

Worship at Home for October 18 2020

You may choose to read right through this document, stopping for your own reflection at any time, or only read the prayers or the scripture or reflection. You might read with family or friends, or alone. Links will take you to music that may enhance your experience as you move through the worship, but you might choose to visit them later, or not at all. Feel free to share this with anyone who might be interested.

If you'd like to comment or have a question, please call or email me directly:
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In the Spirit

Rev. Joanne

Centering Prayer

Holy God, you have created the universe, the stars, the planets.
Create in us a space to marvel, a space for awe,
as we enter into a time of quiet worship and praise.
Amen

Opening Music: "Holy, Holy, Holy"

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2qCmtUhiKcA>

Opening Prayer

Loving God, you draw us into relationship with you,
even when we are filled with resistance to your enveloping love.
Compassionate God, you urge us into relationship with others,
even when we are living in more isolated ways than we have ever known.
Justice-giving God, you send us out to create fair and inclusive relationships,
even when they may seem unfamiliar.
Be with us as we spend time in worship this day,
and open us to you Word and your way.
Amen

Scripture Psalm 96

O sing to the Lord a new song;
sing to the Lord, all the earth.
Sing to the Lord, bless God's name;
tell of God's salvation from day to day.
Declare God's glory among the nations,
God's marvellous works among all the peoples.

For great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised;
Our God is to be revered above all gods.
For all the gods of the peoples are idols,
but the Lord made the heavens.
Honour and majesty are before God;
strength and beauty are in God's sanctuary.

Ascribe to the Lord, O families of the peoples,
ascribe to the Lord glory and strength.
Ascribe to the Lord the glory due God's name;
bring an offering, and come into God's courts.
Worship the Lord in holy splendour;
tremble before God, all the earth.

Say among the nations, 'God is the ruler of all!
The world is firmly established; it shall never be moved.
God will judge the peoples with equity.'
Let the heavens be glad, and let the earth rejoice;
let the sea roar, and all that fills it;
let the field exult, and everything in it.
Then shall all the trees of the forest sing for joy
before the Lord; for God is coming,
for God is coming to judge the earth.
God will judge the world with righteousness,
and the peoples with God's truth.

Reflection

"Sing a new song to God!" declares the psalmist in this powerful and positive hymn of praise and exultation. "Sing to the Lord – bless God's name!"

I think it was certainly easier to think about singing new songs to God before we were isolated in our homes. It was simpler to imagine new ways to praise God when we could actually sing together, joining our voices and our energy in worship. Singing to God can feel problematic when we are alone, when we don't have the breath of others around us to help to lift our own voices, hearts, and our own praise. The "strength and beauty" of the sanctuary of God that this psalmist writes about can remind us of our own church space, and perhaps bring feelings of loneliness or longing for the time before the pandemic.

Yet I believe we can still find new songs, new ways to praise in these times. The fact that you are reading this Worship at Home is an example of a 'new song'; our podcasts are new songs as well. Looking out our windows at God's world – with a small prayer of thanks – can be a new song to God, as can a moment spent in prayer for another. We may not feel like shouting our praise, we may feel self-conscious about singing alone, or in the homes we share with others, but God is still great, and we as God's people are still called to moments of praise.

loneliness, with hopelessness, with anxiety, with the threat and the reality of violence, war and injustice. We pray that they find a measure of your peace and comfort through our efforts.

Your creation, too, bears the burdens of our use and abuse. So we pray for our earth, and for those who make decisions that affect fragile ecosystems and our climate. We pray for a world still in the grips of a pandemic, and for the lives it has changed and is changing. We remember and pray for the vulnerable ones, the burdened ones, and ask that you lead us and teach us in ways that will bring healing, wholeness and your peace to the world.

O God, we lift our hearts to you ...

These are our prayers God, and we continue to pray separately yet joined by your Spirit, and at a distance we share the prayer that Jesus taught us -

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=usVwXs02VWs>

Closing music: "In Christ Alone"

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RY4CW5pte98>

Blessing

Enter the rest of your day with God's blessings.

May you share the hope of God you find,
celebrate the love of Jesus as you can,
and feel the Spirit's breath in all you do.

Amen