



Chet Valley Churches
Last Sunday Praise
28 February 2021



Welcome

Welcome to Last Sunday Praise. In this file you will find links to the songs we have chosen for our worship. Click on the links to take you to each song.

Introduction

Our theme for this service is looking at our walks with God. We often refer to the Christian faith as a journey, but how many different ways are there of walking with God? Many of us have felt this most recent time of lockdown to be something we just have to keep plodding through, clinging on to the belief that the summer will bring some measure of normality. But as we move into lighter evenings and nature's surge of new life, most of us are just beginning to get a spring in our step. So let's take some time to praise and worship God who loves us whatever we feel like, starting with three songs of praise.

♪♪ All the songs link to YouTube. Just click with your mouse on the link, which will take you to a song with on-screen words. You may have to skip a few YouTube adverts if we have chosen songs that are not currently on the Chet Valley Churches YouTube channel.

♪♪ I will worship

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SJsN358apt8>

♪♪ Strength will rise

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yubLGTOcm8c>

♪♪ We'll walk the land – let the flame burn

<https://youtu.be/YXYxmU73-yo>

Pause for thought, and prayer...

In the months of January and February the weather is often awful, and going outside an effort. It can easily feel as if there is not much to look forward to – and that’s in a ‘normal’ year! We move into Lent, taking time to re-focus our lives on God, and clearing out the rubbish in our lives that comes between us and Him. It is a good time to sing that we will worship and will gain strength from doing so, and to declare that we will walk in God’s way. The following prayer leads us to think not only about the disciplines of Lent, but about the suffering and glory of Christ at Easter.

The Collect is a special prayer written for each day. Perhaps you might read the prayer aloud, line by line, stopping to think about each line as you do so.

The Collect—A Special Prayer for the Day

Almighty God,
by the prayer and discipline of Lent
may we enter into the mystery of Christ’s sufferings,
and by following in his Way
come to share in his glory;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

♪ Show me the way of the cross

<https://youtu.be/nGGeeDPJFnc>

♪♪ **O church arise**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?app=desktop&v=OXNO-OGUGyU>

♪♪ **Thy word is a lamp unto my feet**

https://youtu.be/Y_nwVsve2dk

Pause for thought, and prayer...

We praise God in songs of strength and commitment, because God is good and God is mighty. We know this to be true, although sometimes God can feel very far away from our daily situation.

Perhaps you might like to ponder the following prayer.

A prayer for our lives

Heavenly Father,

Forgive us for the times when we forget that walk beside us and sometimes when we need it you carry us,

forgive us for the times when we grumble and don't trust you, forgive us for the fears and troubles that eat away at us, yet we sometimes fail to bring to you.

Help us to have courage, faith and the assurance that we walk with you, and you walk with us, every step of our lives,

♪♪ **There is a hope**

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

🎵 Cornerstone

<https://youtu.be/BHzlxSuHtqs>

Bible Reading

Psalm 89 verses 1-15

- ¹ I will sing of the LORD's great love forever;
with my mouth I will make your faithfulness known
through all generations.
- ² I will declare that your love stands firm forever,
that you have established your faithfulness in heaven itself.
- ³ You said, "I have made a covenant with my chosen one,
I have sworn to David my servant,
- ⁴ "I will establish your line forever
and make your throne firm through all generations."
- ⁵ The heavens praise your wonders, LORD,
your faithfulness too, in the assembly of the holy ones.
- ⁶ For who in the skies above can compare with the LORD?
Who is like the LORD among the heavenly beings?
- ⁷ In the council of the holy ones God is greatly feared;
he is more awesome than all who surround him.
- ⁸ Who is like you, LORD God Almighty?
You, LORD, are mighty, and your faithfulness surrounds you.
- ⁹ You rule over the surging sea;
when its waves mount up, you still them.
- ¹⁰ You crushed Rahab like one of the slain;
with your strong arm you scattered your enemies.
- ¹¹ The heavens are yours, and yours also the earth;
you founded the world and all that is in it.
- ¹² You created the north and the south;

- Tabor and Hermon sing for joy at your name.
- ¹³ Your arm is endowed with power;
your hand is strong, your right hand exalted.
- ¹⁴ Righteousness and justice are the foundation of your throne;
love and faithfulness go before you.
- ¹⁵ Blessed are those who have learned to acclaim you,
who walk in the light of your presence, LORD.

Talk

David Owen has written this reflection.

In 2020 the bishop of Norwich, Graham Usher, published a book entitled “The Way under our Feet”. In it he reminds the reader that walking is one of the simplest things we do as humans and that it's how most of us experience life. How true. Watching our grand-daughter discover the mechanics of walking has been a great joy. Now she is rushing around trying to get everywhere as fast as she can.

Reflecting on this past year – it is twelve months since we last held an in-person act of Last Sunday Praise – many have commented how invigorating it was during the summer lockdown to be able to get out and about along the footpaths near our homes. We were discovering sights and sounds which we may not have noticed for quite a while. We weren't driving, we were walking.

There are several reasons for walking. There is the basic need to get from one place to another – the act of getting from A to B – and in many parts of the world walking is the first mode of transport. For some people it may be a sport. For others it is usually a leisure activity. Whatever the reason for our wanting

or needing to walk, there are deep connections between the very act of walking and God, and in turn with Creation.

