

WORSHIP @ HOME 1st March 2026 Final

Good morning and welcome to Worship @ Home on Sunday 1st March 2026 – Saint David’s Day. St David is the patron saint of Wales and there is a beautiful cathedral in St David’s (the smallest city in Britain) in Pembrokeshire. I went to school in Wales and on 1st March children wore their Welsh Costume to school – had a concert in the morning, then school dinner and then had the afternoon off. The national flower of Wales is the daffodil and everyone wore them on 1st March. I love daffodils. I love the bright yellow varieties the bright trumpets looking up to the sky – to me a sign of sunshine, the warmer days will come and just to look at them brings me great joy. The days are getting longer and there are signs and hope of better days to come. Today is also the 2nd Sunday of Lent.

Call to Worship: Matthew 16 1 – 3 The Pharisees and Sadducees came, and to test Jesus^[a] they asked him to show them a sign from heaven. ²He answered them, “When it is evening, you say, ‘It will be fair weather, for the sky is red.’ ³And in the morning, ‘It will be stormy today, for the sky is red and threatening.’ You know how to interpret the appearance of the sky, but you cannot interpret the signs of the times.^[b]

Hymn: Stf 124 For the fruits of all creation.

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| 1 For the fruits of all creation,
thanks be to God ;
for the gifts to every nation,
thanks be to God ;
for the ploughing, sowing, reaping,
silent growth while we are sleeping,
future needs in earth's safe-keeping,
thanks be to God. | 2 In the just reward of labour,
God's will is done ;
in the help we give our neighbour,
God's will is done ; | in our world-wide task of caring
for the hungry and despairing,
in the harvests we are sharing,
God's will is done. |
| | | 3 For the harvests of the Spirit,
thanks be to God ;
for the good we all inherit,
thanks be to God ;
for the wonders that astound us,
for the truths that still confound us,
most of all, that love has found us,
thanks be to God. |

Fred Pratt Green (1903–2000)

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A prayer of adoration and praise*

God of all knowledge, we worship and adore you! Son who makes the Father known to us, we worship and adore you! Holy Spirit who brings wisdom to our hearts and minds, we worship and adore you! We gather before you, God, eager to listen and to learn, but also with questions in our hearts and on our minds. We offer you our praise trusting that you hear us and love us. We are grateful that we can come to you at any hour; you are

only a prayer away. We give thanks that we can ask about what is on our minds. We praise you for being available to us at all times and in all places; that you help us to come to knowledge and understanding. **Amen**

A prayer of confession*

Heavenly Father, you created us to be curious creatures, yet we forget this when it comes to our faith. We hear the stories of your deeds with complacency and without comment, so often forgetting to try and see in depth, to question. Forgive us for this lack of respect. We renew our commitment to a relationship with you that is not afraid to ask questions, for you delight in the curiosity of your children. **Amen.**

Assurance of forgiveness*

You forgive us, Lord, when we become lukewarm and complacent towards you. You forgive us when we allow the unimportant things of life to distract us from the big questions we should be asking. Praise be to you, God, for waiting, father-like, to hear and forgive us. **Amen.**

Today is also the 2nd Sunday of Lent and we shall be hearing about Nicodemus, a learned Pharisee, who was a member of the Sanhedrin the powerful ruling council. The Pharisees were a group of religious leaders whom Jesus and John the Baptist often criticised for being hypocrites. Most of them were intensely jealous of Jesus because he undermined their authority and challenged their views. Nicodemus arranged to see Jesus after dark – he may have been afraid of what his peers, the Pharisees would say about his visit. Nicodemus was searching and believed Jesus had some answers and he wanted to know more facts and not listen to rumours. Nicodemus recognised that Jesus must have come from God because of the signs and miracles that Jesus had done. God must have been in it somewhere. Nicodemus started asking questions but Jesus always seemed to respond with another question.

