



6th Week of Easter 2024 Worship at Home with Local Preacher Jenny Brooks

Call to worship

Come into God's presence.

Leave behind worries. Leave behind cares.

Leave behind prejudice and preference.

Come to God, who accepts all,

who receives all and who loves all. Come and worship our surprising God.

Hymn StF 531

1. What a friend we have in Jesus, all our sins and griefs to bear! What a privilege to carry everything to God in prayer! O what peace we often forfeit, O what needless pain we bear, all because we do not carry everything to God in prayer!

2. Have we trials and temptations, is there trouble anywhere? We should never be discouraged: take it to the Lord in prayer.

Can we find a friend so faithful who will all our sorrows share? Jesus knows our every weakness: take it to the Lord in prayer.

3. Are we weak and heavy laden, cumbered with a load of care? Precious Saviour, still our refuge - take it to the Lord in prayer! Do your friends despise, forsake you? Take it to the Lord in prayer; in his arms he'll take and shield you, you will find a solace there.

Prayers

We thank you, Lord, that if we are truly open to you, you fill us with your spirit. You surprise us with your joy and power. We are ready to accept your challenge, and to live our lives open to you, with hearts full of praise and thanksgiving.

Our gracious, all-encompassing God, you know no boundaries, no limits. Come to us and accept our confession.

Open the door to your glorious light and life.
You carry complete forgiveness and healing in your wings. We thankfully
and humbly receive you now, Lord God.

Amen.

Prayers of intercession

When people feel they are strangers:

Lord Jesus, surprise them with your love.

When people feel they are alone:

Lord Jesus, surprise them with your love.

When people feel that nobody likes them:

Lord Jesus, surprise them with your love.

Loving God, today and always, surprise us
with your love.

Hymn StF 410

1. Lord your church on earth is seeking your renewal from above; teach us all the art of speaking with the accent of your love. We would heed your great commission sending us to every place- preach, baptise, fulfil my mission, serve with love and share my grace.
2. Freedom give to those in bondage, lift the burdens caused by sin. Give new hope, new strength and courage, light for darkness; joy for sorrow; love for hatred; peace for strife. These and countless blessings follow as the Spirit gives new life.
3. In the streets of every city where the bruised and lonely dwell, let us show the saviours pity, let us of his mercy tell. In all lands and with all races let us serve and seek to bring all the world to render praises, Christ to you, Redeemer, King.

Readings:

John Chapter 15 verses 9-17 and
Acts Chapter 10 verses 44-48.

Reflection

The lectionary this week gives us a gospel reading from John, in which Jesus reminds his disciples of his commandment to love one another, as he has loved them.

We understand that this is a commandment to us too. Then we have a reading from Acts, that is the end of the story about Peter and Cornelius, reminding us just how powerful God's spirit is and how unpredictable. Being a follower of Jesus is, in some ways very simple – believe in Jesus as the Son of God and keep his commands. The living of this faith is so much more complex than that summary.

The disciple Peter was finding this, as he made his way in the world after Jesus' death. In Acts 10 Peter has to face the reality that his understanding of what Jesus meant about "telling the world", was much too narrow. Having received a vision, Peter travels to the home of a Roman captain called Cornelius and shares the message about Jesus with Cornelius and his household. As Peter brings this message, the people listening were filled with the Holy Spirit; this shocked the Jewish people there – they thought that this blessing was reserved for those who were of the Jewish faith and had performed all the appropriate rituals. Not only has Peter to challenge his own thinking but has to deal with trying to help his peers to widen their understanding of what Jesus meant about making new disciples. On returning to Jerusalem, Peter is challenged about why he baptised all these Gentiles.

With our perspective of time and modern thinking, it is clear that Jesus meant his good news of God's love to be accessible to everyone. However, we have our own lack of openness and our view about who is acceptable within the church and who isn't. Many people, for all kinds of reasons feel unwanted, unloved, unwelcome within our worshipping communities. Peter had to step out of his lifelong understanding about faith and God, in order to fully bring God's love to Cornelius and his household. Where is God calling you to be, or do, or go?

Hymn StF 418

1. We have a Gospel to proclaim, good news for all throughout the earth; the gospel of a saviour's name: we sing his glory, tell his worth.
2. Tell of his birth at Bethlehem-not in a royal house or hall, but in a stable dark and dim, the Word made flesh, a light for all.

3. Tell of his death at Calvary: hated by those he came to save, in lonely suffering on the cross, for all he loved his life he gave.
4. Tell of that glorious easter morn: empty the tomb, for he was free. He broke the power of death and hell that we might share his victory.
5. Tell of his reign at God's right hand, by all creation glorified. He sends his spirit on his Church to live for him, the Lamb who died.
6. Now we rejoice to name him King: Jesus is Lord of all the earth. This gospel message we proclaim: we sing his glory, tell his worth.

Sending out prayer

Father God, send us out to live in your love; to share your peace and to be open to your challenges, today and every day.



Prayers from Roots