

**Worship at Home - Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2022**

This short act of worship has been prepared for you to use at home. We invite you to spend a few moments with God, knowing that other people across the Methodist Connexion are sharing this act of worship with you.

**Psalm 100: 1-3**

Make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the earth.  
Worship the Lord with gladness;  
come into his presence with singing.  
Know that the Lord is God.  
It is he that made us, not we ourselves;  
we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture.

**Hymn: Praise to the living God! (StF87)**

Sing/ Read /pray /proclaim the words

<https://youtu.be/s5Gmo1JzbCU>

Praise to the living God!  
All praised be his name,  
who was, and is, and is to be,  
for e'er the same!  
The one eternal God  
ere aught that now appears:  
the First, the Last, beyond all thought  
his timeless years!

Formless, all lovely forms  
declare his loveliness;  
holy, no holiness of earth  
can his express.  
Lo, he is Lord of all!  
Creation speaks his praise,  
and everywhere, above, below,  
his will obeys.

His Spirit flowing free,  
high surging where it will:  
in prophet's word he spoke of old,  
is speaking still.  
Established is his law,  
and changeless it shall stand,  
deep writ upon the human heart,  
on sea, on land.

Eternal life has he  
implanted in the soul;  
his love shall be our strength and stay,  
while ages roll.  
Praise to the living God!  
All praised be his name,  
who was, and is, and is to be,  
for e'er the same.

*Mediaeval Jewish Doxology*  
*translated by Max Landsberg (1845-1928) and Newton Mann (1836-1926)*

### **Let us pray together**

Eternal One, we gather together across time and space to worship you; united by the words we read; united by our love for you.  
We celebrate your awesome majesty, your holiness, and your amazing love.  
We acknowledge you as Lord of our lives.  
We sing your praise and we bless your name.

Living One, we bring you our lives just as they are – not varnished or airbrushed – the things we are proud of and the things we would rather hide. And we acknowledge them for what they are. Where we have fallen short of the mark we ask your forgiveness knowing that it is your nature both to forgive and to enable new life.

We give thanks for all that you have done in our lives and pray that we will continue to be open to your work in us in Jesus' name. Amen.

**Today's Reading from Acts:** Acts 16: 1-15

**Today's Gospel Reading:** John 14: 23-29

### **Time to Reflect**

I wonder ... what picture do you have in your mind of Paul? Take a moment to think what words you would use to describe him .....

Our reading today marks a big turning point in his ministry. Paul and his mentor, Barnabas, have had a disagreement and parted company just as they were setting out on a new missionary journey. At first the going is obvious. Paul revisits the towns from his previous journey and we're told that the churches there were strengthened in the faith by his presence. But then the time comes to move on ...

I wonder if the words you chose for Paul contained ideas like "hesitant" or "undecided" or "uncertain"? He continues to travel west along the trade road through Asia Minor taking Silas and Timothy with him, but he's lost the clarity of purpose that marks his earlier journey. First they travel through Phrygia and Galatia but they're stopped from preaching there. Then they try to go into Bithynia and are stopped. So they continue west until the road literally runs out on them as they reach the sea at Troas ... and we have no stories of preaching in the towns along the way because we're told that they bypass Mysia too. And only now, in Troas, when Paul has no options left does he receive the vision for his journey.

Sometimes we present the Christian journey as one of certainty ... just have faith and all will be simple and straightforward. But over and over again the Bible reminds us that reality isn't like that. Reality is confusing and messy and there are times when we feel lost.

Paul has lost his mentor, his home base, and his travelling companion and it takes time for him to get back on track. For a while there he's adrift and uncertain of the way to go. All he can do is put one foot in front of the other and continue, trusting that the fog will lift and that God will speak ... and so it is ... and it turns out that God was speaking and guiding him even in the fog.

In our Gospel reading Jesus and the disciples are approaching a time of great loss and uncertainty as they head for Jerusalem, and Jesus is trying to prepare them for this time. He will no longer be with them but they will not be alone.

His Spirit will be with them and will guide them and remind them of the things they need to remember.

This was Paul's experience at his time of loss and uncertainty. It has been my experience too. Life is messy and confusing but if we listen and follow one step at a time then when we look back we find that we were not alone even when we thought we were.

*Take a time to sit quietly*

### **A time of prayer**

Loving One, as we come to you:  
part of your church on earth,  
in prayer for our world:  
we are so often confused and bewildered by what we've seen,  
overwhelmed by the magnitude of all that we bring, and lost in the debris ...  
the very words we use,  
the names we have for you,  
tainted and spoiled by the sickness in the world.