Let us listen to the reading from John 3: 1 – 17 Nicodemus Visits Jesus

3 Now there was a Pharisee named Nicodemus, a leader of the Jews. ²He came to Jesus^[a] by night and said to him, “Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God, for no one can do these signs that you do unless God is with that person.” ³Jesus answered him, “Very truly, I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God without being born from above.”^[b] ⁴Nicodemus said to him, “How can anyone be born after having grown old? Can one enter a second time into the mother’s womb and be born?” ⁵Jesus answered, “Very truly, I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and Spirit. ⁶What is born of the flesh is flesh, and what is born of the Spirit is spirit. ⁷Do not be astonished that I said to you, ‘You^[c] must be born from above.’^[d] ⁸The wind^[e] blows where it chooses, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of

the Spirit.”⁹ Nicodemus said to him, “How can these things be?”¹⁰ Jesus answered him, “Are you the teacher of Israel, and yet you do not understand these things?

¹¹ “Very truly, I tell you, we speak of what we know and testify to what we have seen, yet you^[f] do not receive our testimony. ¹² If I have told you about earthly things and you do not believe, how can you believe if I tell you about heavenly things? ¹³ No one has ascended into heaven except the one who descended from heaven, the Son of Man.^[g] ¹⁴ And just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, ¹⁵ that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.^[h]

¹⁶ “For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life. ¹⁷ “Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world but in order that the world might be saved through him.

Reflection:

Jesus revealed to this devout Pharisee that the kingdom would come to the whole world not just the Jews, and that Nicodemus wouldn't be a part of it unless he was personally born again. Nicodemus was confused. Jesus explained that the kingdom is personal, and its entrance requirements **are** repentance and spiritual rebirth. We must be born of water and the Spirit. Nicodemus was beginning to understand – he was born in water, he knew about John baptising in water, knowing that there is something, cleansing, healing and satisfying about water. But spiritual rebirth into the kingdom is not by leading a better life.

Who is the Holy Spirit? God is three persons in one – the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. God became a man in Jesus so that Jesus could die for our sins. Jesus rose from the dead to offer salvation to all people through spiritual renewal and rebirth.

God's love is not static or self-centred. It reaches out and pulls others in. Here God sets the pattern of true love; the basis for all love relationships – when you love someone dearly, you are willing to give freely to the point of self-sacrifice. God paid dearly with the life of his Son, the highest price he could pay. Jesus accepted our punishment, paid the price for our sins, and then offered us the new life he had bought for us. Eternal life is God's life embodied in Christ given to all believers now as a guarantee they will live for ever. It means to put our trust and confidence in him that he alone can save us. It is to put Christ in charge of our present plans and eternal destiny. Believing is both trusting his words as reliable and relying on him for the power to change. Receive this new life by faith.

Abram had deep faith in God. When God told him to pack up his home, he did exactly as he was told. Let me read you the passage from Genesis 12:1-4 headed The Call of Abram

12 Now the Lord said to Abram, “Go from your country and your kindred and your father’s house to the land that I will show you. ²I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. ³I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.”^[a]

⁴So Abram went, as the Lord had told him, and Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he departed from Haran.

Abram had great faith in God, because although his nephew Lot went with him, he obeyed God’s command. But Abram didn’t know where he was going. He hadn’t been told. God had said go from your country, your family to somewhere I will show you when I am ready, and when you get there I will make a great nation. Abram moved out in faith from Ur to Haran and finally to Canaan. There God established a covenant telling Abram he would found a great nation from which through Abram’s descendants Jesus Christ would be born and come to save humanity. In Romans 4 v 3 says Abraham believed God. God accepted Abraham’s faith, and so his faith made him right with God.

Many of the people who met Jesus asked him questions, so we should also feel free to ask questions about our faith, either asking Jesus in prayer, or other Christians, or both. As Jesus says in John 3.17 ‘God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him’. Jesus does not condemn us or judge us when we ask questions; in fact, he probably delights that we want to know more. That means that, as Christian communities, we might ask ourselves whether our communities are safe spaces for people to ask questions. Would people feel comfortable asking questions about faith, without fear of being judged or ostracised? And can we create communities that are comfortable with unanswered questions? Perhaps we don’t always feel that we need to have the ‘right’ answer, or even any answer.

