

Third Sunday after Pentecost – Year A

Third Sunday after Pentecost – 18 June 2023

There are different options for resources for this week. The new material from Dr Lisa Adjei and archive resource from Rev Dr Steve Taylor focus on Windrush Day (22 June). The archive material from Rev Allan McCafferty focuses on the lectionary readings for this week.

The Faith Action Programme would like to thank Dr Lisa Adjei, British Church Relations Manager for Christian Aid, Rev Dr Steve Taylor, former Principal of the Knox Centre for Ministry and Leadership in Dunedin, New Zealand, and Rev Allan McCafferty, Minister of St Mark's, St Andrews.

Weekly Worship, based on the Revised Common Lectionary, is for everyone – in any capacity – who is involved in creating and leading worship.

It provides liturgical material that can be used for worship in all settings. Our writers are asked to share their approaches to creating and delivering this material to equip leaders with a greater confidence and ability to reflect on their own worship practice and experience and encourage them to consider how this material might be adapted for their own context.

We would encourage continual reflection on the changing patterns of worship and spiritual practice that are emerging from disruption and how this might help identify pathways towards development and worship renewal.

An archive of resources for daily worship can be found on the [Sanctuary First website](#).

We may not all be gathered in the same building, but at this time, when we need each other so much, we are invited to worship together, from where we are – knowing that God can hear us all and can blend even distant voices into one song of worship.

Non-lectionary material (Windrush)	3
Archive material (Windrush)	7
Lectionary-based archive material for the third Sunday after Pentecost.....	20
Reflecting on our worship practice	30
Useful links	31

Non-lectionary material (Windrush)

Dr Lisa Adjei, British Church Relations Manager for Christian Aid

Introduction

This week we celebrate the 75th anniversary of the arrival of the Windrush. Windrush Day is marked to honour the many people who were brought from the Caribbean islands to the UK. This history is not often taught in our educational curriculum but this is a great opportunity to remember the contribution of so many Caribbeans to our society.

On 22nd June 1948, HMT Empire Windrush carried over 800 passengers from the Caribbean and docked at Tilbury, Essex, before travelling on to London. This was the first of many ships that would carry passengers to UK shores to help rebuild the nation following World War II. On arrival in the UK, many of the Windrush generation were met with racism. This racism was not limited to wider society or the workplace but was prevalent in the Church too. Many of the people arrived at churches in the UK but were not welcome in them. Instead of the hospitality that reflects the kingdom of God, they were met with rejection because of the colour of their skin. Asked to leave, not welcomed, ignored, asked to not return, this was the experience of many of the people who had left their home to come and help. In the workplace, this played out as a prejudice against them during job applications, with a dismissal of their educational qualifications, and so many of them had to take jobs or roles they were over-qualified for.

Despite this, their contributions to our society can be seen all around us. This week, we acknowledge, honour and celebrate them and their descendants. The Bible calls us to honour all people; firstly as image bearers of God – all people carry intrinsic value in their being, and secondly to give honour where honour is due – to call out the good in one another.

As we celebrate the 75th anniversary of the Windrush generation, we honour who they are and the good that they have done.

Sermon Ideas

I have chosen three passages today that are particularly relevant to the Windrush generation:

[Isaiah 58:1-9](#) – A call to repentance

[Isaiah 56:1-7](#) – A call to justice

Acts 10:34-43 – A call to honour

Below are some prompts for how you might respond to these themes, and links to further resources provide more detailed background information.

We Remember

- Truth-telling
- Take this opportunity to speak about the history of the Windrush generation
- Share the stories and contributions of the Windrush generation
- Share stories in your sermon about current descendants of the Windrush generation that are making significant contributions to society
- Celebrate who they are and how they have built the society we all benefit from

We Repent

- You have heard about the pain and racism the Windrush generation suffered
- Take some time to research about the Windrush Scandal
- Repentance requires us to acknowledge what is wrong and broken and to acknowledge the ways in which it has harmed everyone
- We must name the specific wrongs that we have committed as a society or church and actively seek ways to walk away from this (this may be an opportunity for people to hold a rock/stone, confess their own prejudices/complicity and to throw the rock/stone into a bucket of water)
- How deep does our repentance go? What does it look like for our repentance to be true? These are questions we must ask

We Commit

- A strong focus on how we walk forward well
- What can we do differently? What convictions must guide our life?
- Could your congregation write declarations about who you commit to be as a community?
- Could you seek ways to reach out to the Windrush generation or their descendants in your community, support their ministry/projects etc.?

Resources

[Story of Windrush ship](#)

[This here flesh by Cole Arthur Riley](#)

[Voices of the Windrush generation by David Matthews](#)

[The Windrush Betrayal](#)

An article on the Church's response to the Legacies of Slavery can be found in the June issue of *Life and Work*

Quotes that may be helpful

“To treat a child of God as he or she is less than this is not just wrong, which it is;
it is not just evil, as it often is;
not just painful, as it often must be for the victim;
it is veritably blasphemous, for it is to spit in the face of God”

The late Archbishop Desmond Tutu

“...Some theologies say it is not an individual but a collective people who bear the image of God. I quite like this, because it means we need a diversity of people to reflect God more fully. Anything less and the image becomes pixelated and grainy, still beautiful but lacking clarity. If God really is three parts in one like they say, it means that God's wholeness is in a multitude”

Cole Arthur Riley

Prayers

Gathering prayer / Call to worship

God, we gather today to worship You.
We join with the people of faith all over the world,
in churches and communities,
in lifting up Your Holy name.
We acknowledge Your presence amongst us,
in each of us gathered here today and in all of creation.
You are bigger than we could have ever imagined.

Confession / Repentance

God of Justice,
help us to listen to the voices that say things are not as they should be.
Tear down the veil of fear and lies
so we see the sins being committed against people
because of the colour of their skin.

Help us to trust You to do a good work in us,
to give us a renewing of the mind
when it comes to facing racial injustice,
past and present.

Break our hearts
just as Yours breaks for those who have been hurt
and those who continue to be affected by racism today.

And let us not just console or empathise.
Remind us that with each step we take to follow You,
with each thought we take captive to make obedient to You,
and with each loving action we take,
that we are being formed and shaped to be more like Jesus.
Jesus who challenged and stood up to injustice.
God, You said that what we do to others, we do to You.
Let that truth guide us each day.

