

Worshipping Together : Apart
Sunday 27th June 2021 at 10.30am
Church; Physically Distanced but Spiritually United
Worship Prepared by Rev. Janine Atkinson

A Call to Worship God

Praise God who made the earth and the sea.
Give thanks to God, whose love endures for ever.
Praise God who calms the storm and quietens our fears,
Give thanks to God, whose love endures for ever.
Praise God who gathers us all in love.
Give thanks to God, whose love endures for ever.

Hymn - R&S 50: *Psalm 147: 1,4-5,7-11 para. Isaac Watts (1674-1748) altd.*

Praise ye the Lord, 'tis good to raise
our hearts and voices in his praise;
his nature and his works invite
to make this duty our delight.

He formed the stars, those heavenly flames,
he counts their numbers, calls their names;
his wisdom's vast, and knows no bound,
a deep where all our thoughts are drowned.

Sing to the Lord, exalt him high,
who spreads his cloud all round the sky;
there he prepares the fruitful rain,
nor lets the drops descend in vain.

He makes the grass the hills adorn,
and clothes the smiling fields with corn;
the beasts with food his hands supply,
and the young ravens when they cry.

What is the creature's skill or force?
The sprightly man, the warlike horse?
The nimble wit, the active limb?
All are too mean delights for him.

But saints are lovely in his sight,
he views his children with delight;
he sees their hope, he knows their fear,
and looks, and loves his image there.

A snippet from the Bible...

The Gospel writer, Mark, tells us:-

35 On that day, when evening had come, he said to the disciples, 'Let us go across to the other side.'

36 And leaving the crowd behind, they took him with them in the boat, just as he was. Other boats were with him.

37 A great gale arose, and the waves beat into the boat, so that the boat was already being swamped.

38 But he was in the stern, asleep on the cushion; and they woke him up and said to him, 'Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?'

39 He woke up and rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, 'Peace! Be still!'

Then the wind ceased, and there was a dead calm.

40 He said to them, 'Why are you afraid? Have you still no faith?'

41 And they were filled with great awe and said to one another, 'Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?'

(Mark 4: 35 - 41 New Revised Standard Version - Anglicised)

Approaching God in Prayer

Lord God, sometimes I feel overwhelmed;
sinking under the worries of life, challenged by conflict,
threatened by the forces that rage against us all.
Sometimes, it seems as if you are sleeping,
that you don't care about my distress.

Lord God, I am often afraid - we are often afraid
when we look at what's going on around us,
and we lack the confidence that you will bring us safely through.
We are afraid to take the risk of trusting you,
and sometimes we feel as if you have abandoned us.
Wake up when we cry out to you, calm the storms around us,
and help us to grow the faith that trusts in you.
Lord God, forgive us; and help us to trust your presence with us.
as we pray in words Jesus taught us

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name;
thy kingdom come; thy will be done; on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory,
for ever and ever. Amen.

Food for Thought...

We have a saying, don't we, that we use when everyone's in the same sort of 'pickle'. We say "We're all in't same boat".

When life seems a bit of a mess and a muddle and the going is tough it helps to have someone with us who understands what we're going through. In these difficult days one thing is for sure we are all in the same pickle, though we all experience it in different ways. We are in different boats - and some are less 'seaworthy' than others! Whilst

some of us feel as though we're in a cruise liner - somewhat robust and secure, others of us feel as though we are sailing this storm in nothing more than a dinghy. We must always remember that not everybody experiences the same storm in the same way - for each one of us, the circumstances we are in and the resources we have are different.

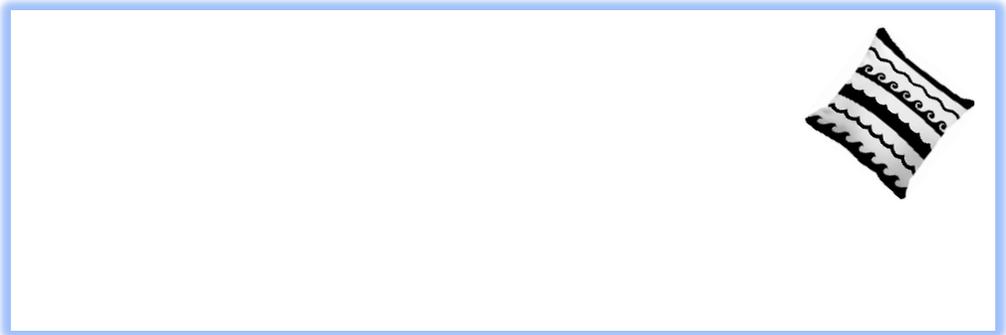
Jesus was 'in't same boat' as the disciples and because Jesus is with us every step of life's way, he's 'in't same boat as us' whatever type of boat it is that we are metaphorically in - here and now, in whatever pickles we are in - and Jesus says to our raging storms and fears - Peace! Be still!

