

*This short act of worship has been produced for you
by the Revd Dan Haylett.
If you are well enough and able,
why not spend a few moments with God
knowing that others are sharing this act of worship with you.*

Opening Prayer

Calm me, Lord, as you calmed the storm;
still me, Lord, keep me from harm.
Let all the tumult within me cease;
enfold me, Lord in your peace.

David Adam (1936-2020)
Reproduced from Singing the Faith – number 624

Hymn: Singing the Faith 14 Sing to him in whom creation

Sing / read / pray / proclaim the words or listen to it here

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7exfbDsz IM>

Sing to him in whom creation
found its shape and origin;
Spirit, moving on the waters
troubled by the God within;
source of breath to all things breathing,
life in whom all lives begin.

Sing to God, the close companion
of our inmost thoughts and ways;
who, in showing us his wonders,
is himself the power to gaze;
and his will, to those who listen,
by a still small voice conveys.

Holy people, priests and prophets,
caught his accents, spoke his word;
his the truth behind the wisdoms
which as yet know not our Lord;
he the love of God eternal,
which in Christ was seen and heard.

Tell of how the ascended Jesus
armed a people for his own;
how a hundred men and women
turned the known world upside down,
to its dark and furthest corners
by the wind of Whitsun blown.

Pray we then, O Lord the Spirit,
on our lives descend in might;
let your flame break out within us,
fire our hearts and clear our sight,
till, white-hot in your possession,
we, too, set the world alight.

Praise, O praise the Holy Spirit,
praise the Father, praise the Word,
source, and truth, and inspiration,
Trinity in deep accord:
through your voice which speaks within us
we your creatures own you Lord.

Michael Hewlett (1916-2000)

Prayer:

God of our going out and our coming home,
I worship you today.
For the times and places that have filled me with joy,
I praise you.
For the love that has sustained and kept me, I praise you.
Creator God, your grace renews and lights up our living.
We marvel at your coming to us.
Living Christ, your joy transforms our living.
We are in awe of your costly, risk taking love for us.
Spirit of truth, your gentle power infuses our living, our
choosing and our waiting. Our hearts are lifted high as we
worship you.
Where I have chosen the wrong path and caused pain to
myself, to you and to others, I ask your forgiveness.
Where I have given in to the lie that my living can make no
difference, or that the world is as it should be, I ask your
forgiveness.
In Christ we find the assurance that you, Lord will walk

beside me to forgive me and restore me.

All thanks and praise to you, our all-compassionate God.
In the name of Christ. Amen.

Today's Reading from the Hebrew Bible: Isaiah 55:1-5

Ho, everyone who thirsts,
come to the waters;
and you that have no money,
come, buy and eat!
Come, buy wine and milk
without money and without price.
² Why do you spend your money for that which is not bread,
and your labor for that which does not satisfy?
Listen carefully to me, and eat what is good,
and delight yourselves in rich food.
³ Incline your ear, and come to me;
listen, so that you may live.
I will make with you an everlasting covenant,
my steadfast, sure love for David.
⁴ See, I made him a witness to the peoples,
a leader and commander for the peoples.
⁵ See, you shall call nations that you do not know,
and nations that do not know you shall run to you,
because of the LORD your God, the Holy One of Israel,
for he has glorified you.

Today's Reading from the Gospel: Matthew 14:13-21

Now when Jesus heard this, he withdrew from there in a boat to a deserted place by himself. But when the crowds heard it, they followed him on foot from the towns. ¹⁴ When he went ashore, he saw a great crowd; and he had compassion for them and cured their sick. ¹⁵ When it was evening, the disciples came to him and said, "This is a deserted place, and the hour is now late; send the crowds away so that they may go into the villages and buy food for themselves." ¹⁶ Jesus said to them, "They need not go away; you give them something to eat." ¹⁷ They replied, "We have nothing here but five loaves and two fish." ¹⁸ And he said, "Bring them here to me." ¹⁹ Then he ordered the crowds to sit down on the grass. Taking the five loaves and the two fish, he looked up to heaven, and blessed and broke the loaves, and gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the crowds. ²⁰ And all ate and were filled; and they took up what was left over of the broken pieces, twelve baskets full. ²¹ And those who ate were about five thousand men, besides women and children.

Time to Reflect

Something remarkable happened on 25th July 1965 that changed the world forever. In case the date isn't etched into your memory (there is no reason why it should be!), it was on this day at the Newport Folk Festival, on the Isle of

Wight that music was changed forever when Bob Dylan took to the stage with an electric guitar. That might seem a little underwhelming to some of you, but to any Bob Dylan fan, it was the moment that everything changed. It symbolised Dylan's leave taking from one phase of life and work within and among the folk community and heralded a louder and I would say a freer context for his music, and music in general to explode into.