And when the concern and the pain grow weak within us,
let us stop and listen
and remember why we began this journey.
Let the anguish and the desire to make things better
be made fresh within us until the fire is rekindled
and we burn with love and righteousness
to seek justice for all people.

God, we pray for our leaders and people with great power.
Work in them to be people who seek the good for all people,
especially the Windrush generation,
and who work to make the places they govern
just, fair and kind.

Deborah Ross, Sankofa Collective UK

Thanksgiving / Gratitude

God, we thank You for the Windrush generation and their descendants.
We celebrate Your image in each and every single person.
We acknowledge who they are,
their gifts, talents, culture and way of life.
We thank You for the many contributions they have made to our society,
and we pray a blessing over them and their generations.
We celebrate them with joy and gladness in our hearts.

Prayer for others / Intercession

God, we intercede on behalf of our nation.

'Let justice roll down like waters, like an ever-ending stream'
We pray for justice, restoration and healing in our nation.
We pray for all of our leaders,
all of our communities and all people in our land.
Today, we pray specifically for the Windrush generation.
We pray for their flourishing, in every way possible.
May they be treated with honour and respect.

Blessing / Closing prayer

God, through our journey to end injustice,
in our discomfort – be our peace.
Be our steady hand.
Be at our backs
to keep us from returning to the old ways.
Be at our side
so we don't follow another or go our own way,
thinking we know better.
And Lord, be before us,
leading us into the way of truth,
of love and of peace for all –
the way of Jesus.

Deborah Ross, Sankofa Collective UK

Archive material (Windrush)

(Lectionary material for 2 Sunday after Pentecost, 21 June 2020) Rev Dr Steve Taylor, former Principal of the Knox Centre for Ministry and Leadership in Dunedin, New Zealand, now Director at AngelWings Ltd resourcing mission, University of Otago.

Introduction

I have been asked by the Weekly Worship editors to explore possible links between the lectionary readings for this week and Windrush Day, which is being celebrated on 22 June.

In seeking to be faithful to both Biblical text and context, I will link two of the lectionary texts with Windrush Day, paying particular attention first to the place of national identity in relation to the story of dispute between Sarah and Hagar in Genesis 21:8-21 and second to the way that baptism, as an act of immersion in water, connects us to all who seek migration over water. I will provide a more conventional set of resources for the Gospel reading and the Psalm.

I trust this two-pronged approach will enhance the possibilities for every worshipping community to resource themselves in their own unique context.

Windrush Day: Observance of Windrush Day was introduced in the UK in 2018. It was on 22 June (1948) that several hundred people arrived from the Caribbean on board the HMS Empire Windrush to start a new life in Britain. Caribbean people who had served in the British armed forces were encouraged to come to Britain to work. More people followed. It is estimated that around 500,000 people living in the UK are part of the Windrush generation. Windrush Day celebrates these arrivals and seeks to honour the diverse contributions the Caribbean community has made to British society.

Like many migrant stories, those who arrived were full of hope. Over time, many faced racism and discrimination. Children were picked on at school and jobs were difficult to obtain. Hence Windrush Day can be broadened to include reflection on migrant journeys in general and what it means to be a hospitable community. As Professor Alison Phipps, UNESCO Chair in Refugee Integration through Languages and the Arts at the University of Glasgow argues, many countries have a hospitality crisis rather than a refugee crisis. This is an invitation to focus on what it means to be hosts, rather than guests. While this continues to focus attention on the already dominant cultures, it can invite learning, growth and changes of behaviour.

A liturgical theology of ordinary time festivals: In 2020 the UK Government promised £500,000 per annum to groups and local authorities who wanted to celebrate Windrush Day and educate communities about the experiences of the Windrush generation. Some helpful information is still available on <https://www.windrushday.org.uk/> Before a church participates in community festivals, it does well to ponder the theologies by which it might engage. One place to begin reflection is through a liturgical lens, that of ordinary time festivals. This begins with the recognition that the Church has a range of feasts. These include Ash Wednesday, Palm Sunday, Easter, Pentecost and again at Christmas and Epiphany. These feasts fall within the Church seasons and provide a way to commemorate the reconciliation and promised consummation of the world in Christ.

In the Church calendar, time that falls outside the Church seasons is called 'ordinary' time. One of the tasks of the Church is to clarify God's presence in ordinary time. This provides a way to approach community festivals. They provide an opportunity to clarify God's presence in everyday life. Despite the lack of religious feasts, at the heart of ordinary time is the affirmation that God remains present. Hence community festivals are an invitation to clarify God's remaining presence.

The community beyond the Church can offer a wide range of festivals. Some are local, for example festivals specific to the area. Some can be more general, for example May Day.

Theologian Amy Plantinga Pauw suggests a wisdom ecclesiology by which the Church is present in ordinary time. This enables a focus on “our creaturely existence as it is sustained by God’s creative blessing and calling.” (Pauw, 1.) She argues that ecclesiology has “largely neglected this ordinary-time dimension of Christian life ... the primordial and ongoing graciousness of God’s work as Creator.” (Pauw, 2.) Pauw outlines liturgical themes of

- Making new
- Longing
- Giving
- Suffering
- Rejoicing
- Joining hands

Each of these themes could provide a theological way to engage a community festival, including Windrush Day. If you were to join a community group planning a local Windrush celebration, or encourage your church to attend one already planned and advertised, you could invite them to reflect on a question as they participate in a Windrush Day festival.

For example – What part of life is it hoped there will be a making new? What is being longed for? What do you see being given? What suffering is being named? What dimension of life is being celebrated? Where are there signs of partnership?

These become signs of God’s activity. As Paul Fiddes, writes: “But wherever in the world people give themselves to others or sacrifice themselves for others, these actions will also match the movement in God that is like a Son going forth on mission in response to the purpose of a Father; their acts share in the patterns of love in God, and so in them we can discern the body of Christ. Wherever there is the movement of a measure of music, or a stroke of a brush, or a blow of a chisel, or a sequence of thought in the arts or sciences, which reflects God’s truth and beauty, this too shares in the dynamic flow of the life of God.” (1)

This is because the world is the sphere in which God is active. This allows us to look for the activity of God in the world and looks for ways to understand this activity, occurring in the space opened up by God, matching the movements in God. This is perhaps what is meant by Wisdom 1:7, in which “the Spirit of the Lord has filled the world, and that which holds all things together knows what is said.”

