

Abbey Baptist Church, Reading
Worship Service 10:30am 22 March 2026
Simon Bird leading and Jill Bird preaching
www.abbeybaptistchurch.org.uk
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Entering God's presence together: Worship

Call to worship (Based on Col 3:1-2)

We have been raised with Christ. **We set our hearts on things above.**
Christ is seated at the right hand of God. **We set our minds on things above.**

Song

*Bless the Lord O my soul O my soul
Worship His holy name
Sing like never before O my soul
I'll worship Your holy name*

The sun comes up it's a new day dawning
It's time to sing Your song again
Whatever may pass and whatever lies before me
Let me be singing when the evening comes

You're rich in love and You're slow to anger
Your name is great and Your heart is kind
For all Your goodness I will keep on singing
Ten thousand reasons for my heart to find

And on that day when my strength is failing
The end draws near and my time has come
Still my soul will sing Your praise unending
Ten thousand years and then forevermore

Jonas Myrin, Matt Redman © 2011 Atlas Mountain Songs CCLI Licence No.152160

Introduction & Family Time

Worship MP1040, BPW74/MP790

We worship God with our offering which will be taken during the singing of these songs.

Come now is the time to worship
Come now is the time to give your heart
Come just as you are to worship
Come just as you are before your God, Come

One day every tongue
Will confess You are God
One day every knee will bow
Still the greatest treasure remains

For those who gladly choose You now
Brian Doerksen © 1998 Vineyard Songs CCLI Licence No.152160

You are the King of glory
You are the Prince of Peace
You are the Lord of heav'n and earth
You're the Son of righteousness
Angels bow down before You
Worship and adore
For You have the words of eternal life
You are Jesus Christ the Lord
Hosanna to the Son of David
Hosanna to the King of kings
Glory in the highest heaven
For Jesus the Messiah reigns

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Thanksgiving for offering and prayer for Sunday School (1Chron 29:11)

Yours, Lord, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the majesty and the splendour, for everything in heaven and earth is yours.

We give back to you just a little of what you give to us.

Children leave for their classes

Bible readings

Psalms 96:1-9, John 4:4-7, 19-24, Revelation 4:1, 10-11, 5:9-14

Sermon -The Holy Habit of worship

How much time have you spent cooking, eating, on social media, worrying this last week?

But how much time worshipping? Are you a worshipper? And do you really look forward to it? So what do we mean as Christians by worship? I wonder how many of you would say coming together and singing!!

BUT can we just arrive here at church and go straight into true worship? I would say no – we come together to worship well when we are already individual worshippers.

So how can we be **personal worshippers**? In a way this is the culmination of our series on holy habits. If all these habits are in place, our hearts will be full to bursting with love and worship of our amazing God. We are created to worship. It should be as natural as breathing.

Where in the bible do we get a glimpse of great worship? Surprisingly – from beginning to end

- **Job 38:7** All the morning stars sang together and the angels shouted for joy as creation happened
- **Exodus 40:34** The tabernacle/tent set up for worship in the desert and the glory of the Lord filled it.
- **1 Chronicles 15:1, 16:1, 2 Sam 6:17** David worshipping with all his heart as the ark representing the presence of God was brought to a tent that served for worship for 40 years – nonstop worship with musicians and singers. Did David and others write even more than the 150 Psalms we have recorded? They are so the heart of worship in the whole bible – read them, meditate on them, learn them and worship with them
- **1 Kings 8:10-11** Under Solomon the glory of the Lord filled the temple – a place of continuous worship.

BUT as the history continued the Israelites turned away from God – their love for him grew very cold and worship ceased. But the 'good' kings restored the temple and worship to be central to the people of God.– Jehosaphat, Joash, Hezekiah, Josiah – then after the return from exile Ezra and Nehemiah.

Then a **new age of worship** came with the gift of the Holy Spirit, We don't have to go to a temple or be special people, we can all be filled with the Holy Spirit and out of us can flow rivers of living water in worship back to God. In Acts we have so many occasions when the early Christians got together to pray and worship, even the whole house where they met was shaken by the presence of God.

