

‘Unemployment & the future of work’

An Act of Worship

Opening Sentence Psalm 24: 1

The earth is the Lord's and all that is in it, the world and those who dwell therein.

O Lord God, your Creation holds within itself such promise for all your people. You have entrusted us with the stewardship of the earth and opened up before us a vision of what can be achieved. You have granted us a capacity to meet the needs of the deprived, to reach a measure of fulfilment through daily work and to use your resources responsibly. We pray that you may enable us to realise these hopes, so that, at the end, your Rule may indeed triumph for ever and ever. **Amen.**

Hymn

**Worker God, who planned creation -
Complex splendour held in one:
spoke out threads of light and matter
weaving what your word has spun,
then, with proper satisfaction,
rested when the work was done.**

**Many see the sudden ending
of their deeply cherished plans
through the failure of a system
which no longer meets demands,
and the fruit from years of effort
slips away from helpless hands.**

Blessing:

May God our Father, source of all creation and creativity, pour his blessing upon us in all our daily life and work.

Amen.

May our Lord Jesus Christ, who came that we may have life in all its abundance, transform our lives with the joy of his presence.

Amen.

May the Holy Spirit, who gives us such a diversity of gifts, inspire and guide us in all your ways.

Amen.

And the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be among us and remain with us always.

Amen.

**Will you let the blinded see
if I but call your name?
Will you set the prisoners free
and never be the same?
Will you kiss the leper clean
and do such as this unseen,
and admit to what I mean
in you and you in me?**

**Will you love the 'you' you hide
if I but call your name?
Will you quell the fear inside
and never be the same?
Will you use the faith you've found
to reshape the world around
through my sight and touch and sound
in you and you in me?**

**Lord, your summons echoes true
when you but call my name.
Let me turn and follow you
and never be the same.
In your company I'll go
where your love and footsteps show.
Thus I'll move and live and grow
in you and you in me.**

*Wild Goose Worship Group
Iona Community*

**Who are we to spoil the pattern,
make redundant hands and mind,
tarnish pleasure in achievement
which your pleasure undersigned,
crushing lives and wasting talent,
uncreating humankind?**

**Helplessness fuels bitter anger –
friends and loved ones bear the cost.
Voices raised create a Babel,
countermanding Pentecost,
and by this disintegration,
whole communities are lost.**

**Worker God within creation
weaving what our hands have spun,
give to us consistent strength
to speak your word and see it done.
So through humble human triumphs
may your victory be won.**

*Janet Wootton 1992
Suggested tunes: Oriel, Rhuddlan*

Prayers for Forgiveness

***The desert will rejoice and flowers will bloom in the
wilderness (Isaiah 35:1)***

Leader: Let us ask God's forgiveness for colluding with structures which prevent the blossoming of the wilderness. While 'set-aside' fields are uncultivated and agricultural workers are laid off, fertile land is turned into desert.

Response: God forgive our passivity

Leader: We are warm and comfortable while teenagers in our cities are homeless and jobless. The city is a wasteland and God's loved ones go hungry and cold.

Response: God forgive our failure to respond

Leader: While many are rich and well fed, the single mum sits in the lonely prison of the tower block, bored and unemployed. Her child cries.

Response: God forgive our indifference

Leader: Let water spring up in the wilderness and torrents flow in the desert. Open up the way to holiness.

Response: Forgive our foolishness. Forgive our sinfulness. Forgive us for depriving men and women of hope. Shower your children with joy and gladness and let suffering and weariness be done away.

Behold, the cry of my people has come to me (Exodus 3:9)

Psalm 31 - A Prayer of Trust in God

**Be merciful to me God, for I am in trouble;
My eyes are tired from so much crying;
I am completely worn out.
I am exhausted by sorrow,
and weeping has shortened my life.
I am weak from all my troubles,
even my bones are wasting away.**

**Lord, you placed me in the world to live in community.
Thus you taught me to love, to share in life,
to struggle for bread and for justice,
Your truth incarnate in my life.
So be it, Lord.**

Christ bids us to be life salt calling forth human worth, like lamps bringing light to the world.

