20th June 2021

A service for all ages on Father's Day

**Call to worship**

Today is Father’s day – and we will be reflecting on the care of Father’s and the care of our Heavenly Father whilst also praying for healing for broken hearts and the needs of the world. We will recall how

Jesus on the boat in the storm said: ‘Peace! Be still!’…and there was a great calm.
We come to God, just as we are.
Sometimes at ease.
Sometimes confused by life’s storms.
Let us trust God with our big questions, and listen for God’s still small word to restore us to a sense of peace.

**HYMN: Come people of the risen King**

**The origins of Father's Day**Many people look on Father's Day as an invention by greetings card manufacturers to convince customers to give them even more money. However, it originated as a church service in America. There are debates over the origins of the idea of setting apart the third Sunday in June as a special day to honour fathers, but the strongest claim is focused on the selfless love and care of a father in Washington USA who brought up six children on his own.

William Jackson Smart was an American Civil War veteran, who lived on a rural farm in eastern Washington. He was widowed when his wife died giving birth to their sixth child. One of his daughters grew up to become Mrs Sonora Dodd, and while listening to a Mother's Day sermon in 1909 at her church in Spokane, she realised all the sacrifices her father had made for her and her brothers and sisters. She approached her minister and some friends about having a church service dedicated to fathers on 5 June, the anniversary of her father's death. That date was too soon for her minister to prepare the service, so they spoke a few weeks later on 19 June and, from that first service in Spokane, the state of Washington has celebrated the third Sunday in June as Father's Day. It was adopted as an official national holiday in the USA in 1972. Since then it has spread across the world as the specific day on which fathers should be honoured by their children..

 **Opening prayer**God, who is both a Father and a Mother to us,
we thank you for your love to us from before we were born;
your guidance and protection as we have grown;
your wisdom and strength when we have sought to be parents to others.

We take time today to bring to mind our earthly fathers,
to give thanks to you for all that they have done for us,
all that they have been to us;
to thank you for the good times we have shared together
and to thank you for bringing us through hard times together.

There are also those here for whom memories of their fathers are painful,
or for whom there are no memories at all.
Heavenly Father, may we find in you a loving embrace that more than makes up for the inadequacies of our earthly fathers.
Gracious Lord, no human father is perfect and we who are fathers today confess our failings.
We pray that you will help us to love our children as you love us,
giving generously with wisdom and forgiving freely with justice.
In the name of your Son, our brother Jesus, we pray.
**Amen.**

***Open mike***

**The church family prayer***A modern paraphrase of the Lord's Prayer*

Heavenly Dad,
we respect your name and everything you stand for,
and we want others to respect you too.
Please take control of the earth:
so that people learn to live life your way, the way of heaven.
Please bring us all that we need today:
we'll worry about tomorrow when it comes.
Please forgive what we've done wrong,
in the same way we forgive what others have done to us.
Please protect us from evil, whether we're tempted by it or attacked by it.
Because you're the King, the ruler of everything;
you and you alone deserve all the credit.
Forever, and ever, and ever, and ever,
let it be true.

 **Dad's words of wisdom** *A dialogue between the Wise Teacher of Proverbs and Homer Simpson*

**The Wise Father**
Listen, my son, to your father's instruction and do not forsake your mother's teaching. *(Proverbs 1.8)***Homer**How many times do I have to tell you?

**The Wise Father**
My son, do not despise the Lord's discipline and do not resent his rebuke, because the Lord disciplines those he loves, as a father the son he delights in. *(Proverbs 3.11-12)***Homer**Stop crying or I'll give you a reason to cry.

**The Wise Father**
Listen, my sons, to a father's instruction; pay attention and gain understanding. *(Proverbs 4.1)*
**Homer**I'm not just talking to hear my own voice! As my father used to tell me…

**The Wise Father**
When I was a boy in my father's house, still tender, and an only child of my mother, he taught me and said, 'Lay hold of my words with all your heart.' *(Proverbs 4.3-4)*
**Homer**So long as you live under my roof, you'll play by my rules.

**The Wise Father**
A wise son brings joy to his father, but a foolish son grief to his mother. *(Proverbs 10.1)***Homer**How would I know? Go ask your mother!

**The Wise Father**
A wise son heeds his father's instruction, but a mocker does not listen to rebuke. *(Proverbs 13.1)***Homer**What did I just tell you?

**The Wise Father**
A fool spurns his father's discipline, but whoever heeds correction shows prudence. *(Proverbs 15.5)***Homer**
This will hurt me a lot more than it hurts you.

