

Worship at Home – 27th July 2025 (17th Sunday in Ordinary Time)
A short act of worship for use in people's homes prepared by Erica Gassor.

Call to worship

Loving God, as we come today to hear your Word to celebrate your love and to pray for your world, we ask you to deepen our faith, to refresh our spirits and to unite us in heart and mind. In Jesus' name. **Amen**

Hymn – STF 526 – Lord of all hopefulness Jan Struther (1901–1953)

- 1 Lord of all hopefulness, Lord of all joy,
Whose trust, ever child-like, no care could destroy,
Be there at our waking, and give us, we pray,
Your bliss in our hearts, Lord, at the break of the day.
- 2 Lord of all eagerness, Lord of all faith,
Whose strong hands were skilled at the plane and the lathe,
Be there at our labours, and give us, we pray,
Your strength in our hearts, Lord, at the noon of the day.
- 3 Lord of all kindness, Lord of all grace,
Your hands swift to welcome, your arms to embrace,
Be there at our homing, and give us, we pray,
Your love in our hearts, Lord, at the eve of the day.
- 4 Lord of all gentleness, Lord of all calm,
Whose voice is contentment, whose presence is balm,
Be there at our sleeping, and give us, we pray,
Your peace in our hearts, Lord, at the end of the day.

Bible reading – Psalm 138

A psalm of David.

- ¹ Lord, I will praise you with all my heart.
In front of those who think they are gods
I will sing praise to you.
- ² I will bow down facing your holy temple.
I will praise your name,
because you are always loving and faithful.
You have honoured your holy word
even more than your own fame.
- ³ When I called out to you, you answered me.
You made me strong and brave.
- ⁴ Lord, may all the kings on earth praise you
when they hear about what you have decided.
- ⁵ Lord, may they sing about what you have done,
because your glory is great.
- ⁶ Though the Lord is high above all, he cares for the lowly.
Though he is in heaven above, he sees them on earth below.

⁷ Trouble is all around me,
but you keep me alive.
You reach out your hand to put a stop to the anger of my enemies.
With your powerful right hand you save me.
⁸ Lord, you will show that I was right to trust you.
Lord, your faithful love continues forever.
You have done so much for us, so don't stop now.

A prayer of confession and assurance of forgiveness

Everlasting God, our day begins with dawn,
but our life truly begins when we receive Jesus into our hearts,
for He with you and the Holy Spirit are our strength,
our hope and our inspiration.
And so, we praise you for all the joys, the challenges
and the blessings of life lived with you.

Faithful God, forgive us when we lose sight
of what really matters,
when we get sidetracked by the trivial and the trite,
the superficial and the shallow.
Forgive us, and draw us back to your Son Jesus Christ,
who embodies all that is truthful, vital and eternal.

Creator God, thank you for hearing our prayers
and for your reassurance that we matter to you.
You love us so much and long for us to be fully rooted in you,
to rely on you and to reflect your forgiveness, grace and
redeeming love to all the world. **Amen**

Hymn – STF 18 – Be still and know that I am God Anonymous

- 1 Be still and know that I am God.
Be still and know that I am God.
Be still and know that I am God.
- 2 I am the Lord who saves and heals.
I am the Lord who saves and heals.
I am the Lord who saves and heals.
- 3 In you, O Lord, I put my trust.
In you, O Lord, I put my trust.
In you, O Lord, I put my trust.
- 4 Be still and know that I am God.
Be still and know that I am God.
Be still and know that I am God.

Bible reading – Colossians 2:6-19

Having All Things in Christ

⁶ You received Christ Jesus as Lord. So, keep on living your lives in him. ⁷ Have your roots in him. Build yourselves up in him. Grow strong in what you believe, just as you were taught. Be more thankful than ever before.

⁸ Make sure no one controls you. They will try to control you by using false reasoning that has no meaning. Their ideas depend on human teachings. They also depend on the basic spiritual powers of this world. They don't depend on Christ.

⁹ God's whole nature is living in Christ in human form. ¹⁰ Because you belong to Christ, you have been made complete. He is the ruler over every power and authority. ¹¹ When you received Christ, your circumcision was not done by human hands. Instead, your circumcision was done by Christ. He put away the person you used to be. At that time, sin's power ruled over you. ¹² When you were baptized, you were buried together with Christ. And you were raised to life together with him when you were baptized. You were raised to life by believing in God's work. God himself raised Jesus from the dead.

¹³ At one time you were dead in your sins. Your desires controlled by sin were not circumcised. But God gave you new life together with Christ. He forgave us all our sins. ¹⁴ He wiped out what the law said that we owed. The law stood against us. It judged us. But he has taken it away and nailed it to the cross. ¹⁵ He took away the weapons of the powers and authorities. He made a public show of them. He won the battle over them by dying on the cross.

Freedom From Human Rules

¹⁶ So don't let anyone judge you because of what you eat or drink. Don't let anyone judge you about holy days. I'm talking about special feasts and New Moons and Sabbath days. ¹⁷ They are only a shadow of the things to come. But what is real is found in Christ. ¹⁸ Some people enjoy pretending they aren't proud. They worship angels. But don't let people like that judge you. These people tell you every little thing about what they have seen. They are proud of their useless ideas. That's because their minds are not guided by the Holy Spirit. ¹⁹ They aren't connected anymore to the head, who is Christ. But the whole body grows from the head. The muscles and tendons hold the body together. And God causes it to grow.