This work can then shape our prayers, particularly those of approach and thanksgiving, as we affirm in community festivals what we see of God's movements in longing.

[1] Fiddes, in "Ecclesiology and Ethnography: Two Disciplines, Two Worlds?" in *Perspectives on Ecclesiology and Ethnography* ed P. Ward (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2012), 31, reflecting on Bonhoeffer, *Ethics* ed. Eberhard Bethge, trans N. Horton Smith (London, SCM, 1971), 66-68.

Scripture passages and sermon ideas

I offer points of interest for each passage, and two different sermon ideas for Genesis 21 and Romans 6.

[Genesis 21:8-12](#)

This is one of two accounts in Genesis of the departure of Hagar (Genesis 16:1-16; 21:8-21). Some scholars see this as a single event. Others see this as two distinct events.

In seeking to read in light of Windrush, two commentators proved provocative. Delores Williams offers a black womanist reading of Hagar, that she, like "many black women, goes into the wide world to make a living for herself and for her child, with only God by her side." (2) This reading provides dignity to Hagar, and to all those who experience injustice. Like Hagar, they can enact agency. They are not dependent on the existing familial systems of injustice. As they seek to make their way, they can expect to find God with them, attentive to all who cry for justice.

New Zealand biblical scholar, Judith McKinley, who sadly died in 2019, argues that the wilderness and ethnic dimensions of the text resonate strongly with our world today (3). Hence this text allows us to have sensitive conversations with people today who experience marginalisation, including through gender and ethnicity. In order to undertake such conversations, McKinley increases her empathy by exploring accounts in history in which women are marginalised. She does this by examining New Zealand mission history. Such an approach invites those of us working with the text in other contexts to explore our own histories.

[2] Delores S. Williams, *Sisters in the Wilderness: The Challenge of Womanist God-Talk*, Orbis, 1993, 33

[3] “Sarah and Hagar: What Have I to Do with Them?” Her Master’s Tools? Feminist and Postcolonial Engagements of Historical, edited by Caroline Vander Stichele, Todd C. Penner, SBL, 2005, 159-77

Sermon idea

Who is God?

Take McKinley’s approach. Explore your own national history by seeking a story from an individual, perhaps from the Windrush (“The stories of the Windrush veterans” on https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m_83opQtBYY). Or locate some more recent migrant experiences. As these stories are read, we can ask questions of the Biblical text (Genesis 21:8-19)

- What distress is God, like in verse 11, hearing?
- What weeping is God, like in verse 16, hearing?
- What promises might God be speaking, like in verse 18, to those who weep?
- What eyes, like God in verse 19, are opening?

These actions by God provide a way to preach about how God might speak in light of Windrush Day.

Psalm 86:1-10, 16-17

This is a prayer of David, often classified as individual lament. It has the pattern of

Call for help (vv1-7)

Confidence (vv8-11)

Thanksgiving (vv12-13)

Further prayer (vv14-17)

There is a rich and fascinating link with Genesis 21, particularly in verse 16, which refers to the need to save the child of your serving call. Applied to Hagar, the use of the word “your” is inclusive, weaving her as part of God’s family.

The words “be gracious to me” are used both in verse 3 and verse 16. It has echoes of the well-known Aaronic prayer from Numbers 6: “The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face to shine upon you and be gracious to you.” Words spoken to Moses, who experienced God in the desert, first in the burning bush experience and again in Exodus.

This invites the imagination, in which God of the desert appears not only to Moses, wanting to bless and be gracious, but also the desert appears to Hagar, equally wanting to bless and be gracious.

[Romans 6:1b-11](#)

The temptation is to read this text through individual eyes, with a focus on purely human-divine interactions. The challenge is to read this text in corporate and social terms. We can test our approach by asking, with John Ziesler, (*Paul's Letter to the Romans*), is justification only about 'being put right with God' or is it equally about 'entering the people of God'. (Ziesler, 18).

Romans 14:1-15:6 suggests that this book is about divisions between different ethnic groups. What role does baptism, as discussed in Romans 6:1b-11, play in overcoming division between groups and cultures with different ethnic and religious identity markers?

To contemporise, what does baptism say about the place of migrants and refugees amongst the people of God?

Sermon idea

The band U2 has in recent years drawn attention to how Europe might respond to migration. Consider, for example two songs from their most recent (and fourteenth) album, *Songs of Experience*. The album debuted at no 1 on the Billboard charts, making U2 the first music group to gain a no. 1 album in four consecutive decades.

In the midst of commercial success, U2 has continued to engage social issues, singing no to human evil in the world. *Songs of Experience* is no exception, as U2 engage the evils around the European refugee crisis.

Evil is a strong word. Yet the Scriptures are clear. The greatest of God's commandments includes the loving of neighbour as yourself. Israel's laws emerged from the Exodus experience, of being refugees, fleeing the tyranny of Empire in Egypt. As Israel in history experienced God's protecting love as refugees, so now in everyday life humans should express God's love, including to refugees. Any less is to deny the Commandments, downplay a heritage and diminish one's future.

On *Songs of Experience*, U2 engage the evil of the refugee crisis in a mid-album bracket of two songs. A first song, *Summer of Love*, longs for flowers to grow amid "the rubble of Aleppo." The hope, 50 years after a drug-fuelled, music-drenched Summer of Love in San

Francisco, is for peace to descend on the West Coast of Syria in the Middle East. A second song is *Red Flag Day*. The title suggests a continuation of the beach vibe of *Summer of Love*, while the lyrics remain focused on the consequences of Aleppo, Syria's largest city, becoming rubble.

The civil war in Syria resulted in a refugee crisis. For more than 1 million people in 2015, this meant crossing the Mediterranean Sea, seeking safety in Europe. Deaths at sea rose to record levels, with more than 1,200 people drowning in the month of April 2015. And so in *Red Flag Day*, U2 address this evil: "Not even news today; So many lost in the sea." This is *evil-as-disinterest*, as the lost and the least disappear from our 24-hour news cycle.

For U2, the response to this evil is located in one word. "The one word that the sea can't say, Is no, no, no, no." It is easy to imagine the impact of this line performed live, Bono holding a microphone out to an audience, inviting them to sing, "no, no, no, no." It is a powerful lyric. Water, the sea over which refugees travel, can never speak. But humans can. Humans can sing that one word, "No."

