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**Sunday 13th August**

**Ordinary 19 / Proper 14**

**The Revd Helen Garton**

**Call to Worship**

Let us come together to hear what God, the Lord, will speak,

for He will speak peace to His people,

to His faithful, to those who turn to Him in their hearts.

**A Gathering Prayer**

God of everything and everywhere,

we find you by the lakeside,

we hear you in hidden places,

we see you on the mountain-top.

May we feel your presence with us as we worship today. Amen

**Prayer of Approach**

Gentle God, speak to us in the sound of silence;

speak to us through the voices of the past;

speak to us in the babble of conversation;

speak to us with words from scripture;

speak to us from the experience of faith;

speak to us, for we are listening for your word. Amen

**Prayer of Confession**

When we look for you in your magnificence,

and fail to see you standing next to us…forgive us and help us.

When we drown your voice in noise and busyness,

and forget to still ourselves to listen to you…forgive us and help us.

When we look for you in good and holy people,

but fail to see you in those who make us uncomfortable…forgive us and help us.

In the silence, hear us as we cry to you…

Reassure us with your love,

surround us with the warmth of your grace

and your ever present forgiveness,

for you are a kind and gentle God, who seeks us out to bring us home. Amen

**Readings**

1 Kings 19:9-18 | Psalm 85:8-13 | Romans 10:5-15 | St Matthew 14:22-33

**Prayer of Praise for after the Gospel Reading**

God of all faithfulness, you meet us in Christ in the ordinary and every day.

You are there in the boat with us, as we are tossed about by the storms of life.

You reach out to us when we are at our lowest ebb.

You call to us to step out in faith, beyond our own limitations.

You pick us up when we falter and let you down.

You bring calm and peace when all around brings distress.

How can we cease from singing your praises?

How can we do other than bring our adoration?

We can do no other than thank you for your goodness to us. Amen

**All Age Introduction – What’s in a word?**

Today’s two main readings feature wind and storms. Now the Hebrew word for wind, *ruach* (pronounced roo-akh) *(you might want to print this out in Hebrew to show the congregation)* can mean many things:

* Wind – in the OT reading we hear of a storm outside a cave and in the Gospel reading we hear of a storm on the sea of Galilee
* Breath – in Job 12:10 *ruach* is the word for breath “In God’s hand is the life of every living thing and the breath of every human being”
* Spirit – In Genesis 1:2 God spirit broods over the face of the waters and brings creation into being and in chapter two God breathes into the human beings he has made to bring them to life.
* Ruach is also the Hebrew word for the Holy Spirit

*(you might also want to print out the Bible verses)*

**A Prayer for All Ages**

Like the prophet Elijah, up a mountain,

listening out for your voice,

help us to listen out for what you want to say to us.

Like the disciples tossed about in a boat on the lake,

help us to trust that you are with us in all things.

Like Peter wanting to prove his commitment to you,

help us as we try to be faithful to you.

For we will not always get it right,

but you love us for trying. Amen

**Sermon Notes**

The key to the Gospel reading lies in the geography of the Sea of Galilee. The Sea is itself a freshwater lake surrounded by low lying hills. Storms appear out of nowhere from a gap between two of the hills which acts as a funnel for the wind. Otherwise, experienced fishers would not be taken by surprise by a storm whipping around the sea like a cook stirring ingredients in a bowl. And it is this image of a boat or ship which is used as a metaphor for the Church. As with boats, the Church is on a sea, travelling when it is not anchored to the sea bed or docked in port. The waters can be treacherous at times, sometimes choppy, at other times dangerous, but still the Church needs to keep moving. You cannot fish for people as Christ commanded us to do unless you are in the boat riding the waters.

In the morning, presumably exhausted and shaken up by the last night’s storm, Jesus appears as if out of nowhere. Remember they had taken him in the boat to the other side of Galilee, where he spent the night in prayer up a mountain (actually it would be a hill, this is Galilee!). Were they really alone? Had Jesus left them without support? He would have been aware of the storm, after all he was in it himself on the hill. And who was he praying for, surely at least some of his prayers would have been for his disciples. Surely he knew they would make it through safely… otherwise this might have been quite a different story.

