

Introduction To Worship

Sunday 10th January 2020



I spent some time sitting in the garden during the week, listening to sounds coming from our neighbour's large Norfolk Island Hibiscus on our boundary. At the moment it's covered in blossoms and during the day dozens of honey eaters and thousands of bees feed on the nectar in the tree; and at night the possums and bats come and feed on the flower's nectar. It's alive with the sound of humming bees, bird and animal calls.

It's like its humming with life. In time, the Hibiscus tree's blossoms fade and turn into hard seeds with asbestos like fibres that stick to the breasts of honeyeaters, possums and bats who carry them to different places, where they fall to the ground, germinate and send down roots and send up shoots, that grow into new hibiscus trees.

The tree reminds me of mustard seed trees, which grow along the banks of the Sea of Galilee.

These trees shelter birds whenever the wind becomes strong, in a place where nature can be unpredictable, with the Sea of Galilee calm one minute and stormy the next. Trees shelter and sustain wildlife.

As we continue on journeying through the uncertainty of life, with its storms, like we journeyed through last year, we remain resilient. God shelters us and our faith keeps us strong and sustains us. Like all the creatures of the earth, we adapt and survive and keep on keeping on, no matter what. Let us give thanks to God for bringing us through challenging times. May this year be a year of blessings for all of us. May this week's worship bless us, with its focus on God's power, the Holy Spirit and Jesus baptism in the Jordan.



Rev Tina

Mountview Worship @ Home

Sunday 10th January 2021 – Baptism of Jesus



Hymn: Be Still For The Presence Of The Lord – Middlesbrough Baptist Church [2:53]

<https://youtu.be/ZugvUQ4m90U>

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Be Still, For The Presence Of The Lord (v.1)

Be still,
for the presence of the Lord,
the Holy One, is here;
come bow before Him now
with reverence and fear:
in Him no sin is found -
we stand on holy ground.
Be still,
for the presence of the Lord,
the Holy One, is here.

Welcome To Our Service

Today we focus on Baptism
May you be blessed by the service

Acknowledgement

We acknowledge those who were here before us, the first inhabitants of this place.
We honour them for their custodianship of the land on which we gather today.



Call To Worship

God takes the Initiative
God's voice is powerful

We receive our baptism
As a gift from God

For we are God's beloved
God loves us



Hymn: All Things Bright And Beautiful

– Helen Jackson [3:40]

https://youtu.be/y_bo9sBhALA

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Lyricist Refrain and vv.2 alt. and 5: Cecil Frances Alexander
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Prayers Of Adoration, Invocation And Confession

Lord, our God

In the beginning your breath swept over face of the waters
Your voice said, “Let there be light” and there was light
Your voice spoke over the waters of storms throughout the centuries
You gave strength to your people
as you blessed them with deep peace.
When you Son rose out of the waters of Baptism
Your breath came down upon him
You spoke.

You affirmed him as your Son, your beloved,
The one you are pleased with.
You were with Jesus, all the days he was with us,
sending your spirit upon him.

We praise you our mighty God

Jesus our Lord
Rising out of the waters
Baptised in solidarity with all of us
Beloved Son of God
Divine and human
God parted the heavens for you
God’s breath came down upon you
God’s voice spoke to you
God affirmed you as his Son

We praise you our mighty Lord

Holy Spirit
Breath of God
Who comes upon us all at our baptism
Filling us,
so that we become the church,
empowering us to continue the Ministry of Jesus Christ

We give praise to you Holy Spirit

Spirit of God
Come upon us now
Bless and fill us
Bring us closer to God
And Lord, if we need forgiveness or to forgive, help us,
Calm our hearts and transform us, give us a fresh start, a new beginning,
new eyes of faith to know you,
Lord we come before you in silence
with all that’s on our hearts

Silence

Hear then Christ's Words of grace to us
'Your sins are forgiven'
Thanks be to God

Hymn: She Sits Like A Bird – St Chad's Ladybarn [2:55]

<https://youtu.be/9iYgOWT1AKA>

By John Bell and Graham Maule, Wild Goose Publications. © Posted to YouTube by StChad Ladybarn

Scripture Readings

Genesis 1: 1-4

¹ In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth, ² the earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep, while a wind from God swept over the face of the waters.
³ Then God said, "Let there be light"; and there was light.
 And God saw that the light was good; and God separated the light from the darkness.

