**Worship at Home: Sunday 2nd May 2021 prepared by Rev James Bamber**

**Take a moment to be still and know that God is with you as you worship.**

**Call to worship**

Praise God in his holy house of worship; praise him under the open skies;

Praise God in our homes,

Praise him in our schools and on our streets, and at our work.

Praise him for his acts of power, praise him for his magnificent greatness;

Praise with a blast on the trumpet, praise with music through our headphones

Praise him with big noises, praise him in quiet whispers

Let every living, breathing creature praise God!

Hallelujah!

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**Hymn: Let all the world in every corner sing (StF 57/H&P 10)**

Sing/ Read /pray /proclaim the words or listen to it here <https://youtu.be/PfXldoDnvq4>

**Prayers of Adoration and Confession** (from Connexional Worship at home sheet)

Loving God, we give you thanks and praise for the works of your creation in all its wonder and richness of diversity, a window for us to see who you are. Majestic, awe-inspiring, beyond understanding, the source of being. We wonder at you, as we wonder at your world. We especially give you praise and thanks for your son, Jesus. We wonder at how you revealed yourself in him and went through the agony of death on the cross that we can know you. We wonder also at the many talents and different characteristics that you have bestowed on each of us today through your Spirit, which lead to acts of amazing creativity and kindness. You have shown us how there can be such strength in both togetherness and diversity, just as there is within the Trinity.

Forgive us when we fail to use the gifts you have given us, when we deny those talents in others and prevent them becoming the people you intended, when we fail to work together with others to achieve your purposes. Help us to know the freedom of forgiveness and to be open channels of your love and grace to others. Amen.

**Introduction to the theme (from Roots)**

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When might your feelings be portrayed like this image?

Where do you feel most connected to God? What leads us to feel disconnected?

What helps you to keep growing as a follower of Christ?

**Bible reading:** John 15: 1 – 8

**Message**

In our garden it is hard to determine what is weed and what isn’t! Therein lies a clue to my gardening incapabilities☺

Within our reading this week at the heart of the image of a vine and its branches is an invitation to intimacy with God. We have been grafted into the vine – you and I with all our foibles and failures. We are children of God. That is how much God loves us – God grafts us in, nourishes and provides for us, enables us to bear fruit and prunes us.

Neighbours new to an area planted an orange tree and a lemon tree. The lemon tree produced beautiful blossom but never any fruit. When a friend visited and enquired about homemade lemonade the hosts laughed and explained their dilemma – “Try pruning it” was the advice and sure enough the next year 6 large lemons appeared! It makes sense in the garden but what about in the church, or in our lives. Pruning can be painful but by diverting the energy to another branch, another outreach, and another way of serving…new buds and fruit can emerge…new and deeper ways of trusting God can also blossom.

Through all we are sustained by God’s life-giving words – remember this is Jesus speaking to his disciples those brought into the vine because of what He has already declared – what word or words of Jesus from the Bible do you cling to you as life-giving water?

My peace I give to you… Your sins are forgiven… Get up and walk…

Your faith has healed you… My yoke is easy, my burden is light…

The vine shares with it branches the nutrients that sustain it, the life source of the whole plant. Our connection cannot be faked. We cannot pretend to have been grafted in. In the same way as plants look real but on closer inspection aren’t the same can be true in our relationship with Jesus – outward motions are not enough.

Eugene Peterson translates "abide" in verse 4 a little differently, but with the same meaning, as Jesus teaches his followers, "Live in me. Make your home in me just as I do in you" (*The Message*). In recent times we have been encouraged to be at home more than ever before. How do we ‘stay at home in God’? We have over the past 12months both come to value connections anew and establish new ways of connecting – what have we learnt from those experiences that we could carry forward into the future? How might we in the words of St Francis de Sales ‘bloom where we are planted?’

**Response to the Word**

*“Then the way you live will always honour and please the Lord,*

*and your lives will produce every kind of good fruit.”*Colossians 1:10

Lord, we would grow with you and bring forth fruit that is pleasing to you fed by your living water giving sustenance to others. Lord, we would grow with you

© contemporary Welsh prayerposted on **A Place for Prayer.**<http://revgalprayerpals.blogspot.ca/>

**Prayers of Concern**

Abiding God, we lift our world to you holding in our hearts places where lives are crushed by injustice, torn up by conflict, trampled by the greed of others. May justice germinate and righteousness ripen that all may know your abundant love.

Let us lift our prayers for the world to God. *[Silence]*

Re-root us in you: **that your Kingdom may grow through us**

Nurturing God we pray for our communities Holding in our hearts places where isolation and deprivation has parched dreams have. Flow afresh through these places that all may know Your promise of fullness.

Let us lift our prayers for our communities to God. *[Silence]*

Re-root us in you: **that your Kingdom may grow through us**

Life-giving God, We pray for our Church where apathy diseases: Plant in us a dis-ease with all that stifles Your Spirit.

Where lack of vision is causing your people to perish: Graft us to into Your limitless love.

Where weariness withers: Revive us with the Light of Jesus

Let us lift our prayers for the Church to God. *[Silence]*

Re-root us in you: **that your Kingdom may grow through us**

We pray for ourselves and the concerns of our hearts,

Let us lift our prayers for ourselves to God in the stillness. *[Silence]*

Re-root us in you: **that your Kingdom may grow through us**. Amen.

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**The Lord’s Prayer**

**Hymn: O thou who camest from above (StF 564/H&P 745)** – Sing/ Read /pray /proclaim the words or listen to it here <https://youtu.be/PfDJL2CGQ9w>

**Blessing**

Today and every day may God help us to stay connected to Him, and to on another. May we abide in Him and allow His growing, grafting, pruning to mould us and shape us that wherever we are we might bear fruit for His glory.

May the same God watch over you, your comings and goings, and those of whom you love and pray for. May His blessing and keeping surround you always. Amen.