



## Lent 2 Soul Shelter

### Introductory Prayer:

*Give us this day our daily bread to shelter our soul.*

As bricks and mortar give our bodies shelter, shelter our being, our souls with your Spirit.

*Give us this day our daily bread to shelter our soul.*

As houses protect and keep safe our physical being, hold us as in the shelter and safety of your word

*Give us this day our daily bread to shelter our soul*

As an umbrella holds back the rain and storms, so Lord be our umbrella, our tent, our shelter in life's uncertain times.

O Lord our God, on this Lenten journey, shelter us in the struggling world's uncertainties.

**Amen**

### Hymn – StF 545 Be thou my vision

Be thou my vision, O Lord of my heart,  
be all else but naught to me save that thou art;  
Be thou my best thought in the day and the  
night,  
both waking and sleeping thy presence my light.

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

Be thou my breastplate, my sword for the fight;  
be thou my whole armour, be thou my whole  
might.  
Be thou my soul's shelter, be thou my strong  
tower;  
O raise me heavenward, Great Power of my  
power.

Riches I heed not nor earth's empty praise:  
be thou mine inheritance now and always.  
Be thou and thou only the first in my heart;  
O Sovereign of heaven,  
my treasure thou art.

High King of heaven, thou heaven's bright Sun,  
O grant me its joys after victory is won.  
Great Heart of my own heart, whatever befall,  
still be thou my vision O Ruler of all.

### Prayers of Praise and Thanksgiving

Merciful God, you are our Father and we are your beloved children.

You have taught us that we are loved and forgiven,

Cherished and longed for,

Held in your hand.

**We praise and adore you.**

Creator God, you bless us with life and love,

You have taught us that all we have is a gift from you;

Food for our wellbeing, shelter and clothes,  
Love and laughter,  
Nourishment for our souls and a sense of your abiding presence,  
**We praise and adore you.**

Jesus Christ, Saviour and Lord,  
You have taught us that we are not servants, but friends,  
Friends for whom you died.  
You offer us new life,  
A home in your Kingdom - for we are Kingdom people.  
**We praise and adore you.**

Holy Spirit, ever present God  
You warm our hearts and fill us with your love.  
You guide us and teach us  
Opening our hearts to new possibilities  
Stretching out our horizons, leading us into new experiences  
And accompanying us on our journey,  
**We praise and adore you.**

One God, Father Son and Holy Spirit,  
You are all we need.  
As we gather to worship you, may we sense your presence?  
Accept our worship and praise  
And fill us with gratitude and joy.  
**Amen**

**Readings: Psalm 27:1-6**

The Lord is my light and my salvation: I will fear no one.  
The Lord protects me from all danger: I will never be afraid.

When evil men attack me and try to kill me, they will stumble and fall.  
Even if a whole army surrounds me I will not be afraid;  
Even if enemies attack me, I will trust in God.

I have asked the Lord for one thing; one thing only do I want:  
To live in the Lord's house all my life, to marvel there at His goodness, and to ask  
for His guidance.

In times of trouble He will shelter me; He will keep me safe in His Temple;  
And make me secure on a high rock.  
So I will triumph over my enemies around me.  
With shouts of Joy I will offer sacrifices in His Temple; I will sing, I will praise the Lord.

**Luke 13:31-35**

At the same time some of the Pharisees came to Jesus and said to Him, "You must get out of here and go somewhere else, Because Herod wants to kill you."

Jesus answered them, "Go and tell that fox; 'I am driving out demons and performing cures today and tomorrow, and the next day; it is not right for a prophet to be killed anywhere except in Jerusalem.

Jerusalem, Jerusalem! You kill the prophets; you stone the messengers God has sent to you! How many times have I wanted to put my arms around all your people, just as a hen gathers her

chicks under her wings, but you would not let me. And so your Temple will be abandoned. I assure you that you will not see me until the time comes when you say, 'God bless Him who comes in the name of the Lord. "'

### **Sermon:**

In years gone by, I thought that a life of faith was all a bed of roses. Little by little, I discovered that paths of faith have rocks in them – difficult times when I ask myself “why me?”

Jesus felt like that. He knew that He had to go to Jerusalem and suffer and die. I wonder if He was aware of the resurrection, the ascension and beyond. I expect that He hoped it would work out in the end but He was intent on getting to Jerusalem and all that this meant – for the rest I think possibly, He just hoped for the best.

When I was younger, I lived in a village in South Wales so it was easy enough for us to get over the water to the Cheddar Gorge. So, when I was a teenager, a group of friends from the church, spent a day exploring the Cheddar Gorge. We did the usual visits to the caves and caverns but in the afternoon we clambered over the piled up rocks at the side of the gorge. The rocks were large and unstable and appeared to be dumped in huge piles along the edge of the road and up the sides of the gorge. We raced each other up these rocks, using our hands and arms as well as legs and feet. We reached the top giggling and laughing. We were young and healthy and hardly noticed our scraped knees, bleeding fingers and cracked nails.

By stages we reached the top of the gorge. On one side was beautiful farmland, woods and meadows stretched away for miles whilst on the other side was the deep rocky gorge which sliced its way through the countryside. We were elated when we reached the top and felt we could do everything, achieve anything.

As the years passed I did less and less scrambling over rocks and only on a few occasions did I manage to reach the tops of hills. Some time ago, I went for a day into Derbyshire and there attempted again to climb over a rock strewn hillside but this time I was soon out of breath. My knees and hips hurt and I didn't reach the top of the hill. However, there were compensations. I took it slowly and on occasions spent the time sitting on rocks in the sunshine admiring the view, each time from a different perspective. I was able to look at the delicate flowers and plants which clung onto the tiny crevices in the rocks and watch the birds wheeling overhead.

