

worship notes



The Sixth Sunday after
Pentecost
17th July 2022
The Rev'd Simon Walkling

from the United Reformed Church

Call to Worship

Come, let us sing for joy to the Lord;
let us shout aloud to the Rock of our salvation.
Let us come before the Eternal One with thanksgiving,
and extol God with music and song.

Prayers of Approach, Confession and Forgiveness

Eternal God,
we have made space for you in this place at this time.
We have made space in the rhythm of our days
to worship you, to thank you, for your place in our lives.
But when we stop,
we realise that you have always been making the space for us,
making time for us, opening a place of love for us.
You made space for creation to explode, expand, and explore being alive.
You loved each of us as we formed and grew and continue to develop.
You call us and gather us and open up new possibilities for the future.
So forgive us when we are distracted by our own busyness and need.
Forgive us when we see the earth and its resources
as ours to exploit for short term gain.
Forgive us when we use other people as a means to our ends.
Forgive us when we lose our focus on you, your will and your way.
Loving God, calm us and capture our attention.
Welcome us into your belonging.
Assure us of our worth.
Lead us in love.
So may we know that we are forgiven
and be refreshed to be your people in the world,
in Jesus name, Amen

A Prayer of Illumination

Living God,
You still speak to us through circumstances and other people

and in our prayers.

We pray now that your Word will be alive for us today as we hear and reflect on readings from the Bible with the help of your Spirit. Help us to picture the scenes, be curious about what they mean, and open to you speaking afresh to us, as we seek to follow Jesus, your living Word, Amen.

Readings

Genesis 18: 1 – 10a | St Luke 10: 38 – 42

Ideas for An All Age Talk

Prepare a bag with a number of things in:

- A board game
- A pack of cards
- A ball
- A doll
- A toy car
- Some Lego
- Some colouring pens
- A TV remote
- A mobile phone
- A snack – an apple, a packet of carrot sticks or a packet of crisps etc
- A drink – bottle of water etc
- A DVD
- A PlayStation game or controller

Use the following as an introduction to the story of Mary and Martha:

In the service, ask what people do when they meet up with friends? As people answer pull some of the things out of the bag and place them at the front of the worship area. People might say play football, go to a film, have a drink...pick out the closest thing to an answer. They might say they meet up on social media...pick out the phone. After a couple of answers, ask what people do when friends come to their house? As people answer pull other things out of the bag. After a few answers, ask what people enjoy about people coming to their house? If no-one else says it, say that you like spending time with friends. If you are feeling brave, ask whether there are ever any difficulties when friends come to your house? Listen to an answer, or say that we are going to hear a story about Jesus visiting with friends, and about a bit of friction between two sisters

Reading: Luke 10: 38-42

After the reading make the following points:

- Mary sitting at Jesus feet was her being a learner listening to Jesus the teacher.
- In those days girls and women weren't expected to learn in that way and there's still places like that in the world today. Jesus was unusual – he wasn't bothered about being treated as an honoured guest by Martha, and he was happy for Mary to listen and learn.
- Jesus wants everyone to know that they are loved by God, and we are his friends continuing the work of showing God's love to other people (even when we might get frustrated with our sister!)
- Ask 'I wonder how you learn about Jesus?'

Sermon Notes

Both readings are, in different ways, about hospitality. Sometimes the ways we show hospitality are about social convention – offering tea when someone visits, for instance. Both readings, separated by hundreds of years yet speak of a common human need. In Abraham's age hospitality was something that could secure life itself – it showed one wasn't hostile or a threat in a difficult nomadic existence. Many people today have to be prepared to leave at a moment's notice – those in war zones, for example, have to be ready to leave at moment's notice and then depend on the hospitality of other people and other governments. Hospitality then is about creating a welcoming safe space where people might survive and flourish. In Mary and Martha's time the people weren't nomadic but there were still expectations – centred on women – of the need to offer hospitality. How might we show hospitality in our own lives and in our churches? How might we welcome those who are displaced, those who need to find space and security in order to grow?

