

Worship at Home with Mary Winchcome for Sunday February 2nd 2025

Call to Worship

Loving God, your love is immeasurably more than we could ever understand.

Draw us deeper into the truth of your love for us and help us to reflect that love in our daily lives. **Amen.**

Hymn: STF 161

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 fulfill 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, till your church is built,
And the earth is filled with your glory.

Prayer of Adoration and Praise

Almighty God, we are a mixed bunch of people, but all unique and special and with a common purpose – to worship you.

You are the bringer of good news; and the example of what true love is, giving yourself for our sakes.

You are the meaning and the motivation for how we chose to live.

You are light in the darkness that draws us on.

You are the whisper in the wind and the shout in the thunder. You are the Spirit that warms our hearts. We worship and adore you.

Please read: Luke 4: 21-30

1 Corinthians 13: 1-13

Reflection:

Our television screens enable us to watch amazing events, amazing people with amazing skills.

Sportsmen and women some as members of a team, others competing as individuals. Musicians, their fingers flying to and fro on an instrument, filling the air with wonderful music

Of course we know that it didn't just happen like that. The brilliant athlete has been training and practising hour after hour, week after week. The musician has been playing exercises, perfecting techniques for long hours out of the public eye. The word inspiring is often used to describe such talents and skills.

All their brilliant performances are the result of long, patient hard work.

Our two Bible readings can appear very different from each other – in Luke Jesus is at first warmly welcomed to his home town, but then the welcome turned to anger and he was hounded out of town. The reading from Paul's letter to the Corinthians is all about love.

When Jesus said, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me," It was the culmination of years of silent preparation. His life of prayer leading up to his baptism which confirmed his vocation, and then testing it in the wilderness, before at last going public with early deeds in Capernaum. Now after years of preparation he stands before his own town. He knew everyone there and they knew him. He preached like a man inspired, but he wasn't saying what they wanted to hear.

What was so wrong with what he said?

He reminded them that God's generosity, God's grace—is for everybody instead of grace just for Israel and fierce judgement for everyone else.

In Corinthians Paul reminds us that we can say all the right things, and we can be deeply religious in thinking and practice, but this will count for nothing without love. Love is the greatest gift and the most enduring aspect of our life in God. This is because if God is love, it is by exercising distinctively Christian love that we are brought closest to God's heart. Paul goes as far as saying that a life grounded in love is greater than one grounded in faith alone.

Love endures.

It's good to remind ourselves that God loves us with a love greater than earthly love, and to remind ourselves that God doesn't just love us, he actually loves all of his creation equally. The difference is that not all of his creation has responded to his love. He longs for it to do so.

Sometimes it can be hard to show love towards others. When I'm struggling with someone being difficult, rude or nasty to me I remind myself that God loves them just as much as he loves me. They don't necessarily go away, but somehow it makes it easier to get along with them.

Paul reminds us that Love is patient and kind. Love is not jealous or boastful, proud or rude. It doesn't demand its own way. It isn't irritable, and it keeps no record of being wronged. It doesn't rejoice about injustice but rejoices whenever the truth wins out. Love never gives up, never loses faith, is always hopeful, and endures through every circumstance.

Three things will last forever—faith, hope, and love—and the greatest of these is love.

Amen

Prayers for others:

Gracious God we bring to you our broken world, so full of injustice and exploitation, suffering and sorrow, hatred and division.

We pray for all who work for change; all who strive to bring help and healing, hope and wholeness.

Loving God bring healing and renewal; through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen

STF 519

Father, I place into Your hands
the things that I cannot do.

Father, I place into Your hands
the things that I've been through.

Father, I place into Your hands
the way that I should go, for I know I always can trust You

Father, I place into Your hands
my friends and family.

Father, I place into Your hands
the things that trouble me.

Father, I place into Your hands
the person I would be, for I know I always can trust You.

Father, we love to seek Your face,
we love to hear Your voice.

Father, we love to sing Your praise,
and in Your name rejoice.

Father, we love to walk with You
and in Your presence rest, for we know we always can trust You.

Father, I want to be with You
and do the things You do.

Father, I want to speak the words
that You are speaking too.

Father, I want to love the ones
that You will draw to You, for I know that I am one with You.

Blessing:

Loving God, thank you for your great love for us,
love which is patient, kind, protecting and persevering.

Help us to take your love out with us this week
and show it to those who feel they are outside of your family.

Give us your heart for those who don't yet know you.

We ask this in Jesus' name.

Amen