

The Vine at Home 18.7.21

Call to worship

The Spirit of God says 'come'.

Jesus Christ says 'come'.

Let anyone who hears this say 'come'.

Let anyone who is thirsty, thirsty for the water of life, come.

Come, all are welcome,

The Spirit of God is in this place. Amen.

Hymn: 156 STF – From the breaking of the dawn –

Opening Prayers

Risen Saviour, Jesus our Lord, we love you and we are grateful that you love us so much that you were prepared to give up everything and live on earth, showing us how to live, and then to die, all so that we might know what it means to become children of God. Pour your Holy Spirit into our lives that we may grow more like you.

For your life which informs our living, for your compassion which changes our hearts, for your clear speaking which contradicts our vague generalities, for your disturbing presence, your innocent suffering, your fearless dying and then rising to life breathing forgiveness, we praise and worship you.

As we worship, help us to know your presence with us, open our minds and hearts we pray.

Generous God, whose love is free to all, we often struggle to be the people that you want us to be, loving one another as brothers and sisters in your world-wide family. Shape our lives into an expression of faith. Protect us from cultural forces which try to conform us to an image other than yours. Show us the harm we do when we water down the good news of your love, when we become a mirror reflecting the world's brokenness and hate, rather than a window through which your wholeness and love can shine.

Lord, we fail you in some many ways, we are so sorry...

'I am making all things new', says the Lord. This is Christ's gracious word: 'Your sins are forgiven'. Amen.

Let us now say the Lord's Prayer

Readings:

2 Samuel 7:1-14a - God's Covenant with David

7 Now when the king was settled in his house, and the Lord had given him rest from all his enemies around him, 2 the king said to the prophet Nathan, "See now, I am living in a house of cedar, but the ark of God stays in a tent." 3 Nathan said to the king, "Go, do all that you have in mind; for the Lord is with you."

4 But that same night the word of the Lord came to Nathan: 5 Go and tell my servant David: Thus says the Lord: Are you the one to build me a house to live in? 6 I have not lived in a house since the day I brought up the people of Israel from Egypt to this day, but I have been moving about in a tent and a tabernacle. 7 Wherever I have moved about among all the people of Israel, did I ever speak a word with any of the tribal leaders of Israel, whom I commanded to shepherd my people Israel, saying, "Why have you not built me a house of cedar?" 8 Now therefore thus you shall say to my servant David: Thus says the Lord of hosts: I took you from the pasture, from following the sheep to be prince over my people Israel; 9 and I have been with you wherever you went, and have cut off all your enemies from before you; and I will

make for you a great name, like the name of the great ones of the earth. **10** And I will appoint a place for my people Israel and will plant them, so that they may live in their own place, and be disturbed no more; and evildoers shall afflict them no more, as formerly, **11** from the time that I appointed judges over my people Israel; and I will give you rest from all your enemies. Moreover, the Lord declares to you that the Lord will make you a house. **12** When your days are fulfilled and you lie down with your ancestors, I will raise up your offspring after you, who shall come forth from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. **13** He shall build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. **14** I will be a father to him, and he shall be a son to me. When he commits iniquity, I will punish him with a rod such as mortals use, with blows inflicted by human beings.

Ephesians 2:11-22 – One in Christ

11 So then, remember that at one time you Gentiles by birth, called “the uncircumcision” by those who are called “the circumcision” - a physical circumcision made in the flesh by human hands - **12** remember that you were at that time without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. **13** But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. **14** For he is our peace; in his flesh he has made both groups into one and has broken down the dividing wall, that is, the hostility between us. **15** He has abolished the law with its commandments and ordinances, that he might create in himself one new humanity in place of the two, thus making peace, **16** and might reconcile both groups to God in one body through the cross, thus putting to death that hostility through it. **17** So he came and proclaimed peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near; **18** for through him both of us have access in one Spirit to the Father. **19** So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are citizens with the saints and also members of the household of God, **20** built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the cornerstone. **21** In him the whole structure is joined together and grows into a holy temple in the Lord; **22** in whom you also are built together spiritually into a dwelling place for God.

Mark 6:30-34, 53-56

³⁰ The apostles gathered around Jesus, and told him all that they had done and taught. ³¹ He said to them, “Come away to a deserted place all by yourselves and rest a while.” For many were coming and going, and they had no leisure even to eat. ³² And they went away in the boat to a deserted place by themselves. ³³ Now many saw them going and recognized them, and they hurried there on foot from all the towns and arrived ahead of them. ³⁴ As he went ashore, he saw a great crowd; and he had compassion for them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd; and he began to teach them many things.

53 When they had crossed over, they came to land at Gennesaret and moored the boat. **54** When they got out of the boat, people at once recognized him, **55** and rushed about that whole region and began to bring the sick on mats to wherever they heard he was. **56** And wherever he went, into villages or cities or farms, they laid the sick in the marketplaces, and begged him that they might touch even the fringe of his cloak; and all who touched it were healed.

Reflections on the reading

“Almost everything will work again if you unplug it for a few minutes... Including you.”

Anne Lamott

Can we start by just taking a few moments to think back over your past week... think about the times you were happy... the times you were stressed... but specifically can you remember those times when you deliberately put some time aside for YOU... to rest... not when you were sleeping – that doesn't count! – but instead when you actually took time to rest and take some genuine "time out".

In today's reflection, we are simply going to take a space. A space away from words, from more learning, reflection, input, teaching, singing, metaphors and descriptions. Today, there is some space. Today is for you.

Let's be still for a moment. Perhaps you are being called to stillness, to time out, to rest, this day and in the week ahead.

Let us hold the stillness, and make space for God.

[Pause – you may like to play some soft music, or just hold the silence.]

Come Lord Jesus, fill our hearts, turn us away from a world where we are judged by what we produce, and connect us to the deep base-note of your Spirit, all around us. This is our prayer, in Jesus name. Amen.

Prayers of intercession

Today, instead of using lots of words for our prayers of intercession, our prayers for the world, we are going to hold a couple of times of quiet, and I simply invite you to bring your own prayers into those spaces.

Firstly, spend a moment praying for those close to you: people in your family, your friends, perhaps members of this church, who are in your thoughts. It might be the people you are worried about, or just someone who you know needs to feel God's presence today.

In the stillness, hold that person, and their situation, in the light of God's love.

Come Lord God. Answer our prayers, in Jesus' name.

And now, in this space, bring a situation or person further afield. Perhaps a story from the news, or a situation or story that has found its way to you. It is probably about people or a person you will never meet, but in this moment, you want to hold those people in prayer. In the stillness, we pray for a better world.

Come Lord God. You know the names, the faces, the situations that we've held in our hearts and minds over these past few minutes. Answer our prayers, in Jesus name. Amen.

Hymn: 547 STF – Beyond these walls of worship –

Blessing

God of grace, Spirit of hope, Christ who transforms us – send us out with your courage, your love, your peace to bring into a community and a world in need.

Go in peace, and serve the Lord. Amen.