

Welcome to Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> January's Reflection. You might like to email us your thoughts on your own Worship Space / time.....

### Setting up my Worship Space at home....

I turned my chair to face the window, from where I could see the frost laden branches and I was blessed to be warm inside my Study. The picture of St Mary's on the wall, with its snowy churchyard was in my view and the calendar hanging below it, which was made for me by someone in the Community, turned to January.....days stretching ahead.....



I placed the printed Sunday Order of Service for 'The Baptism of Christ' and also 'The First Sunday of Epiphany' on the table, as I lit the candle placed in a holder, which someone at St Mary's so kindly gave to me.

Near enough to reach, I placed the cd player, which I was bought at the start of my fulltime Ministry in 2003, before ipods and laptops and ipads and memory sticks were the order of the day. I had found a cd given to me when I was Vicar in Sale, which has 12 instrumental tracks of worship songs played on piano.

The words of the first track helped me to gather myself as I remembered, and found myself singing the words:

## When I Look Into Your Holiness

### Maranatha!

When I look into Your holiness

When I gaze into Your loveliness

When all things that surround

Become shadows in the light of You,

When I found the joy of reaching Your heart

When my will becomes enthroned in Your love

When all things that surround

Become shadows in the light of You.

I worship You  
I worship You  
The reason I live is to worship You  
I worship You  
I worship You  
The reason I live is to worship You

When I look into Your holiness,  
When I gaze into Your loveliness,  
When all things that surround  
Become shadows in the light of You.  
When I find the joy of reaching Your heart,  
When my will becomes enthroned in Your love  
When all things that surround,  
Become shadows in the light of You

I worship You  
I worship You  
The reason I live, is to worship You  
I worship You  
I worship You  
The reason I live is to worship You  
Songwriters: Wayne & Cathy Perrin

I relaxed. I felt together in my space with you in your space. I could go at my own pace and stop and start the cd as I wished. I could repeat a part of the service. I could just sit in silence or listen to the music.

I could worship freely and the second track gently coaxed me in this Worship space: 'Be still for the presence of the Lord'....

I did experience an Epiphany. There was a sense of peace and presence, both with you, where you were and with God. Away from the computer, and away from all the other current strains of being 'out there', I was able to feel safe and know that you were too. There was a kind of real integrity concerning us truly all 'on the same page' .... 'in this together'. And then the next instrumental track's lyrics came to mind:

**'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.....has done for us'.

[Don Moen - Give Thanks\\_Lyrics\\_|AZLyrics.com\]](http://DonMoen-GiveThanksLyrics_AZLyrics.com)

As I took my time to go through this Service, over and over again different thoughts entered my mind, but it was OK to allow my mind to wander for a few moments, because I could pick up the service again, at any point.

God has given us through His Word, and through the years of Worship we have participated in, a whole feast of praise and thanksgiving, prayer and affirmation. This is a memory bank for us to use as a treasure store to resource us. We have followed the frameworks of countless forms of liturgy and interspersed it with an overwhelmingly enriching variety of music and singing. But this, today, was stripped back. Here was I with you, seemingly in isolation, yet being 'in Spirit' with you and welcoming God to be at home completely in my home. God was able to translate this intimate time into one which, somehow, was right for Him and me today and hopefully for you, just where you were.....'Be still and know that I am God' .....

**'Maranatha'** is the subtitle to the above printed song. Looking for an explanation to the meaning of the word, 'Maranatha' took me on quite a journey, so for those who enjoy this kind of 'cerebral' exercise, here goes:

If one chooses to split the two words as מרנא תא (maranâ thâ), a vocative concept with an imperative verb, then it can be translated as a command to the [Lord](#) to come. On the other hand, if one decides that the two words מרן אתא (maran 'athâ), a possessive "Our Lord" and a perfect/[preterite](#) verb "has come," are actually more warranted, then it would be seen as a [credal](#) expression. This interpretation, "Our Lord has come," is supported by what appears to be an equivalent of this in the early credal acclamation found in the biblical books of [Romans 10:9](#) and [1 Corinthians 12:3](#), "Jesus is Lord." In general, the recent interpretation has been to select the command option ("Come, Lord!"; [Revelation 22:20](#)).

One of the wonderful bonuses of being in Lockdown, or isolation, for those of us able to do so, is to look online and discover or rediscover connections.

<https://www.maranathacommunity.org.uk>

**Maranatha** is a scattered **community** of Christians from all church traditions in Britain and abroad who come together in worship and are committed to Unity (among Christians), Renewal (of ourselves and our churches, by the power of the Holy Spirit), Healing (of relationships, and in body, mind and spirit) and **Prayer**. It is not a breakaway movement, but positively encourages its members to be more effective Christians where they worship, live and work.

I remembered visits to this Maranatha Community in Flixton, near Manchester. I recalled prayers offered, food and fellowship shared and, as I sat at home this morning, it brought me back into the presence of those 'brothers and sisters' with whom I travelled on that part of my journey, from all

different Christian denominations and walks of life and, virtually, I could continue with both them and with you now.

This below is taken from 'From Darkness into Light' by Dennis Wrigley, a Co-Founder and Leader of the Maranatha Community ISBN 978-0-9565717-1-7:

### **Insecurity**

I yearn for safety.

I demand protection from the dangers of an unknown future.

Deep down, whatever preparations, I know I am vulnerable to all manner of situations, Unforeseen and unexpected.

I know a world which is insecure and in my own insecurity,  
I know that nothing is permanent;  
that the foundations of my life are constantly at risk.  
For a time I may believe the false prophets and deny the dangers,  
but the truth soon comes rushing into me, so that I am unable to build  
the secure wall of protection around me,  
without which my very foundations are at risk.

Yet, the truth which God proclaims to me  
is that my weakness can be made strength;  
that I can lie down and sleep in peace,  
knowing that the name of the Lord is a strong tower.

In the day of trouble,  
You will keep me safe in your dwelling  
and you will set my feet upon a rock.  
In You, Lord, I can take refuge.

"You will be secure, because there is hope; you will look about you and take your rest in safety"  
(Job 11: 18)

"In You, O Lord, I have taken refuge" (Psalm 71:1)

"He alone is my rock and my salvation; he is my fortress, I shall not be shaken" (Psalm 62:6)

"Blessed is the man who trusts in the Lord, whose confidence is in him. He will be like a tree planted by the water that sends out its roots by the stream. It does not fear when heat comes; its leaves are always green. It has no worries in a year of drought and never fails to bear fruit" (Jeremiah 17: 7 – 8)

"The Lord will be your confidence and will keep your root from being snared" (Proverbs 3: 26)

"In all your ways acknowledge him and he will make your paths straight" (Proverbs 3: 6)

"I can do everything through him who gives me strength" (Philippians 4: 13)

“Everything is possible for him who believes” (Mark 9: 23)

“Cast all your anxiety on him, because he cares for you” (1 Peter 5: 7)

“The Lord has become my fortress, and my God the rock in whom I take refuge” (2 Samuel 22: 3)

“Your Father knows what you need before you ask Him” (Matthew 6: 8)

Do keep your Bible by you and, especially in these times we share. Find strength, comfort, peace, encouragement and certainty, in the abiding, loving, presence of God, through the inspired words of those who have written down their experiences, for such a time as this..... and eternity .....

**Maranatha!**