Psalm 29

The Voice of God in a Great Storm A Psalm of David

¹ Ascribe to the Lord, O heavenly beings,
 ascribe to the Lord glory and strength.
² Ascribe to the Lord the glory of his name;
 worship the Lord in holy splendor.
³ The voice of the Lord is over the waters;
 the God of glory thunders,
 the Lord, over mighty waters.
⁴ The voice of the Lord is powerful;
 the voice of the Lord is full of majesty.
⁵ The voice of the Lord breaks the cedars;
 the Lord breaks the cedars of Lebanon.
⁶ He makes Lebanon skip like a calf,
 and Sirion like a young wild ox.
⁷ The voice of the Lord flashes forth flames of fire.
⁸ The voice of the Lord shakes the wilderness;
 the Lord shakes the wilderness of Kadesh.
⁹ The voice of the Lord causes the oaks to whirl,^[a]
 and strips the forest bare;
 and in his temple all say, "Glory!"
¹⁰ The Lord sits enthroned over the flood;
 the Lord sits enthroned as king forever.
¹¹ May the Lord give strength to his people!
 May the Lord bless his people with peace!

Acts 19: 1-7

Paul in Ephesus

¹ While Apollos was in Corinth, Paul passed through the interior regions and came to Ephesus, where he found some disciples. ² He said to them, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you became believers?"
 They replied, "No, we have not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit."
³ Then he said, "Into what then were you baptized?" They answered, "Into John's baptism."

⁴ Paul said, “John baptized with the baptism of repentance, telling the people to believe in the one who was to come after him, that is, in Jesus.” ⁵ On hearing this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.

⁶ When Paul had laid his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came upon them, and they spoke in tongues and prophesied — ⁷ altogether there were about twelve of them.

Mark 1: 4-12

⁴ John the baptizer appeared in the wilderness, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins.

⁵ And people from the whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem were going out to him, and were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. ⁶ Now John was clothed with camel’s hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. ⁷ He proclaimed, “The one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to stoop down and untie the thong of his sandals.

⁸ I have baptized you with water; but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.”

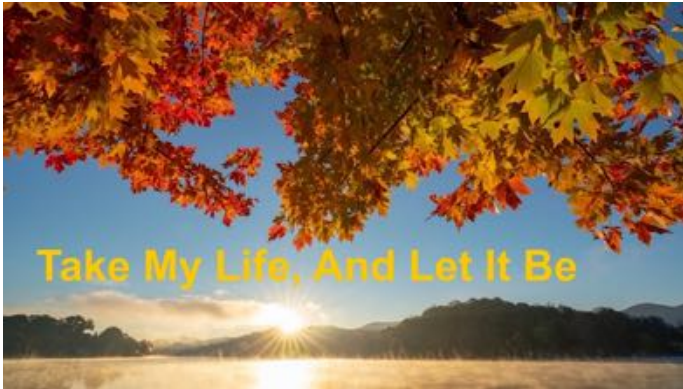
The Baptism of Jesus

⁹ In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. ¹⁰ And just as he was coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens torn apart and the Spirit descending like a dove on him.

¹¹ And a voice came from heaven, “You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased.”

The Temptation of Jesus

¹² And the Spirit immediately drove him out into the wilderness.



