**Westfield URC 10.30am 31st January 2021**

**Hymn Crown Him With Many Crowns - M.P. 109**

Crown Him with many crowns,

the Lamb upon His throne;

Hark! how the heavenly anthem drowns

all music but its own:

awake, my soul, and sing

of Him who died for thee,

and hail Him as thy chosen King

through all eternity.

Crown Him the Son of God,

before the worlds began;

and ye who tread where He hath trod,

crown Him the Son of Man,

who every grief hath known

that wrings the human breast,

and takes and bears them for His own,

that all in Him may rest.

Crown Him the Lord of life,

who triumphed o'er the grave,

and rose victorious in the strife,

for those He came to save:

His glories now we sing

who died and rose on high,

who died eternal life to bring,

and lives that death may die.

Crown Him, the Lord of heaven,

enthroned in worlds above;

crown Him the King to whom is given

the wondrous name of Love:

All hail, Redeemer, hail!

for Thou hast died for me;

Thy praise shall never, never fail

throughout eternity.

MATTHEW BRIDGES (1800~94) and GODFREY THRING (1823~1903) CCLI 150801

**Prayer of Adoration**

God of grace,

You have made our minds,

So help us to know you.

You have made our hearts

So help us to love you.

You have made our voices,

So help us to sing your praise.

Fill us with your Holy Spirit,

So together we may celebrate your glory

And worship you in spirit and in truth,

Through Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.

(from *One Voice \ the Timaru Presbyterian Parish*)

**Hymn Rock Of Ages - M.P. 582**

Rock of ages, cleft for me,

let me hide myself in Thee;

let the water and the blood,

from Thy riven side which flowed,

be of sin the double cure,

cleanse me from its guilt and power.

Not the labour of my hands

can fulfil Thy law's demands;

could my zeal no respite know,

could my tears for ever flow,

all for sin could not atone;

Thou must save, and Thou alone.

Nothing in my hand I bring,

simply to Thy cross I cling;

naked, come to Thee for dress,

helpless, look to Thee for grace;

foul, I to the fountain fly;

wash me, Saviour, or I die.

While I draw this fleeting breath,

when mine eyes shall close in death,

when I soar through tracts unknown,

see Thee on Thy judgement throne;

Rock of ages, cleft for me,

let me hide myself in Thee.

Augustus Montague Toplady (1740-78) CCLI 150801

Readings:

Daniel 2:1-23

James 1:5

**Launching out into the deep Glynis**

It's Friday morning and I am sitting in our lounge contemplating about the goodness of God in the land of the living. Recovering from covid-19 which has been a horrible experience but my spirit is delving and launching out into the deep things of God, standing in awe of His mercy and grace and entering His gates with thanksgiving and His courts with praise, singing great is Thy faithfulness, morning by morning new mercies I see, meaning it with all my being because I have heard about God but now I have seen Him doing things in my life that no man could have done. What a wonderful God we serve.

As I am in isolation, thinking about where to start in my bible, the Holy Spirit, my Teacher, led me in the book of Daniel to a strange character, Jonah, who ran away from His assignment of telling Nineveh about the upcoming God's wrath upon their lives because he (Jonah) already made up his mind that they deserve the punishment - hence he ran away from God.

Daniel decided long time ago that, he would find space for what he treasured, he made time for what he wanted, he chose his priorities and Jesus was his number 1. In Daniel 1 v 8 we find him resolving not to defile himself with the royal food and wine, but he chose vegetables instead. Even though it was against the chief official policy, but he gave them permission with one condition - just a 10 day trial. The bible tells me that Daniel and his friends looked healthier than that of young men who were eating from the king’s table.

This was their preparation to launch out into the deep. In Daniel chapter 2 we find Nebuchadnezzar dreaming but not willing to share with anyone, therefore he summoned the magicians, enchanters, sourcerers and astrologers to tell him what he dreamed. In verse 10 the astrologers answered the king " there is not a man on earth who can do what the king asks". They compared him with other kings- that there is never a king who has asked such a mystery, hence Nebuchadnezzar issued a harsh sentence to kill all of them including Daniel and his friends.