Lord make us salt and light again, for the renewal of the earth and the service of your kingdom.

Hymn (during which salt is passed round)

**Will you come and follow me,
if I but call your name?
Will you go where you don't know
and never be the same?
Will you let my love be shown,
will you let my name be known,
will you let my life be grown
in you and you in me?**

**Will you leave your self behind
if I but call your name?
Will you care for cruel and kind
and never be the same?
Will you risk the hostile stare,
should your life attract or scare,
will you let me answer prayer
in you and you in me?**

Lord, help us to stop judging people by the job they do and the money they earn.

Help us to value all work - paid and unpaid - and to search for ways of extending support and opportunities to those who are desperate for a job but unable to find one.

We pray for employers and politicians, for those who work in the Employment Service, and those who have no work.

Give us all the courage to face the challenges of economic change and to explore ways of increasing opportunities for people to find jobs and to fulfil their potential.

Through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Reading: Matthew 5: 13-16 A candle is lit.

To keep Hope and Commitment Alive

**Lord, you placed us in the world to be its salt,
I was afraid of committing myself
afraid of being stained by the world.
I did not want to hear what they' might say.
And my salt dissolved as if in water.
Forgive me Jesus.**

**Lord, you placed us in the world to be its light.
I was afraid of the shadows, afraid of the poverty.
I did not want to know other people.
And my light slowly faded away.
Forgive me Jesus.**

**All my enemies, and especially my neighbours,
treat me with contempt;
Those who know me are afraid of me;
When they see me in the street, they run away.
Everyone has forgotten me as though I were dead;
I am like something thrown away.
I hear many enemies whispering:
terror is all around me.
They are making plans against me,
plotting to kill me.**

**I call to you Lord; don't let me be disgraced
Silence those liars - all the proud and arrogant who
speak with contempt about righteous people.**

Reading: Deuteronomy 24: 17-21

The Jobseekers Story
Matthew 20: 1-16

Hymn (Tune - Harewood)
**Lord God, in whom all worlds,
All life, all work, began,
Give us the faith to know
We serve your master plan.
How happy they who thus have found
Contentment in the daily round.**

**But when good work receives
No adequate reward,
When meaningless routines
Leave willing workers bored;
When time is spent in needless strife:
Make us ashamed, O Lord of life.**

**And if, in leaner years,
What we had gained is lost;
If progress must be bought
At someone else's cost:
Make us, one nation, swift to share
The hardships others have to bear.**

**So, for tomorrow's sake,
Teach us new skills today,
To do your perfect will
In our imperfect way,
And live as those whom you have called
To be your work-force in the world.**

F Pratt Green

Prayers

Through our calling we pray that God's faithfulness and love may be known in the world, saying,

**Faithful God
Glorify your name.**

You have called us to build - not ant hills to our own agenda, but bridges which connect with others. Help us to serve others and work for human dignity in the spirit of Jesus.

**Faithful God
Glorify your name.**

You have called us to be a pilgrim people, unafraid to take risks and to die to ourselves. Help us to be prophetic enough in our nation at this time to proclaim that only a just and caring society can achieve real and lasting prosperity.

**Faithful God
Glorify your name.**

You have called us to mission, not to futile religion, serving only as a refuge from the Gospel. Help us to proclaim the free gift of love, which cannot be earned, yet which must find its expression in a society where paid work in the norm.

**Faithful God
Glorify your name.**

You have called us to brokenness. Help us to live in the tension between being shocked and saddened by the contrasts in our society and the hope which can change attitudes and bring enough good work for everyone.

**Faithful God
Glorify your name.**

You have called us to have no gods before you. Help us not to make idols of political dogma or the market economy.

**Faithful God
Glorify your name.**

You have called us to community, a regathering and reconstruction in the power of the spirit. Help us to go about our business with a generous spirit, not pursuing economic advantage to the limit but working for that image of society as a living body of which all are members and in which all can share.

**Faithful God
Glorify your name.**

So Lord, may we find our true love in you; true prayer as our best hope against idolatry, and true grace through your faithfulness, whose name we glorify. **Amen.**