

# Worship at Home

15<sup>th</sup> February 2026

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Format and edits by the South Devon Circuit

**Welcome.** This short act of worship has been prepared for you to use at home on your own, or together with others. We hope this will enable you to spend some time with God, and to be encouraged, knowing that there are other people sharing in this act of worship with you.



## MP 111: Dear Lord and Father...

Dear Lord and Father of mankind, forgive our foolish ways!

Reclothe us in our rightful mind; in purer lives Thy service find, in deeper reverence, praise.

In simple trust like theirs who heard, beside the Syrian sea, the gracious calling of the Lord, let us, like them, without a word rise up and follow Thee.

O Sabbath rest by Galilee! O calm of hills above, where Jesus knelt to share with Thee the silence of eternity, interpreted by love!

Drop Thy still dews of quietness, till all our strivings cease; take from our souls the strain and stress and let our ordered lives confess the beauty of Thy peace.

Breathe through the heats of our desire Thy coolness and Thy balm; let sense be dumb, let flesh retire; speak through the earthquake, wind and fire, O still small voice of calm!

John Greenleaf Whittier (1807-92)

## Prayers

God of wholeness, God of Grace, to you we bring our thanks and praise.

To a world that searches **you** are a lamp that shines, to a world that is hungry **you** are food that sustains, to a world that suffers **you** are hope of release, to a world that's broken **you** are one who restores, to a world full of hate **you** are love that forgives, to a world that denies **you** are truth that endures. To **you** we bring our thanks and praise.

**God of compassion, God of love.** Grant us your gift of forgiveness.

We pray for ourselves as we struggle with the hurts, disappointments and injustices which still rankle and disturb our hearts. Give us the grace to move beyond bitterness into the open place of letting go and letting be.

**Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer**

We pray for churches and communities where people are locked into distrust, resentment and bad feeling. Forgive us for the times when we hold onto grudges and argue.

**Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer**

In our nation and the wider world we pray for all situations of conflict and disagreement. Where the powerful exploit and the powerless suffer, where anger roars and despair whimpers.

We ask for your forgiveness for the places where there is dishonesty, greed and injustice.

**Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer**

**God of compassion, God of love.**

In a brief moment of silence, we bring before you those situations where we know we have done wrong asking for your forgiveness and healing.

We bring these prayers in the name of your Son, our Saviour, Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

## We say the Lord's Prayer...

**Reading:** Matthew 5:21-37

## Message

In today's reading from Matthew, we hear Jesus' teaching as part of the Sermon on the Mount regarding murder, adultery, divorce and revenge.

What Jesus makes abundantly clear is that all these actions have a root cause. Before murder comes anger and contempt for another human being. 'Raca' means 'You fool', however, Jesus goes even further and equates anger towards another person as murder in our hearts. We are not urged but commanded to deal with anger towards others swiftly and with utmost urgency.

Before adultery comes lust. Jesus states that looking at someone with lust is adultery in the heart, emphasizing the need for inner purity and self-control to safeguard relationships. Throughout this passage, Jesus calls each and every one of us to high standards in our lives and this highlights that right relationships with people are a prerequisite for a right relationship with God.

A prominent message is the necessity of making peace with others before offering gifts to God in worship.

Jesus' command to, "...let your 'Yes' be 'Yes,' and your 'No,' 'No.'" calls for such a high level of integrity that oaths become unnecessary. It's about living a lifestyle where one's simple word can always be trusted.

We are being called to a **kingdom righteousness** that goes beyond mere external compliance with the law, requiring a transformation of the heart and mind. This work of transformation in our lives may seem a hard ask or even impossible at times, but it is work we do in the strength of the Holy Spirit. It is the responsibility of each and every one of us, as we journey with Christ through our lives, because it causes so much damage to our neighbour and our sense of peace when we don't do the work which God calls us to do.

The principles in Matthew 5:21-37 are personal to each one of us, but they are also directly applicable to modern world conflicts as they address the foundational human conditions that lead to war and strife.

