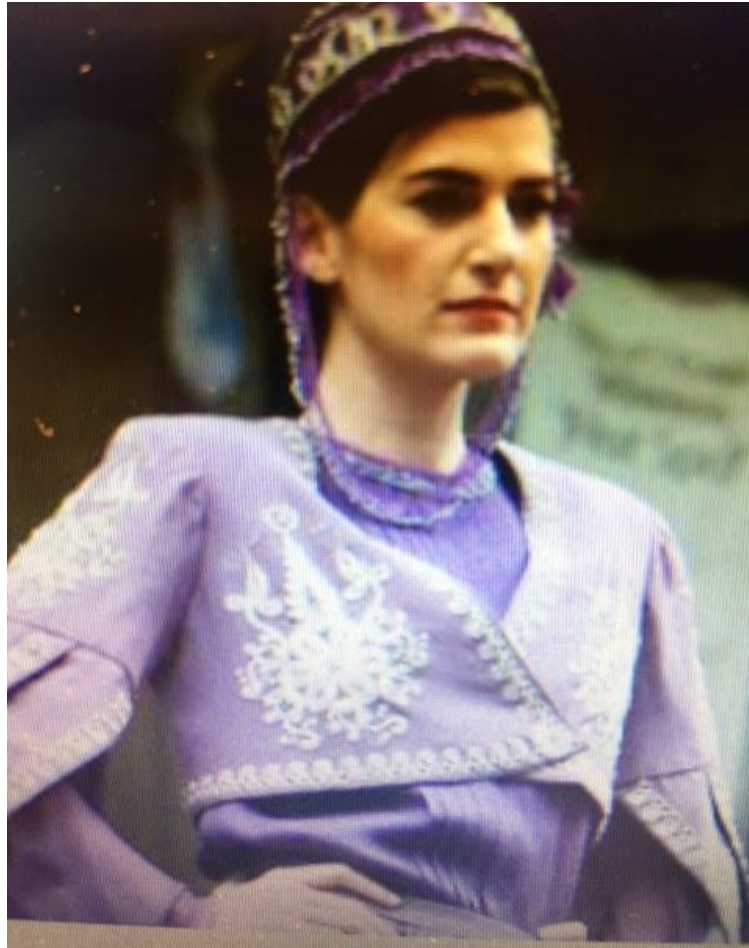




**Sunday Worship for 28th June
Third Sunday after Trinity**



Introduction

Though we cannot come together physically, we gather spiritually as the family of God in our Father's presence to offer him praise and thanksgiving, to hear and receive his holy word, to bring before him the needs of the world, to ask forgiveness for our sins and to seek his grace, that, through his son Jesus Christ we may give ourselves for his service.

Service leader's intro from Cheryl Moore

Good morning everyone! and welcome to today's virtual service, the last in this month's theme of Women in the Bible. All four women – Deborah, Martha, Hannah and Lydia were examples of people with great faith and each one has given us different meaningful messages on which to reflect – Deborah the only female prophet and judge mentioned in the Bible tells us that God can

accomplish great things through people who are willing to be lead by Him. Hannah, mother of Samuel, also from the OT, showed that it is alright to pray to God for a personal miracle if the outcome of this request is ultimately for God's glory. Martha, sister to Mary and Lazarus is an example of one type of personality in contrast to her sister. Both women had a great love for Christ but it manifested itself in different ways because of their different personalities. The message for us being that of finding a balance, between worshipping Christ and service. Andrew is giving the talk today about Lydia – a successful Greek business woman, dealer in expensive purple cloth, known for her hospitality and the first Greek to be baptized by Paul. We look forward to hearing her story.

Let us take a moment of quiet before we begin.

Greeting and Opening Prayer

Grace, mercy and peace from God our Father
and the Lord Jesus Christ be with you.
and also with you.

I will enter His gates with thanksgiving in my heart.
I will enter His courts with praise.

**We come together this-morning in the name of Christ –
to offer our praise and thanksgiving,
to hear and receive God's holy word,
to pray for the needs of the world and to seek forgiveness for our sins,
that by the power of the Holy Spirit we may give ourselves to the service of God.**

The night has passed and the day lies open before us. Let us pray with one heart and mind.
Silence is kept

As we rejoice in the gift of this new day,
So may the light of your presence, O God,
Set our hearts on fire with love for you;
Now and forever.
Amen

Our first hymn this-morning '**To God be the Glory**', MP 708 is a popular hymn of praise. Please use the link and bring this time of worship to life by joining in, in full voice!