At the same time, having raised children, I am well aware of the limitations inherent in the simple word "No." It is often the first word learnt by a child, easy on the lips of a two year old, teetering on a tantrum. So when U2 sing no, what exactly are they asking us as humans to do?

U2 conclude "Red Flag Day" with the provocative line "Baby let's get in the water." It reminds me of the baptism of Jesus. It is the way Jesus begins ministry, by getting in the water.

So is the refugee crisis in fact an invitation for the Church to sing "no", to respond to evil by entering the waters of baptism? Physically, in entering the Jordan River, Jesus expresses His obedience to God. This makes getting in the water the essential pattern of Christian discipleship, a way of saying "No" to our own plans and a "Yes" to God's intentions. Historically, as Israel crossed the Jordan River, they were saying "Yes" to living God's commandments no matter what country they found themselves living. This makes baptism an expression of "Yes" to loving our neighbour. Sacramentally, baptism and communion are woven together in the Exodus story of the Passover, which involves Israel entering the waters of the Red Sea. This makes getting in the water an expression of solidarity with all those who decide to say "No" to persecution and tyranny, whether in fleeing Egypt in history or the rubble of Aleppo today.

Hearing U2's "Red Flag Day" and listening to the Gospel story of Jesus' baptism offers ways to respond to the evil of refugee crisis. It fills the one word of "No" with Christian content. Every red flag swim in this summer of love becomes a singing of "no." It means lobbying of Parliament to "Let them come." It involves lighting candles as prayers of intercession for all those lost at sea, refusing to forget those forgotten by the news today. It means a welcome to the promised lands as we teach English classes and guide migrants around previously unfamiliar supermarket shopping.

Adapted from Steve Taylor, "Saying no: U2's response to the evils of the refugee crisis." *Zadok* 138 Autumn 2018, (4).

Matthew 10:24-39

The passage begins with truth telling. Every secret is named; every truth is told; every hair is counted; every human is valued.

The passage works with hyperbole as a genre. The passages make more sense interpreted figuratively than literally. Jesus does not literally bring a sword. However He does invite stark choices which will divide opinion. Hence taking up the cross is read in the context of the challenge of discipleship.

At the same time, in the "literal" reality for many young Christians in Africa and Asia, following Jesus does result in enormous familial pressure. This is closer to the reality of life for Matthew's community. Note how in Mark 13:9 – you will be beaten in synagogues becomes in Matthew 10:17 – you will be flogged in their synagogues. Familial pressure is a reality. In such situations, the words of Jesus are both challenge and comfort. God pays attention to the sparrow – not one will fall. So God is paying attention to every disciple of Christ. This of course can be linked to the story of God paying attention to Ishmael in Genesis 21 and Psalm 86:16.

Prayers

Prayer Approach to God (using Genesis 21 and the question of Who is God?)

Hearing God,
Help us hear what You hear

Speaking God,
Help us receive what You say

Eye-opening God,
Help us see what You see

Thanksgiving (drawing on Matthew 10:29-31)

God who cares
Watching every sparrow
Counts every hair on every head
Names every refugee in every camp

We gather knowing You are
Watching us
Counting us
Naming us

With that care, aware of Your attention
We express our thanks

Confession (using Genesis 21 and Romans 6)

God, in every other
If we're honest,
We see ourselves more clearly –
Sometimes our warmth,
Our welcome, our hospitality, our inclusion
And for this we give You thanks, loving God

God, in every other,
If we're honest,
We sometimes see ourselves more clearly –
Our coldness
Toward those different
And in this we confess our sin,
Our sense of superiority, Our desire for monochrome identity, those like us

God
Help us accept Your welcome of us
And of every other,
In one shared body, as forgiven, baptised children

Intercession (using John Holt, Stick by me, from *The Tide is High, Anthology 1962-79* (Trojan Records, 2001 <https://youtu.be/dMVmPqmrCzY>), and imagining God singing to Hagar and Ishmael:

“Stick by me, I'll stick by you
When you cry, I cry, too, oh oh
Stick by me and I'll stick by you
Remember my heart and my love belong to you, oh oh
Stick by me, I'll stick by you”

A possible prayer

Lullaby God,
We hear You soothe in the desert
Singing to a crying child – Ishmael, Isaac climbing Mt Moriah and the Exodus children facing the Red Sea
We hear Your comfort,
Don't be afraid,
When you cry, I cry too
Stick by me, I'll stick by you

Lamenting God,
We hear You sing in the wilderness
Hope for a grieving mother – Hagar, Hannah, Elizabeth
We hear Your peace,
Don't be afraid,
When you cry, I cry too
Stick by me, I'll stick by you

Serenading God of the Blues, who mourns in the wilderness
For all families torn apart by bitterness, envy and strife
When you cry, I cry too
Remember my heart and my love belong to you,
We hear Your heart,
Don't be afraid,
No one can tear us apart
Stick by me, I'll stick by you

Harmonizing God
For all churches facing a hospitality crisis

Help us hear Your melody, harmonize with Your desert lullaby,
May we open our arms
To all those estranged in our community
You've got a place in our heart, oh yeah
Stick by us, as we stick by You
Amen.

“Stick by me, I'll stick by you
When you cry, I cry, too, oh oh
Stick by me and I'll stick by you
Remember my heart and my love belong to you, oh oh
Stick by me, I'll stick by you.”

Musical suggestions

Our [online music resource](#) is on the Church of Scotland website; you can listen to samples of every song in the Church Hymnary 4th edition (CH4) and download a selection of recordings for use in worship. You will also find playlists for this week and liturgical seasons and themes on the *Weekly Worship* and *Inspire Me* tabs.