Jesus' focus on anger, unforgiveness, and contempt speaks directly to the root emotions that fuel ethnic, national, and political conflicts. Rather than avoiding conflict, we are called to be active peacemakers working towards reconciliation within our communities and the wider world, not just in our own lives.

Jesus' message in Matthew is, I believe, always relevant. However, when we look at the world God created today, we cannot ignore the escalation recently in global tensions. The work of healing starts with us as we ensure that our relationships with others are what God calls us to. In addition, the church has a duty to speak for peace and model reconciliation when it sees division and conflict.



### MP 456: Make me a channel...

Make me a channel of your peace:  
Where there is hatred, let me bring your love;  
where there is injury, your healing power,  
and where there's doubt, true faith in you.

Make me a channel of your peace:  
where there's despair in life let me bring hope;  
Where there is darkness, only light,  
and where there's sadness, ever joy.

*O, Spirit, grant that I may never seek  
so much to be consoled as to console,  
to be understood as to understand,  
to be loved as to love with all my soul.*

Make me a channel of your peace:  
it is in pardoning that we are pardoned,  
in giving to all that we receive,  
and in dying that we're born to eternal life.

Sebastian Temple (1928-1997)

### Prayers for the World

Father God, fill our souls with your wonderful love and light. Give us strength and courage to reflect that love and light in the world.

Let us never shrink back from who we are in you or hide our light inside ourselves. Renew in us a sense of joy, painting the dark shadows around us with your light, your love and your salvation.

Hear us today as we pray for a world too often darkened by hatred, evil, power and greed.

**Within our darkest night - *Let your light shine.***

God of power and might, your broken world cries out from the depths, a world dominated by the darkness of war, terror, pain and suffering.

We think of the on-going and deepening conflicts around the world. We share the pain and anguish of those who have had to flee from their homes, countries and livelihoods, who risk their lives, desperate for a new start free from fear and war.

May they see your light, feel your strength and power and know the truth of your promise that we shall not be overcome by the dark shadows of life or the darkness of human nature.

**Within our darkest night - *Let your light shine.***

God of compassion and grace, we share with you our love and concern for people in a dark place today.

We have on our hearts the friends and loved ones of the victims of violence and hatred.

We pray that they will find your strength in the compassion and love of those around them.

We pray for tolerance in our society. We pray especially for all those suffering from hate crime.

Let your light shine through the darkness of all their pain and their suffering.

**Within our darkest night - *Let your light shine.***

God of life, we ask for your healing power on those who battle with pain and illness.

We share the grief of people close to us, who've recently lost loved ones.

We know your everlasting light shines with us in moments of great sadness and great joy.

**Within our darkest night - *Let your light shine.***

God of love and hope, renew in us a deeper sense of who we are in you. Help us to be aware of your presence each and every day.

Make us instruments of love and peace.

**Within our darkest night - *Let your light shine.***

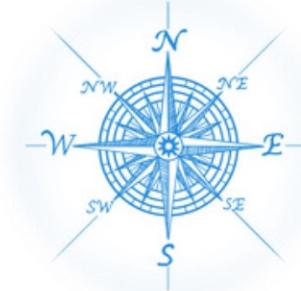
### MP 329: In Christ there is no east or west

In Christ there is no east or west,  
In him no south or north,  
But one great fellowship of love  
Throughout the whole wide Earth.  
In him shall true hearts everywhere  
Their high communion find.  
His service is the golden cord  
Close-binding humankind

Join hands, then, children of the faith,  
Whate'er your race may be!  
Who serves my Father as a son  
Is surely kin to me.

In Christ now meet both east and west,  
In him meet south and north;  
All Christly souls are one in Him,  
Throughout the whole wide earth.

John Oxenham (1852-1941)



### Blessing

May the love of the Father,  
the tenderness of the Son,  
and the presence of the Spirit,  
gladden our hearts  
and bring peace to our soul,  
this day and all days, Amen.