Please use the link and bring this time of worship to life by joining in, in full voice!
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ukQajOmgDGk>

Song: To God be the glory

**To God be the glory! great things He hath done;
so loved He the world that He gave us His Son;
who yielded His life an atonement for sin,
and opened the life gate that all may go in.**

***Praise the Lord, praise the Lord!
let the earth hear His voice;
praise the Lord, praise the Lord!
let the people rejoice:
O come to the Father,
through Jesus the Son
and give Him the glory;
great things He hath done!***

**O perfect redemption, the purchase of blood!
to every believer the promise of God;
the vilest offender who truly believes,
that moment from Jesus a pardon receives.**

***Praise the Lord, praise the Lord!
let the earth hear His voice;
praise the Lord, praise the Lord!
let the people rejoice:
O come to the Father,
through Jesus the Son
and give Him the glory;
great things He hath done!***

**Great things He hath taught us, great things He hath done,
and great our rejoicing through Jesus the Son;
but purer, and higher, and greater will be
our wonder, our rapture, when Jesus we see.**

***Praise the Lord, praise the Lord!
let the earth hear His voice;
praise the Lord, praise the Lord!
let the people rejoice:
O come to the Father,
through Jesus the Son
and give Him the glory;
great things He hath done!***

Before we move on to a time of confession it would be good to think about and pray for our regular group of children who attended Sunday Church. We know they are being well catered for on Sundays via Facebook thanks to Ruth and have been following the same theme of Women in the Bible. We miss them.

Let us pray –

Heavenly Father we bring before you now our young people,
Lily, Alba, Ruby, Evalyn, Charlotte, Annabel, Ben, Olivia, Sarah and Daniel.

We ask that you bless them and keep them and their families safe
during these troubling times.

We pray that they continue to learn about you and when the time is right
come back to worship with their church family. We pray for that day to come.

In Jesus' name. **Amen**

Confession

God so loved the world that he gave his only Son Jesus Christ to save us from our sins, to be our
advocate in heaven, and to bring us to eternal life.

Let us confess our sins in penitence and faith, firmly resolved to keep God's commandments and
to live in love and peace with all.

**Almighty God, our heavenly Father,
we have sinned against you,
through our own fault,
in thought, and word, and deed,
and in what we have left undone.
We are heartily sorry,
and repent of all our sins
In your mercy forgive what we have been,
help us amend what we are and direct what we shall be;
that we may do justly, have mercy and walk humbly with you,
our God. Amen**

So may the Father of all mercies
cleans us from our sins and restore us in His image
to the praise and glory of His name,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen

Readings

Acts 16: 11-15

¹¹ From Troas we put out to sea and sailed straight for Samothrace, and the next day we went on
to Neapolis. ¹² From there we travelled to Philippi, a Roman colony and the leading city of that
district of Macedonia. And we stayed there several days.

¹³ On the Sabbath we went outside the city gate to the river, where we expected to find a place of
prayer. We sat down and began to speak to the women who had gathered there. ¹⁴ One of those
listening was a woman from the city of Thyatira named Lydia, a dealer in purple cloth. She was a
worshiper of God. The Lord opened her heart to respond to Paul's message. ¹⁵ When she and the
members of her household were baptized, she invited us to her home. "If you consider me a
believer in the Lord," she said, "come and stay at my house." And she persuaded us.

This is the Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Matthew 9: 18-26

¹⁸ While he was saying this, a synagogue leader came and knelt before him and said, "My daughter has just died. But come and put your hand on her, and she will live." ¹⁹ Jesus got up and went with him, and so did his disciples.

²⁰ Just then a woman who had been subject to bleeding for twelve years came up behind him and touched the edge of his cloak. ²¹ She said to herself, "If I only touch his cloak, I will be healed."

²² Jesus turned and saw her. "Take heart, daughter," he said, "your faith has healed you." And the woman was healed at that moment.

²³ When Jesus entered the synagogue leader's house and saw the noisy crowd and people playing pipes, ²⁴ he said, "Go away. The girl is not dead but asleep." But they laughed at him. ²⁵ After the crowd had been put outside, he went in and took the girl by the hand, and she got up. ²⁶ News of this spread through all that region.

This is the Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Talk (by Andrew Killick)



Good morning. This is an odd way to give a talk! But we have had to get used to a lot of strange things during this period of lockdown, so I hope that you will profit from reading on! This is a series on "Women of God". Lydia is an important woman of God, the first convert to Christianity in Europe – but let's go back earlier in the story and look at the Who, When, Where, Why, What and How. You might like to keep Acts chapter 16 open for reference, along with a map of the eastern end of the Mediterranean if you have maps in the back of the Bible.