**The Wise Father**
To have a fool for a son brings grief; there is no joy for the father of a fool. *(Proverbs 17.21)***Homer**Don't look at me in that tone of voice!

**The Wise Father**
He who robs his father and drives out his mother is a son who brings shame and disgrace. *(Proverbs 19.26)***Homer**
Turn off those lights. Do you think I am made of money?

**The Wise Father**
If a man curses his father or mother, his lamp will be snuffed out in pitch darkness. *(Proverbs 20.20)***Homer**
Just wait until I get you home!

**The Wise Father**
The father of a righteous man has great joy; he who has a wise son delights in him. May your father and mother be glad; may she who gave you birth rejoice! *(Proverbs 23.24-25)***Homer**
What do you think this is, your birthday?

**The Wise Father**
He who keeps the law is a discerning son, but a companion of gluttons disgraces his father. *(Proverbs 28.7)*
**Homer**You'll eat it and enjoy it, whether you like it or not.

**The Wise Father**
A man who loves wisdom brings joy to his father, but a companion of prostitutes squanders his wealth. *(Proverbs 29.3)***Homer**
You're not leaving my house dressed like that!

**The Wise Father**
The eye that mocks a father, that scorns obedience to a mother, will be pecked out by the ravens of the valley, will be eaten by the vultures. *(Proverbs 30.17)***Homer**
What part of NO don't you understand?

Ask for ***Other not-so-wise words include:***
I'll play football after I read the paper.
Get your elbows off the table.
When I was your age…
Did you think I was born yesterday?
I don't care what other people are doing! I'm not everybody else's father!
Two wrongs do not make a right.
Am I talking to a brick wall?
If I catch you doing that one more time, I'll...
Wipe your feet!
Don't make me stop the car!
Act your age. Not your shoe size…
Who said life was supposed to be fair?
I'll tell you why. Because I said so. That's why.
Big boys don't cry.
Isn't it time you got a haircut?
If I've told you once, I've told you a thousand times…
Don't give me any of your lip, young lady.

*The quotations from the Book of Proverbs are from the New International Version of the Bible.*

***We come to God asking for words of wisdom and guidance in the storms of life.***

**Prayer**

God of our ups and downs,
we come together in your name
with concerns in our hearts and questions in our minds,
with troubles in our lives and fears for our world.
We come trusting that you
share our concerns and hear our questions,
embrace our troubles and know our fears.
We come trusting that you never give up on us,
that you never abandon us, never dismiss us.
For you are a God of love, of peace, of power –
you are our God. **Amen.**

**Hymn: The Lord’s my shepherd**

**Bible reading Mark 4 .35-51**

**Theme**

The Calming of the Storm (Mark 4.35-41).

**Script**
**Narrator:**One night Jesus said, **'It's a bit crowded here, let's go across to the other side of the lake**.' So the disciples went to get a boat that they could use.

*(Mime the hoisting of a sail.)*

**Narrator:**Jesus stepped on board and they set sail.

*(Mime the waving/water movement.)*

**Narrator:**Jesus had been very busy all day and he was very tired.

*(Mime a yawn.)*

**Narrator:**So he went for a quick nap.

*(Mime sleep.)*

**Narrator:**After a little while a big storm started.

*(Mime blowing.)*

**Narrator:**The wind blew hard

**Narrator:**The waves were huge.

*(Raise arms from floor to outstretched right above head.)*

**Narrator:**The water was coming into the boat and the disciples tried to stop it.

*(Mime collecting water in a bucket and throwing it overboard.)*

**Narrator:**But they couldn't.

*(Everyone looks miserable.)*

**Narrator:**They were very afraid.

*(Mime fear.)*

**Narrator:**They went to Jesus and woke him up.

*(Mime shaking someone to waken them.)*

**Narrator:**They said: ‘**Don’t you care?**' Jesus woke up.

*(Mime opening of eyes and stretching.)*

**Narrator: 'Don't worry**,' he said to his disciples. ' And then he told the wind to stop. ‘**Peace be still’** he said

*(Mimers blow and then stop.)*

**Narrator:**And then he told the rain to stop. **Peace be still**

*(Mimers wiggle fingers like rain coming down and then stop.)*

**Narrator:**And then he told the waves to be still. **Peace be still**

*(Mime a huge waving movement slowly getting smaller.)*

**Narrator:**He asked them why they were frightened. **'Do you not trust me**?' he asked. The disciples were amazed and said to each other, **'Wow! Even the wind and the sea obey him!**

*(Mime a puzzled look.)*

**Talk**

I don’t know if you have ever argued with your father? As part of your development to be an independent person it may not be a bad thing! We are called to honour our parents, not necessarily agree with them!

