

St Luke's Anglican Church Vermont
Worship at Home
Sunday 25 July 2021

You are encouraged to use the following Bible readings, prayers and notes to support you worshipping at home this week.

1. Opening Prayer

We come before our gracious God
in the name of Christ,
to offer our praise and thanksgiving,
to hear and receive God's holy word,
to pray for the needs of the world,
and to seek the forgiveness of our sins,
that by the power of the Holy Spirit
we may give ourselves to the service of God. **Amen.**

2. Psalm 96:2-3

Sing to the Lord, praise his name;
proclaim his salvation day after day.
Declare his glory among the nations,
his marvellous deeds among all peoples.

3. Hymn – All Creatures of Our God and King

Francis of Assisi. 1182 – 1226

https://youtu.be/eXtdodTum_0

1. All creatures of our God and king,
lift up your voice and with us sing

O praise him, Alleluia!

Bright burning sun with golden beam,
soft shining moon with silver gleam,

O praise him, O praise him,
Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!

2. Swift rushing wind so wild and strong,
white clouds that sail in heaven along,

O praise him, Alleluia!

New rising dawn in praise rejoice,
your lights of evening find a voice;

O praise him, O praise him,

3. People and nations, take your part,
love and forgive with all your heart;

Alleluia, Alleluia!

All who long pain and sorrow bear,
trust God and cast on him your care;

O praise him, O praise him,
Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!

4. Death, once the ancient enemy,
hear now our Easter melody,

O praise him, Alleluia!

You are the pathway home to God;
our door to life through Christ our Lord;

O praise him, O praise him,
Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!

5. Let all things their creator bless
and worship him in lowliness

O praise him, Alleluia!

Praise, praise the Father, praise the Son,
and praise the Spirit, Three-in-One,

O praise him, O praise him,

Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!

4. Bible Reading – Acts 10:23b-48 (NIV)

The next day Peter started out with them, and some of the believers from Joppa went along. ²⁴ The following day he arrived in Caesarea. Cornelius was expecting them and had called together his relatives and close friends. ²⁵ As Peter entered the house, Cornelius met him and fell at his feet in reverence. ²⁶ But Peter made him get up. ‘Stand up,’ he said, ‘I am only a man myself.’

²⁷ While talking with him, Peter went inside and found a large gathering of people. ²⁸ He said to them: ‘You are well aware that it is against our law for a Jew to associate with or visit a Gentile. But God has shown me that I should not call anyone impure or unclean. ²⁹ So when I was sent for, I came without raising any objection. May I ask why you sent for me?’

³⁰ Cornelius answered: ‘Three days ago I was in my house praying at this hour, at three in the afternoon. Suddenly a man in shining clothes stood before me ³¹ and said, “Cornelius, God has heard your prayer and remembered your gifts to the poor. ³² Send to Joppa for Simon who is called Peter. He is a guest in the home of Simon the tanner, who lives by the sea.”’

³³ So I sent for you immediately, and it was good of you to come. Now we are all here in the presence of God to listen to everything the Lord has commanded you to tell us.’

³⁴ Then Peter began to speak: ‘I now realise how true it is that God does not show favouritism ³⁵ but accepts from every nation the one who fears him and does what is right. ³⁶ You know the message God sent to the people of Israel, announcing the good news of peace through Jesus Christ, who is Lord of all. ³⁷ You know what has happened throughout the province of Judea, beginning in Galilee after the baptism that John preached – ³⁸ how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power, and how he went around doing good and healing all who were under the power of the devil, because God was with him.

³⁹ ‘We are witnesses of everything he did in the country of the Jews and in Jerusalem. They killed him by hanging him on a cross, ⁴⁰ but God raised him from the dead on the third day and caused him to be seen. ⁴¹ He was not seen by all the people, but by witnesses whom God had already chosen – by us who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead.

⁴² He commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one whom God appointed as judge of the living and the dead. ⁴³ All the prophets testify about him that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name.’

⁴⁴ While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit came on all who heard the message. ⁴⁵ The circumcised believers who had come with Peter were astonished that the

gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out even on Gentiles.
⁴⁶ For they heard them speaking in tongues and praising God.

Then Peter said, ⁴⁷ ‘Surely no one can stand in the way of their being baptised with water. They have received the Holy Spirit just as we have.’ ⁴⁸ So he ordered that they be baptised in the name of Jesus Christ. Then they asked Peter to stay with them for a few days.

5. Reflection Questions

David Cook. *Teaching Acts: Unlocking the Book of Acts for the Bible Teacher*, (Proclamation Trust Media; Christian Focus Publication 2007)

(1) Study the passage

Acts 10:1–11:18

- i) What reputation did Cornelius have (10:1–2)?
- ii) Why was the sheet with clean and unclean animals and the command to eat them such a shock for Peter? (see Lev. 11)
- iii) What was the lesson God was teaching Peter and when do you think he learned it?
- iv) We are told in 9:43; 10:6; 10:32 where Peter was living. Why is it significant he should receive *such a vision in such a house*?
- v) From 10:34–43, how would you summarise Peter’s address?
- vi) Why do you believe the Holy Spirit is given here before Peter concludes his message?
- vii) What is the accusation made against Peter by the brethren at Jerusalem (v. 3)?
- viii) How does Peter defend himself (vv. 4–17)?
- ix) What is the response of the objectors and how do they describe the Gentile experience (v. 18)?

(2) Think it through

Every potential barrier to the gospel's movement from Jerusalem to Rome is demolished by God. Cornelius is prepared to receive the gospel. Peter, by means of a threefold vision, is prepared to take the gospel and communicate it to an 'unclean' Gentile. The church in Jerusalem is prepared for the inclusion of Gentiles into its ranks.

