2026 10 04 WORSHIP AT HOME

Dear friends,

Well, I am back – and Ian and I were able to get away and had a lovely time on a Baltic cruise, seeing places I'd always hoped to see but didn't really expect to see. Now, we're back to normal and I'm setting out to continue these offerings of home worship for as long as I can. Now that we are heading into autumn and winter, I hope that have good memories of the summer and are settling into this very different part of the year. We know that whatever the time of year, God is always with us, holding us close and leading us onward. Every blessing to you all: Margaret.

Call to worship:

Father God, we, your children, come together, mindful that we are stewards of your world. Teach us to care for your creation and honour others with humility and love. By your Spirit, embolden us to protest against injustice – to be a voice for the voiceless and a champion for the vulnerable, for Jesus Christ's sake, who laid down his life that we might live. Amen.

Creator God, giver of breadth and breath – you have filled the earth with your glory.
Attune our ears to hear the music of your handiwork.
Open our eyes to see the splendour of your beauty in all that is made.
Quicken our spirits to sense the divine rhythm that pulses through all your works.
The cry of your heart bids us live in harmony with your world and with one another. Encourage us to resist those forces which would exploit, oppress or destroy the earth and all that lives in it. Amen.

The words to 'All heaven declares' written by Noel Richards [b.1955] & Tricia Richards [B.1960]. Singing the Faith 293

1 All heaven declares the glory of the risen Lord;
who can compare with the beauty of the Lord?
Forever he will be the lamb upon the throne;
I gladly bow the knee and worship him alone.

2 I will proclaim the glory of the risen Lord,
who once was slain to reconcile us to God.
Forever you will be the Lamb upon the throne;
I gladly bow the knee, and worship you alone.

Prayer

Faithful God, you give us chance after chance, opportunity after opportunity, yet we do not take them.
You entrust things to us which are precious, yet we do not share them.
You offer us a share in your kingdom, a path to fulfilment, yet we want our own way & go our own way.
You invite us to work for the future, to bless the next generation, yet we live for ourselves and now.
You speak words of wisdom & warnings, of security & salvation, yet we are in danger of missing out.
Forgive us, faithful God, for we pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

Patient God, you give us another chance to hear your message of hope, challenge & grace through the words of Scripture and others – through the silence of prayer and through the beauty of creation. You give us another chance to act and re-act with hearts in tune with yours – and with that freedom to give our all in your service, rejoicing that, in you, it is never too late to start again. Thank you, Lord. Amen.

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 & 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.

Matthew 21: 33-46 taken from the New Testament: a New Translation by William Barclay. Copyright William Barclay 1968.

'Listen to another parable. There was a householder who planted a vineyard. He surrounded it with a hedge and dug out a pit in which the juice could be extracted from the grapes and built a watchtower. He then let it out to tenants and went abroad. When the fruit season arrived, he sent his servants to the tenants to receive his due share of the crop. The tenants took the servants and beat one up, and killed another, and stoned another. Again, he sent other servants, more than the first lot he had sent, and they treated them in the same way. He then sent his son to them. 'They will treat my son with respect,' he said. But, when the servants saw the son, they said to themselves: 'This is the heir. Come on, let's kill him! And let us seize his estate!' So they took him and threw him out of the vineyard and killed him. When the owner of vineyard comes, what will he do to these tenants?

They said: 'he will see to it that these bad men come to a bad end, and he will let out the vineyard to other tenants, who will pay him his full share of the crops when it is due.'

Jesus said to them: 'have you never read in the scriptures:

> "The stone which the builders rejected, this has become the headstone of the corner.
> This is the action of God, and it is marvellous in our eyes."

I tell you, that is why the Kingdom of God will be taken from you and given to a nation whose conduct befits it. Anyone who falls against this stone will be shattered, and it will crush anyone it falls upon.

When the chief priests and Pharisees heard Jesus' parables, they were well aware that he was speaking about them. They tried to find a way to arrest him, but they were afraid of the crowds, for they regarded him as a prophet.

Meditation of one of the elders. Taken from 'A Most Amazing Man – year A of the Lectionary'. Copyright 2010 Nick Fawcett

Now wait a minute,
this has gone far enough, too far by half!
That Jesus fellow,
the one stirring up the crowds,
he really does believe he's the Son of God!
Preposterous, I agree,
but I've heard it from his own mouth,
wrapped up in some stupid story he told,
and yet again he's made *us* the villains of the piece,
despite us having done more than anyone to keep the flag of faith flying high.
All right, so we've made compromises –we've had to, to stay in with Rome –
but the benefits have outweighed the cost: a new temple, for a start,
yet now he's stealing the glory even there,
making himself out to be the cornerstone,
as though all our efforts count for nothing.
He's not just rude, insulting;

he's guilty of blasphemy, plain and simple,
and must pay the price.
True, it will lend authenticity to that parable of his –
I'd avoid that if I could –
but he's forgotten one thing,
for does he seriously imagine that when God sends his Son
he'll let anyone touch a hair of his head,
let alone kill him in cold blood?
That's the flaw, isn't it!
And mark my words, we'll get Jesus one way or another.
Not yet perhaps, not while the crowds still follow him,
but give it time and we'll have him.
Then we'll see who he really is, won't we,
For, as they say: truth will out.

Prayer:
Sovereign God, it's folly to some, a stumbling block to others,
but for us the message of Christ crucified is the good news of your love, power, wisdom and grace.
help us to discern in the cross not defeat but victory,
not hatred but love, not darkness but light,
not an end but new beginnings for us and for all.
Teach us that, supremely, in the sacrifice of your Son,
his living and dying among us,
we see your hand at work and your purpose fulfilled,
the culmination of your redeeming love,
and in that faith may we live and move and have our being. Amen [Copyright 2010 Nick Fawcett]

Father, Lord of all creation, we pray for those who have the power to shape or mar this planet. May they act responsibly and wisely to sustain life.
Jesus, Lord of the Church, our Redeemer and Judge, may we confront injustice, speak up against the exploitation of the weak, and accept the cost of discipleship.
Holy Spirit, Challenger and Changer, melt the hearts of the spiritually complacent, awaken the minds that need to change so that faith may be renewed, lifestyles reshaped in tune with the world and its Creator.
Trinity of Unity, restore our broken world, and all the fractured relationships within it.
Gracious God, father, Son and Holy Spirit, grant that we and those for whom we have prayed may be whole and complete in you. Amen.

Close: Go in Jesus' name, restored and renewed.
May you know God's face shining on you,
And the Spirit of God flowing through you,
So that your life may be fertile ground for good news. Amen.

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