

Worship at Home 2 August 2020

A short act of worship for use in people's homes, provided by Mary Armstrong.

Call to worship

Loving God, as we find ways to connect on this Lord's Day, may we sense your presence amongst us, leading, guiding and strengthening our faith and our ability to trust you in all things.

Hymn: Singing the Faith 409 ¹

[To join in click here, sorry about the ad!](#)

1. Let us build a house where love can dwell
and all can safely live,
a place where saints and children tell
how hearts learn to forgive.
Built of hopes and dreams and visions,
rock of faith and vault of grace ;
here the love of Christ shall end divisions :
*All are welcome,
all are welcome,
all are welcome in this place.*
2. Let us build a house where prophets speak,
and words are strong and true,
where all God's children dare to seek
to dream God's reign anew.
Here the cross shall stand as witness
and as symbol of God's grace;
here as one we claim the faith of Jesus:
All are welcome,
3. Let us build a house where love is found
in water, wine and wheat:
a banquet hall on holy ground
where peace and justice meet.
Here the love of God, through Jesus,
is revealed in time and space;
as we share in Christ the feast that frees us:
All are welcome,
4. Let us build a house where hands will reach
beyond the wood and stone
to heal and strengthen, serve and teach,
and live the Word they've known.
Here the outcast and the stranger
bear the image of God's face;
let us bring an end to fear and danger:
*All are welcome,
all are welcome,
all are welcome in this place.*
5. Let us a build a house where all are named,
their songs and visions heard
and loved and treasured, taught and claimed
as words within the Word.
Built of tears and cries and laughter,
prayers of faith and songs of grace,
let this house proclaim from floor to rafter:
All are welcome,

Opening prayers

Lord of compassion, we direct our attention to you
knowing that you are always attentive towards us.
Thank you for your love which sustains us
and your grace that restores us.

Forgive us for the ways we have fallen short in our love
and grow in us a desire to be more like you.
Sometimes Lord, we know we do not listen properly to you.

We are easily distracted.

Or we listen, but still go our own way, putting ourselves first.

Sometimes Lord, we are anything but prepared for our journey with you.

Forgiven by you, we can start anew. Amen

Jesus among us,

we thank you for your presence and the work of your Spirit within us

That you promise to be with us and grant that we are never alone.

Thank you for drawing us to you through your love

and illuminating our hearts and minds with your truth. **Amen**

Father over all,

the whole of creation witnesses to your great works and rejoices in who you are.

You are worthy of our adoration and we join our voices to bring you our praise.

To you belongs all glory and splendour and we magnify your holy name. **Amen**

Now please say **The Lord's Prayer**

Reading: Matthew chapter 14: 13-21 ²

[To listen click here from 1:18 to 2:32](#)

¹³ When Jesus heard what had happened, he withdrew by boat privately to a solitary place. Hearing of this, the crowds followed him on foot from the towns. ¹⁴ When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, he had compassion on them and healed their sick. ¹⁵ As evening approached, the disciples came to him and said, "This is a remote place, and it's already getting late. Send the crowds away, so that they can go to the villages and buy themselves some food." ¹⁶ Jesus replied, "They do not need to go away. You give them something to eat." ¹⁷ "We have here only five loaves of bread and two fish," they answered. ¹⁸ "Bring them here to me," he said. ¹⁹ And he directed the people to sit down on the grass. Taking the five loaves and the two fish and looking up to heaven, he gave thanks and broke the loaves. Then he gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the people. ²⁰ They all ate and were satisfied, and the disciples picked up twelve basketfuls of broken pieces that were left over. ²¹ The number of those who ate was about five thousand men, besides women and children.

Hymn: Singing the Faith 455 – *All my hope in God is founded.*

[To join in click here](#)

1. All my hope on God is founded ;
he doth still my trust renew.
Me through change and chance he guideth,
only good and only true.
God unknown, he alone
calls my heart to be his own.
2. Human pride and earthly glory,
sword and crown betray our trust ;
what with care and toil we fashion,
tower and temple, fall to dust.
But God's power, hour by hour,
is my temple and my tower.

3. God's great goodness aye endureth,
deep his wisdom passing thought ;
splendour, light, and life attend him,
beauty springeth out of naught.
Evermore from his store
new-born worlds rise and adore.
4. Daily doth the almighty giver
bounteous gifts on us bestow;
his desire our soul delighteth,
pleasure leads us where we go.
Love doth stand at his hand;
joy doth wait on his command.
5. Still from earth to God eternal
sacrifice of praise be done,
high above all praises praising
for the gift of Christ his Son.
Christ doth call one and all,
ye who follow shall not fall.

Robert Bridges (1844-1930) (alt.) based on Joachim Neander (1650-1680)

Reflection

Have you ever felt ordinary? Have you ever felt like you do not have much to offer?
Many of us have feelings like this at some point or other.