Sometime during my school days I was persuaded to take part in a sponsored walk which would take me on a round trip of about 25 miles from my home in Chester to Beeston Castle and back. It was at that time the furthest that I'd walked in a single journey. I recall being told that I needed to protect my feet by wearing the correct shoes and socks, and above all follow a preparatory ritual of rubbing surgical spirit onto my feet to "toughen them". I'm not sure if it did, but the smell of surgical spirit still lingers in my memory! It was a walk I did with a friend and we spent most of the time talking. It was only when we'd finished the walk did we realise how tired we were.

Other occasions also come to mind:- walking across Dartmoor with my son, walking up to Goat Fell on Arran during a geology field trip, walking to a glacier in Iceland and more. Most of these walks were done in company with others – family or friends. But there are walks that we do alone – walking along the seashore on Anglesey is one I vividly recall. It is on these occasions that we find ourselves possibly talking to ourselves. Or are we? I reckon these are the times that we find ourselves talking to God; recognising that we have God as our companion.

Languages are rich in their words, and English, being such a mongrel of a language, is possibly one of the richest languages in general use. I believe that Innuits have a plethora of words for 'snow', but in English we have a multitude of words to describe how we walk. Before I write them down see how many you come up with – and don't use a thesaurus!

How about amble, march, stride, shuffle, bounce, meander, drift, dawdle, stroll, wander, saunter... and others that I haven't written, I'm sure.

Looking now at those words I therefore wonder how the translators of the bible chose the appropriate word when they were translating the Hebrew or Greek texts when the original language might usually only mean: 'walk'. In Genesis 22. verse 6 when Abraham has been told to go and sacrifice his son, Isaac, did he walk..... or did he stride or dawdle? Using either stride or dawdle gives differing impressions of his intentions to the neutral word 'walk'!

Not surprisingly the word 'walk' occurs many times in the bible and on several occasions the connection between God and the character who is walking brings out a significant relationship.

Let's look at a few now.

Moses. His walk with God is a real combination of those synonyms for walking. How did he approach the Burning Bush? – did he shuffle...? How did he enter Pharaoh's presence to demand that the Israelites be set free? – did he dawdle...? How did he lead the Israelites across the Red Sea? – did he march...? How did they cross the Sinai wilderness? – did he meander...? In everyone of those situations the bible account tells us that he knew God was with him – his companion.

Similarly David, the shepherd boy, probably went striding towards Goliath.

If we looked at the various prophets we can discover another host of actions of people walking with God in their own ways, as circumstances required.

In the gospels Jesus is recorded as walking around the countryside, meeting people on those journeys. He is their companion, a tangible presence in their daily life. (Think of the French word for day – jour)

The ultimate gospel account perhaps of a companion on walks with God is the story of the two disciples journey to Emmaus.

Here it is the 'breaking of bread' which brings realisation to the disciples of who it was that had been walking with them. Of all the words which we can use to describe walking perhaps the most apt for their journey would be 'saunter'.

Saunter comes from 'sante terre' – holy ground. It describes the walk of a pilgrim, and if we are walking with God, we are pilgrims on a journey, whether that journey is actual or metaphorical. So perhaps in our walks with God we should saunter more, giving ourselves time for reflection and allowing God to be our companion on the journeys we make. "Walk – saunter – in the light of the Lord".

♪♪ **How deep the Father's love for us**

<https://youtu.be/TQ5kqQ359E4>

Time for prayer...

Let's take time to pray for:

- The people we live amongst – family, neighbours, friends far or near, acquaintances
- Our national leaders who make decisions that directly affect all of us
- Our church leaders seeking to find a way through the rules about Covid to enable the church to live and grow as we look to the future
- Members of church congregations who are finding it tough not being able to meet
- People we know who are struggling as a result of Covid, either socially or economically or because of long term effects on their health

- Those who are ill, or who have lost touch with society following isolation and are afraid to venture out
- Those who are fearful of the future
- Ourselves, that we might be brave enough to stand out as people of faith and not fall into discouragement

And a prayer about walking with God:

In my journeying with you,
may I never lose my sense of direction,
never lose sight of the landmark
towards which I travel.
And should cloud or rain obscure my vision,
may I draw closer to you,
so that my feet may tread
in your footsteps,
your words be my encouragement,
and your love my protection
against the storms that assail me.

You might want to pray aloud the prayer that Jesus taught his first disciples. Use whatever version or language you wish!

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name.
Your kingdom come, your will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who sin against us.
Lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power and the glory
are yours, now and for ever. Amen.

♪♪ **Guide me O thou great Redeemer**

<https://youtu.be/5j48TLIRb4Q>

♪♪ **We are marching in the light of God**

https://youtu.be/gl24_27wWIE

♪♪ **Teach me to dance**

<https://youtu.be/iMeAyiZIniE>

A blessing

The Lord bless you and keep you;
the Lord make his face shine upon you
and be gracious to you;
the Lord turn his face toward you
and give you peace.

Amen

Scroll down to the next page to read the well-known poem
'Footprints'.

Footprints

One night I dreamed a dream.

As I was walking along the beach with my Lord.

Across the dark sky flashed scenes from my life.

For each scene, I noticed two sets of footprints in the sand,

One belonging to me and one to my Lord.

After the last scene of my life flashed before me,

I looked back at the footprints in the sand.

I noticed that at many times along the path of my life,

especially at the very lowest and saddest times,

there was only one set of footprints.

This really troubled me, so I asked the Lord about it.

“Lord, you said once I decided to follow you,

You'd walk with me all the way.

But I noticed that during the saddest and most

troublesome times of my life,

there was only one set of footprints.

I don't understand why, when I needed You the most,

You would leave me.”

He whispered, “My precious child, I love you and will never leave you

Never, ever, during your trials and testings.

When you saw only one set of footprints,

It was then that I carried you.”