2026 10 25 WORSHIP AT HOME

Dear friends,
Here we remember that the Law of Moses is the heart of the OT – and Jesus' teaching is its NT equivalent. Both command us to love our neighbour as ourselves. But can you control love – can you tell someone what they must feel? Yes, for this love comes from the heart which was then considered not the seat of the emotions but rather the seat of the will. Love is a conscious decision to seek the other's well-being just as we would seek our own. What a wonderful world it would be if everyone followed that precept. Every blessing to you – Margaret.

Call to worship:
Come. Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul and with all your mind.

Let us thank God for each other and for the people around us as we share in worship, as we pray and praise. Let us thank God for the witness of Jesus and the gift of the Holy Spirit to inspire and move us. Amen.

We bring ourselves to a moment of quiet – to a place of peace – to a place where we feel safe – welcome.
We bring ourselves to a time when we cast off the cares of the world, a time when we can reflect on you, Lord God, so that our batteries may be recharged – our direction be refocused – our energy renewed; a time when we may let go of things which hamper us, a time when we are free to care gently for those with whom we spend time.
O God, we pray, renew us so that we may renew others. Amen.

The words to 'Come, let us sing of a wonderful love' by Robert Walmsley [1831-1905] StF 443
1 Come, let us sing of a wonderful love, tender and true;
out of the heart of the Father above, streaming to me and to you:
wonderful love dwells in the heart of the Father above.

2Jesus, the Saviour, this gospel to tell, joyfully came;
came with the helpless and hopeless to dwell, sharing their sorrow and shame;
seeking the lost, saving, redeeming at measureless cost.

3 Jesus is seeking the wanderers yet; why do they roam?
Love only waits to forgive and forget; home, weary wanderer, home!
Wonderful love dwells in the heart of the Father above.

4 Come to my heart, O thou wonderful love, come and abide,
lifting my life till it rises above envy and falsehood and pride;
seeking to be lowly and humble, a learner of thee.

Prayer:
Holy Spirit of God,
may confession and grief for what we have done wrong, or what we have left undone, be taken from us.
May our burdens be lifted and our inner souls released to share afresh the love we have known in you.

Holy Spirit of God,
forgive us and assure us that our sins are forgiven, that our lives are renewed, and that we are loved, cherished and cared for. Amen.

We thank you, Lord God, that by your grace you do forgive us, helping us to live afresh and for always walking alongside us. Amen.

And we give thanks too for the gentle, caring people in the world whose love for you radiates from their lives. We thank you for their gentleness of voice and touch, for their gentle smile and listening ear, for their quiet reassurance and understanding and for their patience and perseverance with us.
We thank you, Lord God, that you have touched the lives of these people and have enabled them to touch our lives and bring us to our faith and understanding of you. Amen.

Our Father who art in heaven hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come and 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.

Leviticus 19: 1-2,15-18 – taken from the Holy Bible New International Version [Copyright 1973,1978, 1984,2011 by Biblica, Inc]'
The Lord said to Moses: "Speak to the entire assembly of Israel and say to them: 'be holy because I, the Lord your God, am holy.'"
"' Do not pervert justice; do not show partiality to the poor or favouritism to the great, but judge your neighbour fairly. Do not go about spreading slander among your people. Do not do anything that endangers your neighbour's life. I am the Lord.
Do not hate a fellow Israelite in your heart. Rebuke your neighbour frankly so you will not share in their guilt. Do not seek revenge or bear a grudge against anyone among your people, but love your neighbour as yourself. I am the Lord.'"

Matthew 22: 34-40. [Copyright as above]
Hearing that Jesus had silenced the Sadducees, the Pharisees got together. One of them, an expert in the law, tested him with this question: 'Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?'
Jesus replied: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: Love your neighbour as yourself. All the law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments."

Comments:
1 To respect your neighbour is no more than is expected of any human being. Christians have a different perspective on 'love your neighbour which is that we do so because 'all people are of God'. God loves each of us, so we have a duty to love our neighbour.

2 'Love of God' and 'love of neighbour' are two sides of the same coin. Neither exists in isolation from the other.

3 To talk about love of God and love of our neighbour is just doing what OT law commands of us. Christians believe that we love God first and foremost, and the fruit of God's love for us is that we love our neighbour.

4 Some Christian communities are very good on the love of God. They observe the traditions of faith, working and praying hard at these aspects. Other churches put love of neighbour as their first priority but fall down on the first commandment to love God. Where does your church fit in all this – and where would you think you would. We need to be able to marry the two together.

5 A monastery fell on hard times and the few old monks became very dispirited. The abbot called them together & told them that the Messiah lived among them. When they heard this, the monks were overwhelmed with joy.....but who was it? As time passed the attitude of the monks changed as each began to show greater respect to his brothers for in so doing they lived with a renewed love of God.

6 Love also means allowing ourselves to be loved – are we open to God's love? Opening ourselves to his love gives us courage& strength. To see the confidence of children when they know they are loved helps us understand God's transforming love. But our images of God sometimes stand in the way. Do we see God as a critical parent or a vengeful tyrant? We may be afraid to open ourselves to love because this makes us vulnerable to loss and grief. But God never lets us down. If we open ourselves to his love we will have the courage to love our neighbours whoever they may be.

Prayer:
Lord God, we pray for those who brought us to faith, who have shown us your love, who have tended to our needs be they physical, emotional or spiritual.
We pray for those who have put themselves in harm's way for us and others.
We pray for those whose lives have been made harder because they have sought to help you, Lord, and their fellow human beings.
We pray for those whose selfless acts have caused them distress.
We pray for those who have at any cost shared the Gospel of Christ.
We pray for those imprisoned and tortured for their faith and witness.
May all be blessed in abundance with your love and care. Amen.

Close:
God of all times, may we live our lives so that others know we care for them, are there for them and that we are loving them in your name. Amen.

We go in the power of the Spirit to bring glory to God, hope to our neighbour, and the love of Christ into every part of our lives. Amen.

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