And then in **Revelation**, the very end of the bible, we get a good look at worship in heaven. All the heavenly beings giving glory, honour and thanks to him who sits on the throne and to the lamb. John was invited up to have a look and we certainly will be there too when we die – but the invitation is open now to enjoy ever greater nearness and joy in worship.

So when do you find worship just flowing out from you?

When you look at creation – this beautiful spring bursting forth – a wonderful sunrise or sunset. Just looking around you at all the unique and wonderful creations God has made

When you read the bible. As you spend time daily in the bible, learning more about God and his ways with us, are you finding thanksgiving and then worship just bursts out from you?

We had in our reading Jesus talking to the Samaritan woman. He said a time is coming when you will worship **in spirit and in truth**. As we explored at the beginning of the service, knowing the truth of what God is like and how much he loves and watches over us, leads us to true worship. But later in **John 5:39** there a rebuke from Jesus '**You diligently study the scriptures because you think by them you possess eternal life. These are the scriptures that tell all about me, yet you refuse to come to me that you may have life.** Could you challenge yourself that for sure you are not worshipping the bible!! The bible must always lead us to worship as we learn more and more about our wonderful LORD. These last weeks I have been reading the Psalms each morning and finding such joy in joining King David as he expressed his worship in these songs.

Then we also need to worship **in Spirit** – this is what was so new after the coming of the Holy Spirit for all believers at Pentecost. Only then can it be true and real worship. Let's be sure we are asking the Holy Spirit to fill us again and again to overflowing, so we can worship in **Spirit** and in **truth**.

So what can be blocking our true worship? Are you coming with a divided heart. Are you coming as a hypocrite – just singing words you don't really mean with all your heart?

- **Psalm 78:36** They would just flatter him with their mouths.
- **Psalm 86:11** Give me an undivided heart to fear your name and praise you with my whole heart.

He is a jealous God . Think of the relationship between a husband and wife. Are they totally faithful and committed in love – or are there other relationships and goals that come between them. It is right to be jealous in a marriage and God is the same – he wants our undivided worship. Our God is an awesome God we come before with awe – he is also a consuming fire!

So helpful hints

- A. Put on a garment of praise Isaiah 61:3 – get dressed for worship – take off anxiety, distractions
- B. A sacrifice of praise Hebrews 13:15 – sometimes we just feel too heavy, too burdened but God delights in us coming with determination to worship.
- C. Put on humility, dependence and abandonment to our God and Saviour.

So finally why do we worship?

- **It's what we are created for** – to find our hearts lost in awe in the presence of God
- **It is spiritual warfare.** Satan hates us worshipping God. **He** wants our worship but as we worship God, his power over us lessons, he has to flee
- **It is healing physically and emotionally** – in God's presence is fullness of life
- **It is purifying** In God's holy presence we become so aware of our sin and shortcomings. Psalm 24:3-4
- **It is empowering** – in worship we are filled again with God's power and calling. Isaiah 6, as Isaiah was worshipping, he was cleansed by the burning coal but also given his task to do

- **It is joy** for us and also for God, as we join the whole company of heaven and find what we are most created to do. **Psalm 16:11** in your presence is fulness of joy

John 5:23 says God is seeking worshippers to worship him in spirit and in truth. Has he found you and are you responding? We are made to worship and our hearts are restless until we find our God shaped hole filled with worship. How central is worship to you? Are you a true worshipper?

Responding to the word in worship BPW52/MP388, MP170, BPW41/MP142

Jesus we enthrone You
 We proclaim You our King
 Standing here in the midst of us
 We raise You up with our praise
 And as we worship build a throne
 And as we worship build a throne
 And as we worship build a throne
 Come Lord Jesus and take Your place
 Paul Kyle © 1980 Thankyou Music Ltd CCLI Licence No.152160

Give thanks with a grateful heart
Give thanks to the Holy One
Give thanks because He's given
Jesus Christ His Son
 And now let the weak say I am strong
 Let the poor say I am rich
 Because of what the Lord has done for us
 Henry Smith CCLI Song #20285 CCLI Licence No.152160

Father we love You, We worship and adore You
 Glorify your name in all the earth
 Glorify your name
 Glorify your name
 Glorify your name in all the earth

Jesus we love You...

