

# Winchester, Eastleigh & Romsey Circuit Worship at Home Sheet 5<sup>th</sup> Sept. 2021

prepared by The Revd Ruth Fry

## Opening Responses

O God, you summon the day to dawn,  
you teach the morning to waken the earth.

**Great is your name Great is your love**

For you the valleys shall sing for joy,  
The trees of the field shall clap their hands.

**Great is your name Great is your love**

For you the monarchs of earth shall bow,  
The poor and persecuted shall shout for joy

**Great is your name Great is your love**

Your love and mercy shall last for ever,  
Fresh as the morning, sure as the sunrise

**Great is your name Great is your love**

## Listen, read, pray, or sing along

[https://youtu.be/q37\\_qLKHLS1](https://youtu.be/q37_qLKHLS1)

I sing the almighty power of God,  
that made the mountains rise,  
that spread the flowing seas abroad,  
and built the lofty skies.

I sing the wisdom that ordained  
the sun to rule the day ;  
the moon shines full at his command,  
and all the stars obey.

I sing the goodness of the Lord,  
that filled the earth with food ;  
he formed the creatures with his word,  
and then pronounced them good.

Lord, how your wonders are displayed  
where'er I turn mine eye,  
if I survey the ground I tread,  
or gaze upon the sky !

God's hand is my perpetual guard,  
he guides me with his eye ;  
why should I then forget the Lord,  
whose love is ever nigh ?

Isaac Watts (1674–1748)

Reproduced from *Singing the Faith* Electronic Words  
Edition, number 107

## Adoration

God who gave us the creation to play in,  
with rolling landscapes of delight,  
with wonders of earth and sea  
and endless discoveries of beauty

**We adore you**

God who made us in infinite diversity,  
with all the vivid colours of our differences,  
all the magic of our unknowns to be explored and  
celebrated

**We adore you**

God who in your being  
carries the One who loved to feast with friends,  
who sat in silence on the mountain tops alone,  
whose spirit dances in all the earth

**We adore you**

God who loves each one of us without exception  
at the beginning of the Methodist Connexional  
year, we are once again reminded that at your  
table there truly is a place for all, a place free  
from the prejudices, limitations, and divisions of  
this world in which we live.

**We offer you our thanks, our praise, our  
adoration, now and always**

**Amen**

## Prayer for Forgiveness

Hospitable God, when we have made the Church  
a closed place,  
where only those who know the unwritten rules  
are welcome:

**Forgive us and enlarge our hearts**

When we have made our minds a closed place,  
where only those who think as we do are  
welcome:

**Forgive us and enlarge our hearts**

When we have made our hearts a closed place,  
where only those who love as we do are  
welcome:

**Forgive us and enlarge our hearts**

Thank you for loving us as we are and for calling  
us to grow into the image of your Son,  
in whose name we pray.

**Amen**

**Collect**

Lord of the changing,  
you help us find our voice  
that we might find our faith:  
we praise you for the Gentile woman  
who answered back the Son of God;  
release us from the crowds which command our  
silence and free our tongues to demand from you  
the healing of the earth;  
through Jesus Christ, the opener of the gate.

**Amen**

**Read** James 2: 1-10, 14-17

**Read** Mark 7: 24-37

**Reflection**

The theme designated by Sonia Hicks, President,  
and Barbara Easton; Vice president of the British  
Methodist Conference 2021/2022 is '**A Place for  
All**'. In the introduction to this year's Methodist  
Prayer Handbook, they write:

'One of the most heart-tugging songs must be  
*There's a place for Us* from the musical *West Side  
Story*. A teenage couple whose lives have been  
turned upside down by love, long to find a place  
free from the prejudices, limitations, and  
divisions of the world in which they live.'

The passage from Mark's Gospel presents us with  
the story of the Syrophenician woman, a woman

who knows her so called 'place' and yet who  
challenges the politics of her day, displays the  
depth of her faith in God and receives what she is  
seeking, the healing of her beloved daughter. It  
seems to me this is a very good example of God's  
message that there is indeed 'A place for all'.

We need to consider this story in its context  
within Mark. The preceding passage from chapter  
7 presents a fresh view of cleanness and  
uncleanness with Jesus debating with the  
Pharisees and some of the Scribes, about the  
tradition of the elders. Now here in the passage  
from verse 24 onwards is a Gentile girl, with an  
unclean spirit. How will Jesus react? A desperate  
and determined woman, the girl's mother, seeks  
him out, bows down at his feet and begs him to  
cast the demon out of her daughter.

The woman's accepted 'place' as a Gentile in the  
Jewish society of the day means that she doesn't  
question the apparent insult when Jesus refers to  
her as a 'dog'. Instead, she turns it to her own  
advantage. She answers Jesus back saying 'Sir,  
even the dogs under the table eat the children's  
crumbs'. What a courageous, smart, quick-  
thinking woman she is. Jesus immediately  
recognises this and responds, 'For saying that,  
you may go – the demon has left your daughter'.

God's intention was always that there should be a  
place at the table for all. Jesus' short ministry is  
primarily to the Jews. Tom Wright asserts that  
Jesus believed, as any Jew of that period might,  
that when Israel was redeemed, that would be  
the time for the rest of the world to be brought  
under the saving (and judging) rule of God. The  
Gentiles would be brought in soon enough; for  
the moment it was vital that Jesus should not be  
distracted from his primary task. He had come  
north, out of Jewish territory, not to preach and  
heal but to lie low for a while after doing and  
saying some risky things. The Syrophenician  
woman, however, clearly shows that she has  
understood the bigger picture, that she knows

there is a place at God's table for her and for her daughter. Jesus can do nothing less than respond as he does.

