

Worship at Home

13th September 2026

Prepared by Bev Smerdon
from the Plymouth & Devonport Circuit

Formatted by the Devon Moor to Shore Circuit team

Today we invite you to spend a few moments with God, knowing that other people across the South West Peninsula Methodist District are sharing this act of worship with you. Our opening prayer reminds us that we are all connected to one another and to God through the loving sacrifice of Jesus Christ and the power of God's Holy Spirit.

Let us pray

Holy and marvellous God,
We thank you that you saw creation and said it is good. We thank you that you sent your Son to ensure that we, as your creations, understand how you long to include us in your church. When we find it hard to fit in, may the counter-cultural behaviour of Jesus Christ remind us we belong. When we feel rejected, may the scarred, resurrected body of Christ give us hope.

We thank you that you sent your Holy Spirit to connect us with one another, and with you, a relationship made accessible through Christ. Help each of us today, through your spirit, to feel included, and to hope for a future, where all truly belong.

Amen

(From the 2026/7 Methodist Prayer handbook;
written by Mo Onyett, presbyter and coordinator,
Solidarity Circle for Living with Disability)

Read or sing:

STF 511: Speak in the Stillness

(Alt tune: O waly waly - STF 569)

**Speak in the stillness, God we pray,
come to our hearts and meet us here.
Bring us your peace for each new day
- the gift of grace to earth from heaven.**

**We speak as though we have not heard
and live as if we do not know
your love in Christ, the living Word
- the gift of grace to earth from heaven.**

**When, in the anxious rush of days,
we lose our hold on faith and you,
reclaim us with your calm embrace
- the gift of grace to earth from heaven.**

**Lift us to see with heaven's eyes.
We long to soar on eagles' wings
as we press on to claim your prize
- the gift of grace to earth from heaven.**

**So may we be renewed in love,
held and sustained by you alone.
Strengthened by you that we may prove
a gift of grace to earth from heaven.**

Gareth Hill (b.1956)

As we thank God for that "gift of grace to earth from heaven", we pray:

The Lord's Prayer

followed by our

Prayer of Confession (using STF 423)

Forgive our sins as we forgive',
you taught us, Lord, to pray; but you alone can grant
us grace to live the words we say.

How can your pardon reach and bless
the unforgiving heart, that broods on wrongs and will
not let old bitterness depart?

In blazing light your cross reveals
the truth we dimly knew: what trivial debts are owed
to us, how great our debt to you!

Lord, cleanse the depths within our souls
and bid resentment cease; then, bound to all in
bonds of love, our lives will spread your peace.

Rosamund Eleanor Herklots (1905-1987)

**Lord, we receive your forgiveness and your blessing
through the power of the Holy Spirit
and in the name of Jesus,
our Saviour and Redeemer. Amen**

Readings: Jeremiah 29: 4-7, 10-13

Mark 16: 9-20

Message

If you are in the South West Peninsula Methodist District, you may have heard of a project called Transforming Conversation. I recently retired from the project, which it has been my privilege to lead for the last five years. In preparation for my handover, I spent some time reflecting on why conversation is important, and I came to realise that conversation is an often-overlooked aspect of the Bible.

We find many examples of Jesus as a communicator. He talked with so many people and he always seems to be able to get to the core of what is needed at any time. One of the most famous conversations has to be the Emmaus Road experience of the two disciples after Jesus has risen from the dead. Of course, the disciples, as followers of Jesus, were constantly having conversations with Him and with one another.

And what about all those conversations the prophets have with God in the Old Testament?

I didn't choose any of those examples for our Gospel reading today, instead I chose a reading to help us think about the kinds of conversations we might have with the people around us, however limiting our circumstances. I felt this reading made it clear that sharing the good news of Jesus was a very early concept. I was also struck by how many times people just didn't believe what they were being told. First by Mary Magdalene, then by the other disciples.

The quote below from Marcel Legault (1900- 1990) might help us to understand why this has always been challenging:

"To start talking to people about God can court sterility from the outset. To do justice to the theme, you need a previous exchange on the human level, marked by honesty, and depth, about how people really live, and what they have experienced in the privileged moments of the past."

