



Worship at Home : 24th January 2021

Call to worship

Jesus invites us to a way of celebration,
meeting and feasting with the humble and poor.

Let us walk his way with joy.

Jesus beckons us to a way of risk,
letting go of our security.

Let us walk his way with joy.

Jesus challenges us to listen
to the voices of those who have nothing to lose.

Let us walk his way with joy.

Jesus calls us to follow the way of the cross,
where despair is transformed by the promise of
new life.

Let us walk his way with joy.



One hundred days and counting -
Sing to The Churches One Foundation – Aurelia 76
76 D

One hundred days and counting
Our normal swept away
We questioned and we wondered
We worried and we prayed
Though everything was different
Our life turned upside down
And God was waiting with us
Until we met again

Two hundred days and counting
The lull before the storm
Perhaps we were complacent
As cases seemed to fall
Our churches were reopened
We saw another's face
And found new ways of worship
Reflecting love and grace

Three hundred days and counting
Our lives now overwhelmed
Restrictions seem unending
But in Gods hands we're held
And each death is a person
An individual life
A victim of pandemic
That seems will never end

Through all of twenty twenty
And into twenty one
The world has changed completely
From what we've ever known
The cycles of the seasons
The glimpse of hope we feel
For God is hugging tightly
And we shall all be healed

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Let us pray.

All-holy God,
you call us together to be your holy people, and so
we join to give you praise
for the joy of our creation;
for our redemption in Christ;
for the empowerment of your Spirit.
Gracious God,
fill our hearts with your love
and our lives with your glory
as we come before you in worship and prayer
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Intimate God,
we praise you because you know each one of us;
the worries that nag us, the achievements we are
proud of, the hopes and expectations that we
hold, half-recognised, in our hearts.
We praise you for what we know of you;
the ways in which you have welcomed and met us,
your quiet, constant, presence in our lives.
And we praise you for what we do not yet know;
the mysteries of your creation,
the questions that baffle us,
the wonders of discovery awaiting us.

Unknown God,
may we be open to meet with you in unexpected
ways; discerning your presence in what is strange
to us,
and seeing the familiar with newly-opened eyes.

Amen.

Silence

We say together:
**God of love and mercy,
we come before you
knowing that we are in need of forgiveness.
We have sinned against you
in our speaking and in our silence;**



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in our thinking and in our thoughtlessness; in our actions and in our inaction.

**We have sinned against you,
in not loving you with our whole heart
and soul and strength;
in not loving our sisters and brothers in Christ.
Grant us, O Lord, your forgiveness,
restore us in the image of your Son,
and lead us along the way to your kingdom, to
the glory of your name.**

Amen.

Hear the good news! Who is to condemn? It is Christ Jesus, who died, yes, who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who indeed intercedes for us.

So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new!

Receive God's gift of forgiveness and be at peace.

Amen!



Speak, O Lord, as we come to You
To receive the food of your holy word.
Take Your truth, plant it deep in us;
Shape and fashion us in Your likeness,
That the light of Christ might be seen today
In our acts of love and our deeds of faith.
Speak, O Lord, and fulfil in us
All Your purposes, for Your glory.

Teach us Lord full obedience,
Holy reverence, true humility.
Test our thoughts and our attitudes
In the radiance of Your purity.
Cause our faith to rise
Cause our eyes to see,
Your majestic love and authority.
Words of power that can never fail;
Let their truth prevail over unbelief.

Speak, O Lord, and renew our minds;
Help us grasp the heights of Your plans for us.
Truths unchanged from the dawn of time,
That will echo down through eternity.
And by grace we'll stand on Your promises;

And by faith we'll walk as You walk with us.
Speak, O Lord, 'til your church is built
And the earth is filled with Your glory.

Keith Getty (born 1974) and Stuart Townend (born 1963)

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Mark 1:14-20

Now after John was arrested, Jesus came to Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God, and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe the good news." As Jesus passed along the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting a net into the sea-for they were fishermen. And Jesus said to them, "Follow me and I will make you fish for people." And immediately they left their nets and followed him. As he went a little farther, he saw James son of Zebedee and his brother John, who were in their boat mending the nets. Immediately he called them; and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired men, and followed him.

Reflection

Jesus said, "the Kingdom of God has come near; repent and believe the good news."