The path of faith is rocky and steep and certainly no easy climb. Philip Yancey, the Christian writer, in a number of books noted an unexpected phenomenon in the faith journey of many Christians. It seems that younger Christians take to the journey of faith with enthusiasm and excitement, having numerous mountain top experiences, often receiving answers to prayers, and being aware of the presence of God much of the time. Faith at that time seems so easy.

However, it appears that as the journey progresses the climb gets harder, God's presence is much less sure and the mountain top experiences are few and far between. Why should this be? Perhaps, as our relationship with God matures, God doesn't see the necessity for demonstrations of His presence. And maybe there are compensations. We can take life at a slower pace and can spend more time in meditation and prayer, reading and learning. Perhaps we can view the world in three dimensions rather than the flat two dimensions of youth. It is only then that we can say “but I can see a different way of looking at that.”

So, when the going gets tough and we find that the climb gets harder, look out for those moments when we can take our time and notice the small insignificant things that make this time worthwhile.

At this time in our journey, our relationship with God changes. It is now a matter of faith, and the mountain top experiences, which we may still hanker after, are really unnecessary to keep us on the right path

**Meditation:**

*Do I regret the passing of the experiences of my youth Lord? Those times when my heart soared and exalted in your presence?*

*If I am honest, at times I do.*

*I long again to fly on eagles' wings;*

*To climb to the heights;*

*To run and never grow weary;*

*To sense your presence at every turn.*

*But you know what is best for me,*

*Sometimes I need to grow up, to mature.*

*At this stage, my relationship with you should be deeper, not necessarily higher.*

*And when I give you time,*

*To quietly stand aside for a while;*

*Open my eyes to the little, delicate things, the small wonders of your universe.*

*Help me to view the landscape from various perspectives;*

*To be allowed to ask the awkward questions and not to be satisfied with easy answers.*

*Then, one day Lord, when this part of my journey is over;*

*When weakness and pain drops away;*

*I will again soar with you to the mountain tops and be safe in your presence.*

**Hymn – StF 706** Longing for light we wait in darkness

1. Longing for light, we wait in darkness. Longing for truth, we turn to you.

Make us your own, your holy people, light of the world to see.

*(Chorus) Christ be our light! Shine in our hearts.*

*Shine through the darkness.*

*Christ be our light! Shine in your church gathered today.*

2. Longing for peace, our world is troubled. Longing for hope, many despair;

Your word alone has the power to save us. Make us your living voice.

*(Chorus)*

3. Longing for food, many are hungry. Longing for water, many still thirst.

Make us your bread, broken for others, shared until all are fed.

*(Chorus)*

4. Longing for shelter, many are homeless. Longing for warmth, many are cold.

Make us your building, sheltering others, wall made of living stone.

*(Chorus)*

5. Many the gifts, many the people, many the hearts that yearn to belong.

Let us be servants to one another, making your kingdom come.

*(Chorus)*

## **Prayer of confession**

If we have fallen into despair;

**Lord forgive us.**

If we have failed to hope in you,

**Lord forgive us.**

If we have been fearful of death,

**Lord forgive us.**

If we have forgotten the victory of Christ,

**Lord forgive us.**

May the living God raise us from despair?

**Give us victory over sin and set us free in Christ.....AMEN**

## **Prayers of Intercession**

We use the hymn 711 in 'Singing the Faith' to lead us into our prayers of Intercession:

Written by Fred Pratt Green

**Pray for the Church, afflicted and oppressed,**

**For all who suffer for the gospel's sake,**

**That Christ may show us how to serve them best,**

**In that one Kingdom Satan cannot shake.**

**But how much more than us they have to give,**

**Who by their dying show us how to live!**

*(We pray for the church in this country: pray for our local church: Pray for the circuit staff. The person who is coming to Arnold and Calverton Methodist churches)*

**As Jesus waited in the olive grove,**

**The unjust trial, the pre-determined fate,**

**The world's contempt for reconciling love.**

**Shall all they won for us, at such cost,**

**Be by our negligence or weakness lost?**

*(We pray for the persecuted church. We pray those people who are suffering from old age in our church, or infirmity of mind and body. We continue to pray for those people who are finding life difficult through lack of money, lack of means to heat their homes or who live on the streets.)*

**Pray that if times of testing should lay bare**

**What sort we are, who call ourselves His own,**

**We may be counted worthy then to wear,**

**With quiet fortitude Christ's only crown:**

**The crown that in His saints He wears again –**

**The crown of thorns that signify His reign.**

*(We pray for our world – those who suffer from violence, particularly in Gaza and Ukraine. We continue to pray for those who suffer because of climate change.)*

**Amen**

**Hymn- StF 467**    I need thee every hour

1. I need the every hour, most gracious Lord.  
No tender voice like thine can peace afford.  
*I need thee O I need thee, every hour I need thee.  
O bless me now my saviour; I come to thee.*
  
2. I need thee every hour; stay though close by.  
Temptation lose their power when thou art nigh.  
*(Chorus)*
  
3. I need thee every hour in joy or pain.  
Come quickly and abide or life is vain.  
*(Chorus)*
  
4. I need thee every hour, teach me they will,  
And thy rich promises in me fulfil:  
*(Chorus)*

**Final Prayer said together**

**Lord may your Kingdom come  
And your will be done.**

**May your peace be known in this world?  
And your will be done.**

**May your peace and joy come into our hearts – even at this time?  
And your will be done  
On earth as it is in heaven.**