

Worship@Home 14th July 2024 15th Sunday in Ordinary Time: With Revd Dr Samantha Gillard

Opening Prayer:

Living and faithful Spirit, the God in whom we live and move and have our being, the God who is made known in Christ Jesus, bless us one and all as we wait on you this day.

Please remove from our minds and hearts whatever impediments hinder worship or dampen our joy. Increase within us that holy longing for closeness which can open our lives to fuller delight and to a deeper commitment.

May our hymns and prayers, our searching thoughts, and our hearing of the Scriptures, be an exercise in the holiest love making.

By you, with you and for you, may our lives publish your praise. In the name of Christ Jesus. **Amen!**

written by Bruce Prewer, and posted on Bruce Prewer's Homepage. <http://www.bruceprewer.com/> Reposted on RE: Worship: <https://re-worship.blogspot.com/2012/06/call-to-worship-prayer-proper-8-b.html>

STF 44 Come on and celebrate his gift of love

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kHfGDN6Lrsk>

Come on and celebrate. His gift of love, we will celebrate
The Son of God who loved us, and gave us life.
We'll shout your praise, O King, you give us joy nothing else can bring,
We'll give to you our offering. In celebration praise.

Chorus

*Come on and celebrate, celebrate
Celebrate and sing,
Celebrate and sing to the King.
Come on and celebrate, celebrate
Celebrate and sing,
Celebrate and sing to the King.*

By Brian Doerksen Words & Music © 2005 Thankyou Music & Integrity Music. Admin by worshipitogether.com
CCL:I Song Number: 4662491

Please read: 2 Samuel 6: 1-5, 12b-19

<https://bible.oremus.org/beta>

Time to Reflect

On holiday recently I had the opportunity to go on a boat trip to visit some uninhabited islands. As I stood on the beach looking out to the ocean, I started thinking about what it would be like stranded on this Island, triggering memories of listening to *Desert Island Discs*. A radio 4 programme which has now been running for over 82 years, where people are asked to choose eight music tracks, a book and a luxury item. Many of you may have listened to this long running programme; I wonder if you have ever thought about what you would take. I am still pondering on my choices because for me, I listen to different types of music depending on how I am feeling. Would you choose to take as your luxury item, a valued possession, if so, would your choice be related to the meaning behind the object or its monetary value? Our Bible reading today is about King David and the people celebrating the return of the Ark of God, their most valuable object they possess.

The Ark of God, a highly decorated chest, often referred to as the Ark of the covenant, because it held within it three objects (Exodus 25:10-22 and 34:1); a stone tablet on which were the Ten Commandments, believed to be written by God's own finger on Mount Sinai and given to Moses; a jar of manna, a sign of God's provision for them in the wilderness and Aron's budding rod, which confirmed his divine priesthood. For the Israelites the Ark, was their most holy object, that symbolised that God's presence was with them. After the Israelites were defeated by the Philistines, the Ark was captured, but later returned to them out of fear of its power. On its return the Israelites neglected the Ark, storing it for twenty years in an ordinary house (1 Samuel 1:7). King David, anointed now as King, chose to reunite the Ark of God with the Israelites. There were jubilant celebrations, including David "leaping and dancing before the Lord" (Verse 16).

Reflecting, can an object symbolise God's presence?

God revealed over time that God's presence cannot be contained but is everywhere. Isaiah 66: *"Heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool"*. Acts 7:48: *"However the Most High does not live in houses built by human hands"*.

God's omnipresence means that whenever and wherever we are worshipping, God is with us.

Jubilant celebrations surrounded the return of the Ark, why then had they neglected it for twenty years? They had placed the Ark in a safe place,

it was guarded, a treasure stored away. How often do we store up treasures, valuable objects and neglect our time with God? Jesus Christ teaches us, not to store up treasures on earth, *“For where your treasure is, there will be your heart”* (Matthew 6:19-21).

The returning of the Ark with jubilant celebrations, reflects the unconditional welcome God gives to us, when we turn away from things that are not of God, or they cause us to neglect our time spent with God. Jesus uses three different parables (Luke 15); the lost sheep, the lost coin and the lost son, to reveal how God longs for us to return. Then to live out our calling (<https://www.methodist.org.uk/about/our-calling/>) as God’s children; to respond to the gospel of God’s love in Christ. In seeking how to respond, we discover God requires us *“To act justly and love mercy and to walk humbly with your God”* (Micah 6:8). A way that leads to transformation through love and Justice. This is the theme for the coming year, as revealed by Revd Helen Cameron, our previous District Chair and now President. In her recent address to the 2024 Methodist conference, she drew from Isaiah 1:17a *“Learn to do right; seek justice, defend the oppressed”* and motivated the church to be bolder, to show ‘that justice is what love looks like in public’. <https://www.methodist.org.uk/about/structure-and-governance/the-methodist-conference/conference-2024/presidency/president-and-vice-president-2024-25/the-presidents-address-to-the-conference-2024/>. **Amen**

Prayer of Intercession

You are invited to pray silently for:

The needs of the world...

The Church and its calling...

Loved ones going through difficult times...

For peace, justice, and reconciliation...

In Jesus name. **Amen.**

The Lord’s Prayer

Our Father, who art in heaven...

StF 338 There is a redeemer

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ldRcFz7rK7w>

There is a redeemer, Jesus, God’s own Son,
precious Lamb of God, Messiah, Holy One.

Chorus

*Thank you, O my Father, for giving us your Son,
and leaving your Spirit, till the work on earth is done.*

2. Jesus, my Redeemer, name above all names,
precious Lamb of God, Messiah, O for sinners slain.

Chorus

3. When I stand in glory, I will see his face
and there I'll serve my King for ever in that holy place.

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Final Prayer:

Wonderful God, you call us to do the impossible:

to love our enemies,
to confront injustice,
to share bountifully with the poor.

You do not give us an inch:

you call us to be perfect in our imitation of you.

And yet, you give us everything:

love abounding,
the foundation of Christ,
and the gift of creation.

Bless us, give us the blessing of a faithful spirit, a willing heart, and a kingdom of grace. **Amen!**

Prayer inspired by Leviticus 19: 9-10, Matthew 5: 43-48. ~ written by the Rev. Elizabeth Dilley, and posted on the United Church of Christ's *Worship Ways* website. <http://www.ucc.org/worship/worship-ways/> Reposted on RE: <https://re-worship.blogspot.com/2014/02/closing-prayer-epiphany-7a.html>