

Spring, Summer, Autumn, Winter

Sunday 25 July 2021

Call to Worship

Psalm 22

Here's the story I'll tell my friends when they come to worship, and punctuate it with Hallelujahs:

**Shout Hallelujah, you God-worshippers;
He has never let you down,
He has never wandered off to do his own thing;
he has been right there, listening.**

Here in this great gathering for worship
I have discovered this praise-life.
And I'll do what I promised right here
in front of the God-worshippers.

**Down-and-outers sit at GOD's table and eat their fill.
Everyone on the hunt for God is here, praising him.
"Live it up, from head to toe. Don't ever quit!"**

Our children and their children will get in on this

**As the word is passed along from parent to child.
Babies not yet conceived will hear the good news—
that God does what he says.**

All things bright and beautiful

All things bright and beautiful,
All creatures great and small,
All things wise and wonderful:
The Lord God made them all.

Each little flow'r that opens,
Each little bird that sings,
He made their glowing colours,
He made their tiny wings.

The purple-headed mountains,
The river running by,
The sunset and the morning
That brightens up the sky.

He gave us eyes to see them,
And lips that we might tell

How great is God Almighty,
Who has made all things well.

Reading 1 Corinthians 13:1-8a

If I speak in the tongues of mortals and of angels, but do not have love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. ²And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. ³If I give away all my possessions, and if I hand over my body so that I may boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing.

⁴Love is patient; love is kind; love is not envious or boastful or arrogant ⁵or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; ⁶it does not rejoice in wrongdoing, but rejoices in the truth. ⁷It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

⁸Love never ends.

Prayer of Adoration and Confession

God of mercy and love

You cause the sun to shine in our lives

Lighting our way

Illuminating the dark places

Searching out all that we are and can become

You send the wind and the rain into our lives

Testing our strength and our courage

Seeking out the nooks and crannies

The hiding places we create for ourselves

Introducing your love into all that we are

Through the soft light of morning and evening

Through the harsh brightness of the day

Through the dark hush of the night

You are with us

Watching over us

Caring for us

We bow at your feet, our confessions laid bare before you

In your mercy you forgive our sin

And cast it beyond the furthest horizon

We worship you. Amen

The Peace

Reading 1 John 4:7-21

God is love, and those who abide in love abide in God, and God abides in them. ¹⁷ Love has been perfected among us in this: that we may have boldness on the day of judgment, because as he is, so are we in this world. ¹⁸ There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear; for fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not reached perfection in love. ¹⁹ We love because he first loved us. ²⁰ Those who say, "I love God," and hate their brothers or sisters, are liars; for those who do not love a brother or sister whom they have seen, cannot love God whom they have not seen. ²¹ The commandment we have from him is this: those who love God must love their brothers and sisters also.

Message Spring, Summer, Autumn, Winter

God of the seasons, of spring and summer, autumn and winter
God of the weather, the wind and the rain, the sun and the snow
God of the earth, of trees and seas, of the animals and the birds and the fish
We come before you amazed that you see us
Amazed that in our puny, misshapen lives you know us
Even to the hairs on our heads
And we pause in wonder.
Your love flourishes with life
Spring bursting to life
Summer vigorous with growth
Autumn gracious in harvest
Winter sustained in darkness
We abide in the cycle of your love

Spring

Of the first flush of green
Small, full of hope
A new-born lamb staggers to its feet
Leaning into a much-relieved mother
A bare branch cracks open to buds
Pushing out into the world
Basking in gentle sunlight
A child steps into the gathering warmth
Peals of laughter as puddles splash
Flooding wonder at atahua (beauty) unveiled
The patient love of Winter
Revealed in the erupting of Spring

No order to this miracle
Chaos in creation
All mysteries and all knowledge
Wrapped in the never ending aroha (love) of God

May you discover the koa o te ora (joy of life) of spring bursting in on every experience.