Today, in our gospel story, we are reminded that in Jesus, and with his love, we have an abundance – we have plenty!

Jesus does not judge us by what we must bring, or compare our gifts to those of any others.
In the Kingdom of God, we do not compare with other people, we just offer what we have.

In today's story, a young man offers his gifts, his handful of loaves and fish, and in the hands of Jesus, they become transformed into a gift for all those who are gathered. When we offer what we have when we combine our generosity with Jesus' love for the whole world – we see people's lives changed, and those in need receive what they need. Whatever you have and whatever you are bringing, will you offer it to God today?

Matthew's account of the feeding of 5,000 begins with Jesus withdrawing on the news of John's death. Is he seeking solace in the wilderness, taking stock of his movement now John has gone, or getting out of Herod's way? Whatever the reason, this story has a profoundly political location, beginning with the empire acting against Jesus' movement, and ending with the feeding of an army in the wilderness. In between these events we are treated to a story of compassion in action, of the lavish grace of a God who loves and provides for all.

The crowds followed Jesus, and his response was to meet their needs. The disciples – perhaps keen to ensure that they could meet Jesus’ need – want to send the crowds away. But Jesus challenges them to meet the crowds’ need for food (v. 16). Rightly the disciples object that they have barely enough for their own needs (v. 17). So, Jesus feeds the crowds so that the disciples will learn what compassion looks like, but equally because they all needed an evening meal.

Although the miracle is Jesus’ doing, the disciples are invited to play their part by making the seating arrangements, distributing the food, and clearing up afterwards. Amazingly, five loaves and two fish had become a banquet for 5,000 men and unnumbered women and children, with more left over for the disciples than they had started with.

Whenever we have a bring-and-share meal at church, there is always an amazing variety of food. There is also plenty for everyone, including those who do not bring anything, and if you have a portion of chilli on the same plate as a cheese sandwich and some samosas, then so much the better! It is never formally planned, and we never know how many will turn up, but without fail there is enough and more to spare. Like the story of Jesus feeding more than 5,000 people it is another example of the glorious bounty of God.

Bountiful God - help us to share your riches and blessings as widely and generously as we can, in your strength. Amen

Prayers of intercession

Let us pray.

God of all grace, we bring you ourselves.

We bring you our lives, as they currently are, with all that is broken and wrong, but also, much to be grateful for and to celebrate. Use us, O God, to build your kingdom, to seek peace in our world, to build communities of love.

May we follow in your way, O God.

God of all grace, we bring you our churches,

Caught in this strange ‘in between’ time, as we reflect on the painful experiences of lockdown, and how we can best serve our communities and our world over this summer and into the year ahead. Show us how to create safe spaces, spaces where people can grieve, can find healing, can meet with you and be transformed by your grace.

May we follow in your way, O God.

God of all grace, we bring you our nation, 2020 has been – and will continue to be – a difficult year for us as a country. This year of Coronavirus, but also a year where we have discovered much underlying injustice and pain.

We bring to you all who have been working overtime to see us through this time of crisis, and all who will need to work overtime as we seek to rebuild our communities, our economy, our relationships, and our livelihoods.

We bring you our leaders and all who must face difficult decisions or face up to inadequacies in our systems exposed by the process of lockdown and pandemic. Show us how to be a people of grace.

May we follow in your way, O God.

God of all grace, we pray for our world.

We look out on a global pandemic, and a world in which we have gone backwards in tackling poverty and reaching those most in need during this time of pandemic, which has affected the most vulnerable in our world more than many of us.

As we rebuild, show us how to build a world in which every person's needs are provided for, a world where every person's potential is fulfilled.

May we follow in your way, O God.

May I follow in your way, O God.

Show me what is mine to do.

We bring this and all our prayers, in Jesus' name. **Amen**

Hymn: Singing the Faith 465

[To join in click here](#)

1. Guide me, O thou great Jehovah,
pilgrim through this barren land ;
I am weak, but thou art mighty ;
hold me with thy powerful hand :
Bread of heaven, Bread of heaven,
feed me now and evermore ;
feed me now and evermore.

2. Open thou the crystal fountain
whence the healing stream shall flow ;
let the fiery, cloudy pillar
lead me all my journey through :
strong Deliverer, strong Deliverer,
be thou still my strength and shield ;
be thou still my strength and shield.

3. When I tread the verge of Jordan
bid my anxious fears subside ;
death of death, and hell's destruction,
land me safe on Canaan's side :
songs of praises, songs of praises,
I will ever give to thee ;
I will ever give to thee.

William Williams (1717-1791) translated by Peter Williams (1727-1796)

Blessing

As we rise to face the week ahead,
Rise with us, O God.

As we go to face the challenges of the days and weeks to come,
Travel with us, O God.

As we go to seek to be the best we can be,
May we know your presence alongside us, may we recognise your Spirit at work.
In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

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