Touch us that we might see the world as you see it; that we might hear the rhythms and know the prayer of your heart.

Guide us that we might truly understand your Word; that we might hold in our hands the compass by which to steer.

Lead us that we might follow in your Way; seeking justice for the outcast, freedom for the oppressed and forgiveness for those who are broken by life.

Heal us that we, in turn, might bring healing to others; that we might reach out in love to those who have been taught only hate.

Strengthen us that we might have the courage to live as your people in this troubled world and the grace to live with the consequences of that choice.

And the prayers that we bring for ourselves we now offer for the whole of your church on earth; that together we might truly hold out your peace, your wholeness, to the world in the name of Jesus who brought this gift to us. Amen.

### **The Lord's Prayer**

*Our Father .....*

**Hymn:** Listen to “I watch the sunrise” (Stf 469) or sing a verse of a hymn that comes to mind

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r0l0ipG58\\_o](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r0l0ipG58_o)

I watch the sunrise lighting the sky,  
casting its shadows near.  
And on this morning bright though it be,  
I feel those shadows near me.  
But you are always close to me  
following all my ways.  
May I be always close to you  
following all your ways, Lord.

I watch the sunlight shine through the clouds,  
warming the earth below.  
And at the mid-day life seems to say:  
'I feel your brightness near me.'  
For you are always close to me ...

I watch the sunset fading away,  
lighting the clouds with sleep.  
And as the evening closes its eyes  
I feel your presence near me.  
For you are always close to me ...

I watch the moonlight guarding the night,  
waiting till morning comes.  
The air is silent, earth is at rest --  
only your peace is near me.  
Yes, you are always close to me ...

*John Glynn*

### **A prayer of blessing**

Wherever you are today and whatever is happening in your life, as you turn to the Eternal One in worship and prayer may God bless you and keep you; may God look on you with grace and mercy; may God acknowledge you and give you peace. Amen.

Original Materials by Mary G Elms

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Local Churches please insert CCCLi No here

We are grateful to all the Ministers and Local Preachers from around the Connexion who have contributed to Worship at Home. This resource is administrated by Ministries: Vocations and Worship in the Connexional Team.

For more worship resources see

[The Bible \(methodist.org.uk\)](http://methodist.org.uk)

[Singing the Faith Plus \(methodist.org.uk\)](http://methodist.org.uk)

### **Acts 16: 1-15**

Paul went on also to Derbe and to Lystra, where there was a disciple named Timothy, the son of a Jewish woman who was a believer; but his father was a Greek. He was well spoken of by the believers in Lystra and Iconium. Paul wanted Timothy to accompany him; and he took him and had him circumcised because of the Jews who were in those places, for they all knew that his father was a Greek. As they went from town to town, they delivered to them for observance the decisions that had been reached by the apostles and elders who were in Jerusalem. So the churches were strengthened in the faith and increased in numbers daily.

They went through the region of Phrygia and Galatia, having been forbidden by the Holy Spirit to speak the word in Asia. When they had come opposite Mysia, they attempted to go into Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus did not allow them; so, passing by Mysia, they went down to Troas. During the night Paul had a vision: there stood a man of Macedonia pleading with him and saying, 'Come over to Macedonia and help us.' When he had seen the vision, we immediately tried to cross over to Macedonia, being convinced that God had called us to proclaim the good news to them.

We set sail from Troas and took a straight course to Samothrace, the following day to Neapolis, and from there to Philippi, which is a leading city of the district of Macedonia and a Roman colony. We remained in this city for some days. On the sabbath day we went outside the gate by the river, where we supposed there was a place of prayer; and we sat down and spoke to the women who had gathered there. A certain woman named Lydia, a worshipper of God, was listening to us; she was from the city of Thyatira and a dealer in

purple cloth. The Lord opened her heart to listen eagerly to what was said by Paul. When she and her household were baptized, she urged us, saying, 'If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come and stay at my home.' And she prevailed upon us.

### **John 14: 23-29**

Jesus answered him, 'Those who love me will keep my word, and my Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them. Whoever does not love me does not keep my words; and the word that you hear is not mine, but is from the Father who sent me.

'I have said these things to you while I am still with you. But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything, and remind you of all that I have said to you. Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid. You heard me say to you, "I am going away, and I am coming to you." If you loved me, you would rejoice that I am going to the Father, because the Father is greater than I. And now I have told you this before it occurs, so that when it does occur, you may believe.