But Daniel and his friends had already decided to launch out into the deep even before the predicament. In verse 16 we see the boldness of Daniel when he went to approach a furious king asking for more time. In verse 17 Daniel explained the matter to Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah. He urged them to plead for mercy from the God of heaven concerning this mystery. During the night the mystery was revealed to Daniel in a vision, then he praised the God of heaven saying "Praise be to the name of God for ever and ever, wisdom and power are His".

In James 1 v 5 the bible tells us if you ask for wisdom, God will give generously without finding fault. God is willing to give wisdom to those who ask Him. Daniel and his friends made up their minds long before to sit at God's feet and got to know Him more. They were in a foreign land, away from what they knew, instead of joining the wrong crowd, they chose what was best, to know the Omnipotent God. The bible says Daniel prayed 3 times a day facing Jerusalem. When storm came into their lives, they were ready for it, wearing the full armour of God from top to bottom [ Ephesians 6 v 10-18]. They were not afraid of the king’s verdict because they were prepared to face anything that were coming their way. With God on their side, nothing was impossible. Daniel 11 v 32 declares that people who know their God are strong and they do exploits.

This is the question I ask myself everyday, do I know who am I? Do I know Whose am I? Am I skimming the surface and maybe afraid to launch out into the deep things of God for my life? God is a God of mercy and love, willing to take us step by step, however we have to be willing to launch out into the deep things of God and to know Him more as His word says in James 4 v 8 " Draw near to God and He will draw near to you".

**Hymn The Lord's My Shepherd (Stuart Townend) - M.P. 1008**

The Lord’s my shepherd, I’ll not want.

He makes me lie in pastures green.

He leads me by the still, still waters,

His goodness restores my soul

*And I will trust in You alone,*

*and I will trust in You alone,*

*for Your endless mercy follows me,*

*Your goodness will lead me home.*

He guides my ways in righteousness,

and He anoints my head with oil,

and my cup, it overflows with joy,

I feast on His pure delights.

 *And I will trust....*

And though I walk the darkest path,

I will not fear the evil one,

for You are with me,

and Your rod and staff

are the comfort I need to know.

 *And I will trust....*

Psalm 23 adapted Stuart Townend © 1996 Thankyou Music

**Prayers of Intercession Neil**

Ever gracious and Holy God, we pray for the family of Westfield. Come close to all members and friends of our church, especially at this difficult time of pandemic. Please bring healing where healing is needed, hope where there is need of encouragement, and the knowledge to us that you are eternally faithful and that you will never ever leave us.

We pray for our building project in church. That the development will start soon, and Lord we will get back to worshipping you in our sanctuary, and that the sanctuary will be a place that will bless many people and many in our community.

We pray for the continued protection of our NHS staff, people working in the care homes and in the clinics and surgeries. We pray for people who have the Covid virus right now and particularly those who are very poorly.

We pray for our community and all those who serve our community. We pray for the work of the five Wyke Churches and our church leaders in our five churches. We remember to you our foodbank, the trustees, the steering committee, the volunteers and all the clients and their families. Help this important ministry at this difficult time Lord.

We pray for Boris Johnson our Prime Minister, Matt Hancock, our Secretary of State for Health, all the cabinet and the work of the M.P.'s. We pray for all world leaders that they would honour you by pursuing peace, justice and a better world for our children to live in. Especially at this time we pray for the new President of the United States - President Biden, that he and his administration would do well for the world.

Finally we pray for our Queen Elizabeth, the Duke and the wider royal family, protect and bless them all in the work you have called them to do.

All these prayers we bring in the precious and glorious name of your son and our Saviour, Jesus Christ. Amen.

**Hymn What a Friend We Have in Jesus - M.P. 746**

What a friend we have in Jesus,

all our sins and griefs to bear!

What a privilege to carry

everything to God in prayer!

O what peace we often forfeit,

O what needless pain we bear -

all because we do not carry

everything to God in prayer!

Have we trials and temptations?

Is there trouble anywhere?

We should never be discouraged:

take it to the Lord in prayer.

Can we find a friend so faithful

who will all our sorrows share?

Jesus knows our every weakness -

take it to the Lord in prayer.

Are we weak and heavy-laden,

cumbered with a load of care?

Precious Saviour, still our refuge!

Take it to the Lord in prayer!

Do Thy friends despise, forsake thee?

Take it to the Lord in prayer!

In His arms He'll take and shield thee,

thou will find a solace there.

JOSEPH SCRIVEN (1819-86) CCLI 150801