Hymn: Take My Life, And Let It Be
– Helen Jackson [3:02]

<https://youtu.be/NFJRDPTI6cc>

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For The Young At Heart

Psalm 29 speaks of a wild storm with waves, lightening, thunder, with wind that tears down cedars and forests. Yet, the voice of God is greater than storms and gives strength to his people in the midst of storms.

Having grown up with storms on lighthouses, I love them. Their wilderness and power.



St Columba’s Bay, Iona



Pilgrimage around Iona in the midst of wild storm

I travelled to Iona, an Island in Scotland, considered a thin place, a sacred place of pilgrimage, with a history of Celtic spirituality. One of the days I set off with a group of people in the midst of wild storm to do the pilgrimage around the Island.

People must have thought we were crazy, but it was an amazing experience, perhaps a little like the psalmist's experiences of a storm in Psalm 29.

After Iona I travelled onto Lindisfarne, just over the border of Scotland, into England. The waters were calm and quiet, compared to Iona's. I found a plaque which spoke of God being mightier than storms and seas, reassuring us that we need not be afraid when we face storms in life, such as health issues, loss, pandemics and uncertainty. Storms come and go, but our faith remains constant and keeps us anchored in God.



Lindisfarne

Hymn: Father Welcomes All His Children – [not stated] [2:54]

https://youtu.be/_csBD6xswlc

Song by Robin Mann 1949– ; © R. Mann. Used **without** permission. Posted to YouTube by Linda Stumpf

Sermon

In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, amen

God chooses us. The Holy Spirit is very present during preparation of adults for baptism. Adults I've prepared feel deeply moved and often tears come to their eyes. Through the ministry of a school chaplain, one teenage girl came for baptism and she invited her friends to her baptism, to come and see. After her baptism, three of her friends were baptised. None of their parent's had a faith.

It was the movement of the Spirit in their hearts and the ministry of the chaplain that brought about their baptism.

Baptism has a profound effect on our family's life. It changes our relationships. Most families gather together for the day when their child or grandchild are baptised and are involved.

A child or Godparent may pour the water into the font and a mother may carry her child around the church introducing them to members of the congregation. I found it deeply moving the day my husband and daughter were baptised together.

Later on, other members of my family were baptised.

We used to visit Singapore and stay with my mother-in-law, who was a Buddhist, as were two of my sister-in-law's.



At a low point in their lives, I shared how my faith sustained me during difficult times and what God meant to me. Then I went home. Later on, I heard both my sisters-in-law were baptised. We are called to be witnesses of our faith in Jesus in the world. We never know what happens when we share our faith with others. We can plant a seed in their hearts. A seed of faith that God waters and nurtures until they are ready to be baptised.

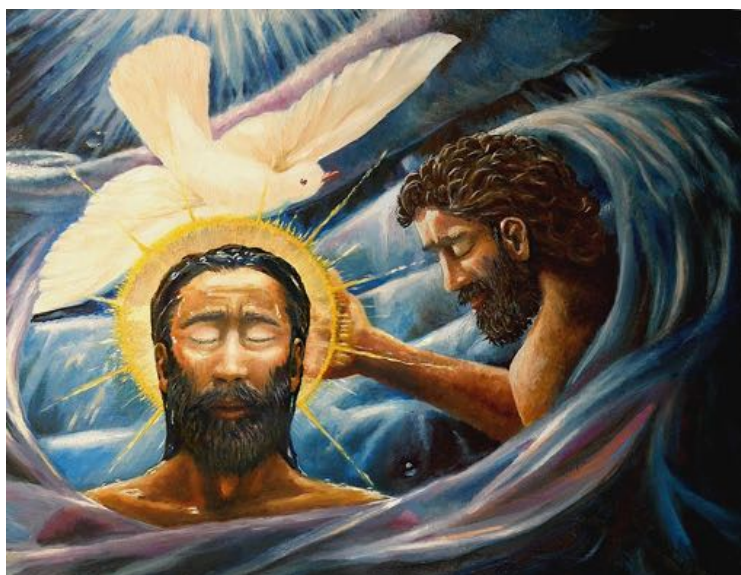
We can change people's lives this way, by simply sharing what we believe.