With our relationship to God – I wonder if we argue with God?

 Perhaps we equate faith with politeness? Our ideal picture of a person with great faith can be someone who is calm no matter what, someone who murmurs, ‘These things happen for a reason’. It does not resemble the disciples. They ask questions, they protest and complain. They speak up when they feel abandoned, and they express depression and frustration. In this way, their relationship with God moves forward with integrity through voicing questions, rather than grinding to a halt in silent pious politeness. Our communities need a faith that takes suffering seriously and does not silence people’s pain.

Perhaps the biggest question any of us ask of God and each other is: ‘Do you not care?’ In the storms, God can seem to be asleep for us, and we can seem to be asleep for each other. How do we find a sense of being heard by God and others in these storms?

Many local stories of hope came out of the surveys asking people what hurts most in the [‘Who cares?’](https://www.who-cares.org.uk/onebigquestion) initiative. Everybody hurts but not everybody has hope. *WHO CARES?*is a nationwide initiative where churches are working together to listen to the needs of local people and offer compassion and hope. The website contains true life stories of ordinary people working through painful times, as well as connect with people who care.

Look at this video:

Love protects us from nothing, even as it unexplainably sustains us in all things. I heard a story from someone who said their grandmother lived in Birmingham during World War Two. One night, bombs were falling and she was on her own in the house. Her husband was in the army, her eldest daughter in the land army, her son in the RAF and her youngest daughter evacuated. Out of her mind with anxiety, fears roared in her head. She heard a still small voice tell her to get up and do the washing – a safe, neutral practical task. It calmed her down, restoring her to a sense of trustfully getting on to do her bit. And next morning the sun rose and indeed all the family were fine. When and how have we heard God in the storms of our lives? How have we known God’s care?

‘Now is the day of salvation.’ The time to engage with life and faith is now. Faith is not theoretical. If we are not to accept the grace of God ‘in vain’, we need to respond with faith to what we find at this particular moment in our lives. We need to greet the grace of God with an open heart and innovate on our plans with courage. Then we will develop the character to cope with sleepless nights, hard work, afflictions and baseless accusations. We won’t escape from suffering and storms, but we will learn to recognise the presence of God in each moment.

Hymn

Cornerstone

**Intercessions**

Rupert Gough and The Choir of Royal Holloway release a new single with soprano Laura Wright, raising awareness of mental health and encouraging people to seek support and donate to mental health charities if they feel able to. The track, written by composer Thomas Hewitt Jones and lyricist Matt Harvey, speaks of the loneliness and despair felt by many around the world during the COVID-19 pandemic. All of the musicians involved gave their services for free and hope that the song can be an anthem for kindness, bringing hope all around the world to those suffering with their mental health. Released by Signum, proceeds from the single will be donated to a number of UK-based mental health charities. visit the website for more details: [https://www.staystrong.org.uk](https://www.youtube.com/redirect?event=video_description&redir_token=QUFFLUhqbUZQaFJFanRMQkhDOHo0cVFLZGZIUUNIcGZtQXxBQ3Jtc0ttRFlOdXpvakY4cTZzY2YtOFphSHV5N1l5ZXJkcmwzYXBqSkpfMU1vaHVxTmhERmREV01hX3pjVWxvdFhVT2dGZndFYm9iR280c2lHX2lPTEljdlJlVGRtUG1GWVN2Y1FyMllUQjJRTXNpcy1nTjloVQ&q=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.staystrong.org.uk) LYRICS Though you’re so far away I will hold you one day Can you hear me? I can hear you. Though we’re apart I’m still near you We are only human Our hearts reach out in pain. Pass by, Keep your distance This too will pass One day we will be together Though you’re so far away Can you hear me? I am near you.

**A community lament.**

* A lament is a heartfelt expression of protest to God at a wounding of the community or a personal tragedy –
* Give people scraps of material to tear. From the newspaper – so can think what’s in the news. What is happening to us now. What do we want to cry out and say ‘Don’t you care?’ Can you hear me?
* Think for a moment of what is troubling you – personal thinking, maybe be a local thing. Something in the church. Something in the nation. A global issue.
* Tear the paper in a few strips.
* Then invitation to come and bring those laments in prayer – invitation to come to the mike pray for the storms of life – I pray for those struggling with lack of freedom and isolation: and end your short prayer: **God bring your peace**.
* Please keep your personal prayers personal as we are livestreaming – so don’t mention names.

HYMN: In Christ alone

**Benediction**May you know that God your heavenly Father is watching over you, that Jesus your brother abides with you, and the Holy Spirit lives within you, for evermore.
**Amen.**