

# 12 Feb 2023

## Worship Sheet for Sunday 12 February

## Running the race

Paul uses the picture of a runner (almost certainly a long distance runner) to illustrate the need for believers to strive to be fit for running the Christian course. As with athletes – it doesn't "just happen" – it requires perseverance, diligence and commitment. But like them we have the best of coaches in Jesus. He also points the superb prize for completing the course – not a medal or prizemoney but the gift of eternal life and the Lord's commendation.

Call: Lord, we open our doors to you, help us to open our hearts too. We come to offer you our praises, may we also give you the service of our lives. Make us fit for the service you have called us to, equipped in love and grace, encouraged by your example and your promise to accompany us. May we run the race of life before us, in your strength, for your glory.

Pray : Almighty God, our loving heavenly Father in Jesus Christ, we praise you and thank you for your utter commitment and love towards us and all your people. You delight to work out your purposes even though time and time again we let you down. Grace and mercy abound. We are inclined to be quick to condemn those who offend against us and quick to defend our own actions even when they are indefensible. Help us today to be crystal clear about your love shown to us in Jesus your Son, the cross, the cost of salvation. We gladly acknowledge that wonderful gift to humanity, free to us, yet at great price to the Saviour. Lord, we praise you, now, today for your continuing love for us; for the presence of the risen Christ in our midst, for the Holy Spirit working in us to recognise you at work in our world, and for the privilege of sharing in your work. Accept our praises, Lord God, accept us with all our shortcomings; forgive us, and equip us to serve you day by day – not just when we are here in church or doing something for church during the week but in the way that we live out our lives each and every day. Help us to journey with you in faith – to run the race of life with you and for you. Hear us as together we pray together saying: Our Father...

Reading 1 Corinthians 9:16-24-27 Running the race.

Thought Some of you know, I'm quite involved with the local parkrun on a Saturday morning. I enjoy the discipline of the exercise at a fixed point in the week and I also enjoy the sense of community that goes with it. I also know that running isn't for everyone – though I think you'd be surprised at the wide range of abilities and fitness at parkrun – and the fact that folk don't all run – there's quite a few walk at least part of it, and others help out volunteering without ever getting a time. Paul, makes the point that as believers we are all involved in the race of life; it's not a short sprint but more like a marathon. The nearest I've got to a marathon is a Mars bar. We can be totally put off anything that we imagine is way way beyond us but Paul says that we ought to be in the business of running the race of life with and for Jesus – and that perseverance and drawing strength from him and one another is part and parcel of it. No way can we be self-sufficient – we need support and encouragement from fellow believers and from Jesus and the Spirit. We also need to keep at it, to build spiritual resilience – in short to practice. But he wants us to see that it is do-able, that Jesus is committed to giving us what we need to complete the course. Some will push themselves too hard too quickly, or be drawn into far too much, or rely solely on their own strength. And, perhaps we don't give enough time to rest and recuperation after the fray. But we are encouraged to run the race of life with and for Jesus and to keep at it. Just a few verses this week – but important ones nevertheless. Not for a gold medal, but for a Well done!

Praise CH4 270 Put all your trust in God.

Pray Lord God, thank you for your patience and perseverance with us. We are apt to be quick to give up on one another while you go on loving us come what may. Develop in us and your people more of the grace and mercy that so characterises Jesus' dealings with us. Enable us to be the loving, forgiving, society changing people you mean us to be. Your world is littered with much that mars your creation – not only pollution and the destruction of the planet, but the widespread poverty, disease, deprivation, danger and injustice that is

experience of so many. Even locally violence, drugs, enmity rear their ugly head. We might be tempted to wash our hands and begin all over but you have not given up on us. This is still your world, for which your Son died, the world you intend to redeem and renew. Give us a heart to love the world in which we live, our neighbours near and far; to see them as your children. Grant us the vision to see where you are at work and the faith to get behind you – to be active in spreading the love of Jesus in our community and beyond. We pray for the initiatives that reflect your love in our community, whether run with a Christian label or not. Encourage and prosper all that displays the qualities of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness and all that is Christ-like. Enable us to recognise the opportunities to advance your cause and grant us the readiness to engage wholeheartedly in them. Bring peace to those who can barely dream of an end to conflict, hope to those who have all but given up that there could possibly be a future for them, faith to those who find it hard to trust anyone, love to those who have been let down badly and forgiveness to us all. We pray for the community in which we live and the people who are our neighbours, whether known to us or not; we pray for the wide variety of needs – whether expressed or not. We pray that we might welcome the Lord Jesus in our midst and be open to being changed by him. In our prayer walk this week we pray for those in Garrison Road inc Fire & Ambulance Station. Lord, in a moment of silence we bring to you all who need your comfort, consolation, healing and strength including folks known to us, and yes, us too. SILENCE Gracious and loving God, encourage us and fit us to do your work. Hear our prayers, answer us for Jesus sake and make us expectant and hopeful as we seek to serve you. Amen.

Blessing      May the Lord bless you. Amen.

#### Notices

- Messy Church - Messy Joshua - Sunday 12 Feb 4pm – 5.30pm.
- Lego Church Sunday 26 Feb 4pm-5pm.
- Craft and Play drop in sessions (children to be accompanied) Tues 28 and Wed 1 Mar 10-12
- Youth Work Coffee Morning Sat 4 March 10-12 Donations of baking/books/unwanted gifts/nearly new appreciated.

To assist those unable to access material via the internet we have established a phone line where people can phone in to hear the mini service or sermon.

**01674 902624.**

To hear the mini service people just need to dial in and wait. To hear the sermon, after dialling you need to press 1 then #. In either case there is a few seconds delay while the message loads so tell folk not to hang up! If folk press 1 for the sermon before the intro finishes the system doesn't pick up on it and it defaults to the mini service. The message now says wait until after the tone before pressing 1 but give it a few seconds after that and do press # after pressing 1.

**Sermon, prayers and news (or links to them) will be uploaded to our website [www.oldandstandrews.com](http://www.oldandstandrews.com) and the Old and St Andrew's Facebook page. Feel free to copy this and pass it on to Church members or friends who might not use the web or social media**

**Please continue to pray for one another and support where you can and remember that the congregation is united in love wherever we are and however we are worshipping.**

**Stay safe! May the Lord bless you!**

**Ian**

*Rev Dr Ian A McLean*