- You can find further musical suggestions for this week in a range of styles on the [Songs for Sunday blog](#) from Trinity College Glasgow.
- CH4 187 – “There’s A Wideness in God’s Mercy” – themes from Psalm 86
- CH4 239 – “When Your Father Made the World” – themes from the Matthew reading
- CH4 533 – “Will You Come and Follow Me” – themes from the Matthew reading
- CH4 635 – “We Know That Christ is Raised and Dies No More” – themes from Romans reading and of Baptism
- CH4 785/786 – words from the Aaronic blessing
- “May the Lord Bless You”, by Yvonne Lyon – another version of the Aaronic blessing. Words, music and a recording can be found online: <https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=1181610668849517>
- Common Hymnal – “The kingdom is yours” <https://commonhymnal.com/songs/the-kingdom-is-yours>
- Common Hymnal – “God will heal our wounds” <https://commonhymnal.com/songs/god-will-heal-our-wounds>
- Common Hymnal – “Come to the table” <https://commonhymnal.com/songs/come-to-the-table>

Given the invitation by Weekly Worship to focus on the theme of Windrush, Steve Taylor focused his attention on creative possibilities. The Windrush Generation transformed British arts and culture (<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/articles/z6grnrd>), bringing an explosion of dance, art, writing and music which would transform British culture. So in seeking to connect with contemporary issues raised by the theme of Windrush, some of the musical and spoken word suggestions are from contemporary culture. Images, songs, poetry and art can evoke strong emotions. Curating worship when using these resources will require conversational space for processing ideas and hearing diverse views. These resources are suggested with that in mind.

Windrush music – consider for example *The Tide is High, Anthology 1962-79* (Trojan Records, 2001) – John Holt encapsulates Jamaica’s sublime vocal tradition, moving in the mid-60s from rocksteady to passionate ballads with strong roots lyricism. He penned the much-covered ‘The Tide is High’ and the lovers’ anthem, ‘Stick by Me’. For the early Windrush generation, Holt was a nostalgic reminder of Jamaica’s outdoor blues sessions. The song *Stick By Me* is on <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dMVmPqmrCzY> and I used it to write one of the prayers above.

U2 – The rock band U2 have recently engaged with the hospitality crisis, particularly in their Songs of Experience tour. You could also use the DVD U2: Innocence + Experience, Live in Paris. There is video footage of Syria during the song October. There is video footage of migrants seeking to enter UK during Zooropa. There is Scripture (at a rock concert!) and prayer in the transition between “Zooropa” and “Where the Streets have no name”. Before deciding to purchase the DVD, you can preview the images at <https://youtu.be/3aGEONyIOAo> and <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wDxCn8QzXTI>

Beyoncé – U2 is now a band that might not connect with emerging generations. For another generation, recently Beyoncé, in *Lemonade*, has drawn on the work of Warsan Shire, the Kenya-born, Somali-British poet. Here is redemption – Beyoncé (written by Warsan Shire) lyrics. The video at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DGZczCdCDnc> is 3:29 in length. It begins talking about her grandmother, who “found healing, where it did not live.” The video transitions around 2:16, and the words, “So we’re gonna heal, we’re gonna start again, you’ve brought the orchestra, synchronised swimmers.” This language could be imagined on the lips of Hagar and perhaps even Hagar’s children and grandchildren.

Warsan Shire has been called the new voice of the refugee crisis. Here is an excerpt from his poem, “What They Did Yesterday Afternoon”. This could be used to begin prayers for others.

“later that night
i held an atlas in my lap
ran my fingers across the whole world
and whispered
where does it hurt?

it answered
everywhere
everywhere
everywhere
everywhere.”

Glasgow University art and poetry – In seeking to redress the institution's historical links with racial *slavery*, the University has initiated fact-based *reporting* that offers public scrutiny and oversight.

Art – One result in an art exhibition, unveiled in the University chapel in August 2019. The title is distinctly liturgical – Call and Response: The University of Glasgow and slavery. The exhibition is available online:

<https://www.gla.ac.uk/schools/humanities/slavery/callandresponse/exhibition/>. Some images could be shown in worship, in the context of an explanation (call) and space for people to react (respond) to the histories of enslaved people could offer an art-based worship resource.

For example, a rare “Slave Bible” – only three first edition copies are left in the world. Any passage that might incite rebellion was removed – gone, for example, were references to the exodus of enslaved Israelites from Egypt.

God, we wonder what parts of the Bible we want to remove

Jackie Kay poetry – “Here’s the redress that’s long been owed. Here’s the first step on the road.” Former Scots Makar [@JackieKayPoet](#) performs an original poem written for the University of Glasgow at

<https://www.facebook.com/UofGlasgow/posts/2800983769921320/>

Lectionary-based archive material for the third Sunday after Pentecost

The Mission and Discipleship Council would like to thank Rev Allan McCafferty, Minister of St Mark's, St Andrews, for this archive material for the third Sunday after Pentecost.

Introduction

The first thing to note is that there is a choice given in two of the readings for today, whether to go for a shorter or longer reading. Those verses which appear in brackets are optional.

Appreciating what comes in the weeks before and after the readings for each Sunday can help the worship leader select appropriate hymns, and themes. The Lectionary at this period runs (semi-continuously) through passages from Genesis (and then Exodus), Romans and Matthew. This carries on throughout the summer until the middle of September. A benefit of this is that a congregation, week by week, gets to follow a particular biblical narrative through. A chance to watch it unfold and see the pattern of its flow and development emerge. Another consequence is that it means at times there will be a less clear connection between each individual lectionary reading. It's good to make connections where they exist but it is equally important not to force connections where they do not exist. The readings for this week are each quite different although you could argue there are common elements, e.g. the fact that in both Genesis and Matthew hospitality is shown or referred to. In Genesis we find Abraham offering sustenance to the three men he finds near his tent and in Matthew the disciples, having been sent out by Jesus, are instructed to accept lodgings in 'worthy' houses. Another example is that we find God to be an overarching power. This is demonstrated in Genesis where God gives life (even though the circumstances are most unusual), and in the Romans reading Paul shows how God at the right time sent Jesus to die for us, although "we still were sinners".

On an initial reading of the texts I'm struck firstly by the importance of names and lack of names and secondly, in Genesis, with the presence of laughter.

- Specific named individuals and the meaning of their names and beyond named people to vast categories, which is most clearly exemplified in Romans where Christ (a special individual) died for humanity (a species).
- Laughter is not present in many bible passages but in the Genesis reading today it is a not insignificant feature.

For those interested in the idiosyncrasies of the Lectionary, it's intriguing to note that at this time of year some readings do not come up every third year. The readings today, although appearing in 2017, previous to that, were last used back in 2008. If Easter is late, then the date of Pentecost and Trinity Sunday is also late and so today's readings fall from the calendar. In years when Easter is early then the compensation is earlier in the year and sometimes readings from late January and into February are not required. This guarantees that the readings for the Transfiguration of the Lord are used on the Sunday before Lent begins. In most years some readings from each of these periods will be forfeited.

