

# Teddington Circuit Worship at Home Sheets

Sunday 9 August 2020

This short act of worship has been prepared for you to use whilst we are unable to use Methodist Church premises. If you are well enough why not spend a few moments with God, knowing that other people are sharing this act of worship with you. With thanks to Joyce Pegg, John Turner, Nick White and the Connexional team.

## Opening Prayer

We come together to worship  
We step out in trust  
We have no need to fear  
We put our hand in the hand of God who saves us  
As we come together to worship God.

## Hymn: StF 51 Great is thy faithfulness

Sing/ Read /pray /proclaim the words or listen to it here <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dTKlqmdfH5k>

Great is thy faithfulness, O God my Father,  
there is no shadow of turning with thee;  
thou changest not, thy compassions, they fail not;  
as thou hast been thou for ever wilt be:

Great is thy faithfulness! Great is thy  
faithfulness!  
Morning by morning new mercies I see;  
all I have needed thy hand hath provided.  
Great is thy faithfulness, Lord, unto me.

Summer and winter, and springtime and harvest,  
sun, moon and stars in their courses above,  
join with all nature in manifold witness  
to thy great faithfulness, mercy and love:

Pardon for sin and a peace that endureth,  
thine own dear presence to cheer and to guide;  
strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow,  
blessings all mine, with ten thousand beside!

*Thomas O. Chisholm (1866-1960)*

## Let us pray together

Creator God  
Maker of blue skies and stormy weather  
Of mountains and seashores  
You restore our equilibrium  
Jesus rescuer and risk taker  
You call us and give us confidence  
Spirit of God moving across troubled water  
You bring us peace  
We praise you for being with us wherever we are  
And for blessing us so richly every day.

**Amen**

God of grace, I praise You. I praise You for who You are: creator, faithful, rescuer, and holy. I praise that You even though I cannot be with others to worship You, I can feel that You are here in my heart. I praise You, for all the blessings You have given me. For family, for friends, for a relationship with You. Help me not to take You for granted. God of grace, as I worship You this morning, help me to be transformed by Your love, and in the power of Your Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

Old Testament Reading 1 Kings 19:9-18

**Today's Gospel Reading:** Matthew 14:22-33

## Time to Reflect

The gospel reading for this week is a bit like an allegory of our present circumstances.

Confined to the safety of our homes during lockdown, we've been advised against doing

many things like using public transport, visiting crowded places, going to the dentist or the hairdresser or the beauty salon even, attending sports events or concerts, going away on holiday, and even singing in church. But now we're being encouraged to take more risks.

Piece by piece the normal behaviour of life is being put back together again cautiously.

Parents are wondering whether they should risk sending their children back to school.

How do you feel about it? A bit nervous? Let others try it first and see what happens?

The disciples were safe in the boat, in their comfort zone, but Jesus was not with them.

And then, literally out of the blue, Jesus appears walking on the water, and calls to them.

At first they think He's a ghost, but then they recognise Him. Will they step out of the boat?

It's not surprising that Peter is the one who thinks about doing it first, but even he's nervous.

He takes a few faltering steps, but then he takes his eyes off Jesus and begins to sink.

Jesus takes him by the hand and escorts him safely to the boat, back to his comfort zone.

Is there a message for us here about how we should approach our life, living with the virus?

Does our faith give us more confidence to resume normal life, or would that be irresponsible?

Should we trust in Jesus to protect us, or would we be putting other people's lives at risk?

And how should the church respond to being shut away for a period and then stepping out?

When you're unsure about something, like deciding if the bath water is too hot for a baby,

or when food appears that you've never tried before, or you're recommended a new book,

what do you do first and how do you describe it? You say, "I think I'd better test the water".

If you haven't been out for ages, maybe self-isolating or shielding, you take a step at a time.

You test the water. No doubt Peter did. He hung onto the boat, as he tested the water.

And then perhaps he got more confident and took a few strides further without mishap.

I'm sure we've all done this in different ways, "testing the water" "before jumping right in.

So now that churches are beginning to re-emerge into uncharted waters, how does it feel?

Gradually week by week, they will test the water and gain confidence as life resumes.

But need it be the same as it always was, or is this an opportunity to do something new?

Many churches have found that the period of lock down offers the chance to test the water.

Can you reach more people with online services? Can the prayer life of the church become more communal,

regular and proactive? Can pastoral support be greater and more shared?