When Jesus was baptised heaven and earth met when he came up out of the water of the Jordan River.

He chose to be baptised in solidarity with all of us, for all time. The heavens were torn apart by God in that great cosmic event when God sent the Spirit down upon Jesus and fire and water met, the water of Baptism and the fire of the Spirit. God's voice spoke from the heavens affirming Jesus as his Son, his beloved, who is he well pleased with.

His baptism spoke of a new creation. It was a cosmic event and the primary focus was on Jesus being the Son of God. He was already the Son of God, but his Sonship was affirmed. He was baptised in the wilderness, where the Holy Spirit came upon him and kept him in the wilderness for forty days.



Uniting in Worship explains the meaning of baptism; and every time you have attended a baptism you would have heard these words. I invite you to read slowly and prayerfully read the words:

'Baptism is Christ's gift. It is the sign by which the Spirit of God joins us to Jesus Christ and incorporates us into Jesus Christ's body, the Church. In his own baptism in the Jordan by John, Jesus identified himself with humanity in its brokenness and sin; that baptism was completed in his death and resurrection. By God's grace, baptism plunges us into the faith of Jesus Christ, so that whatever is his may be called ours. By water and the Spirit, we are claimed as God's own and set free from the power of sin and death. Thus, claimed by God we are given the gift of the Holy Spirit that we may live as witnesses to Jesus Christ, share his ministry in the world and grow to maturity, awaiting with hope the day of our Lord Jesus.'

With our baptism. the waters of baptism meet with the fire of the spirit where we receive baptism as a gift from God. We become the beloved child of God and one in Christ, a member of the body of Christ and it is all God's doing, God's gift to us at Gods initiation. It is a life changing event for all of us no matter what age and as we live our lives, we live out our baptism until we are called home to God.

William Wilimon wrote in his book, *Remember Who You Are*;

'Baptism is something God does for us and to us. It is a sign and seal of our salvation which God brings about. It is the door into the church for us. It is the path into the kingdom for us, where each of us receives Gods love, his saving, redeeming, initiating birthing action on our soul. Baptism is the churches proclamation and experience that we are who we are because God has first chosen us, loved us and called us into the Kingdom. We can choose, at any point in our life to say yes to God's yes in us.'

We or our parents make promises to God after our baptism, for it is a gift to us first.

We may choose at a later date to be confirmed, to make a statement of faith, where hands are laid on us for the Holy Spirit to empower us for ministry.

It's never too late to ask for Confirmation. I once prepared a lady in her eighties for confirmation. Her faith and faithfulness were affirmed, and she make a statement of faith. She as good at taking cadre of her brothers and sisters in Christ, pastorally and with hospitality.

Paul spoke of the differences in John the Baptist's baptism and the baptism of Jesus.

He baptised twelve people in the name of Jesus, then he laid hands on them for the Holy Spirit to come upon them and there were signs of the Spirit's presence.

Our baptism follows a similar pattern where people are baptised with water, then when they are ready, they can ask to be confirmed with the laying on of hands and empowerment of the Holy Spirit for ministry in Jesus' name. I was a teenager with a group of friends when I was confirmed and made a personal statement about my faith. Confirmation is open to teenagers and adults who are ready to affirm their faith.

During baptism there is an opportunity for newly baptised adults and candidates for Confirmation to come forward to be marked with the sign of the cross on their foreheads and to kneel, where leaders within the church chosen by Church Council lay hands on them, to be empowered for ministry. This prayer is said:

By the Holy Spirit, gracious God,
strengthen these your servants,
and set their hearts on fire with love for you.
Increase in them your gifts of grace:
the spirit of wisdom and understanding,
the spirit of counsel and might,
the spirit of knowledge and wonder in your presence,
the spirit of joy and delight in your service,
now and forever.