Genesis 18:1-15 (21:1-7)

In the book of Genesis stories of the Patriarchs start with Abraham in Chapter 12, which was one of the readings for last week. God calls Abram (who becomes known as Abraham) to leave his father's home and journey to a new country. He is told that he will have many descendants and become a great nation. This week we have moved to chapter 18 and much has happened since. For today's reading perhaps the important intervening events relate to his offspring. When it seemed as though Sarai, his wife, would never have any children, to allow the promise God had given to be fulfilled, she gave him her Egyptian slave girl, Hagar, and suggested they sleep together and as a result Ishmael was born (chapter 16). Then the promise to make of Abram a great nation is re-affirmed in chapter 17 and he is given a new name, Abraham. Indeed his wife also receives a new name – now not Sarai but Sarah and it's made clear they will have a son together. Our reading picks up at the start of chapter 18 and at verse 1 with the words, "The Lord appeared to Abraham". Sitting by the opening to his tent he sees three men. He offers them water, rest and food. After eating, one says that he will return one day and that by then Sarah will have a son. Sarah had been listening in, since both she and her husband were old, this made Sarah laugh. One of the three noticed she laughed, and although she insisted she had not (to admit it would appear as laughter arising from disbelief), he was clear that she did.

If you also read the optional verses, the result of that initial encounter is outlined. Again Sarah laughs but this time because a son, Isaac, is born, and it is as though the laughter is infectious, for Sarah says, "God has brought laughter for me; everyone who hears will laugh with me."

Psalms 116:1-2, 12-19

This Psalm was also used on the third Sunday of Easter. In Hebrew Psalm 116 is an acrostic poem. It forms part of the recitation observant Jews make on (some) Jewish holidays as an act of thanksgiving. It is written in the first person and starts with the details of why the

Lord is loved. It begins with affection and trust. The next section of the Psalm, from verse 3 (not part of the given reading) outlines how the Psalmist suffered, how they prayed to the Lord and how the Lord answered their cry. Verse 11 ends with the strong words, “Everyone is a liar”, which conveys the depths to which the Psalmist has sunk, but throughout all the troubles experienced, their trust in the Lord did not wane and the Lord answered their pleas. Appreciating the depths of pain and anguish in verses 3-11 allows the significance of the thanksgiving which follows to make (even more) sense. This is the point at which the reading picks up again (from verse 12). Here we find deep gratefulness for what the Lord has done and that gratefulness spills out in a series of actions.

If it happens to be a service of Holy Communion, you could use verse 12 and 13 as a call to prayer, or even incorporate it into an offering prayer.

[Romans 5:1-8](#)

In chapter four Paul talks about Abraham, who is seen as “the ancestor of all who believe” (Rom 4:11) – for both Jew and Gentile need to rely on God. By chapter five he moves on to describe how we have peace with God through Jesus Christ since we are justified by faith.

This is the second time the start of chapter five has been read this year. It was read back in the third Sunday in Lent (but then going all the way through to verse 11 rather than stopping at verse eight). That is perhaps a clue to its importance. This is a point of transition in Paul’s letter to the Romans. It seems some scholars think this passage refers back to what is written in previous chapters; it’s very first word “therefore” seems to confirm that whatever is said in chapter five arises out of what has come before. They see it as a rounding off of Paul’s discussion of justification. Others see it more as a bridge to help link Paul’s description of justification and then on to the doctrine of assurance. They take that view because as well as here in Romans 8:18-39, as Douglas Moo neatly expresses it, “Paul argues that God’s love and God’s work in Christ and through his Spirit provide the believer with hope for the future. This theme of assurance frames chapters 5-8 and it is the central idea of these chapters.”(1)

If you examine the footnotes in the NRSV you will see that on a few occasions the word ‘we’ could equally be translated as ‘let us’, e.g. in verse one, “since we are justified by faith, we have peace with God...” as opposed to “since we are justified by faith, let us have peace with God...”. Each has quite a different feel to it for in one the peace is established in the other translation it seems more a hope. The footnote in the Revised English Bible (REB) at the same point states, “*some witnesses read* let us continue at peace”, i.e. “now that we

have been justified through faith, let us continue at peace with God..." (Rom 5:1, REB). Note however in their main text both the NRSV and the REB plump for using "we".

Readers are given an interesting glimpse into how Paul's mind works as he states that suffering produces endurance, which leads to character, which subsequently leads to hope and confidently he announces that hope does not disappoint us because we have been given the Holy Spirit and God's Spirit pours God's love into our hearts. That progression opens up doors for worship leaders to develop and hope is significant.

The word boast is central too, but boasting in "our hope of sharing the glory of God" (Rom 5:2) –importantly, not in an individual's achievements.

Matthew 9:35-10:8 (9-23)

The reading, interestingly and significantly, starts with Jesus and His ministry. Jesus is travelling around cities and villages teaching, healing and proclaiming "the good news of the kingdom". When Jesus encounters crowds He feels compassion for them, for they were "like sheep without a shepherd". At the end of chapter nine another strong image emerges of a plentiful harvest but a shortage of labourers. Chapter 10 moves to Jesus giving the 12 disciples "authority over unclean spirits" and the task of curing disease and sickness. The charge they are tasked with is a rippling out of the ministry of Jesus, an extension of that ministry. Jesus is not asking them to do anything He has not done and they have not witnessed.

In this passage we get the list of the names of the 12 disciples. It is the longest list of names to appear in this gospel apart from back at the very start of it, when the writer lists the ancestors of Jesus Christ (and of course this includes Abraham and Isaac, both of whom feature in today's first reading).

The disciples are sent out by Jesus to proclaim the good news to a limited audience; not to Gentiles or Samaritans but to the "lost sheep of the house of Israel".

If you choose to read on (10: 9-23) there are further instructions for the disciples – travel light, accept hospitality, offer peace but where no welcome is received move on. Jesus offers a warning that they may meet hostility, so they should be "wise as serpents and innocent as doves". They may be arrested and punished but they are assured that God, through the Holy Spirit, will provide them with the words they need at the appropriate moment. In other words they will not be alone and unsupported.