Who was Lydia? Her name literally means “the Lydian woman”, a simple name indicating that she MIGHT have been born a slave. But if so, she had gained her freedom and prospered as a seller of purple cloth in Thyatira (in the Roman province of Asia, now part of Turkey; and it’s one of the 7 Churches of Asia to whom letters are addressed in Revelation chapters 2 and 3). By the time we reach Acts chapter 16 she had moved a long way across the Aegean Sea to Philippi, an important centre for trade in Macedonia to the north of Greece.



When did these events take place? Paul was on what we now call his second missionary journey. We do not have many precise dates for the events of the New Testament; but we are in the period around 50 AD. We can be very certain of this thanks to Acts 18.12 which refers to Gallio as the Roman proconsul. He held office in Corinth in 52 AD. After leaving Philippi Paul had spent a short time in Thessalonica, Berea and Athens before working in Corinth for 18 months; then he was seized and accused before Gallio. Gallio, by the way, was the brother of the philosopher Seneca who was tutor to the emperor Nero – but that’s a completely different story!

Where is Philippi? Philippi was a Roman colony in Macedonia, which was formerly the kingdom of Philip and his son Alexander the Great, but today is part of northern Greece. Roman soldiers had been settled there after the battle of Philippi in 42 BC (where the murderers of Julius Caesar met their end), and it had risen to be the leading city of that area (see verse 12). It was on an important east-west trade route, which presumably explains why Lydia had chosen to come there and carry on her trading.

Why did Paul come to Philippi? Paul must have realised the strategic importance of Philippi. If a church could be planted there, the Gospel would be able to spread through the surrounding area. [Memo to today’s church: be strategic in our thinking!] But in fact it was all part of God’s plan, guiding Paul and his party NOT to enter the province of Asia, NOT to enter Bithynia, but then sending a vision when they reached the port of Troas guiding them to go west to Macedonia (see verses 6-10). [This is a good illustration of how the Lord guides us: sometimes direct prompts from dreams, visions or advice from friends which we are confident come from God, combining with our own God-given wisdom to make sensible choices. I like that verse Psalm 25.12: in the RSV translation it says “Who is the man that fears the Lord? Him will he instruct in the way that he should choose”. So WE do the choosing and GOD does the guiding: both elements are important, and in general we shouldn’t just sit around doing nothing while waiting for some mythical bolt from the blue!]

What happened? Chapter 16 focuses on encounters with three people: Lydia, a slave girl and the town jailer. Paul usually visited the synagogue and spoke to the Jews when he arrived in a new place. But there was no synagogue in Philippi, presumably because there were not the requisite ten men needed as a minimum. So Paul went down to the river on the Sabbath, expecting that there would be a place of prayer there. He met several women, including Lydia. Interestingly she was already a worshipper of God – how often we meet people like that in the pages of Acts, like the Roman centurion Cornelius in chapter 10, people who don’t

yet understand the Gospel but are ready to receive it when it is explained to them fully for the first time. [Memo: We live in an age of increasing Biblical and spiritual illiteracy; but we should keep a sharp lookout for people who are already well disposed towards spiritual things and in whom God is already at work!]

Lydia responded to Paul's message and was baptised along with the rest of her household. And that raises a question: was she perhaps a widow? Or was she an unmarried businesswoman carrying on a successful trade with folk working for her? We don't know; but she certainly was a natural leader and insisted on Paul and his party staying in her house: verse 15 suggests that she wouldn't take no for an answer!

However, the most important result of this riverside meeting was the planting of a church in Philippi. It survived the attacks that were made on Paul later in chapter 16; Paul was arrested, beaten and imprisoned, he was miraculously delivered and he was able to give some parting encouragement to Lydia and the group of believers before he moved on to Thessalonica (verse 40). Later, on his third missionary journey, Paul visited the young churches in Macedonia twice – on his way southward to Corinth and then on his return journey (Acts 19.21 and 20.1-3) – and later still he sent the letter we now call Philippians, when he was a prisoner in Rome sometime around 63 AD. [Memo: Evangelism is very important, but so is follow-up. We need to tell people the Good News, and if they receive it, we need to stay alongside them and teach and help them.]

