

Worship at Home – 20th July 2025 (16th Sunday in Ordinary Time)
A short act of worship for use in people's homes prepared by Karen Frost.

Introduction

Welcome to Worship at Home. It's lovely to worship with you today. I hope you're managing to stay cool in the summer heat. Perhaps you have a refreshing ice-cold drink to hand or maybe you've been enjoying some ice cream during the past few days.

You may have heard of Anna chaplaincy, an ecumenical ministry which enables local churches to offer high quality spiritual care to older people in the community, who may be of strong, little or no faith. This afternoon nine new Anna Chaplains are being commissioned to work in the Basingstoke area of our Methodist Circuit. May I ask you to pray for us as we start on our chaplaincy journeys, please?

Call to worship

Into the midst of your presence, we come, Holy Lord. Into the hope of your Spirit, we come, Holy Lord. Into this time of worship, we come, Holy Lord. Show us how to follow you, today, we pray, Living, loving Lord. **Amen**

Hymn – STF 489 – All I once held dear Graham Kendrick (born 1950)

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| 1 All I once held dear,
Built my life upon,
All this world reveres,
And wars to own,
All I once thought gain
I have counted loss;
Spent and worthless now,
Compared to this.
<i>Knowing You, Jesus,
knowing You,
there is no greater thing.
You're my all, You're the best,
You're my joy, my righteousness,
and I love You, Lord.</i> | 2 Now my heart's desire
Is to know You more,
To be found in You
And known as Yours.
To possess by faith
What I could not earn,
All-surpassing gift
Of righteousness.
<i>Chorus</i> |
| | 3 Oh, to know the power
Of Your risen life,
And to know You in
Your sufferings.
To become like You
In Your death, my Lord,
So with You to live
And never die.
<i>Chorus</i> |

Opening prayers

Loving God, like travellers after a long journey, we come to you today: In need of rest, in need of shelter, in need of sustenance. Restore our weary bodies that we have strength for the journey ahead. Like small children worn out after a long day's adventuring, we come to you today: in need of love, in need of safety, in need of replenishment. Restore our tired minds that we have energy to adventure again tomorrow. Like creatures of the wild bedding down after a long day of survival, we come to you today: ready to stop, ready to listen and be open to simply resting in your presence. Replenish us today with your love, wisdom and peace. **Amen**

A prayer of confession and assurance of forgiveness

Forgive us, compassionate God, when we fail to see you: in the faces of strangers; in the tears of the desperate; in the anxiety of the afraid; in the silence of the broken; in the fragility of creation; in one another or in ourselves. Forgive us and help us to encounter you afresh.

God of wonder, though we don't always see you, you always see us.

Although our eyes aren't always open to the ways of your kingdom, it is always open to us.

Although we don't always recognise you in our daily encounters, you are always there.

Thank you for meeting us where we are, for your grace and forgiveness, and your life-giving Spirit, which fills us day by day. **Amen**

Hymn – STF 331 – King of kings, majesty Jarrod Cooper

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| 1 King of kings, majesty,
God of heaven living in me,
gentle Saviour, closest friend,
strong deliverer, beginning and end,
all within me falls at your throne.
<i>Your majesty, I can but bow,
I lay my all before you now.
In royal robes I don't deserve
I live to serve your majesty,
I live to serve your majesty.</i> | 2 Earth and heaven worship you,
love eternal, faithful and true,
who bought the nations, ransomed
souls,
brought this sinner near to your throne;
all within me cries out in praise.
<i>Chorus</i> |
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Bible reading – Colossians 1: 15-28

The Son of God Is Better Than Everything Else

¹⁵ The Son is the exact likeness of God, who can't be seen. The Son is first, and he is over all creation. ¹⁶ All things were created in him. He created everything in heaven and on earth. He created everything that can be seen and everything that can't be seen. He created kings, powers, rulers and authorities. All things have been created by him and for him. ¹⁷ Before anything was created, he was already there. He holds everything together. ¹⁸ And he is the head of the body, which is the church. He is the beginning. He is the first to be raised from the dead. That happened so that he would be far above everything. ¹⁹ God was pleased to have his whole nature living in Christ. ²⁰ God was pleased to bring all things back to himself. That's because of what Christ has done. These things include everything on earth and in heaven. God made peace through Christ's blood, by his death on the cross.

²¹ At one time you were separated from God. You were enemies in your minds because of your evil ways. ²² But because Christ died, God has brought you back to himself. Christ's death has made you holy in God's sight. So now you don't have any flaw. You are free from blame. ²³ But you must keep your faith steady and firm. You must not move away from the hope the good news holds out to you. This is the good news that you heard. It has been preached to every creature under heaven. I, Paul, now serve the good news.