An Affirmation of Faith

We believe in the one God,
 Eternal Trinity,
 from whom, through whom and for whom
 all created things exist.
 God alone we worship;
 in God we put our trust.
 We worship God
 source and sustainer of creation,
 whom Jesus called Father,
 whose sons and daughters we are.

We worship God
 revealed in Jesus Christ,
 the eternal Word of God made flesh;
 who lived our human life,
 died for sinners on the cross;
 who was raised from the dead,

and proclaimed by the apostles, Son of God;
who lives eternally,
as saviour and sovereign,
coming in judgement and mercy,
to bring us to eternal life.

We worship God,
ever present in the Holy Spirit;
who brings this Gospel to fruition,
assures us of forgiveness,
strengthens us to do God's will,
and makes us sisters and brothers of Jesus,
sons and daughters of God.

We believe
in the one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church,
united in heaven and on earth;
on earth, the Body of Christ,
empowered by the Spirit
to glorify God and to serve humanity;
in heaven, eternally one with the power,
the wisdom and the love of God in Trinity.

We believe that, in the fullness of time,
God will renew and gather into one,
all things in heaven and on earth through Christ,
and be perfectly honoured and adored.

(The URC Statement of Faith)

Prayers of Thanksgiving and Intercession

God of rest and relaxation,
we pray for those looking forward to holidays:
schools breaking up for the Summer in England and Wales,
people travelling to different places,
families and friends making connections. *Pause*

May praying be part of our reflection
May praying be part of our action

God who is with us on the stages of life,
we think of those contemplating life transitions,
children changing schools
and young people thinking about university.
We pray for people finding themselves in a time of transition. *Pause*

May praying be part of our reflection

May praying be part of our action

God who calls us together as Church,
we pray for those implementing decisions
of the United Reformed Church General Assembly,
we pray for local churches thinking about the future,
we pray for synods and committees working out how to offer support.
We pray for the other churches around us
and those we are connected to around the world. *Pause*

May praying be part of our reflection

May praying be part of our action

God of welcome and wellbeing,
we pray for refugees seeking hospitality.
We pray for those who are ill or in hospital and undergoing treatment.
We pray for those who are grieving.
We pray for peace in the midst
of personal turmoil and conflict in the world. *Pause*

May praying be part of our reflection

May praying be part of our action

We gather all these prayers in the pattern of prayer Jesus followers learned from him,
saying together: Our Father...

An introduction to and an Offertory Prayer

To our offerings of prayer we add acknowledgement of our offerings of money. Let's pray.

Generous God,
our offering is more than money,
and we offer you our time, our prayers, our skills,
and our commitment to you and your work.
To these we add our offerings of money,
whether put in a plate, tapped with a card, or made by bank transfer.
We give in these different ways
out of gratitude for all you have given to us,
and pray that they may be used
to make your presence known in the world. Amen

Closing Words

Having been blessed by God,
let us leave this worship to share that blessing with others:

Ready to give, **because God has given to us.**
Ready to share, **because Jesus calls us as partners in his work**
Ready to live, **because the Spirit lives in us**
Ready to care, **because God first loved us.**

And for all this we need God's grace, so let's pray that for each other:

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

Hymn Suggestions

| Hymn | RS | StF | CH4 | MP |
|--|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| King of Glory, King of Peace | 97 | 56 | | 397 |
| Break Thou The Bread of Life | 314 | 153 | | 64 |
| For Everyone Born, A Place At the Table | | | 685 | |
| Give to me Lord A Thankful Heart | 497 | 520 | | |
| The Church is wherever God's people are praising | 583 | | 522 | |
| Key: <i>RS = Rejoice and Sing, StF = Singing the Faith, CH4 = Church Hymnary 4, MP = Mission Praise</i> | | | | |

The Rev'd Simon Walkling is Moderator of the National Synod of Wales