Spirit we love You...
 Donna Adkins © 1976, 1981, 2025 CCCM Music CCLI Licence No.152160

Prayers of intercession Lam Yee and Selina Chan

Dear Father God,

We thank You for ushering in the beautiful season of Spring. The days are now much longer than in winter, and green shoots and blossoming flowers surround us everywhere. This renewal truly fills our hearts with joy. **Amen.**

We are deeply grateful for Your faithful care for us here at Abbey Baptist Church. Thank You for Your boundless love that sustains us day by day. **Amen.**

At the same time, Lord, we earnestly ask You to watch over our sisters and brothers from Iran. War has raged there for weeks, leaving many anxious for the safety of their families still in the country. We also lift up our Ukrainian sister and friends, as conflict in their homeland has persisted for four long years with no clear end in sight.

We pray that world leaders would heed Your Word, and shift their priorities from intense military actions to genuine PEACE. Our hearts break for all who suffer so deeply in these horrible conflicts. Bring comfort, protection, and an end to the violence. **Amen.**

We pray especially for our children and teenagers here in the UK. Shower them with Your love and wise guidance. Grant their parents patience, faith, and strength to nurture them well. May these young ones grow safely and healthily in Your teaching and promises. Protect them from the harms of toxic social media and negative influences among their peers. **Amen.**

We would also like to pray for our elderly brothers and sisters who are frail or unwell. We particularly pray for Gwen and all who are feeling poorly today. Father, please ease their pain and deliver them from prolonged suffering. Surround them with Your love so they may find rejuvenation in Your presence and continue serving You faithfully as Your devoted servants. **Amen.**

We must not forget the charities we support through our Home Mission: CCA, CIRDIC, RE Inspired, Mustard Tree, the Bower Family, as well as Ray Lam and his family. Strengthen their hands, Lord, as they pursue these good causes in Your mighty name. Provide them with wisdom, resources and resilience. **Amen. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.**

Hymn for sending out BPW391/MP631

Tell out my soul the greatness of the Lord
 Unnumbered blessings give my spirit voice
 Tender to me the promise of His word
 In God my Saviour shall my heart rejoice

Tell out my soul the greatness of His Name
 Make known His might the deeds His arm has done
 His mercy sure from age to age the same
 His holy Name the Lord the Mighty One

Tell out my soul the greatness of His might
 Powers and dominions lay their glory by
 Proud hearts and stubborn wills are put to flight
 The hungry fed the humble lifted high

Tell out my soul the glories of His word
 Firm is His promise and His mercy sure
 Tell out my soul the greatness of the Lord
 To children's children and for evermore

Timothy Dudley-Smith © 1961 Dudley-Smith, Timothy CCLI Licence No.152160



Church offering

Blessing

To him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you before his glorious presence without fault and with great joy – to the only God our Saviour be glory, majesty, power and authority, through Jesus Christ our Lord, before all ages, now and for evermore! **Amen.**

The Grace

May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with us all evermore, **Amen.**

Events to highlight

Tuesday	24	8:00pm	Church prayer meeting on Zoom
Wednesday	25	10:30 12:00 2:00	Renew Café Bible study ICaf English lesson and First Steps course (Jesus film)
Thursday	26	10:30	Toddlers

	10:30	Bible Study
Friday 27	5:00pm	Table Tennis
Saturday 28	10:30am	Walk, meet Abbey
Palm Sunday 20	10:30 After service	Sunday Worship Newcomers' lunch
Maundy Thursday 2 April	7pm	Service at Abbey
Good Friday 3	Good Friday Walk of Witness	Starting from Our Lady of Peace Church at 9.40 am, breaks at St Peters, Anderson Baptist and Park URC and finishing with a service at Wycliffe Baptist. You can join or leave the walk at any stage, or just come along to the service at Wycliffe (time to be advised)
Easter Sunday 5	8am 10:30 After service	Service in the Forbury Gardens (at Abbey if wet) followed by refreshments at Abbey Worship with Communion Easter lunch (Iranian New Year celebration)