Paul's Work for the Church

²⁴ I am happy because of what I am suffering for you. My suffering joins with and continues the sufferings of Christ. I suffer for his body, which is the church. ²⁵ I serve the church. God appointed me to bring the complete word of God to you. ²⁶ That word contains the mystery that has been hidden for many ages. But now it has been made known to the Lord's people. ²⁷ God has chosen

to make known to them the glorious riches of that mystery. He has made it known among the Gentiles. And here is what it is. Christ is in you. He is your hope of glory.

²⁸ Christ is the one we preach about. With all the wisdom we have, we warn and teach everyone. When we bring them to God, we want them to be like Christ. We want them to be grown up as people who belong to Christ.

Hymn – STF 254 – Seek ye first the kingdom of God Karen Lafferty (born 1948)

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| 1 Seek ye first the kingdom of God,
and His righteousness,
and all these things shall be added unto
you.
Allelu, alleluia. | 2 Man shall not live by bread alone,
but by every word
that proceeds from the mouth of God.
Allelu, alleluia. |
| 3 Ask and it shall be given unto you,
seek and ye shall find;
knock and the door shall be opened up to you.
Allelu, alleluia. | |

Reflection on the reading

Today's reading from Paul's letter to the Colossians includes one of the most famous verses in the Bible, and one which has united many people in difficult times. Colossians 1, verse 17 reads 'In Christ, all things hold together' or in the version we heard earlier, 'He holds everything together.' It is a simple verse, and easy to remember because it is so short! Perhaps it is one you could commit to memory this week or write down on a piece of paper or on your mobile, so this reassuring and helpful thought can keep coming back to you in the months ahead. In Christ, all things hold together. Despite its simplicity, it is a crucial verse in helping us reflect on how the world works, and who Jesus is in the midst of all the challenges and pain we face in our lives, see in the news, worry about in our families and communities. Amongst all that seems like it is trying to drive us apart, all the arguments, all the separation, all the breakdown of communities, God in Christ is bringing us back together – or at least trying to. In Christ, all things hold together.' This simple verse is also a reminder of the role we have to play. If we want to get involved in whatever it is that God is 'up to' in the places we call home, then we need to look out for opportunities to bring, and hold, people together. Wherever there is unity amongst division, healing of community breakdown, restoration and forgiveness, God is there. The Christ is there. Are there people, places, situations and relationships which need to know the presence of this healing Christ today? Can you be the hands and the feet that help to hold all things together?

Prayers for the world, others and ourselves. Amen

In this moment Lord, we bring our prayers and our concerns for others. The world seems so full of problems way beyond our imagining and understanding. Emergencies seem to be almost daily, and we move from one to another so quickly. But these emergencies are still there, and people are still impacted and in need. Our prayers we bring, knowing that even if we fail to listen to you, you always listen to us, you listen to our words, our silences, our yearnings and our longing.

For those in crisis this day, we pray that someone will listen to them. **Lord, hear us.**
For those in poverty and destitution, we pray that someone will give them a gift. **Lord, hear us.**
For those in pain and anguish, we pray that someone will offer relief. **Lord, hear us.**
For those who are hungry, we pray that someone will feed them. **Lord, hear us.**
For those who are thirsty, we pray they may be given clean water. **Lord, hear us.**

For those in grief, we pray that someone will simply be with them. **Lord, hear us.**
For those who are near the end of life, we pray that someone will hold their hand. **Lord, hear us.**
For those who are lonely, we pray they may be befriended. **Lord, hear us.**
For those who are frightened, we pray they may be soothed and calmed. **Lord, hear us. Amen.**

You may now wish to say The Lord's Prayer in a version or translation with which you are familiar.

Hymn – STF 319 – Christ triumphant, ever reigning Michael Saward (1932–2015)

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| 1 Christ triumphant ever reigning,
Saviour, Master, King!
Lord of heaven, our lives sustaining,
hear us as we sing:
<i>Yours the glory and the crown,
the high renown, the eternal name.</i> | 2 Word incarnate, truth revealing,
Son of Man on earth!
power and majesty concealing
by your humble birth:
<i>Chorus</i> |
| 3 Suffering servant, scorned, ill-treated,
victim crucified!
death is through the cross defeated,
sinners justified:
<i>Chorus</i> | 4 Priestly king, enthroned for ever
high in heaven above!
sin and death and hell shall never
stifle hymns of love:
<i>Chorus</i> |
| 5 So, our hearts and voices raising
through the ages long,
ceaselessly upon you gazing,
this shall be our song:
<i>Chorus</i> | |

Blessing

We shall go out with joy and be sent forth with peace.
We shall seek to know you more, Lord Jesus, and to follow in your way.
We hold together, in you, Jesus the Christ. **Amen**

And the blessing of God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, remain with you and all those you love, this day and forever more. **Amen**

Bible readings from [New International Reader's Version \(NIRV\)](#)

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