

Worship at Home – 17th August 2025 (20th in Ordinary Time)

A short act of worship for use in people's homes prepared by Marilyn Britt.

Introduction

Good morning and welcome to Worship at Home on Sunday 17th August 2025. My name is Marilyn Britt, and I am a worship leader at Thatcham Methodist Church. My husband Jeff will be helping me today. I wonder if you have ever listened to the programme Desert Island Discs. Famous celebrities choose 8 records to take to a desert island. They are also given the Bible, the complete works of Shakespeare and a book of their choice. I wonder what yours might be. I was listening to a friend recently and she said she would take the Methodist hymn book – Singing the Faith. Today, we will worship God with singing hymns but also using the hymn book as a prayer book. All today's prayers and reading are from Singing the Faith. There are some wonderful words that we can use. I'm going to switch on my electric candle reminding us that Christ is the light of the world and come to worship God.

Call to worship (from STF 22)

Come all you people, Come and praise your Maker. **Come now and worship the Lord.**

Our first hymn this morning was written by Rev Brian Hoare. He was born in 1935 in Essex and then moved to Yorkshire. He trained as a music and religious education teacher. He entered the Methodist Ministry in 1968. He was a New Testament teacher at Cliff College, worked in the Home Missions department, and was President of Conference from 1995-96.

The Methodist Church has always sung its faith. This hymn praises God. We recognise that it is God who has made us but came to earth as Jesus to show us how to live, share our pain and tell us of eternal life. It says the Holy Spirit is poured down on us to help us live the life God wants us to live and is available to all. It also tells us it is not just for us personally, but we have a responsibility to tell others so that they may live as God wants us and continue to confess God is King and sing his praises.

Hymn – STF 21 – Born in Song! Brian Hoare (born 1935)

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| 1 | Born in song!
God's people have always been singing.
Born in song!
Hearts and voices raised.
So today we worship together;
God alone is worthy to be praised. | 2 | Praise to God!
For he is the one who has made us.
Praise to God!
We his image bear.
Heaven and earth are full of his glory;
let creation praise him everywhere. |
| 3 | Christ is King!
He left all the glory of heaven.
Christ is King!
Born to share in our pain;
crucified, for sinners atoning,
risen, exalted, soon to come again. | 4 | Sing the song!
God's Spirit is poured out among us.
Sing the song!
He has made us anew.
Every member part of the Body;
given his power, his will to seek and do. |
| 5 | Tell the world!
All power to Jesus is given.
Tell the world!
He is with us always.
Spread the word, that all may receive
him;
every tongue confess and sing his
praise. | 6 | Then the end!
Christ Jesus shall reign in his glory.
Then the end
of all earthly days.
Yet above the song will continue;
all his people still shall sing his praise. |

Opening prayers

Great and wonderful are your deeds, Lord God the Almighty,
Just and true are your ways, O ruler of the nations
Who shall not revere and praise your name O Lord? For you alone are holy.
All nations shall come and worship in your presence: for your just dealings have been revealed.
To the one who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be blessing and honour and glory and might,
for ever and ever. **Amen**

And the words from hymn STF 67

This, this is the God we adore;
our faithful, unchangeable friend;
whose love is as great as his power.
and neither knows measure nor end.

'Tis Jesus the first and the last
whose Spirit shall guide us safe home;
we'll praise him for all that is past,
and trust him for all that's to come.

And our prayer of repentance and forgiveness is STF 429 written by Martin Leckebusch. Born in 1962, a prolific hymn writer who wrote his first hymn when he was 14. This hymn was written later - Lord, we come to you for mercy.

There will be a short silence between each verse for you to use.

Lord, we turn to you for mercy:
may our prayerful words express
something of our heartfelt sorrow
for the sins we now confess.

Silence

Yet by your immense compassion
you invite, accept, restore,
leading us to greater wholeness
than we ever knew before.

Silence

For you teach a way of wisdom
we may clearly understand:
walking with the God of mercy
step by step, and hand in hand.

Amen

We have trusted far too often
in our human strength and skill;
we have proudly disregarded
what we knew to be your will.

Silence

Your forgiveness lifts our burdens,
setting heart and spirit free
to fulfil our true potential,
all that we were meant to be.

Silence

Singing the Faith is the book used by the Methodist Church and was published in 2011. We think of hymn books only having hymns in, but it also includes a selection of psalms and liturgies. The preface reads of the history of seeking and singing our faith. You may not have a copy, but it is a feast for feeding our spirit and our souls. Apart from some entries from the Common Worship Book and a selection of 41 psalms there is only one bible text in it.

Bible reading – Ephesians 5:19-20

¹⁹ Speak to one another with psalms, hymns and songs from the Spirit. Sing and make music from your heart to the Lord. ²⁰ Always give thanks to God the Father for everything. Give thanks to him in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

These words are a powerful witness to the Gospel encouraging faith and conviction. May all use it.

