best thing that is real is our story, our testimony of what God has done for each one of us, what God means to us in our daily life. If people know that God is real & that he is working in our life then that would give them confidence that he could also work in their lives. We know that God is alive, we know this because Jesus, the Son of God, rose from the dead & is alive & active today. Perhaps we think that all we can do is small & insignificant, but it doesn't matter, God can use anything that we do however small for his glory.

### **Our Prayers of intercession.**

We thank you Lord that it is possible for us to meet to worship you in these difficult times. We are thankful that we can have this time to focus on you. We know that so often we put you to one side as our normal lives can seem so busy & we don't find time for you.

Let us pray for each other. Some of us might be feeling anxious & worried because of the circumstances that we are in, some might be feeling unwell at this time, some feeling lonely as they are not able to get out of the house due to the restrictions. Some of us though are perhaps rejoicing as there has been a family celebration, perhaps health is better. Lord, you know each one of us, where we are at the moment & where we need your touch on our lives. For those who are unwell at the moment we pray for your healing hand to upon them & that in the coming weeks they will be feeling better and able to join with us again.

We thank you Lord that it has been possible for many people to receive the vaccine against the Covid virus & that the number of cases is falling. We pray for those working to get the vaccines produced & then given to people. Lord we ask that this process can continue & that we can start to get the virus under control. We pray for our government at this time as they try & make the decisions about the country returning to something like normal life. We pray that they will have the wisdom to

make the correct decisions, not always the popular decisions, but the ones that are for the best for our country.

Let's now take a moment & bring our own prayers to God.

We pray for the community of Sharnbrook. We pray for any living here who have contacted the virus & who are unwell at the moment. Give them your peace as they possibly worry about the future. We pray for any that have lost family as a result of this virus. Be close to them & give them your hope. We know that the doors of our church are closed, but we know also that our church is also beyond the walls of our building. We pray that through our lives people will come into contact with you & start to seek you and give their lives to you.

Let us close by singing a hymn that reminds that the glory belongs to God as he has done great things & continues to do great things **To God be the glory** (MHON761, StF 94) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2CeBoSQsBR0>  
*Frances Jane van Alstyne (1820 - 1915)*

May God bless each one of us as we live our lives this coming week. May the lives that we all live be a blessing to God as well, in all that we say & all that we do.