Amen

Perhaps the experiences of adults seeking baptism are like a wilderness experience of the soul. No one can understand what each person is going through. Their tears reveal it. Adult baptism often comes at a time when someone is going through a major transition in life. It is the climax of a deep-felt movement of the spirit where people often say they felt led by the Spirit into a church. Like Marina Prior and her family. What wonderful spiritual fruits have come from Marina's baptism in how her life has unfolded ever since her baptism. It is the same for us. Each one of us has been baptised or experienced being part of a baptism. It is a moving experience for each of us and a joyful experience for a congregation.

This is an early font where people were fully immersed when baptised. >>> It is shaped like a cross symbolising being baptised into Christ, dying, being buried with Christ and then rising to new life in Christ.

We are baptised into Jesus Christ and become a member of his church and are brought to life through water and the Spirit.



May the baptism of Jesus remind us of our baptism and who we are as the people of God.
We are the body of Christ and the people on the way, as pilgrims, brothers and sisters in Christ,
who are one in Christ and who belong to Christ.

Rev Tina

Offering Prayer

about offering up ourselves and giving thanks to God for all we have

**Lord and giver of every good thing
we bring to you our lives and gifts for your kingdom
ll for transformation through your grace and love
made known in Jesus Christ our Saviour, amen**

Prayers Of The People And The Lord's Prayer

Michael Plumridge has prepared the Prayers of the people for you today

Lord, creator, nurturer, and lover of all humanity, please hear us as we pray this morning.

Loving God, today we pray for the countries of Iran, Iraq and Syria. We bring before you the constant ongoing violence that characterises this part of the world. We thank you for the courage of those citizens who remain in their country despite the threats to their lives. Lord God we pray for an end to this unrest. We ask for peace. We ask for leaders who will pursue the common good and prioritise human rights for all groups. We give thanks for all those who work for peace, justice, and reconciliation. Lord we also pray for those who flee; seeking refuge in countries where they are strangers. We ask that they may find safe havens and friendly faces. We thank you for those who work in aid agencies and relief networks; grant them strength and wisdom we pray. Lord we would ask that you grant governments around the world wisdom in dealing with this region: that they will pursue policies that result in peace and justice. Lord we offer prayers for the nation of Syria where even after a decade-long war air strikes and violence are common. Lord help us pray as we contemplate the horror of this war that has claimed more than half a million lives and has displaced millions more. God of love we pray for all those affected, and we ask for strength for those who work to establish dialogue among the different groups. We pray that soon Syrians will be able to return home and rebuild their lives.

In other prayers for the world, Lord we pray this morning for the United States of America and for all those affected by the chaos that has erupted in Washington DC. We pray that the divisions that have occurred in the US in recent years will give way to mutual understanding and a new respect for democracy.

Locally we pray for St Timothy's Catholic Church, Forest Hill. We give you thanks for their witness and worship. Bless them we pray. We also pray this morning for our Uniting Church brothers and sisters at the Alphington/Fairfield Parish. Lord bless those who work and worship there.

Lord today we pray for the Synod General Secretary Rev Dr Mark Lawrence.

We give thanks for his calling to this service and ask you to bless the work he does.

Lord we give thanks for our Church Mountview. We thank you for Tina's ministry and for her worship resources. We give thanks for all those who have kept us together as a church in these COVID times. Bless those who are finding it hard at this time. We pause to pray for those whose needs are known to us.

Lord keep us in your love and help us in your service.

We pray this and all our prayers in the name of Jesus who taught us to pray:

**Our Father in heaven,
hallowed 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 for ever. Amen.**

Turn Us Around Lord

Ruth Burgess – Hay and Stardust, Wild Goose Publications
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Turn us around Lord
around to your way of thinking

Around to your way of loving
turn us around Lord

And confront us with Jesus
baptise our fears with your joy

Dismissal

Go out into the world in the power of the spirit and in all things at all times remember Christ is with you.