How did all this come about? The short answer is that it was the Lord's work. The whole of the book of Acts is a missionary book – God's mission. We see God at work at Pentecost, when 3,000 people joined the church; at the Temple, where Peter and John were given the authority to heal a lame man; on a desert road, where Philip led an important Ethiopian official to faith in Jesus; in the conversion of Saul on the road to Damascus; in Caesarea, where Cornelius the Roman centurion welcomed Peter and accepted the Gospel message; in miraculous deliverances from prison – Peter in chapter 12 and Paul in chapter 16; in God's miraculous preservation of Paul on three long journeys round the Mediterranean world where he met violent opposition, arrests, beatings, imprisonment, stoning... All this would have been totally impossible unless it was the work of God.

But the human agents are vital too! There is a simple but profound saying "God has no hands and feet in this world except ours". We are important to God's mission! Another old chorus goes:

"Mine are the hands to do the work;
My feet shall run for thee;
My lips shall spread the glorious news;
Lord, here am I: send me."

As we study the story of Paul's meeting with Lydia and everything that resulted from it, we can marvel that each of them was the right person in the right place at the right time with the right attitude. They didn't need to fret – "Oh dear, I wonder what God wants me to do today – I'm bound to be in the wrong place!" They just needed to walk with the Lord moment by moment, enjoying his unseen presence and allowing him to use them as he chose. And so should we!

Affirmation of Faith

Let us declare our faith in God.

We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty
maker of heaven and earth, of all that is seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father.
God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God.

Begotten not made, of one being with the Father.
Through Him all things were made.

For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven, was incarnate of

the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary and was made man.
For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried;

On the third day he rose again in accordance with the scriptures.
**He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead
and his kingdom will have no end.**

We believe in the Holy Spirit
The Lord the giver of life

Who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
With the Father and the Son he is worshipped and glorified.

He has spoken through the prophets.
We believe in one holy, catholic and apostolic church.

We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.
**We look for the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come.
Amen**

Before Lewis leads us in a time of prayer we're going to sing again.

This song 'You Raise Me Up' is a modern religious song written in 2001 by the Norwegian-Irish duo Secret Garden. The words are very simple and meaningful describing how our faith in the Lord can sustain us through troubled times.

During this period of the pandemic we have all experienced times of frustration, worry and grief. This presentation of the song by Josh Groban is very uplifting.

You Raise Me Up with lyrics https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oni0tO_HN30

[Song: You raise me up](#)

**When I am down and all my thoughts are weary
When troubles come and my heart burdened be
Then I am still and wait here in the silence
until you come and sit a while with me.
You raise me up so I can stand on mountains.
You raise me up to walk on stormy seas.
I am strong when I am on Your shoulders.
You raise me up to more than I can be.**

Now let us be still and silent as Lewis leads our time of prayer

[Prayers \(written by Lewis Ayers\)](#)

In these unusual times, when we cannot meet in our church building, it seems doubly appropriate to think of Lydia who, it seems, started the Christian church in Philippi in her own home.

Father, while we thank you that the worst of the restrictions in our country are now ending, we now pray for everyone in the world.

Father we ask your blessing on all your church in its many forms around the world.

We bring before you all those locally who continue to work to meet our spiritual leadership needs while we cannot meet together and we are without an appointed priest.

Thank you for Paul Arnold, Paul Clayton and all the team who are striving to continue their work despite the additional inconveniences and risks. Support them with your love, Father. Help them. Encourage them. Inspire them.

We also pray for all those involved in the selection of our replacement priest-in-charge. Strengthen them, father, and please speed and smooth the appointment. Father God, you gave us the true Good Shepherd in Jesus Christ your Son, and you continue to call suitable people to lead your sheep, we ask that in due time you bring us a person of wisdom with a servant spirit who can lead us by example, for your glory.

Risen and ascended Lord, **Hear our Prayer.**

Father, we pray for the Royal Family and our Government. We thank you for the wonderful example of service that we have in the persons of our Queen and Prince Phillip. Bless and guide them and all that govern our nation, nationally, regionally and locally, that they may always follow your will and walk in your way.

God of hope, please unite our nation, and as Covid-19 restrictions are lifted, inspire all our leaders with your wisdom.

Risen and ascended Lord, **Hear our Prayer.**

Father, we pray for all our brothers and sisters around the world, and especially those who are in need of any kind, so that they can really know your presence and feel your love.

We think of, and bring to you, all those affected by tragedy or disaster, including the Covid pandemic, and those who continue to suffer poverty, persecution, slavery, oppression, injustice and the effects of war.