Many churches have found that people are more willing to pray together as part of a group.

People have found time to just call each other up to check if they are coping OK and are well.

This may also be a chance to test the water in other ways. To be aware of Jesus' presence.

The disciples in the boat were going through a stormy time. The wind was buffeting them.

They felt alone, separated from Jesus. Perhaps we are feeling a bit like that right now.

The economy is being rocked by unemployment; families are struggling to make ends meet.

In the Old Testament passage for this week, Elijah felt very alone and separated from God.

He felt as if the world around him had rejected God and that he was the last true prophet.

He despaired and even hoped it all would end. He searched for God on the mountain.

There was a wind which tore the mountain apart, then an earthquake and then a fire.

And God was not in any of them. But then God spoke to him, but just in a gentle whisper.

Perhaps amidst the turmoil of the world today, with its health crisis and its broken economy,

we may feel a bit like Elijah. Feeling abandoned and helpless. Seeking to find God in it all.

God asked Elijah, twice, "What are you doing here?" Is that a question God is asking us?

Amidst all that is happening in this world, with its uncertainty and fear, "What are we doing?"

The Year 2020 may be remembered as the Year of the Virus. A year that changed the world.

But perhaps it could also be a year when Christians had the courage to step out of the boat.

Perhaps it could be a year for testing the water with new ideas for spreading the good news.

Let's make it a year when instead of hiding away, we see Jesus coming towards us, saying,

"Take courage! It is I. Don't be afraid." And then, like Peter accepting his challenge to come,

let's take on a new challenge. Let's step out of the boat and test the water with new things.

Justin Welby, Archbishop of Canterbury, preaching to the New Wine conference online,

said that the Dean of Canterbury usually had about 20 people for morning prayers each day. Now, streaming the service online, he said that more people have received it than have ever visited the cathedral in all its many centuries of history. Let's be bold and let's test the water!

As we gradually begin to resume activities and as the church emerges to serve God again,

let's grab the opportunities which exist for us all to spread the good news that God is with us.

*Prayer: Thank you Lord Jesus for sustaining us in the storms of life. Give us the courage to step out of the boat, to test the water, to serve you and to witness to our faith in new ways.*

Take a time to sit quietly

### **A time of prayer**

#### Prayers for others.

The Circuit Prayer Diary invites us to pray for Sunbury church, and their youth music group 'ALOUD!! and LOUDER STILL!!

In our prayers for the world we are asked to pray for Mozambique, one of the poorest countries in the world due to colonial exploitation, poor government and guerrilla warfare together with droughts and floods.

Most church leaders have never received any training, so pray for opportunities for them.

We also remember at this time:  
Peter, who is very unwell.

We also pray for Ailsa and the family at this time.

For Viv on the passing of her Mum, "who was called home to be with Jesus to whom her life was devoted". We also pray for Viv's children.

For Val as she continues her treatment, with the support of Richard and the family,

and for those who are taking or planning to take holidays' at this time, may they stay safe, and be refreshed by their break.

..... (please also add your private prayers for others that are in your thoughts).

Amen

### **Modern Lord's Prayer – (You can use this, or the version you prefer).**

God who made the earth, sky, sea, planets, stars, animals and people. You are amazing.  
Help us to look after the world, be kind and respectful to others and, help us all to reach our full potential. Provide food for the hungry, shelter for the homeless, friends for the lonely and healing for those who are not very well.  
Help us to say sorry when we have hurt others, and to not hold grudges to those who have hurt or upset us. Help us always, to try and do what is right and not to be led into things that make you and others sad. With your help, all things are possible, today, tomorrow, next week and forever. Amen

### ***Hymn: Listen to Jesus, Draw Me Ever Nearer by Keith & Kristyn Getty***

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aLr5Y\\_vW3wA](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aLr5Y_vW3wA)

### **or sing a verse of a hymn that comes to mind**

#### **A prayer of blessing**

Like the prophet Elijah, up a mountain, listening out for your voice help us to listen out for what you want to say to us.

Like the disciples tossed about in a boat in the lake, help us to trust that you are with us in all things.

Like Peter wanting to prove our commitment to you, help us as we try to be faithful to you.

For we will not always get it right, but you love us for trying.

Bless us all this day, and always. Amen

Some Original Materials by Matthew Ramsden, Local Preacher from Bolton  
Methodist Circuit

Hymns reproduced under CCLI 1144191.

Local Churches please insert CCLI No here