Make your life your worship to the praise and glory of God. Amen



Hymn: Be Thou My Vision

– Helen Jackson [2:58]

<https://youtu.be/oEUzvZ5-nK8>

Music: Irish traditional melody. Lyrics: Gaelic c.8th cent. tr. Mary Elizabeth Byrne 1880–1931; versified by Eleanor Henrietta Hull 1860–1935 alt. Song: Public Domain Video: © 2020 the Multimedia team. All Rights Reserved. Posted to YouTube by Mountview Uniting Church.

Be Thou My Vision

Be thou my vision, O Lord of my heart,
 naught be all else to me, save that thou art
 thou my best thought, by day or by night,
 waking or sleeping, thy presence my light.

Be thou my wisdom, be thou my true word;
 I ever with thee and thou with me, Lord;
 thou my great Father, thy child let me be;
 thou in me dwelling, and I one with thee.

Be thou my armour, my sword for the fight,
 be thou my dignity, thou my delight;
 thou my soul's shelter and thou my high tower:
 raise thou me heavenward, O Power of my power.

Riches I scorn and the world's empty praise,
 thou my inheritance, now and always:
 thou and thou only the first in my heart;
 high King of heaven, my treasure thou art.

High King of heaven, after victory won,
 may I reach heaven's joys, O bright heaven's Sun!
 Heart of my own heart, whatever befall,
 still be my vision, O ruler of all.

Extra Worship Resources

Being Human



Once again, many thanks to Lorraine and her helper Barney for our new notice.
We can have confidence in God in all situations

Hymn: Be Thou My Vision – Nathan Pacheco [3:44]

<https://youtu.be/ihJAJA4ibEs>

Music: Irish traditional melody. Lyrics: Gaelic c.8th cent. tr. Mary Elizabeth Byrne 1880–1931; versified by Eleanor Henrietta Hull 1860–1935 alt. Song: Public Domain. Posted to YouTube by NathanPachecoMusic

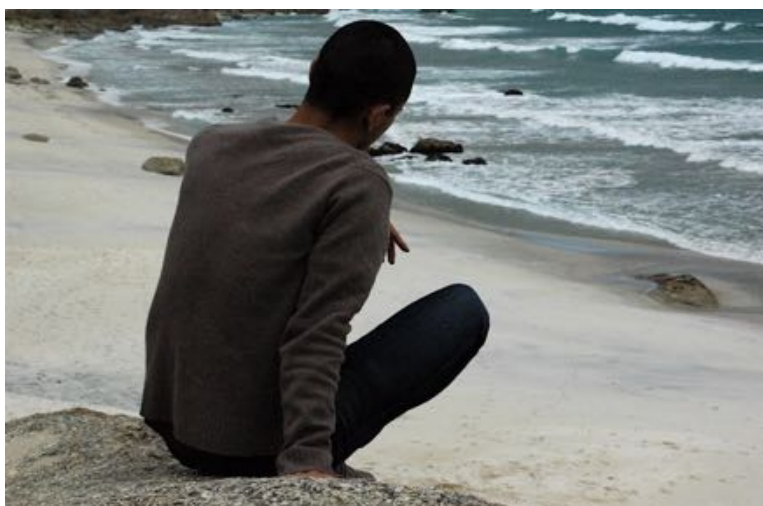
Reflections about ‘Be Thou My Vision’

From Celtic Daily Prayer, Northumbria Community Trust.

The hymn, Be Thou My Vision, offers words of wisdom and solace.
In particular, the following words:

I ever with thee and thou with me, Lord

“I am with you always” He says.
He is all around His people, as strong and reliable as the mountains. He wants us to be with Him, prepares a place for us to share, comes to our place, to our ordinariness, shares bread and wine at table. The commonplace is given great significance because of His presence. Jesus often turned up in unexpected places and in unexpected ways. When we do not see Jesus around us, it is often because we do not look well enough.



