



**Chet Valley Churches**  
**Last Sunday Praise**  
**26 September 2021**



# Welcome

Welcome to Last Sunday Praise. In this file you will find links to the songs we have chosen for our worship. Click on the links to take you to each song.

## Introduction

This may be our final Last Sunday Praise online, as we are hoping that the service will be 'live' in October. Do encourage people to come along when we hold our first service in St John's. This time our theme is all about angels. They make an appearance in a number of Bible passages, and yet they are often regarded as a rather contentious topic. But just think for a moment about the Christmas story, and the multitude of angels who appeared to the shepherds on the hillside, singing God's praises. Maybe we aren't as tuneful as an angel choir, but we too can praise God for his greatness. We're starting with a wonderful hymn, sung to a tune that may be less well known to the Chet Valley Churches, but which is a great favourite elsewhere.

*♪♪ All the songs link to YouTube. Just click with your mouse on the link, which will take you to a song with on-screen words. You may have to skip a few YouTube adverts if we have chosen songs that are not currently on the Chet Valley Churches YouTube channel.*

**♪♪ All hail the power of Jesus' name**

[https://youtu.be/\\_hmtxrfgrEA](https://youtu.be/_hmtxrfgrEA)

**♪♪ King of kings, majesty**

<https://youtu.be/ZKAQvlEotc8>

## ♪ O Praise the name of the Lord our God

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2MqrIgtZS54>

### Pause for thought, and prayer...

Inspiring songs like these lead us to praise God and worship him. It's easy to sing God's praise when we feel we are part of a great gathering of people being transformed by the presence of holiness. But what if you're on your own and don't have the support of hundreds of people's praises? That's when we need to discover how God draws us into his loving presence, and how he walks with us every step of our lives as we learn to trust him more and more.

Prayer is an amazing gift. It doesn't matter if the words are our own or if we are using words written by someone else, maybe many years ago. If the words echo what's in our minds and hearts, then they are the ones to use!

*The Collect is a special prayer written for each day. Perhaps you might read the prayer aloud, line by line, stopping to think about each line as you do so.*

### **The Collect—A Special Prayer for the Day.**

God, our judge and saviour,  
teach us to be open to your truth  
and to trust in your love,  
that we may live each day  
with confidence in the salvation  
which is given through Jesus Christ our Lord.

## ♪♪ **Far and near**

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z\\_9qRaVBt5o](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z_9qRaVBt5o)

## ♪♪ **All my days**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xke5TIU-Nqk>

## ♪♪ **For the joys and for the sorrows**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IMOS6zb3ysg>

## **Pause for thought, and prayer...**

Prayer is our direct link with God, giving us the means to talk to him and also listen for his guidance. When we pray about the joys or challenges in our lives we can expect God to hear us, and while he won't always give us what we want, he will always hold us and sustain us. He wants us to share his love with other people, whether we do so in words or actions, so that they too may be drawn to him.

*Perhaps you might like to ponder the following prayer.*

## **A prayer for our lives**

Heavenly Father,

Forgive us for the times when we grumble because we think we are over-burdened,

forgive us for the times when we are self centred and fail to notice the needs of others

forgive us for the times when we talk to you but don't listen to you talking to us,  
forgive us for failing to have the courage to speak out for you.  
Help us to worship you in our lives as well as our praises, and to know that if we ask, you will change us to become the people you want us to be,

🎵 **Who can know the mind of our creator**

<https://youtu.be/t8VI06tQUG4>

🎵 **When I look into your holiness**

<https://youtu.be/at7fF-0FbvM>

## **Bible Reading**

*Luke 22 verses 39-44*

<sup>39</sup> Jesus went out as usual to the Mount of Olives, and his disciples followed him. <sup>40</sup> On reaching the place, he said to them, "Pray that you will not fall into temptation." <sup>41</sup> He withdrew about a stone's throw beyond them, knelt down and prayed, <sup>42</sup> "Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will, but yours be done." <sup>43</sup> An angel from heaven appeared to him and strengthened him. <sup>44</sup> And being in anguish, he prayed more earnestly, and his sweat was like drops of blood falling to the ground.

## Talk

*Belinda Barwick has written this reflection.*

This coming Wednesday is the feast day of Michael and all angels, so it seems an apt time to consider angels- perhaps an unfashionable thing to think about these days. Our ancestors would have had no doubt at all about their importance: Hamlet, seeing the ghost of his father appearing on the ramparts of the castle immediately called 'angels and minsters of grace, defend us!', as most people of Shakespeare's day would have done in a crisis. Angels were handy beings to call on in any stressful situation. Would you do that in similar circumstances? If the answer is 'No', why not?

I wonder if the answer to that question is not 'because angels have become prettified.' Depictions of angels in art usually show some beautiful creature in human form with a pair of wings, fluttering in mid-air, or strangely disembodied heads and wings, smiling cherubically. Neither manifestation look likely to be of practical help in a crisis.

We talk of other people we admire as angels- remember Chris Andrews' 1965 hit, Yesterday Man?

'Please tell me something, have you met an angel?  
Someone too lovely to live on earth  
Well yesterday, I thought I met an angel  
But she wasn't worth what she seemed to be worth.'