Often it is useful to read a passage through a few times and see if any particular words or phrases emerge. If they do that might be a clue to take time to develop worship around that phrase or theme. This passage has a range of phrases which might usefully be explored.

In many passages of scripture the motif of sheep and/or shepherds appears. In today's (longer) reading it appears three times. Initially when Jesus perceives the crowd as being like sheep without a shepherd, then next when the disciples are sent out to the "lost sheep of the house of Israel" and again later, where the imagery flips and instead of going to the sheep, the disciples are sent out "like sheep into the midst of wolves". There are so many biblical images relating to sheep and shepherds that regular worship leaders may wish to sidestep these references, but others who are occasional worship leaders may wish to focus on that as a useful, rich seam to be mined.

[1] The Lectionary Commentary Theological Exegesis for Sunday's Texts, The Second readings: Acts and the Epistles (2001 edition) p33.

Sermon ideas

Laughter appears infrequently in the Bible and yet it is an important part of everyday life. If focusing on Genesis, where we find laughter, note the meaning of Isaac is *he laughs/will laugh*. You could open with a joke (for once any good joke that makes people laugh allows you to seamlessly move into a conversation about laughter). What makes us laugh? How do people use laughter? How is laughter used in the Genesis passage? Why having laughed, does Sarah deny that she laughed? What is the difference between the laughter in Genesis 18 and its re-appearance in Genesis 21? Mention the meaning of Isaac.

Alternatively the focus could be on the appearance of the three men. It is June, the days are long and this text may quite easily bring to mind hot summer days and meals eaten outside. The importance of sharing food and offering food to others could be thought about. Rublev in the 15th century painted an icon on this passage, called *Trinity* or *The Hospitality of Abraham*. It is well known and could be a useful visual aid. In Henri J M Nouwen's book, *Behold the Beauty of the Lord – Praying with Icons*, he takes a chapter to focus on this icon and states, "it is painted not as a lovely decoration for a convent church, nor as a helpful explanation of a difficult doctrine, but as a holy place to enter and stay within"(2).

Combining the meaning of Isaac with the naming of the disciples could introduce a discussion on names. Why are names important? How do they make us feel? What is it like to have a name taken away from us or another name imposed on us or to make the choice to change the name we were given as an infant? Think of those who take a new name, e.g.

when men or women take Holy Orders and devote themselves to God. Another example could be a person who moves to a new culture that struggles with their given name and so they adopt a new name to help make things easier. Who might this apply to – refugees, international students? What are the consequences for those who take on a new (or additional name)? Is their perception of themselves altered?

The Matthew reading would allow a focus on mission and service. Start by focusing on the life and actions of Jesus, where He went and what He did. Explain Jesus' empathy towards the crowd and the images He used – sheep and shepherds or harvest and labourers. It was out of Jesus' ministry and because of His compassion that the disciples were charged with following in His footsteps and given authority. Detail where they were sent and to whom, and what they were to do. This could easily lead in to affirming and encouraging a congregation in what it already does or it could lead to challenging them to step out and do new things and tell the good news in a different way. Using concrete examples of the parish could be very helpful and would ground the gospel story in life today.

[2] Behold the Beauty of the Lord, Praying with Icons, Henri J M Nouwen (1991 edition) p20

Prayers

Sometimes prayers can feel repetitive and so finding new ways to address old sentiments can allow freshness in worship. By using an image or an emotion as a hook, a prayer can be built up around it. This prayer arises from the theme of laughter especially seen in today's Genesis reading. It is suggested that verse 1 of hymn CH4 764 be used. The congregation could be invited to sing it or a solo voice may also be effective.

Prayer of approach

God, You created the world.

Shaping tall mountains and deep valleys, flat moors and calm lochs,
creatures that fly high or swim deep.

Variety that astounds us, a complexity beyond our comprehension.

Your creation amazes us always and at times makes us laugh with joy.

[Sing CH4 764 verse 1](#)

God, You created each one of us and know us through and through.

You know our names, the number of hairs on our heads,
the words on our lips before we even speak them.

God, Your understanding of each individual astounds us,
its reach is beyond our imagining.
Your comprehensive recognition surprises us,
at times it makes us laugh with astonishment.

Sing CH4 764 verse 1

So gracious God, who allows us to laugh,
as we contemplate the world around us and the precious life of every human being,
let us not doubt that everything is possible for You.

This morning we gather to worship You and offer our joyful praise.
Amen

Worship in the Kirk can often be filled with words, sometimes too many words, so it is good to allow space for silence. Here it is used in a prayer of confession at the point where individuals are invited to seek God's forgiveness, after which, forgiveness is articulated. It can be equally useful to include times of silence during the prayer of intercession or indeed other prayers. Where congregations are not used to periods of silence it is good to alert them to the fact that it is coming before the prayer begins and/or clearly flag this during the prayer, e.g. in this time of a silence, we seek your forgiveness...(silence).

When I first wrote this prayer I had lines which said "...and it is our time to walk in the world today. Our feet have brought us to this place at this time..." On re-reading it, I reworded it to try and be more inclusive as I thought about members who usually come to church in wheelchairs. Sometimes it is difficult to be fully inclusive and prayers can have a poetic feel to them, but where possible it is good to word them to attempt to include everyone.

Prayer of confession

Gracious God, in Your good time You appeared to Abraham by his tent,
and life was transformed.

In Your good time You appeared on earth as Jesus,
and life was transformed.

In Your good time You brought our life into being,
and it is now our opportunity to be disciples in the world today.

The direction of our lives has brought us to this place at this time.
As we reflect on the long history of the People of God and the ministry of Jesus Christ

we are aware that millennium after millennium
people have attempted to follow You faithfully.
We are painfully aware that we stray from the path Jesus invites us to follow.
So where we have neglected You or neglected others,
Where we have prioritised our desires
and pushed down the agenda of the needs of those close to us,
Where we have boasted not in You but selfishly in our own individual achievements...

Forgive us we pray... *(Silence)*

Whether we seek forgiveness often, or hardly ever,
faithfully and repeatedly God forgives.
Know the depth of that forgiveness and be at peace... *(Silence)*

In Your good time, and through the encouragement of the Holy Spirit,
breathe new life into us that our daily actions may tell the world
that we are pilgrims of the One whom death could not hold down,
Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen

Rather than have a prayer of thanksgiving and a separate prayer of intercession, this prayer oscillates between the two. First something to give thanks for and in response a situation of need to remember before God. The prayer would work well using two voices – one offering the prayers of thanksgiving and the other the prayers of intercession.

