

# Central Norfolk Circuit Worship Sheet 17<sup>th</sup> August 2025

## Call to worship

We come to worship God,  
not to find easy answers, but to seek out  
God's truth.  
We come, not to be comforted alone, but to  
be stirred into action.  
We come with our questions, our convictions,  
our fears and our hopes,  
for the One who brings challenge also brings  
love.  
Let us worship God.

## Hymn 728 O God, you search me and you know me

O God, you search me, and you know me.  
All my thoughts lie open to your gaze.  
When I walk or lie down, you are before me:  
ever the maker and keeper of my days.

You know my resting and my rising.  
You discern my purpose from afar,  
and with love everlasting, you besiege me:  
in every moment of life or death, you are.

Before a word is on my tongue, Lord,  
you have known its meaning through and  
through.  
You are with me beyond my understanding:  
God of my present, my past and future, too

Although your Spirit is upon me,  
still I search for shelter from your light.  
There is nowhere on Earth I can escape you:  
even the darkness is radiant in your sight.

For you created me and shaped me,  
gave me life within my mother's womb  
For the wonder of who I am, I praise you:  
safe in your hands, all creation is made new.

## Prayers

God of challenge and change,  
you come not only to comfort us but to  
confront us:  
to call us into deeper truth,  
to awaken us to injustice,  
to stir our hearts towards compassion.

When your words feel uncomfortable,  
help us to not turn away,  
but to listen for your voice in the tension.  
Empower us to walk with courage into the  
present moment,  
faithful to your Spirit at work in the world.

Refine us, guide us, strengthen us.  
In the name of our Saviour, Jesus Christ.  
Amen.

## Reading - Luke 12: 49-56 (NRSV)

<sup>49</sup> 'I came to bring fire to the earth, and how I  
wish it were already kindled! <sup>50</sup>I have a  
baptism with which to be baptized, and what  
stress I am under until it is completed! <sup>51</sup>Do  
you think that I have come to bring peace to  
the earth? No, I tell you, but rather  
division! <sup>52</sup>From now on, five in one  
household will be divided, three against two  
and two against three; <sup>53</sup>they will be divided:  
father against son  
and son against father,  
mother against daughter  
and daughter against mother,  
mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law  
and daughter-in-law against mother-in-law.'

<sup>54</sup> He also said to the crowds, 'When you see  
a cloud rising in the west, you immediately  
say, "It is going to rain"; and so it  
happens. <sup>55</sup>And when you see the south wind  
blowing, you say, "There will be scorching  
heat"; and it happens. <sup>56</sup>You hypocrites! You  
know how to interpret the appearance of  
earth and sky, but why do you not know how  
to interpret the present time?

## Hymn 564 O thou who camest from above

O Thou who camest from above,  
the pure celestial fire to impart,  
kindle a flame of sacred love  
upon the altar of my heart.

There let it for Thy glory burn  
with inextinguishable blaze,  
and trembling to its source return,  
in humble prayer and fervent praise.

Jesus, confirm my heart's desire  
to work and speak and think for Thee,  
still let me guard the holy fire,  
and still stir up Thy gift in me.

Ready for all Thy perfect will,  
my acts of faith and love repeat,  
till death Thy endless mercies seal,  
and make my sacrifice complete.

Charles Wesley

## Reflection

Jesus' words in this passage feel uncomfortable. Fire, division, and unrest don't sound like the language of love. But this is not the absence of love; it is love in its most honest and costly form.

Jesus offers a love that seeks justice, inclusion, peace, and truth. But that kind of love disturbs what is comfortable and unequal. When Jesus speaks of division, it is not because he desires conflict, but because people respond differently to the love he embodies. Some welcome it with joy; others reject it because it threatens the power, the privilege, or the ease that they have.

God's love is not neutral. It stands with the poor, the vulnerable, and the excluded. And when we stand with them, too, it can put us at odds with those who benefit from keeping things the way they are. I question for myself how I misuse the power that is given to me as a minister in the Church. Do I build others up or hold onto power instead of giving it away? Do I put my own comfort or ease ahead of the goodness of others?