'God for All', the strategy for evangelism and growth adopted by the Methodist Church in Britain states that we are called to be a growing, evangelistic, inclusive Church of Gospel people who speak of, listen for, and live out the goodness of a God for all. If we really are going to take that seriously then there's much work to be done.

In her recently published book 'The Church Cracked open, Disruption, Decline, and New Hope for Beloved Community' Stephanie Spellers (*American Episcopal Canon for Evangelism, Reconciliation and Creation*) writes about the stewardship of privilege. She suggests using the power we have as Jesus used his - by loving the face and voice of God we see and hear in the presence of others, by caring and carrying each other's burdens, even though our privilege means we could just turn the other way. We are to do this by embracing uncomfortable spaces and experiences and modelling vulnerability for others who share our privilege. Spellers encourages us to risk making the first move, to share our own story, to appear less than perfect, and to receive the anger of people who've been hurt by systems that protect us. She invites us to celebrate the cultures, gifts and lives of groups who have been silenced or devalued and to speak hard truths that people who share our privilege can hear from us.

All of this and more is what God requires of us if the vision of 'a place for all' is to be truly realised.

*Come sinners, to the Gospel feast,  
Let every soul be Jesus' guest;  
You need not one be left behind,  
For God has called all humankind'.*  
(Singing the Faith 401 verse 1)

### Listen, read, pray, or sing along

<https://youtu.be/gKJgcv8SdnQ>

Let us build a house where love can dwell  
and all can safely live,  
a place where saints and children tell  
how hearts learn to forgive.  
Built of hopes and dreams and visions,  
rock of faith and vault of grace ;  
here the love of Christ shall end division:  
*All are welcome,  
all are welcome,  
all are welcome in this place.*

Let us build a house where prophets speak,  
and words are strong and true,  
where all God's children dare to seek  
to dream God's reign anew.  
Here the cross shall stand as witness  
and as symbol of God's grace  
here as one we claim the faith of Jesus:

Let us build a house where love is found  
in water, wine, and wheat :  
a banquet hall on holy ground  
where peace and justice meet.  
Here the love of God, through Jesus,  
is revealed in time and space;  
as we share in Christ the feast that frees us:

Let us build a house where hands will reach  
beyond the wood and stone  
to heal and strengthen, serve, and teach,  
and live the Word they've known.  
Here the outcast and the stranger  
bear the image of God's face;  
let us bring an end to fear and danger:

Let us a build a house where all are named,  
their songs and visions heard  
and loved and treasured, taught and claimed  
as words within the Word.  
Built of tears and cries and laughter,  
prayers of faith and songs of grace,  
let this house proclaim from floor to rafter:

Marty Haugen (b. 1950)

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## Intercessions

Loving, living God,  
We pray for the world, for those places suffering the most due to climate breakdown. We pray for all who are afraid of what tomorrow may bring. We remember especially those who are least able to recover when natural disasters strike - thinking especially of the people of Haiti, following the recent massive earthquake on the southern peninsula.

Lord, in your mercy: **Hear our prayer**

We pray for all who live in places of war and conflict and for those who work to bring peace and justice remembering especially the people of Afghanistan, the women, children, and men desperate to flee from fear of what life will be like now under rule of the Taliban.

Lord, in your mercy: **Hear our prayer**

We pray for those places in the world struggling to cope with the ongoing effects of Covid 19 - for all who are unwell and for those caring for them, and for all who have been bereaved.

Lord, in your mercy: **Hear our prayer**

We pray for our Circuit and for all the churches in it. We pray for our Circuit Stewards working hard in challenging circumstances and working to tight deadlines to produce profiles for stationing.

Lord, in your mercy: **Hear our prayer**

God of compassion, we pray for all who are unwell or who have recently suffered a bereavement. Comfort and strengthen them and help them to know that whatever they may face you are with them always

Lord, in your mercy: **Hear our prayer**

**Silence** - an opportunity to bring before God the needs of individuals known to us as well as our own needs.

## The Lord's Prayer

## Offering and Prayer of Dedication

Gracious God, accept these gifts, and with them our lives, to be used in mission and service through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

### Listen, read, pray, or sing along

<https://youtu.be/Wsnzm6mSiao>

Behold the servant of the Lord !  
I wait thy guiding eye to feel,  
to hear and keep thy every word,  
to prove and do thy perfect will,  
joyful from my own works to cease,  
glad to fulfil all righteousness.

Me if thy grace vouchsafe to use,  
meanest of all thy creatures, me,  
the deed, the time, the manner choose;  
let all my fruit be found of thee;  
let all my works in thee be wrought,  
by thee to full perfection brought.

My every weak though good design  
o'errule or change, as seems thee meet;  
Jesus, let all my work be thine !  
Thy work, O Lord, is all complete,  
and pleasing in thy Father's sight;  
thou only hast done all things right.

Here then to thee thine own I leave;  
mould as thou wilt thy passive clay;  
but let me all thy stamp receive,  
but let me all thy words obey,  
serve with a single heart and eye,  
and to thy glory live and die.

Charles Wesley (1707–1788)

Reproduced from *Singing the Faith* Electronic Words Edition, number 546

### Closing Prayer

God of love, bless each one of us  
and send us out in the power of your Spirit,  
that we might grow deeper in wisdom,  
more passionate in faith,  
and more welcoming and accepting of all  
In the name of Christ, we pray **Amen**

Prayers adapted and taken from: A wee worship Book, Wild goose Worship Group, Prayers for the inclusive Church, Steven Shakespeare, Liturgies for the journey of Life, Dorothy McRae-McMahon, Methodist Prayer Handbook 2021/2022 Church Copyright Licence No 30794