- i) In what ways do people today need such preparation for the reception of the gospel, its communication and their inclusion?
- ii) What response does each need call for from us?

(3) Live it out

- i) Do we believe that people need to earn the right to receive the gospel?
- ii) What changes do we look for in people to fit them for being an acceptable part of our fellowship?
- iii) Do we resent God's free offer of the gospel and gracious acceptance of people who don't deserve either?
- iv) As fine a man as Cornelius was—generous, God-fearing, highly respected—he nevertheless needed the peace that comes through Jesus Christ. Are there people you are tempted to believe may not need to hear the gospel?
- v) How must our attitudes change in the light of these Scriptures?

6. Song – To God Be the Glory

Fanny Crosby / Public Domain

<https://youtu.be/IpfdyVi0LPw>

1. To God be the glory, great things He has done;
 So loved He the world that He gave us His Son,
 Who yielded His life an atonement for sin,
 And opened the life gate that all may go in.

*Praise the Lord, praise the Lord,
 Let the earth hear His voice!
 Praise the Lord, praise the Lord,
 Let the people rejoice!
 O come to the Father, through Jesus the Son,
 And give Him the glory, great things He has done.*

2. O perfect redemption, the purchase of blood,
 To every believer the promise of God;
 The vilest offender who truly believes,
 That moment from Jesus a pardon receives.

3. Great things He has taught us, great things He has done,
 And great our rejoicing through Jesus the Son;
 But purer, and higher, and greater will be
 Our wonder, our worship, when Jesus we see.

7. Confession

Heavenly Father,
 you have loved us with an everlasting love,
 but we have gone our own way,
 and rejected your will for our lives.

We are sorry for our sins
 and turn away from them.

For the sake of your Son who died for us,
 forgive us, cleanse us, and change us.

By your Holy Spirit, enable us to live for you,

and to please you in every way;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Assurance of Forgiveness

May the Father of all mercies cleanse us from our sins,
and restore us in his image, to the praise and glory of his
name, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

8. Prayers for the world, the church and each other

Knowing your desire to see the whole world blessed – we
pray for your world, the church and its mission and each
other.

We pray for those nations ravaged by covid 19. We pray
especially for Indonesia. May the spread of the disease be
slowed through social distancing measures, vaccination
programs and increased public health steps. Help those who
have contracted covid to recover, and renew the strength of
health workers across the country. May Australian donations
of oxygen equipment and vaccines save lives.

We pray for Germany and China struck by flooding. Comfort
those who are mourning. Strengthen those who face the
daunting task of rebuilding or repairing damaged homes.
Guide government agencies aiming to improve flood
defences and address the causes of extreme flooding.

We pray for Tokyo with the start of the Olympic Games.
Protect the athletes, officials, journalists and residents of
Japan from covid outbreaks. May the games unite the world

in friendly competition and the celebration of sporting excellence.

In Australia, we pray for all those under lockdown – in Sydney, Victoria and South Australia. Give families and households patience with one another, and grace and humour in dealing with confinement. We pray particularly for small business owners, sole traders, casual workers and the unemployed or underemployed. Grant them all good access to government and charitable support to meet their basic needs. Help all Australians to live generously, cooperatively, and compassionately – lifting up the lowly and caring for all in need.

We pray for all students, teachers and educators teaching and learning from home. Please help them all to cope with online learning, and for Victorian students to be able to resume study programs face-to-face next week. We pray for the outbreaks in NSW, Victoria and SA to be contained and for the spread of covid to be arrested. Sustain our public health workers and all who are working to combat the virus.

We pray for the church and its mission.

Thank you for the example of absolute inclusion seen in God's salvation shared with Cornelius and his whole gentile household. Thank you for Peter's pioneering role crossing an ethnic and religious boundary that had stood for centuries. Help us to be faithful witnesses to the glorious gospel truth that God welcomes all people, no matter what background they come from. Help us to welcome the stranger, and take our part in the church's mission to share the gospel with all

people. We pray for those serving in mission overseas, that you will sustain them and help them as they witness to the good news of Jesus in the coming week.

Finally, we pray for those who are sick and suffering; those who are mourning, those facing other troubles of body, mind or spirit. Comfort and heal them. Help us to bring your care and encouragement into their lives. In Jesus' name we pray, as he taught us:

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and forever. Amen.

9. Song – The Compassion Hymn

Keith Getty, Kristyn Getty, Stuart Townend

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<https://youtu.be/DmRjBnuaH-U>

1. There is an everlasting kindness
 You lavished on us
 When the radiance of heaven
 Came to rescue the lost
 You called the sheep without
 A shepherd to leave their distress
 For Your streams of forgiveness
 And the shade of Your rest

2. And with compassion for the hurting
 You reached out Your hand
 As the lame ran to meet You
 And the dead breathed again
 You saw behind the eyes of
 Sorrow and shared in our tears
 Heard the sigh of the weary
 Let the children draw near

*What boundless love what fathomless grace
 You have shown us O God of compassion
 Each day we live an off'ring of praise
 As we show to the world Your compassion*

3. We stood beneath the cross of Calv'ry
 And gazed on Your face
 At the thorns of oppression
 And the wounds of disgrace
 For surely You have borne our suff'ring
 And carried our grief
 As You pardoned the scoffer
 And showed grace to the thief

4. How beautiful the feet
 That carry this gospel of peace
 To the fields of injustice
 And the valleys of need
 To be a voice of hope and healing
 To answer the cries
 Of the hungry and helpless
 With the mercy of Christ

10. Closing Prayer

The Lord bless us, and preserve us from all evil,
and keep us in eternal life. **Amen.**

Let us bless the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

11. Notices

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