

Worship at Home - Sunday October 3 2021

This short act of worship has been prepared for you to use at home. We invite you to spend a few moments with God, knowing that other people across the Methodist Connexion are sharing this act of worship with you.

Jesus welcomes us into his presence, whoever we are and wherever we are.

Let us respond to his embrace, and open our hearts and minds to God's word and the touch of the Spirit.

Hymn: Uyai mose, Come, all you people (StF 22). Listen to it here <https://youtu.be/sMZJFhhTr0I>

Uyai mose,	Come all you people,
tinamate Mwari,	come and praise your Maker,
Uyai mose,	come all you people,
tinamate Mwari,	come and praise your Maker,
Uyai mose,	come all you people,
tinamate Mwari,	come and praise your Maker,
Uyai mose zvino.	come now and worship the Lord.

Alexander Gondo, From Psalm 100

Let us pray together

God of mercy, your love for us is strong, but our love for you is weak.

You call us to follow Jesus, but we are slow to obey.

You care for all that you have made, but we ignore the needs of others and misuse your creation.

We are sorry for our sins.

Forgive us, and help us to please you by the way we live; Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

God is love and forgives our sins through Jesus. Amen.

(Methodist Worship Book)

Today's Reading from the Old or New Testament: Psalm 8

Today's Gospel Reading: Mark 10:2-16

Time to Reflect

The Gospel reading has much to say about relationships, and our reactions to aspects of it may vary.

I've only recently discovered the concept of 'kin_dom' instead of 'Kingdom', although I believe it's been around for a while, and is in the title of at least one book.

(The old model of civilization kingdoms were an area of land inhabited by people who were ruled by a king. Kingdoms had a top-down organizing principle. Kin-doms are self-organizing systems that are fostered in kin-ship – the recognition that we are all kin, working together cooperatively and collaboratively).

How do you react to the concept of 'kin_dom' as a counterbalance to 'Kingdom'?

In the Gospel, as the narrative proceeds, tension mounts. Jesus in many ways fits the pattern of a Rabbi but doesn't fit expectations. Even those who followed him closely struggle. He mixes with all the wrong people. He talks about the last being first and the first last – and even welcomes children!

What is it about children that Jesus is holding up as an example to emulate?

I think it may be to do with expectations. Children are much more accepting of people and situations, not held back by the accumulated assumptions, prejudices, status and power of adults. So, they come open and in humility.

The psalm says that God made us 'rulers' over creation, only a little lower than God himself (v. 5). However, it is also 'through the praise of children and infants' that God silences the foe and avenger (v.2). It might look as though the psalmist is talking about 'Kingdom', but maybe it's more about 'kin_dom'. In our kinship relationships it's all too easy for us to slip into a 'Kingdom' approach to one another, full of set expectations, demands even, instead of rejoicing in one another for who we are, loved children of God. Take a time to sit quietly

A time of prayer

Father, we thank you that you welcome us as we are, inviting not harassing; nurturing not oppressing; ever giving, never grasping.

We pray for those who feel oppressed, by political leaders, within groups they belong to, or by individuals, that they be released and find peace.

We pray for children who have been badly affected by the pandemic, that they will find mentors and role models to encourage and guide them.

We pray for all those we regard as our 'kin', that they, and we, will welcome you and one another in love and grace. Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father

Hymn: Let love be real. (StF 615). Listen to it here - https://youtu.be/6pqPIXLj_HI

1. Let love be real, in giving and receiving,
without the need to manage and to own;
a haven free from posing and pretending,
where every weakness may be safely known.
Give me your hand, along the desert pathway,
give me your love wherever we may go.

As God loves us, so let us love each other:
with no demands, just open hands and
space to grow.

2. Let love be real, not grasping or confining,
that strange embrace that holds yet sets us free;
that helps us face the risk of truly living,
and makes us brave to be what we might be.
Give me your strength when all my words are weakness;
give me your love in spite of all you know.

3. Let love be real, with no manipulation,
no secret wish to harness or control;
let us accept each other's incompleteness,
and share the joy of learning to be whole.
Give me your hope through dreams and disappointments;
give me your trust when all my failings show.

Michael Forster (b. 1946)

A prayer of blessing

May you rest in the embrace of God,
run to the love of Jesus,
and reach for the Holy Spirit.
Go in the kinship of the Trinity,
blessed child of God.

Original Materials by Pamela M. Cram
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