Reflection on the reading - Is this what we do?

Singing and making melody stresses that the worship that is offered, spring from lives centred on God and from an inner awareness of all that God has done. Similarly, the injunction to give thanks for everything refers to everything out of the whole stock of spiritual blessings that God has conferred on his people.

Sometimes we may feel it difficult to give thanks. In all things God works for our good if we love him and are called according to his purpose. Romans 8:28 says:

“And we know that in all things God work for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.”

Thank God not for your problems but for the strength he is building in you through the difficult experiences of your life. You can be sure that God's perfect love will see you through. So, God does not work to make us happy, but to fulfil his purpose. It can be claimed only by those who love God and are called according to his purpose. Those who are 'called' are those the Holy Spirit convinces and enables us to receive Christ. They have a new perspective on life, a new mindset.

They trust in God, not life's treasurers; they look for their security in heaven, not on earth; they learn to accept not resent, pain and persecution because God is with them.

This is one of the psalms that is also in our hymn book as a psalm. Jeff will read it to us now.

Bible reading – Psalm 100

A psalm for giving grateful praise.

¹ Shout for joy to the Lord, everyone on earth.

² Worship the Lord with gladness.

Come to him with songs of joy.

³ Know that the Lord is God.

He made us, and we belong to him.

We are his people.

We are the sheep belonging to his flock.

⁴ Give thanks as you enter the gates of his temple.

Give praise as you enter its courtyards.

Give thanks to him and praise his name.

⁵ The Lord is good. His faithful love continues forever.

It will last for all time to come.

Reflection on the reading

We don't know who wrote the psalm, but it probably was a priest as he welcomed pilgrims to the temple in Jerusalem and opens the gates to admit them to the courts of the Lord for celebratory worship.

Psalm 100 is known to many people as the Jubilate – a Latin word which simply means 'be joyful'. We recognise it in the word Jubilee which comes from a Hebrew word which means ram's horn. This instrument of music was blown when the Jews felt they must celebrate some outstanding feature of their history as, for example, their rescue from Egyptian tyranny. If you read Leviticus 25:10 and 11, it says:

"¹⁰ Set the 50th year apart. Announce freedom all over the land to everyone who lives there. The 50th year will be a Year of Jubilee for you. Each of you must return to your own family property. And each of you must return to your own tribe. ¹¹ The 50th year will be a Year of Jubilee for you. Do not plant anything. Do not gather what grows without being planted. And do not gather the grapes from the vines you have not taken care of."

If it had been celebrated every 50 years, it included cancelling of debts, freeing all slaves and return to its original owners all land that had been sold. In the Bible there is no indication that the year of the Jubilee was ever carried out. If Israel had followed this practice faithfully, they would have been 'a society without permanent poverty.' It is certainly a celebratory hymn.

So that is the background recognising that God is our Creator; we did not create ourselves. Many people live as though they are the creator and centre of their own little world. This mindset leads to a greedy possessiveness and, if everything should be taken away, a loss of hope itself. But when we realise that God created us and gives us all we have, we will want to give to others as God gave to us. (2 Corinthians: 9:8). The point is this: the one who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and the one who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. Each of you must give as you have made up your mind, not regretfully or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to provide you with every blessing in abundance, so that by always having enough of everything, you may share abundantly in every good work.

When the Franciscans were compiling a new version of the Daily Office (the regular daily services of the Church), they called the book *Celebrating Common Prayer*. In choosing the word 'celebrating' they were reminding us that every day's prayers are celebrations of the goodness of God. Of course, we celebrate the Holy Communion when we gather round the table of the Lord; but the Franciscans are telling us to enter his courts with praise daily, even if these courts can only be a kitchen or a bedroom or a study.

God alone is worthy of being worshipped. Do you willingly and joyfully worship God. God's children are celebratory people, singing people, because they are resurrection people. Even when, as sometimes happens their voices are choked with tears, yet, in celebrating the cross and resurrection of Jesus, they can steady themselves in his everlasting love. The psalm tells us to remember God's goodness and dependability, and then to worship with thanksgiving and praise!

Hymn – STF 1 – All people that on earth do dwell William Kethe, (fl 1559-died 1594)

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| 1 All people that on earth do dwell,
sing to the Lord with cheerful voice;
him serve with mirth, his praise forth tell,
come ye before him, and rejoice. | 2 The Lord, ye know, is God indeed;
without our aid he did us make;
we are his folk, he doth us feed,
and for his sheep he doth us take. |
| 3 O enter then his gates with praise,
approach with joy his courts unto;
praise, laud, and bless his name
always,
for it is seemly so to do. | 4 For why? the Lord our God is good;
his mercy is for ever sure;
his truth at all times firmly stood,
and shall from age to age endure. |
| 5 To Father, Son and Holy Ghost,
the God whom heaven and earth adore,
from men and from the angel-host
be praise and glory evermore. | |

Prayers for the world, others and ourselves

Let us pray for our world. Such are the situations today that I almost don't know where to start. I am going to use hymn 718. My thoughts are in italics, and the hymn words are in normal type.