Are you Curious?

Now, Jesus was asleep with his head on a cushion.

I wonder why Mark bothered to tell us that Jesus had a cushion - did it matter somehow?

Write your ideas here...



Thinking Space...

Find a cushion in your home that you can imagine Jesus resting his head on. One in your own bedroom perhaps.

Imagine Jesus 'in't same boat' as you, waiting for you to call his name, waiting for you to wake him up when you're 'in a pickle'.

Active Prayer...

- *Hold the cushion as you pray now*

Wake up Lord, wake up, I need you!

Do not sleep when I call.

Wake up, wake up!

Come and meet me - join in with me here and now.

When life gets tough - and it really is tough sometimes Lord,
help me to remember that you are always with me,
waiting for me to call on you.

Speak your words... **Peace! Be still!**

And calm my fears as I remember that you are in't same boat as me in
whatever pickle I'm in or whatever muddle is happening around me.

Sometimes I feel as though I'm going to drown,
overwhelmed by what is happening.

Remind me that you are with me.

In the storms of life, Lord God speak your words... **Peace! Be still!**

Amen

*Hymn - R&S 355: MP 359: Cecil Frances Alexander (1818-95) altd.**

Jesus calls us! O'er the tumult of our life's wild, restless sea,
day by day his voice is sounding, saying, 'Christian, follow me':

as, of old, apostles heard it by the Galilean lake,
turned from home, and toil, and kindred, leaving all for his dear sake.

Jesus calls us from the worship of the vain world's golden store,
from each idol that would keep us, saying, 'Christian, love me more'.

In our joys and in our sorrows, days of toil and hours of ease,
still he calls, in cares and pleasures, 'Christian, love me more than
these.'

Jesus calls us! By your mercies, Saviour, make us hear your call,
give our hearts to your obedience, serve and love you best of all.

Get Creative...

Why not make a cushion of your own? Or sew something onto a cushion you already have, that will help you to remember Jesus with you waiting for you to call on him ready with his words for you... 'Peace! Be still!'

You will be able to hold it whenever you need to call Jesus' name and ask him to be with you, to calm the storms of your life, the ups and downs, the things that make you feel sad and sick; sinking and scared.

And perhaps when you look at an 'empty' cushion it will represent God, already awake and active in the world. And perhaps it can remind you that God will not sleep when you make your call of faith, even just a little faith?



Holding the World in Prayer

Compassionate God,
we know that your care holds us,
but we pray for all those who don't feel that right now -
those who feel overwhelmed:
those who are struggling in their personal lives,
overcome by pain, disability, loss or grief,
anxious and fearful about the future,
struggling to find meaning and sense in the midst of a pandemic;
for all those who are under pressure at work and those without work;
those who feel insecurity at work and those facing redundancy;
those who feel they have no say in their workplace;
those who must make difficult decisions that will affect others.

We pray for those who are threatened by risk and danger,
those facing the loss of homes, livelihood, friends and family,
for those at risk of violence and abuse in the home;
for those who are in despair,
and for those who feel that their desperate cries are unheard,
that you and your word have abandoned them,
that there is no answer and no hope from a sleeping God.

And we pray for ourselves,
when we are indifferent, fearful, or feeling helpless;
give us the courage to face our fears, and to take risks
to carry your message of hope and power.
We ask all our prayers in the one who says 'Peace! Be still' Amen.

Hymn - R&S 58: MP 122: *William Whitting (1825-78) altd.**

Eternal Father, strong to save,
whose arm doth bind the restless wave,
who bidd'st the mighty ocean deep
its own appointed limits keep:

O hear us when we cry to thee
for those in peril on the sea.

O Saviour, whose almighty word
the winds and waves submissive heard,
who walkedst on the foaming deep
and calm amid its rage didst sleep:
O hear us when we cry to thee
for those in peril on the sea.

O Holy Spirit, who didst sweep
across the dark and formless deep
to bid its angry tumult cease,
and give, for wild confusion, peace:
O hear us when we cry to thee
for those in peril on the sea.

O Trinity of love and power,
sustain us all in danger's hour;
through wreck and tempest, grief and loss,
renew the triumph of the Cross:
and ever let there rise to thee
glad hymns of praise from land and sea.

Closing Words and Blessing

God, who cares for all,
give me the courage to face my fears,
and to go on my way in faith and trust,
for your love will bring me home.

And may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ the love of God
and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with us all, evermore Amen

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