I wonder what images 'the Kingdom of God' brings to mind for you. Maybe you remember the words of the Psalmist who wrote 'He makes me lie down in green pastures; he leads me beside still waters; he restores my soul.' (Psalm 23)

Certainly there are many people who feel closer to God when they are in the countryside. Maybe it is because there are fewer people there, or because of the quietness or the views or the fascinating detail of nature that surrounds them. Whatever it is, they report that they feel closer to God than in the ordinariness of daily life.

Jesus says that the 'Kingdom of God is near, so repent and believe the good news.' During this pandemic it has at times been difficult to hold onto the fact that the Kingdom of God is near – our usual patterns of life and worship have been disrupted. However, the call to draw close to God has never gone away.



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Here in these few verses from Mark's gospel, we are reminded of the closeness of God's Kingdom, almost tangibly close, just within reach. Yet the instruction is first to repent.

Back in my university days, I used to do a lot of work lighting productions in the various performance areas. Two of these projects required UV light. One of the tricky aspects of this for the performers was that this light would pick up any unwanted dust or other debris, especially paper particles, and they would literally glow in the dark.

An almost unseen light would pick up every small detail. I cannot help but wonder if something similar happens when we draw close to the Kingdom of God. Does the purity and brightness of God show up all our imperfections? If so, it is no wonder that the first thing we are asked to do is to acknowledge our shortcomings so that we may face God's light, and God then transforms these imperfections into jewels of light so as to radiate his love and his glory for all to see.

Certainly Simon and Andrew, James and John saw this, because their response to Jesus' invitation was immediate and perhaps even reckless to our minds. To leave your boats and your nets, your livelihood at the invitation of one man?

The Kingdom of God is near. Close. Tangible. Within reach. It takes us as we are and transforms us into what God desires most for us. And as we become aware of it, so we reflect God's love into the world around us, and we become fishers of people.

Once again, it is God who initiates and we who follow if we chose to. What choice, I wonder, will you make in the weeks that are ahead of us?

Let us pray

God, Maker and Lover of all,
we know that your way is not always easy;
that peace is not given lightly,
that sometimes justice comes only through struggle.
We pray for the places in your world where we long to see justice and dream of peace.
We remember especially the peoples of...

where conflicts seem so long-standing and complex that we cannot imagine resolution;
and we pray for wisdom and reconciliation....
Your kingdom come:
Your will be done.

We remember communities divided by poverty and racism, especially....
where the gaps between privilege and powerlessness seem to grow ever wider;
and we pray for justice and healing.
Your kingdom come:
Your will be done.

We remember your church, sometimes fragmented and confused, where in spite of division, your people seek to live out the Gospel; and we pray for joy and a new sense of the Spirit's power.
Your kingdom come:
Your will be done.

We remember our friends, neighbours and ourselves, especially....
in those areas of our lives where we struggle to be true to what we have learned of you; and we pray for faithfulness and courage.
Your kingdom come:
Your will be done.

**God, Maker and Lover of us all
who summons us in Jesus to the way of the cross,
and empowers us to live by your Spirit,
hear our prayer. Amen.**

We say together the prayer that Jesus gave us:

**Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your Name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who sin against us.
Save us from the time of trial
and deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours,
now and for ever. Amen.**



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Will you come and follow me
if I but call your name?
Will you go where you don't know
and never be the same?
Will you let my love be shown,
will you let my name be known,
will you let my life be grown
in you and you in me?

Will you leave your self behind
if I but call your name?
Will you care for cruel and kind
and never be the same?
Will you risk the hostile stare
should your life attract or scare,
will you let me answer prayer
in you and you in me?

Will you let the blinded see
if I but call your name?
Will you set the prisoners free
and never be the same?
Will you kiss the leper clean
and do such as this unseen,
and admit to what I mean
in you and you in me?

Will you love the 'you' you hide
if I but call your name?
Will you quell the fear inside
and never be the same?
Will you use the faith you've found
to reshape the world around
through my sight and touch and sound
in you and you in me?

Lord, your summons echoes true
when you but call my name.
Let me turn and follow you
and never be the same.
In your company I'll go
where your love and footsteps show.
Thus I'll move and live and grow
in you and you in me.

John L Bell (b.1949) and Graham Maule (b. 1958)
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Blessing

May the God whose longing is for justice
and whose passion is for the freedom of all
strengthen us to work for all that makes for peace;
and the blessing of the living God,
Creator, Redeemer and Spirit
be with us all, now and always.

Amen

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