



Worship 21 June

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Welcome to this time of worship at a time that the Covid-19 pandemic is still dominating the news. It is right that the focus today is on saving lives. But in the spirit of safeguarding the well-being of people we must not only seek to contain the crisis that affects so many people all over the world at this time but also look ahead to the future. What has become clear is that our health is interconnected with the health of the planet, the health crisis and ecological crisis are linked. And while the pandemic is a very serious present-day crisis, we know that climate change is an even more serious crisis that will affect future generations. In this time of worship I invite you to stand with Moses on Mt Nebo, looking out over “the promised land,” and even if we may not get there ourselves, we can envision the bright and healthy future that we hope for our children and their children. And we can work to make that vision come true, with the help of God.

Hymn Morning has broken

Prayer

Gracious and loving God, we give you thanks for this new day and for all the ways that you bless our lives:

You bless us with the beauty of nature to behold, the love of family and friends surrounding us, the care for our wellbeing extended to us, the joy of knowing you and hearing your Word for us and your guidance as we share the good news in word and deed.

Send your Spirit upon us at the time of worship, so that we might see visions of a better future, to dream of a time when your kingdom will come and your will be done, in our lives and in the world.

In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Reading Deuteronomy 34: 1-12

Reflection

In today's reading we find Moses standing on the top of a mountain, Mt Nebo, looking out at a dream that his ancestors had passed on to him to which he had dedicated his life. The dream was a promise of a land of “milk and honey,” a place that the people of Israel who had wandered for 40 years in the desert, could finally call home. Moses is able to view the land, but he would not enter it. “I have let you see it, but I will not let your get there,” God says. A view is all that Moses gets! Moses hands over the dream to his successor, dies and is buried just outside the promised land. And, interestingly, his grave has never been found.

Moses had a vision, a dream and this was certainly not a dream of a lifetime; it had been passed on to him for many, many generations. And finally this dream was about to come true. While Moses was not allowed to set foot in the promised land, he did see it on the horizon; he did catch a glimpse of it. And that was enough. He saw how it would be!

All the efforts had not been in vain. It had not been an easy journey: Moses could have recalled the times when the people had bitterly complained; when they had wanted to turn back to “the fleshpots of Egypt”; when they worshipped gods of their own making; and when they turned against him. But that was all in the past, now that he was able to see the destination.

Had it not been for the vision, the dream of Moses, a leader who trusted God's leading, the people would not have been standing on the mountain looking out to their future in the land they, and their children and their children's children, would make their home. Short term pain had resulted in long term gain!

Is there a challenge here for us? Are we able and willing to climb up a Mt Nebo and look out to a future that far extends our own lifetime? Do we consider our children and their children in the decisions we make today that will affect their future?

The world is longing for leadership, daring enough to point to the horizon and say, “this is why we are asking all to make sacrifices today; here is a future which is worth building together so our children and their children

will enjoy peace, justice and freedom, a healthy, biodiverse world with clean water and clean air.”

How shall we emerge from the coronavirus pandemic? Can we dream of an alternative vision for our society and world – a new normal – that may not be realised in our lifetime but sometime in the future it will be? Jesus calls us to such a new view, that of the Kingdom of God.

And Jesus gave us a roadmap to the Kingdom of God, based on love of God and love of neighbour. He showed us how we can live so that all, in this generation and the generations to come, will be able to enjoy life in all its fullness. (John 10: 10)

Yes, we glimpse what God’s way and will is. Through Jesus Christ we have been given a vision of the Kingdom of God. And here I quote the timeless visionary words of Martin Luther King, who gave his life for a dream, the dream of the end of racial inequality, which tragically still hasn’t come true:

“We’ve got some difficult days ahead. But it doesn’t matter to me now. Because I have been on the mountaintop.....I just want to do God’s will. And he’s allowed me to go up the mountain. And I’ve seen the promised land. I may not go there. But I want you to know....that we will get to the promised land.....Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord”

God has led us up the mountain too and shown us that a better world, a better future is possible, for our children and their children. And even if may not get there ourselves, we can pray and work so that the day may draw near that God’s kingdom will come and God’s will be done. Thanks be to God! Amen.

Hymn Thy kingdom come on bended knee

Prayer
Gracious and loving God, we thank you for the glimpses of the coming of your kingdom, even here and now.....
And we will continue to pray for your kingdom to come, on earth, in us, as it is in heaven. And so we lift up our prayers to you.....

For the world, divided by injustice, poverty and conflict, in which the poorest and vulnerable suffer most, bless all who stand up against injustice and work for peace: Those who speak out against the evil of racial and social inequality. Those who bring relief, and we think of the many organizations and charities that are presently struggling to reach the growing number of people who are in need. **May your kingdom come.....**

We pray for our country, for its leaders and decisionmakers, that they may have integrity, wisdom and vision, so that in this time of the corona pandemic and in time of economic hardship, they may protect the vulnerable, the young, the BAME, the jobless, the homeless, and put all their efforts in reducing inequalities rather than increasing them. We pray that all people may have the same opportunities for health, for education and prospects in the workplace. **May your kingdom come.....**

We pray for the visionaries in local communities who challenge governments to engage in long-term planning rather than short term thinking. As they see the harm done by short term policies to people’s health, livelihoods and the environment, may their voices be heard. **May your kingdom come.....**

We pray for all who are anxious and suffering at this time. We pray for those who are sick and those who care for them. We pray for strength and resilience for all the health and care workers who are under a lot of strain during the continuing pandemic. And we pray for healing of body, mind and spirit of those who are ill or in despair, and especially those whom we know and lift up to you.....**May your kingdom come.....**

And we pray for ourselves, that the glimpses of your kingdom may give us hope, strength and joy to continue our journey of faith and faithfulness...

And we pray together....OUR FATHER

Blessing

Go boldly into the future which has been claimed by God
Know that the God who holds all things will be there
Christ who calls us friends will walk beside us
And the Spirit who makes all things new will mark our way with light and hope. **Amen.**