

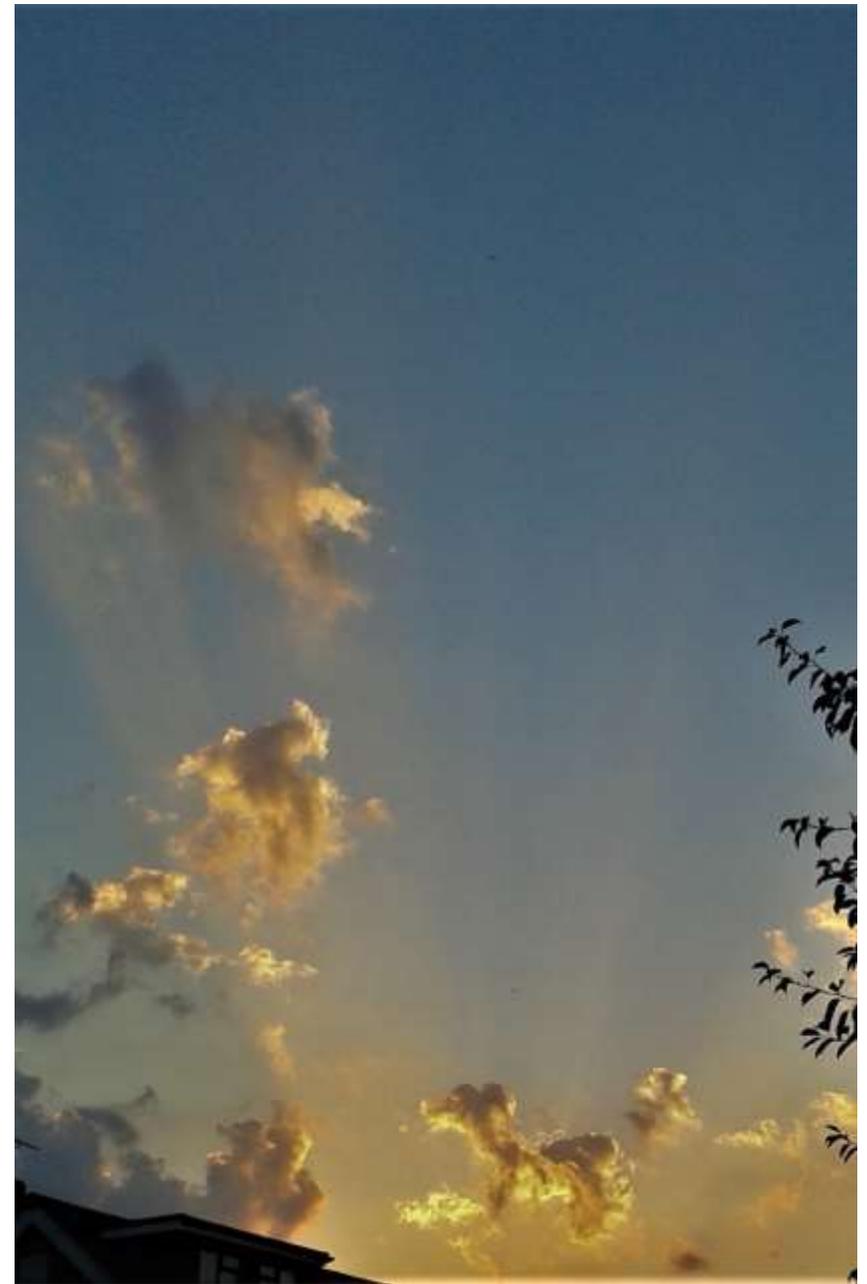
## Preparation:

The readings set this Sunday include:

- Genesis 22:1-14
- Psalm 13
- Romans 6:12-23
- Matthew 10:40-42

1. You may want to read some or all of these readings before starting your worship – or include them after the first prayer. To go into more depth you may want to look at the Bible study material provided at <http://centralhall.info/resources/>
2. When preparing for this worship, find a place and time where you can be quiet and comfortable for half an hour.
3. Put something that speaks to you of God's faithful love in a place where you can focus on it.
4. For the hymns, you can sing them if you are able, or you can read the words out loud – or silently if that seems better – or you may wish to click on the links and join in on the internet (if you are using a computer).
5. When you are ready, light a candle/tea light if it helps you to focus. This can mean many things to you but bear in mind the words of the psalmist: "Consider and answer me, O LORD my God! Give light to my eyes, or I will sleep the sleep of death." (Ps 30:3)
6. Now, sit down, relax your body and your breathing...
7. Welcome to worship!

## Order for worship on Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> June 2020



## **Worship for Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> June – at Central Hall**

*Notes for worship preparation are on the other side of this sheet.*

**Call to worship:** I will sing to the LORD, because he has dealt bountifully with me. (Psalm 30:6)

**Hymn 59:** Lord the light of your love [Link](#)

**Prayer:** Faithful God, source of light and hope of our hearts, we worship and adore you. You are at the beginning and end of all that we are. When we are feeling down you are our support. When we are joyful you lift our eyes beyond the heavens. You alone are God, and you want us to be like you. Yet sometimes we are less than steadfast in our loving. Sometimes we are less than faithful and sometimes we have chosen our own desires above your desire for our lives. Forgive us the things we need to be forgiven. Restore us by your infinite grace... By that grace we know that our sins are forgiven and we can begin again. Thanks be to you. **Amen**

**Gospel reading from Matthew (10:42)**

Whoever gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones in the name of a disciple -- truly I tell you, none of these will lose their reward.

### **Reflection**

The Gospel reading set for today comes at the end of a passage where Jesus is preparing the disciples to be sent out to share good news. This means healing those who are sick and letting people know that the kingdom of heaven is near at hand. The sending out follows from Jesus' emotional response to seeing the harassed and helpless crowds. Jesus wants people to hear good news, but he says that it won't be easy or comfortable for the disciples, and at one point he challenges them to put God above family relationships and all other priorities.

That challenge is seen in the Genesis reading too. Abraham goes up the mountain to sacrifice Isaac. I have spoken to more than one person who was told that story at Sunday School and it made a lasting and not very happy impression. Abraham is doing his best to obey God's will but only

understands what God really wants when he is about to sacrifice his son. God will never ask us to sacrifice another human being, but does ask us to sacrifice something of ourselves –the Romans reading refers to that - sacrificing our selfishness and sinful nature to discover the grace of God. God's love is a love that drives out fear and frees us from being enslaved to false gods and earthly priorities (like keeping up with the neighbours). I think "keeping up with the neighbours" is probably what Abraham thought he was doing. To prove his God was the greatest, he wanted to show his faith was stronger than that of his neighbours. Abraham was willing to sacrifice his son, but that was never God's desire. If the result of the Sunday school lessons we received was that we think God is some kind of ogre, rather than a God of compassion and love, then sadly our lessons failed to teach us about God's nature and the foundations of our faith. Abraham discovers something about God for the first time in human history. (This story is long before the Hebrew Scriptures or the twelve tribes of Israel). God, is increasingly coming into Abraham's life, and God does not desire Isaac's blood. Abraham and people of faith must place God first, then we can do and be much more than if we are enslaved to our own sinful nature. Paul says, "Be free!" Jesus says "show your love!" and goes on to say that a glass of cold water freely given is sufficient.

**Hymn 507:** O for a heart to praise my God [Link](#)

**Prayers** for the world (Please include your own intercessions too)

- Those who don't know where to turn, and end up sacrificing hope, faith and love on the altar of a false god who is like an ogre
- Those who seem hopeless or helpless in our communities
- Those who suffer daily discrimination in our society
- Add your own prayers... and conclude with the **Lord's Prayer**

**Hymn 424:** God forgave my sin [Link](#)

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