In our Bible passage from John’s Gospel, Nicodemus is not the only one who asks questions. Jesus also asks questions of Nicodemus – quite challenging questions. He asks him, ‘Are you a teacher of Israel, and yet you do not understand these things?’ and ‘If I have told you about earthly things and you do not believe, how can you believe if I tell you about heavenly things?’. We might be feeling rather glad that we weren’t Nicodemus at this point. But it might be helpful to ask ourselves what questions Jesus might ask of us today, both as individuals and as communities?

Hymn: Stf 394 Spirit of God, unseen as the wind.

*Spirit of God, unseen as the wind,
gentle as is the dove,
teach us the truth and help us believe,
show us the Saviour's love.*

1 You spoke to us long, long ago,
gave us the written word ;
we read it still, needing its truth,
through it God's voice is heard.

2 Without your help we fail our Lord, strength,
we cannot live his way ; following Christ each day.
we need your power, we need your

Margaret V. Old (1932–2001)

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From *Sing to God*

Prayers for the world, others and ourselves

Almighty God, we pray for your moving in this world. We may wonder where you are and you may be wondering why we are not listening and acting as you would wish us to do.

We have questions about ongoing conflicts. Why? We continually pray for peace but are we talk and no action.

We have questions about behaviour, total lack of regard and respect shown to others, wanting to have power and control, not just within a group, but in industry, commerce, business, government in all countries. The influence and use of money to feed the power and control of so many and not necessarily for the good of humanity.

We come to you to answer these questions because we need answers.

We see desperation in the faces of conflict, in refugees looking for safe homes, for world leaders working together to resolve the issues. We see lack of hope in the homeless, the hungry, the cold, the unemployed, the sadness of broken relationships and the bereaved. We hear of all the agencies aiming to provide the hope and support that individuals and families to help themselves rise out of their despair.

We pray for those who are ill:- waiting for test results, waiting for appointments, and particularly if feeling alone and isolated.

We give thanks for all those who are aware of all these things and more and are, within their own communities, sending practical help in their different ways to reach those who feel unloved.

Open our ears, give us the power, courage and strength to hear what you are saying to us, to act according to your will, so that instead of hate, evil, sadness and despair, together we can make the world a place where your love flows through and amongst us and through to those who don't know your love yet.

In your holy name. **Amen.**

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father in heaven,
Hallowed be your name
Your kingdom come,

your will be done,
On earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
As we forgive those who sin against us.
Save us from a time of trial
And deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours,
Now and for ever. **Amen.**

Hymn: Stf 503 Love Divine, all loves excelling

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| <p>1 Love divine, all loves excelling,
joy of heaven to earth come down,
fix in us thy humble dwelling,
all thy faithful mercies crown.
Jesu, thou art all compassion,
pure, unbounded love thou art ;
visit us with thy salvation,
enter every trembling heart.</p> <p>2 Come, almighty to deliver,
let us all thy life receive ;
suddenly return, and never,
never more thy temples leave.</p> | <p>Thee we would be always blessing,
serve thee as thy hosts above,
pray, and praise thee, without ceasing,
glory in thy perfect love.</p> <p>3 Finish then thy new creation,
pure and spotless let us be ;
let us see thy great salvation,
perfectly restored in thee :
changed from glory into glory,
till in heaven we take our place,
till we cast our crowns before thee,
lost in wonder, love, and praise !</p> |
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Charles Wesley (1707–1788)

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Let us pray

God of our journey and God of our questions, thank you for being with us each step of our journey, and that you hear each question we ask – both those we ask aloud and those we ask silently in our hearts. Be with us as we journey on and keep asking questions. **Amen.**

And the blessing of God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, be with you now and for evermore.

Amen

*adapted from Roots.

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