(Legault was a professor of mathematics, whose beliefs were shaken by the fall of France in World War II. After the war he gave up his academic career and became an isolated sheep farmer to find a more authentic way of living).

Nowadays, people are hungry for authenticity, and I wonder how sad God is when we miss the opportunities he has given us to share his wonderful Good News for the world. However, you may say, “But I don’t get any such opportunities anymore”.

This is partly why I chose the Old Testament reading from Jeremiah. It reminds us to grow where we are planted. Whatever our circumstances, whatever the barriers to being a disciple and sharing the good news we see, I believe God still puts opportunities before us. As the boundaries of my world have become smaller, I have had to look harder and stop expecting to do things I used to be able to do or doing them in the same way. And often God has had to remind me, “See, I am doing a new thing... do you not perceive it? I will make a way in the desert and rivers in the wilderness.” [Isaiah 43:19]

So, maybe all I can offer is a short prayer, or a simple smile, a gracious word, or some other small act of kindness, appreciation and love: these I can accomplish with the Spirit’s prompting and God’s help. As Mother Teresa famously said, “*I may not be able to do great things, but I can do small things with great love*”.

May God show you the people and situations which would benefit from your ‘*small kindnesses and great love*’. And may he give you the love and strength to perform them. **Amen.**

Read or sing reflectively...

STF 370: Breathe on me Breath of God

**Breathe on me, Breath of God,
fill me with life anew, that I may love
what Thou dost love, and do what Thou wouldst do.**

**Breathe on me, Breath of God,
until my heart is pure, until with Thee
I will one will, to do and to endure.**

Breathe on me, Breath of God,

**till I am wholly Thine, until this earthly
part of me glows with Thy fire divine.**

**Breathe on me, Breath of God,
so shall I never die, but live with Thee
the perfect life of Thine eternity.**

Edwin Hatch (1835-1889)

Prayers for Others and Ourselves

Jesus, light of liberation, and source of our deliverance, whose mother’s heart was pierced as you were proclaimed a sign destined to be rejected. Come near to us as we pray for the world.

*We look to you in our trials and tribulations trusting that you who have conquered death might bring us life and hope. Where there is injustice help us to pray for a new dawn. Where the forces of the world seem intent on destruction, help us to stand firm in the conviction that God is good all the time. Grant us your spirit that even in our suffering, we may rejoice that we share in your way of truth and life. **Amen***

Richard Andrew, chair, Darlington district.

- *Spend a few minutes bringing to God in silence your thoughts and concerns for others....*
- *And then, bring to God your needs and concerns for yourself, finishing with the following prayer:*

*God, who knows our deepest being,
you hold our grief and gladness with divine compassion. Our hearts are both heavy and hopeful,
worn down by loss, warmed by love.
We name the pain of what has been damaged.
We give thanks for the blessings that surprise.
Help us to live in the holy tension – to carry both sorrow and celebration as companions on the road.*

*May our tears water seeds of hope.
May our Joy be balm for the weary - and may grace
and love be found dancing even in the shadows.*

Amen

*Ruth Richey, Deacon and mission area lead,
South West Peninsula District.*

Today’s closing hymn is one of Charles Wesley’s great hymns of reassurance about God’s love and grace for each of us and it asks God to be with us through all we face in our lives.

Read or sing

STF 512: Stupendous height of heavenly love

**Stupendous height of heavenly love,
Of pitying tenderness divine;
It brought the Saviour from above,
It caused the springing day to shine;
The Sun of Righteousness to appear,
And gild our gloomy hemisphere.**

**God did in Christ himself reveal,
To chase our darkness by his light,
Our sin and ignorance dispel,
Direct our wandering feet, aright:
And bring our souls, with pardon blest,
To realms of everlasting rest.**

**Come, then, O Lord, your light impart,
The faith that bids our terrors cease;
Into your love direct my heart,
Into your way of perfect peace:
And cheer my soul, of death afraid,
And guide me through the dreadful shade.**

**Answer your mercy’s whole design,
My God incarnated for me.
My spirit make your radiant shrine,
My Light and full Salvation be;
And through the darkened vale unknown,
Conduct me to your dazzling throne.**

Charles Wesley (1707-1788)

Blessing

*May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you now and always.
I bless you in the name of Jesus. **Amen***

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