

MONDAY
10 AUGUST
 Ezekiel 1:2-5. 24-end
 Psalm 148:1-4. 12-13
 Matthew 17:22-end

TUESDAY
11 AUGUST
 Ezekiel 2:8 – 3:4
 Psalm 119:65-72
 Matthew 18:1-5. 10.
 12-14

WEDNESDAY
12 AUGUST
 Ezekiel 9:1-7; 10:18-22
 Psalm 113
 Matthew 18:15-20

THURSDAY
13 AUGUST
 Ezekiel 12:1-12
 Psalm 78:58-64
 Matthew 18:21 – 19:1

FRIDAY
14 AUGUST
 Ezekiel 16:1-15.
 60-end
 Psalm 118:14-18
 or *Cantic/e: Song
 of Deliverance*
 Matthew 19:3-12

SATURDAY
15 AUGUST
 The Blessed
 Virgin Mary
 Isaiah 61:10-end
 or Revelation
 11:19 – 12:6. 10
 Psalm 45:10-end
 Galatians 4:4-7
 Luke 1:46-55

REFLECTION



Ezekiel the priest is called to act as God's prophet in the midst of exile. Jerusalem fell in 597 BC and many were taken to Babylon as captives. It was here that Ezekiel received his call in a vision of

God, with its strange depiction of the four living creatures and the heavenly throne. The message Ezekiel had to deliver was tough. It was about faithlessness, death and destruction, lamentation and grief. God is depicted as the distraught bridegroom who, having rescued an abandoned girl, brought her up and married her; then finds her unfaithful. It is a parable, but the distress expressed is palpable and the image profound. Its profundity is there towards the end of the week, as God expresses a love that is not spoiled, and in Saturday's reading from Isaiah the bride can sing of her delight in her bridegroom.

There is an intimacy and fierceness in this prophetic image that Christians can miss if we're not vigilant. In this image there is bodily delight and physical intimacy, that can begin to heal some of our inherited distrust of the flesh. God is not ashamed of bodies, not yours, not mine.

God of delight and embrace,
 as you rejoice in your creation,
 help us to give up our fears of the physical.
 You have made us in our rich variety as one human race,
 so help us cherish our bodies and those of others
 and, in that, learn to do justice.

PRAYER

HYMN WRITERS

PART II – SARAH FLOWER ADAMS (1805-1848)

Sarah Flower Adams was born in Essex. She came from a long line of radicals, dissenters and rebels, and was the younger daughter of the radical editor Benjamin Flower and Eliza Gould. Her mother died when she was only five and the family moved to Middlesex, where they met Harriet Martineau, who wrote about Sarah and her sister Eliza in her novel *Deerbrook*.

At eighteen Sarah broke the female record for climbing Ben Lomond. Back home, she and Eliza befriended and discussed their religious doubts with the young poet Robert Browning. Having been an active young woman, however, Sarah's health started to fail in her twenties, eventually forcing her to give up a promising acting career. After their father's death the sisters became part of the household of the radical preacher William Johnson Fox, minister of the famous South Place Unitarian Chapel in London. Both girls began literary pursuits and hymn writing. Eliza often composed the tunes while Sarah contributed the words.

When she was visiting her friend, the feminist philosopher Harriet Taylor Mill, Sarah met a young man named William Bridges Adams, who was an author, inventor and locomotive engineer. They were married in 1834 and set up house at Loughton in Essex.

Neither sister was in good health, and Eliza died in 1846 after a long illness. Sarah's health also declined and she died at the age of forty-three. She was buried beside her sister and parents. Mourners sang one of her hymns at her graveside: "*He Sendeth Sun, He Sendeth Shower*".

Sarah's best-known hymn, "*Nearer, My God, to Thee*", is based on the story of Jacob's dream in Genesis 28, and was allegedly played as the Titanic went down. Unsurprisingly, perhaps, given her idealistic roots and her own thwarted aspirations, the hymn conveys a sense of restless searching – looking for a way up, out of the mundane, towards the light: "*Though like the wanderer / The sun gone down, / Darkness be over me, / My rest a stone. / Yet in my dreams I'd be / Nearer my God, to Thee*".

LIVE
theWORD

SUSTAINING YOU
THROUGH THE WEEK

Edited by
 Caroline Hodgson
 and
 Heather Smith



Sarah Flower Adams

Ninth week
 after Trinity

Monday 10 August to
 Saturday 15 August
 2020

WEEK

FSC
 logo