The prayer features both the time of year and echoes from today's readings.

Prayer of thanksgiving and intercession

In long summer evenings when light lingers
and sunsets have time to deepen from light pink to deep red –
we offer You our thanks and praise.

We remember and hold before You
people in your world where the fading of the light brings not only darkness
but sadness and discomfort.
May they know Your light.

When we gather and share food and laughter with friends, relatives,
and those whom we love

and also when we are content to eat alone –
we offer You our thanks and praise.

We remember and hold before You
those who today will share meals tainted with sadness,
those who through no choice of their own eat alone,
those who are hungry and have little food.
May they soon know joy and plenty.

When we have been offered hospitality that was generous or unexpected –
we have been blessed
and we offer You our thanks and praise.

We remember and hold before You refugees and those who are strangers in a foreign land,
those for whom exceptional warmth and hospitality would mean so much.
May they know a rich welcome and ongoing support.

When someone who knows us a little, but not well, remembers our names –
we offer You our thanks for their care and attentiveness.

We remember and hold before You those who have been forced to change names
or those who forget their names – the overseas student in a culture that feels alien,
those who have been trafficked,
those living with dementia.
May they know liberation and freedom.

And hear us too as we take time to remember and hold before You
those caught up in(list a few situations from the week's news e.g. the hurricane in.... , the
political unrest in , the drought in...., the war in)
Minister to their needs we pray.

Ever creating, ever loving, ever encouraging God,
we offer You our deep thanks.
Use our gifts, talents and skills in the world
so that our lives may tell out Your praise and where possible
aid those whom we have remembered before You today.

Hear our prayers,
through Jesus Christ our loving Saviour

Amen

[Note from Editors: This material was written before the outbreak of the COVID-19 epidemic in the UK. Worship leaders can use the most up-to-date sources of information and take into account the experience of their communities for creating appropriate prayers around this issue.]

Musical suggestions

You can hear samples of these suggestions in the ‘Weekly Worship’ section of <https://music.churchofscotland.org.uk/>. This new online music resource will allow you to listen to and search the breadth of music available in the Church Hymnary 4th edition (CH4).

You will find hidden gems and alternative arrangements to familiar songs that will inspire creativity and spark fresh curiosity about how we best use music in worship.

- CH4 76 – “How can I ever thank the Lord” – A short hymn with a well-known tune based on today’s Psalm 116
- CH4 124 – “Praise to the Lord, the Almighty, the King of creation” – A good bright opening hymn with hints of many of today’s readings
- CH4 133 – “Source and Sovereign, Rock and Cloud” – This hymn offers a contrast to thinking of our names and reflects on names given to God
- CH4 182 – “Now thank we all our God” – A strong closing hymn with reference to “mothers’ arms” and “ever-joyful hearts”
- CH4 405 – “We sing the praise of him who died” – A good choice if the focus is on Romans 5
- CH4 501 – “Take this moment, sign and space” – This thinks of identity and fits well if ‘names’ are taken as a focus. It can be particularly effective on the piano
- CH4 522 – “The Church is wherever God’s people are praising” – Appropriate for all ages and talking about sharing the good news of God
- CH4 533 – “Will you come and follow me” – A good choice if the chosen focus is on names or discipleship. Fits well as a fourth or final hymn
- CH4 544 – “When I needed a neighbour, were you there, were you there?” – Well known, suitable for everyone and matches well with Jesus having compassion for the crowd
- CH4 656 – “I come with joy, a child of God” – A good hymn to pick if Communion is being celebrated since it picks up themes from the readings

Reflecting on our worship practice

Since the start of the pandemic in 2020, the way we worship has changed and we need to reflect on the changing or newly established patterns that emerged and continue to emerge as a result of the disruption.

We can facilitate worship for all by exploring imaginative approaches to inclusion, participation and our use of technologies in ways that suit our contexts. This is not an exhaustive list, but some things we could consider are:

- Framing various parts of the worship service in accessible language to help worshippers understand the character and purpose of each part. This is essential for creating worship for all (intergenerational worship) that reflects your community of faith.
- Holding spaces for reflection and encouraging prayer to be articulated in verbal and non-verbal ways, individually and in online breakout rooms.
- In online formats the effective use of the chat function and microphone settings encourages active participation in prayer, e.g. saying the Lord's Prayer together unmuted, in a moment of 'holy chaos'.
- While singing in our congregations is still restricted, we can worship corporately by using antiphonal psalm readings, creeds and participative prayers.
- Using music and the arts as part of the worship encourages the use of imagination in place of sung or spoken words.
- Use of silence, sensory and kinaesthetic practices allow for experience and expression beyond regular audio and visual mediums.

The following questions might help you develop a habit of reflecting on how we create and deliver content and its effectiveness and impact, and then applying what we learn to develop our practice.

- How inclusive was the worship?
Could the worship delivery and content be described as worship for all/
intergenerational? Was it sensitive to different "Spiritual Styles"?
- How was the balance between passive and active participation?
- How were people empowered to connect with or encounter God?
What helped this? What hindered this?
- How cohesive was the worship?

Did it function well as a whole?

How effective was each of the individual elements in fulfilling its purpose?

- How balanced was the worship?
What themes/topics/doctrines/areas of Christian life were included?
- How did the worship connect with your context/contemporary issues?
Was it relevant in the everyday lives of those attending and in the wider parish/
community?
How well did the worship connect with local and national issues?
How well did the worship connect with world events/issues?
- What have I learned that can help me next time I plan and deliver worship?

Useful links

Up to date information for churches around Covid-19 can be found [here](#)

You can listen to samples of every song in the Church Hymnary 4th edition (CH4) and download a selection of recordings for use in worship [here](#)

You can find an introduction to spiritual styles online [here](#)

You are free to download, project, print and circulate multiple copies of any of this material for use in worship services, bible studies, parish magazines, etc., but reproduction for commercial purposes is not permitted.

Please note that the views expressed in these materials are those of the individual writer and not necessarily the official view of the Church of Scotland, which can be laid down only by the General Assembly.