Thou my soul's shelter, and Thou my high tower

The Lord is a refuge that is strong and a very present help.

In a shelter you are passive, and the shelter does the work of sheltering. You have to stay in the shelter and not venture out. In the shelter you can rest and be quiet, you are looked after and are safe.

Christ of my own heart, whatever befall.

What can separate us from God's love?

Wherever we go, we find it there, and if we do not see it, we need to trust in its presence. Only with your heart can you see clearly. The most important things are invisible to the eye.

Antoine de Saint- Exupery – The Little Prince

Invocation Of The Holy Spirit

Most powerful Holy Spirit,
Come down upon us and subdue us.
From heaven, where the ordinary
is made glorious, and glory seems but ordinary

Bathe us with the brilliance
of your light,
like dew.

Blessing

Let nothing disturb you
Nothing affright thee
All things are passing
God never changeth!
Patient endurance attaineth to all things
Who God possesseth
In nothing is wanting
Along God sufficeth.

Serenity Prayer

God, grant me the Serenity
to accept the things I cannot change.
The courage to change the things I can,
and the wisdom to know the difference.

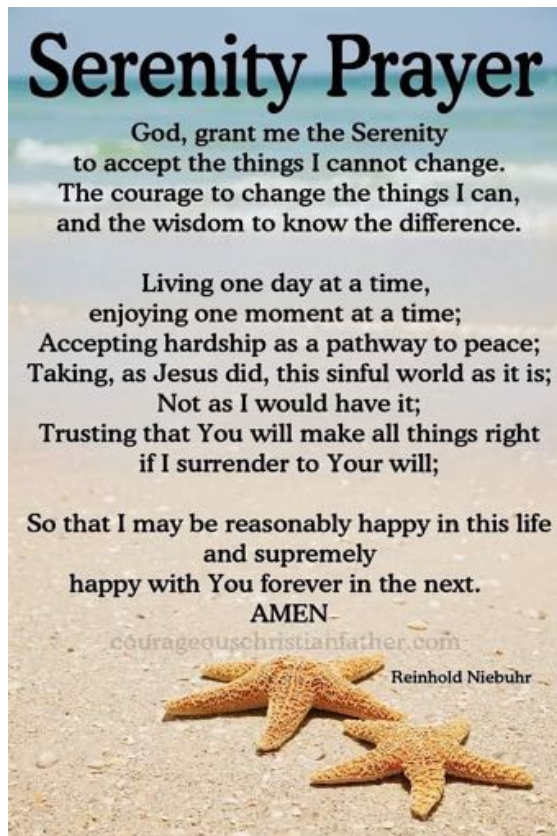
Living one day at a time,
enjoying one moment at a time;
Accepting hardship as a pathway to peace;
Taking, as Jesus did, this sinful world as it is;
Not as I would have it;
Trusting that You will make all things right
if I surrender to Your will;

So that I may be reasonably happy in this life
and supremely
happy with You forever in the next.

AMEN

courageouschristianfather.com

Reinhold Niebuhr



Expressions Of Faith

Lord, You have always given
Bread for the coming day
And even thou I am poor
Today I believe

Lord, You have always given
Strength for the coming day
And though I am weak
Today I believe

Lord, You have always given
Peace for the coming day
And though of anxious heart
Today I believe

Lord, You have always kept
Me safe in trials
And now, tired as I am,
Today I believe

Lord, You have always marked
The road for the coming day
And though it may be hidden
Today I believe

Lord, You have always lightened
This darkness of mine
And though the night is here,
Today I believe

Lord, You have always spoken
When the time is ripe
And thou you be silent now
Today I believe



Christians throughout the world have been invited to say the Lord's Prayer every day

Saying the Lord's Prayer is a good way of giving thanks and trusting in God

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.

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

Rev Tina, for Mountview Uniting Church

<https://www.mountviewuca.org/worship.html>