Father God, the recent weeks have not been easy. In our new norm of physical distancing we cannot offer a handshake to greet, or an embrace to comfort, or a pat on the shoulder to encourage. Please help us to continue to keep each other safe. Give us the love that will help us to support those who are vulnerable, including all those involved with the Moses Project. Help us to find ways to be sociable when we keep our distance. And teach us to be sensible and to seek help ourselves whenever we need it.

Risen and ascended Lord, **Hear our Prayer.**

We Pray for those suffering in any way. Father, please comfort and heal all those who suffer in body, mind or spirit, and especially those known to us, who we now bring to you.

We ask for healing for all who suffer illnesses, both physical and mental. Please make them well, Lord, if it is your will.

And we ask for your comfort and support for all those who love them, care for them, and look after them, whether they do so professionally or simply out of love.

Lord Jesus, who healed the sick, we thank you for all of our medical services professionals and volunteers. Please be with doctors, carers and nurses as they act to deliver your healing touch whether within our hospitals or in other situations.

Give them the gifts and skills they need to perform their work. Give them the strength to continue when days are hard. Give them energy when the day is long. Please keep them and their families in your safe keeping.

Father, we know that this battle against Covid-19 is a marathon and not a sprint. Make us ever conscious that we are not alone because you are on the journey with us.

Father, your word assures us that we should not be afraid. Lord, please continue to remind us of your wonderful promises. Even where death arrives, it is the doorway to life with you as a result of the price paid by our redeemer and saviour, Jesus Christ.

Risen and ascended Lord, **Hear our Prayer.**

Father, while we continue in a period with much higher than normal incidents of death, we bring before you the faithful who have now finished their journey on earth. May the souls of the faithful departed by your mercy rest in peace.

We also bring before you all who mourn and continue to suffer the loss of a loved one, especially during this period when traditional funeral services are not available.

Heavenly Father, please comfort the bereaved. Please hold in your embrace all those whose hearts overflow with grief and a sense of loss. Give them time to shed their tears. Help them to know that you are at work so that they can experience hope and peace.

Merciful Father, **accept these prayers,
for the sake of Your Son
our Saviour, Jesus Christ. Amen**

[Collect for the day](#)

**God our saviour,
look on this wounded world
in pity and in power;
hold us fast to your promises of peace
won for us by your Son,
our Saviour Jesus Christ.**

The Lord's Prayer

**Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name.
Your kingdom come,
your will be done
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those
who sin against us.
Lead us not into temptation
but deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power
and the glory are yours,
now and for ever. Amen**

The Peace

Usually, during our service we would be sharing the peace of God with each other. As this is not possible at present you may wish to take a moment or two to pray for those people who usually sit in front, alongside or behind you or anyone you know who is in great personal need at present.

Our final hymn this-morning is that wonderful hymn of praise 'How Great Thou Art' MP506
How Great Thou Art with lyrics, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dBLRsUMtuFQ>

Song: How Great Thou Art

**O Lord my God! when I in awesome wonder
consider all the works Thy hand hath made,
I see the stars, I hear the mighty thunder,
the power throughout the universe displayed;**

***Then sings my soul, my Saviour God, to Thee,
how great Thou art, how great Thou art!
Then sings my soul, my Saviour God, to Thee,
how great Thou art, how great Thou art!***

**When through the woods and forest glades I wander
and hear the birds sing sweetly in the trees;
when I look down from lofty mountain grandeur,
and hear the brook, and feel the gentle breeze;**

***Then sings my soul, my Saviour God, to Thee,
how great Thou art, how great Thou art!
Then sings my soul, my Saviour God, to Thee,
how great Thou art, how great Thou art!***

**And when I think that God His Son not sparing,
sent Him to die – I scarce can take it in,
that on the cross my burden gladly bearing,
He bled and died to take away my sin:**

***Then sings my soul, my Saviour God, to Thee,
how great Thou art, how great Thou art!
Then sings my soul, my Saviour God, to Thee,
how great Thou art, how great Thou art!***

**When Christ shall come with shout of acclamation
and take me home – what joy shall fill my heart!
Then shall I bow in humble adoration
and there proclaim, my God, how great Thou art!**

***Then sings my soul, my Saviour God, to Thee,
how great Thou art, how great Thou art!
Then sings my soul, my Saviour God, to Thee,
how great Thou art, how great Thou art!***

The Blessing

Eternal God, our beginning and our end,
accompany us in this day's journey.
Dawn on our darkness.
Open our eyes to praise you for your creation
and to see the work you set before us today.
Take us and use us to bring others the new life you give us
in Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Dismissal

So, go in peace to love and serve the Lord.
Amen

Why not listen once more to one of today's hymns whilst you have your coffee and cake!