Hymn – STF 424 – God forgave my sin in Jesus' name Carol Owens (born 1931)

1 God forgave my sin in Jesus' name;
 I've been born again in Jesus' name,
 and in Jesus' name I come to you
 to share His love as He told me to.
 *He said: 'Freely, freely you have received,
 freely, freely give;
 go in My name and because you believe,
 others will know that I live.'*

2 All power is given in Jesus' name
 in earth and heaven in Jesus' name;
 and in Jesus' name I come to you
 to share His power as He told me to.
 Chorus

Reflection on the reading

What really matters?

The congregation in Colossae is being pulled towards concerns about special foods and days, but Paul encourages them to keep focused on Jesus. He uses a number of images to highlight the completeness of our life in Christ.

Paul is keen to stress to the Colossians that, in a world where philosophies and fads come and go, what really matters is Christ – the one in whom the fullness of God dwells and in whom we find fullness of life.

This reading is very apt for us to adopt today when there are so many distractions, lots of activities each day of the week, lots to watch on the TV, lots to take in and follow, lots to concentrate on and enjoy and often an excess of so much but it is important to seek to place Jesus at the centre of our lives and concentrate again on the things that really matter in a world full of distractions.

What are the 'real' things we need to concentrate on today in this World – the World itself, caring for creation in all respects – the earth and all that is created. Our brothers and sisters in the World, to do all that we can to help those who are suffering whether from natural disasters, wars, or plagues and illnesses or just loneliness and neglect. We can often feel that as a single person we cannot make a difference, but we can – each one of us has an influence on the area around us and it is important that we follow the right path and set an example to others in all we do.

Not that there is anything wrong with distractions and activities or watching TV but as Paul said, keep Jesus in the very centre of our lives and remember the things that really matter. I find that is one of the great things about being older, you realise what is important, love, family, friends and the World around us – not the superficial things that the media and social media would have us believe are important. Stand firm and as we sang in our hymn earlier, be still and know that I am God – hallelujah! **Amen**

Prayers for the world, others and ourselves

Father God, help each one of us to be still, listen to you and know that you are God as we turn to think about the World in which we live. Having experienced the heatwaves which flooded and discomforted so many of us, we pray for all those across the world who daily have to deal with such temperature extremes. Those whose houses are flimsy and unstable and uninsulated against cold or heat, those who have no place to find retreat and rest from the heat. Lands become parched more readily and crops wither. Somalia, Ethiopia and Kenya are facing extreme hunger if rains don't come soon. May we and all the world find ways to support each other and reduce our impact on the climate, that all, now and in the future may live more sustainable, healthy lives with food enough for the day.

For all those who work in Social Care and the Health Services in our country and around the world, where underfunding, lack of resources, lack of support and misuse and abuse by so many causes stress to staff, deteriorating care at crisis times, delayed diagnosis and insufficient support. We pray for those who work, who plan for, who fund and who need to use such services.

For governments and regimes around the globe who find themselves in turmoil. We pray for a wider recognition of the needs of all and seek equality and fairness for all humanity. We pray that we may, in our small way, be part of the solution. For those who seek to flee corrupt and violent regimes and who put themselves in danger to simply find a better way of life. May they find, welcome, care, love, support and guidance as they journey.

For those without faith or moral compass, who do not seek the Kingdom of God, the support and love of God, who do not seek or know the burning of the Holy Spirit in their lives. We pray they may see the spark in others and be drawn to faith and find the love and comfort that faith can bring.

For those who still work tirelessly on Covid research and prevention. For those who diagnose and nurse, who support and care for those infected. For those who still need to shield to keep safe and virus free. For those who suffer from long Covid and all whose mental health has been impacted by the virus and the change in our way of life, those who struggled with lockdowns and who find it hard to re-join society, who have become reclusive and fearful of being in crowds.

For the lost, the lonely, the ill, the dying and the bereaved, that in times of pain, confusion and grief they may find comfort in God, in family, friends or neighbour, in a touch, a word, a smile or companionable silence.

This day, these are our prayers for those whose lives touch our lives, our consciousness, our very being, they are the prayers for the people whose needs weigh heavily upon our hearts and lives. Let us stop for a minute and bring to God those who are on our minds at this time.

Holy Spirit of God,
Hear our prayer. **Amen**

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

Hymn – STF 634 – Fight the good fight John S B Monsell (1811-1875)

- 1 Fight the good fight with all your might;
 Christ is your strength, and Christ your right;
 lay hold on life, and it shall be
 your joy and crown eternally.
- 2 Run the straight race through God's good grace,
 lift up your eyes, and seek his face;
 life with its way before you lies;
 Christ is the path, and Christ the prize.
- 3 Cast care aside, upon your guide
 lean, and his mercy will provide;
 lean, and the trusting soul shall prove,
 Christ is its life, and Christ its love.
- 4 Faint not nor fear, his arm is near;
 he changes not, and you are dear;
 only believe, and prove it true
 that Christ is all in all to you.

Blessing

And now may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all, this day and ever more. **Amen**

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

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