We know Peter to be impetuous, so it should not perhaps surprise us that he wants to join Jesus walking on the water. For a time it works, but then he becomes fearful of what the wind will do, is it the precursor to another storm? Fear gets the better of him and he is no longer able to walk on the water, so he begins to drown. Jesus’ response is to chastise him, ‘You of little faith, why did you doubt?’ as he reaches out to save him and the two of them get back into the boat. At that very moment the wind ceases and the disciples are left in no doubt that Jesus is indeed the Son of God. Jesus has been there in the background, behind all that has happened to them. This is no storm, so familiar to those who sail on the Sea of Galilee, that die down as quickly as they appear. No, this has all happened to teach them a lesson: their discipleship will not always be easy, it will be their faith that sustains them, take heart for the one they serve is truly the Son of God.

**A Personal Prayer to follow the Sermon**

Loving God, you whisper in my ear, when all I want to do is shout and scream.

You draw me to yourself, when all I want to do is withdraw.

You offer me eternal life, when all I want to do is survive.

Take my life in your hands and bless me, for I know not always what I do. Amen

**Prayers of Intercession**

We pray for those who find themselves tossed about by all that life throws at them, those who feel out of control and don’t know which way to turn….

We pray for those who find themselves with an unexpected challenge, those who have much asked of them and feel overwhelmed….

We pray for those who find themselves overtaken by events, those who feel dejected and at a loss….

We pray for those who find themselves on the wrong side of popularity, those who feel they have more enemies than friends….

We pray for those who find themselves searching for what they do not know, those who feel that there must be more to life….

We pray for confused disciples and perplexed prophets, those who strive to be faithful and serve you, only to be surprised by grace…. Amen

**Offertory and Prayer**

This is the moment, time and place

to offer back to God what truly belongs to God:

our time, talents and gifts of money

to be put to use for the sake of God’s Kingdom here on earth.

For gifts given unwillingly, for service rendered grudgingly, for lives offered reluctantly,

we ask for your blessing to take, transform and use them for good,

adding them to those gifts given willingly,

to the service offered freely, and lives lived with love. Amen

**A Sending Out Prayer**

May the blessing of God the Father be upon us

as we venture out into the world to live to the glory of God’s name.

May the blessing of God the Son be upon us as we step out in faith,

to serve Jesus Christ as faithful disciples.

May the blessing of God the Holy Spirit be upon us

as we listen to the promptings of God’s Spirit

at one with our neighbours, with ourselves, and with God. Amen

*All material by Helen Garton.*

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| **Hymn Suggestions** |
|  | *RS* | *CH4* | *StF* | *MP* |
| Be still for the presence of the Lord |  | 189 | 20 | 50 |
| Calm me, Lord, as you calmed the storm |  |  | 624 |  |
| Come, let us to the Lord our God | 81 | 482 |  |  |
| Dear Lord and Father of mankind | 492 | 485 | 495 | 111 |
| Eternal Father, strong to save | 58 | 260 | 517 | 122 |
| Give to me, Lord, a thankful heart | 497 |  | 520 |  |
| God of my faith, I offer you my doubt |  |  | 629 |  |
| I heard the voice of Jesus say | 349 | 540 | 248 | 275 |
| In Christ alone my hope is found |  |  | 351 | 1072 |
| Inspired by love and anger |  | 253 |  |  |
| Jesus calls us! O’er the tumult | 355 | 509 | 250 | 359 |
| Jesus is Lord, creation’s voice proclaims it | 268 |  | 353 | 367 |
| Lord of creation, to you be all praise | 532 | 500 | 449 | 440 |
| Lord, speak to me, that I may speak | 613 | 542 |  | 444 |
| My life flows on in endless song |  | 565 |  | 1210 |
| One more step along the world I go | 549 | 530 | 476 | 1346 |
| Praise the One who breaks the darkness |  | 348 |  |  |
| Praise to the Lord, the Almighty, the King of creation! | 74 | 124 | 88 | 564 |
| Saviour, again to thy dear name we raise | 640 | 221 |  |  |
| Source and Sovereign, Rock and Cloud |  | 133 |  |  |
| There’s a wideness in God’s mercy | 393 | 187 | 416 |  |
| We turn to God when we are sorely pressed |  | 393 | 640 |  |
| When, O God, our faith is tested | 343 |  | 643 |  |
| When our confidence is shaken |  |  | 644 |  |
| Will your anchor hold in the storms of life | 598 | 737 | 645 | 770 |

*RS – Rejoice and Sing | CH4 – Church Hymnary | StF – Singing the Faith | Mission Praise*