Christ demonstrates, in his ministry, death, resurrection, and ascension, the way we are to be: of giving away our power. At each step of the way, he seeks to better the world by raising up the lowly (much like Mary's song speaks of!), to bring glory to the Father, to serve the disciples, and, ultimately, bear the Cross and die for us. It is this kind of love that we must embody, to seek servanthood. Yet, this may bring reproach from others because it threatens the power, the privilege, or the ease that they have.

So, where might we be resisting that kind of love in our own lives?

### **This week, try this:**

Read or listen to a story or testimony from someone whose life experience is very different from your own. Perhaps from a refugee, a person living with poverty, or someone part of a marginalised group. Ask: *How does their story shape my understanding of love and justice?*

These testimonies may help you begin this process:

A refugees story:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FGCe5T-DnRY>

The link between disability and debt : Tina's story:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=12xXZdsdh7s>

## Hymn 718 We lay our broken world

We lay our broken world  
In sorrow at your feet,  
Haunted by hunger, war and fear,  
Oppressed by power and hate.

Where human life seems less  
That profit, might and pride,  
Though to unite us all in you  
You lived and loved and died.

We bring our broken towns,  
Our neighbours hurt and bruised;  
You show us how old pain and wounds  
For new life can be used.

We bring our broken hopes  
For lives of dignity;  
Workless and overworked you love  
And call us to be free.

We bring our broken loves,  
Friends parted, families torn;  
Then in your life and death we see  
That love must be reborn.

We bring our broken selves,  
Confused and closed and tired;  
Then through your gift of healing grace  
New purpose is inspired.

O Spirit, on us breathe,  
With life and strength anew;  
Find in us love, and hope, and trust,  
And lift us up to you.

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## Intercessions

God of fire and of peace,  
we bring to you our prayers, our desires for a  
better world:

Where people speak truth against power and  
are silence,  
give them strength and raise up others to  
stand alongside them.

Where there is oppression, war, abuse of  
power, and harm,  
transform the wills and actions of those who  
cause destruction.

Where your Church avoids challenge for the  
sake of comfort,  
kindle a fire of justice and love within us.

Where there is suffering, in body, mind or  
spirit,  
bring your healing presence and peace.

Where we face difficult choices,  
remind us that we do not walk alone.

God of the present moment,  
help us to interpret these times with faith and  
compassion,  
and to follow Jesus wherever he leads us.  
Amen.

## Hymn 345 And can it be

And can it be that I should gain  
An interest in the Saviour's blood?  
Died He for me, who caused His pain?  
For me, who Him to death pursued?  
Amazing love! how can it be  
That Thou, my God, should die for me?

'Tis mystery all! The Immortal dies!  
Who can explore His strange design?  
In vain the firstborn seraph tries  
To sound the depths of love divine!  
'Tis mercy all! let earth adore,  
Let angel minds inquire no more.

He left His Father's throne above,  
So free, so infinite His grace;  
Emptied Himself of all but love,  
And bled for Adam's helpless race;  
'Tis mercy all, immense and free;  
For, O my God, it found out me!

Long my imprisoned spirit lay  
Fast bound in sin and nature's night;  
Thine eye diffused a quickening ray,  
I woke, the dungeon flamed with light;  
My chains fell off, my heart was free;  
I rose, went forth and followed

No condemnation now I dread;  
Jesus, and all in Him is mine!  
Alive in Him, my living Head,  
And clothed in righteousness divine,  
Bold I approach the eternal throne,  
And claim the crown, through Christ my own.

Charles Wesley

## Blessing

We go with courage into the week ahead:  
with the fire of God's Spirit giving us light;  
with the love of Christ shaping our hearts;  
with the wisdom of the Divine Parent to guide  
our steps.  
God is with us today, tomorrow and always.  
Amen.

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