Loving God, Creator of all things, we bring you our world.

We lay our broken world
in sorrow at your feet,
haunted by hunger, war and fear,
oppressed by power and hate.

We see the evidence of those war-torn countries on our television each day and we are so sad that people want the power and control of other lands and people for their own ends. We see destruction and death, injury, malnutrition and we don't know what to do. We pray for peace and love.

Here human life seems less
than profit, might and pride,
though to unite us all in you,
you lived and loved and died.

On our television screens there seems to be no value for human life. Killing is indiscriminate; mutilation is indiscriminate; when and where destruction falls is indiscriminate and we don't know what to do. We pray for calm and love.

We bring our broken towns,
our neighbours hurt and bruised;
you show us how old pain and wounds
for new life can be used.

In our towns and cities, we see people who are homeless, hungry, and afraid for their future. We pray for all those acting on our behalf; leaders in government, both national and local, and all those who make decisions in our current economic climate. Show us those who are struggling with life, worried, anxious, depressed and suicidal about the way their life is at the moment. We pray for healing and love.

We bring our broken loves,
friends parted, families torn;
then in your life and death we see
that love must be reborn.

We bring you the community in which we live. We remember friends who have moved away, and those who have died. Despite not seeing them we remember the memories. We remember families torn apart by lack of love, trust, suffering or hate and those being abused when they thought they were in a place of safety. Thank you, God, that there are agencies and people who will sit and listen. We pray for kindness and tenderness.

We bring our broken selves,
confused and closed and tired.
Then through Your gift of healing grace
new purpose is inspired.

Every day we wake, thanking you for bringing us safely through the night to another fresh day. However, we feel happy or sad, worried about what needs to be done, or wondering if we shall speak to anyone that day. Loving God, you are always available to show us your priority for us and we can speak to you as you are always alongside us. Thank you, God, that you are there. We pray for being able to see and hear others.

Whatever we face each day, we know you are there and the Holy Spirit powers us to love and what is needed, not just for others but us too. We pray for understanding, faith, hope, love, joy, and peace.

O Spirit, on us breathe,
with life and strength anew.
Find in us love, and hope, and trust,
and lift us up to You. **Amen**

Two versions of the Lord's Prayer (both the traditional version and the modern version) are on the back cover of our hymn book.

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

We couldn't possibly finish our worship without a well-known Charles Wesley hymn. It comes under the 'Jesus Christ the Saviour: Lord of all' section of the hymn book.

Hymn – STF 345 – And can it be that I should gain Charles Wesley (1707-1788)

- 1 And can it be that I should gain
 An interest in the Saviour's blood?
 Died he for me, who caused his pain?
 For me, who him to death pursued?
 Amazing love! How can it be
 That thou, my God, shouldst die for me?
- 2 'Tis mystery all: the Immortal dies!
 Who can explore his strange design?
 In vain the first-born seraph tries
 To sound the depths of love divine.
 'Tis mercy all! Let earth adore,
 Let angel minds enquire no more.
- 3 He left his Father's throne above -
 So free, so infinite his grace -
 Emptied himself of all but love,
 And bled for Adam's helpless race.
 'Tis mercy all, immense and free;
 For, O my God, it found out me!
- 4 Long my imprisoned spirit lay
 Fast bound in sin and nature's night;
 Thine eye diffused a quickening ray -
 I woke, the dungeon flamed with light,
 My chains fell off, my heart was free,
 I rose, went forth, and followed thee.
- 5 No condemnation now I dread;
 Jesus, and all in him, is mine!
 Alive in him, my living head,
 And clothed in righteousness divine,
 Bold I approach the eternal throne,
 And claim the crown, through Christ, my own.

Blessing – STF 731

When, in our music, God is glorified,
And adoration leaves no room for pride,
It is as though the whole creation cried:
Alleluia!

So has the Church, in liturgy and song,
In faith and love, through centuries of wrong,
Borne witness to the truth in every tongue:
Alleluia!

How often, making music, we have found
A new dimension in the world of sound,
As worship moved us to a more profound
Alleluia!

And did not Jesus sing a Psalm that night
When utmost evil strove against the Light?
Then let us sing, for whom he won the fight:
Alleluia!

Let every instrument be tuned for praise!
Let all rejoice who have a voice to raise!
And may God give us faith to sing always:
Alleluia!

Let's say the grace together

May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the power of the Holy Spirit be with us
all for evermore. **Amen**

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