Anyone who has worked with young children will have encountered the surfeit of angels problem at Christmas time, sometimes turning into a tinsel crisis as haloes are made at the last moment. I recall one occasion when my teaching assistant had to frantically pull bobbles off a clown suit when an angel

arrived late and had to be clothed. Shining white raiment it wasn't.

All of these images are quite distant from the picture of angels in the Bible. The angels of the Bible from the very start are just there, not explained, just present- and their presence shows the presence of God. So when Jacob sleeps in the desert with a stone for his pillow, the angels that he sees going up and down on a ladder to heaven are an indication that God is near, and indeed, the next thing he knows, there is the Lord right next to him. They're not there to be worshipped and Jacob hasn't been looking for them, but there they are.

Psalm 103 tells us that the angels are mighty in power, that they do God's bidding and obey his commands. Michael emerges as the archangel, the chief angel, in the Bible, with a name meaning 'Who is like God?' In the book of Daniel (12) he leads armies of angels in guarding God's people. He is strong, courageous and a leader in the fight for good against evil. Angels are not just a pretty face- they're tough. The cherubim in Ezekiel's vision (1.5-1.25) are downright frightening, each with four faces and four wings, whizzing about on wheels and sending out sparks of fire and lightning.

Things have calmed down a bit by the time we get to the New Testament: Gabriel in Luke's nativity narrative is quite benign, giving Mary the news of Jesus' incarnation and urging her not to be afraid. His role is clearly that of messenger, bringing an important and specific instruction from God, but he is still very firm- when Zechariah expresses doubt (1.18) the angel causes him to temporarily lose the power of speech as a punishment for his unbelief. A host of angel messengers appear to the shepherds, singing their hymns of praise to God and giving the good news of Jesus' birth, and yet another angel warns Joseph about the evil King Herod in Matthew's gospel.

By the time we get to the final book of the Bible, Revelation, more extraordinary angel behaviour is back, with Michael leading the 'good' angels against a splinter group, lead by a dragon- Satan- which ends with the 'bad' angels being thrown out of heaven. By this point it is generally agreed that the whole angel saga has become an allegory of the triumph of good over evil, rather than a literal account of real events, but in medieval times it was a powerful tool for 'encouraging' virtuous behaviour. The battle between the angels was graphically depicted in 'doom' paintings, with some pretty alarming looking demons on the right and some splendidly squeaky clean angels on the left. It must have been quite traumatic to sit through a church service with a hideous demon glaring down and brandishing a pitchfork, ready to impale the next miscreant. I would certainly have been very keen to join the angelic host, under those circumstances.

Whether we believe in angels as supernatural beings or not, the battle between good and evil is one that is constantly played out in world events, in national events and in events in our own lives. The feeling of being torn between the temptation to do something we know to be wrong and the desire to live a righteous life is very real. Can we depend on an angel appearing at the appropriate moment to keep us on our Christian journey? The role of an angel as a messenger from God may be one that you have seen taken by different people in your own life, and perhaps you have been an angel for someone else, bringing them a message of God's love when they most needed to hear it.

I wonder if it might be that trust is the important issue- trusting that God will help us and hold us, and that someone, whether it is an angel in human or in spiritual form will always be ready to support us through the trials of life, helping us in our own battles between good and evil.



Have you met an angel? I think maybe you have, if anyone has ever assured you of God's love for you and enabled you to feel that love as a reality.

## 🎵 **There is a hope**

<https://youtu.be/FVUfNEwRPno>

## **Time for prayer...**

Let's take time to pray for:

- The people we live amongst – family, neighbours, friends far or near, acquaintances
- People we may not know who are experiencing depression, sadness or hardship
- Those who are over-burdened, stressed or tired
- People who share the joy of a journey with Jesus, and those who are seeking to know him
- Members of church congregations tackling their own decisions about life and faith, and those who have found church online to be their way forward
- People who are ill, or who feel isolated or afraid
- Those who are fearful of change and of the journey ahead
- Ourselves, that we might be willing to listen as well as to talk to God, and then allow him to lead us into action

And two verses of a well-known hymn that can be our prayer of adoration and of belief:

Angel voices, ever singing,  
round Thy throne of light  
Angel harps, forever ringing,  
rest not day or night  
Thousands only live to bless Thee,  
and confess Thee Lord of might.

Thou Who art beyond the farthest  
mortal eye can scan  
Can it be that Thou regardest  
songs of sinful man  
Can we feel that Thou art near us  
and wilt hear us? Yea, we can.  
Amen.

*You might want to pray aloud the prayer that Jesus taught his first disciples. Use whatever version or language you wish!*

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name.  
Your kingdom come, your will be done,  
on earth as it is 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.

♪♪ **All to Jesus I surrender**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SW8EA7DEQ2M>

♪♪ **Teach me to dance**

<https://youtu.be/iMeAyiZIniE>

♪♪ **God is our strength and our refuge**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bA0zJnWIRr8>

## **A blessing**

The Lord bless you and keep you;  
the Lord make his face shine upon you  
and be gracious to you;  
the Lord turn his face toward you  
and give you peace.

Amen