

Sunday Evening Virtual Gathering **45 minutes**

Organist **Colin Baines**

Preparatory ... searching the scripture before the service

What is the biblical and historical context of the OT reading? When was it written? What do you think is its discursive purpose?

**Hint: The Hebrew scriptures were mostly conceived following the period of Babylonian exile.**

How would you react if your world is turned upside down? How have you responded to the challenges of lockdown? What would uprooting and/or dislocation mean in your context?

**Hint: The exile was the time when it seemed that things were out of control and beyond control. Generational institutions and time-honoured rituals collapsed**

What would help you to anchor and recentre when in turmoil/unfamiliar territory?

**Hint: Staircase to heaven? What's that?!**

Zoom Etiquette, Welcome and Notices

Gathering **6:25 pm**

Zoom Etiquette **6:30 pm**

Welcome and Notices

**Slideshow of everyday 'places' we have cherished during lockdown and those we encounter emerging from lockdown**

Opening Responses

The Lord knows each one of us and loves each one dearly.

**Sometimes it feels as though God has drifted away from me.**

Search all paces trustingly for the ways in which God may be present to you.

**Given all the challenges of a day, I often look more closely at the difficulties.**

Come, open your hearts and spirits to God's love and presence

**Lord, help me to see your presence in all of life's circumstances and places. AMEN.**

*StF website only Just as we are, your servants here,*

**Words: © Gillian Collins Metre: 888.6. Suggested tune: "Misericordia" (StF 556: Just as I am)**

Witnessing and Testimony

Confession

Patient Lord, it is so easy for us to focus on all the things that are wrong. We spend much time and energy in anger and sorrow, leaving behind the possibilities of hope and service to you. Ease our hearts, O Lord. Forgive our readiness to be overwhelmed by the negative.

Direct our steps toward positive and honest actions that will produce growth and peace. We offer this prayer in the name of Jesus Christ. AMEN.

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**Silence**

Assurance

Great news has come to us, dear friends. God, is faithful and just,

**cherishes us as we are, seeks restoration and healing for those broken places in our lives,**

**forgives and loves us unconditionally. We receive the good news with joy!.**

*Song Jesus will still be there Heidi*

Genesis 28:10-19

In the world many things happen at night, people travel, people meet, people have secret conversations, people lie awake restless, people lie awake through exhaustion, and this has always been so, holy books bear witness. Let's now hear a night story from the Bible
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Reflection Points:

<b>10 Jacob left Beer-sheba and went towards Haran.</b>
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What is in a place? What does it mean being away from familiar places?
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<b>Taking one of the stones of the place, he put it under his head and lay down in that place.</b> Have you managed to find another 'stone' of the place you find yourself in?
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<b>12 And he dreamed that there was a ladder set up on the earth, ...</b>
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Can a change of place/circumstances give you a new perspective? Can God be found in the unexpected or unfamiliar?
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<b>16 Then Jacob woke from his sleep and said,</b>
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<b>'Surely the Lord is in this place—and I did not know it!'</b>
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Intercessions

The Lord's Prayer

*StF728 O God, you search me and you know me*

Closing Responses

For the day now done **thanks be to God.**

For the rest before us **thanks be to God.**

Because God never sleeps so that we can **thanks be to God.**

But before the day is done, let God's holy name be praised

Let God's people say Amen. **Amen!**

Sung Blessing <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vnEhlz2eHow&t=103s> 0:17-3:13

**End Service!**

**OR** The Grace and ...

The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Ghost, be with us all evermore. (2 Corinthians 13:14)

... Commissioning

Remain in God's world with confidence and hope. God's presence and peace is with you in all that you do. Be those people who dream angels of comfort and hope. God proclaims love for all people. **AMEN.**

Sharing stories and thoughts from where we are today