Summer

Now the full bloom of mauri ora (life force)
Commanding attention
Buds no longer
Lush green and bright colour
Fruits of early planting
Insects pollinating, biting, multiplying
Lawns mown
Hedges cut
Long days
Hats worn
Sunscreen spread
Water splashed
Heat
BBQs
Beaches
The rejoicing love of Spring
Gives way to the boldness of Summer
Mountains moved by faith
Fed and nurtured by love

May you experience the kaha (courage) of summer in the midst of busyness and joy.

Autumn

New growth ready to harvest
The bounty of the whenua (earth)
Dropping into the kete (basket)
New wine, fresh vegetables
Darkening, dropping leaves
Cooling breezes, cooler rain

The earth beginning to curl in on itself
Packing up, putting away
Animals' coats grow longer
Sap slows
Steps slow
Late snatches of warmth
Gratefully embraced
As days grow shorter
The curtains drawn earlier
The bold love of Summer
Sidelines into the companionable stilling of Autumn
Words of mortals and angels
Whispering the love of God to mahinga ataahua (beautiful creation)

May you rest in the Rangimarie (peace) of Autumn finding stillness and peace
in the now.

Winter

Chill air
Frost lies heavy on the ground
Trees hibernate, no sign of new growth or buds
Hills bear splashes of snow
Matariki passes
Inching, minute by minute toward spring
Gripped by cold
Clinging mud
Frozen puddles
Dark skies
Leaden clouds
Lashed by polar blasts
Bared trees stark against the fading light
Movement in bursts
One warmth to another
Huddled away from cold, dark nights
The quiet love of Autumn
Descends into the waiting anticipation of Winter
Enfolding the creation, te ringa i te ringa (arm in arm) in God's love

May you encounter the te awhi aroha (loving embrace) of Winter in anticipation of what is to come.

We Pray

God of the seasons, of spring and summer, autumn and winter

We give thanks for your Aroha

Patient

Kind

Generous

Enduring

We ask for the courage we need to love as you love us.

Never ending Love

Amen

Prayer for Ourselves and Others

For the lost and the hurting, those who have never known the warm embrace of your love.

Make your ways known upon earth, O God,

your saving power among all peoples.

For the people of your church as we struggle to live to your glory, falling as often as we manage to step forward.

Renew your Church in holiness,

and help us to serve you with joy.

For those who whether by election or force have responsibility for the people of this world, that they may have the compacity for compassion and care for those under their authority.

Guide the leaders of this and every nation,

that justice may prevail throughout the world.

For the poor, ground down by a world that is intent of giving its most to the fewest. Scraping by, or not even managing that.

Let not the needy, O God, be forgotten,

nor the hope of the poor be taken away.

In a world rife with fighting and war, blood shed for little or no ultimate gain.

Make us instruments of your peace,

and let your glory be over all the earth.

For ourselves, those we love, our hopes and dreams, fears and concerns

In your mercy Lord, hear our prayer.

All this in the wonderful name of our Lord Jesus who taught us how to pray...

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father in Heaven, holy be your name.

Your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as in heaven.

Give us today our daily bread.

Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.

Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil.

For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours, now and forever.

Amen

Praise to the Lord

Praise to the Lord, the Almighty, the King of creation!

O my soul, praise him, for he is your health and salvation!

Come, all who hear; now to his altar draw near,

Joining in glad adoration.

Praise to the Lord, above all things so wondrously reigning;

Sheltering you under his wings, and so gently sustaining!

Have you not seen all that is needful has been

Sent by his gracious ordaining?

Praise to the Lord, who will prosper your work and defend us;

Surely his goodness and mercy shall daily attend us.

Ponder anew what the Almighty can do,

If with his love he befriends us.

Praise to the Lord! O let all that is in me adore him!

All that has life and breath, come now with praises before him.

Let the Amen sound from his people again;

Gladly forever adore him.

Benediction and Grace

May the Grace of the Lord Jesus Christ,

the Love of God,

and the Fellowship of the Holy Spirit

be with us all, now and forevermore. Amen.