At this point, I feel I should say, if for some inexplicable reason you are not a fan of Bob Dylan, please indulge me and stick with this service!

It was in a performance in England in 1966, when the conflict over Dylan's change of direction came to a head. Notoriously, someone in the audience cried out "Judas!" to Dylan as he began an electric version of a song that was previously acoustic. Dylan responded by ploughing on, urging his band to play even louder. One other song, played louder and faster than before was introduced by Dylan with the words, "It used to go like that, but now it goes like this", as the volume soared and the tempo shifted.

Those words seem to me to sum up the experience of Jesus and those around him in the Gospel narrative today. In the context of John the Baptist's disciples coming to test out Jesus's credentials; Jesus has to show how under John, "it used to go like that" but in the picnic for all on the hills of Galilee, "now it goes like this".

Matthew records how the crowds had by now listened to Jesus' teaching, especially the parables and had followed Jesus to the extent that he needed to get away from their demands. Now Jesus had seemingly disappointed the expectations of his earliest followers in his own patch, this moment marks the turning point. Acoustic parables for the benefit of the in-crowd give way to the explosive and electric breaking open of heaven's abundance for all. Up among the hills of Galilee, in a location that was favoured by those who were failed messianic claimants or political revolutionaries on the run, Jesus hosts an impromptu picnic. He looks with compassion upon the people who had clambered up the hillside bringing nothing with them but vague expectations. Meanwhile the disciples look on at all this with horror. Doesn't he need rest? How can we cope with the demands of a hungry mob? It was all very well for Isaiah to speak about God's kingdom as being like a market place where sellers vied for customers to taste wine and milk without the need to pay for it. But there is no such thing as a free picnic, is there? Who is going to pay for all this? Where's it going to come from? How can we cope with all this?

Jesus' presence means that "it used to go like that, but now it goes like this". In contrast to the disciples' fears about what they lacked, Jesus only saw the worth of what God had given. Where the disciples counted the bread and fish with trepidation wondering how to feed everyone, Jesus saw only

the opportunity for blessing, for breaking, and for sharing. What looked such a meagre offering became an illustration of God's characteristic way among us: self-giving, risk taking

sharing that leads to fulfilment and empowerment for those who are hungry and excluded.

Isaiah foresaw a time where people would turn to God to find the things that really and profoundly satisfy. Jesus came to share bread and himself, as the very life of God in our midst. "It used to go like that, but now it goes like this". The picnic on the hill changed everything. We are shown that what we have, we have only to share and to use for kingdom purposes. We find in Christ what we need the most. We find comfort and inspiration from the fact that in Jesus, truly, the times they are a-changing, as God's kingdom breaks in. We celebrate God's abundance, God's sacrificial love, God's compassion that has made all the difference in the world for us. And we dare not keep that to ourselves. The Lord be with you.

A time of prayer

Ever-present God, I join my prayer with all those who pray in the name of Jesus today:

We pray for your church that you grant us patience as we continue to do the work we need to do to prepare for future

gatherings together.

For those who are anxious about the future and those who see only threat in the days to come.

For those who are estranged from loved ones and feel they are unable to do anything to bring about reconciliation.

For those who wrestle in the night with trouble and distress of body, mind and soul.

I pray especially for those known to me, colleagues, neighbours, friends and family. For all who cry out for justice and peace, for bread and for God.

Holy God,

help us to show others that you are present in the midst of their struggles, that together we might demonstrate your great love and concern for your world.

In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

**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.

Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.

**For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours
now and for ever. Amen.**

Hymn: Singing the Faith 662 Have You Heard God's Voice

Sing / read / pray / proclaim the words or listen to it here

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0LeBah4tflg>

Have you heard God's voice; has your heart been stirred?
Are you still prepared to follow?

Have you made a choice to remain and serve,
though the way be rough and narrow?

*Will you walk the path that will cost you much
and embrace the pain and sorrow?*

*Will you trust in One who entrusts to you
the disciples of tomorrow.*

Will you use your voice; will you not sit down
when the multitudes are silent?

Will you make a choice to stand your ground
when the crowds are turning violent?

*Will you walk the path that will cost you much
and embrace the pain and sorrow?*

*Will you trust in One who entrusts to you
the disciples of tomorrow.*

In your city streets will you be God's heart?
Will you listen to the voiceless?
Will you stop and eat, and when friendships start,
will you share your faith with the faithless?

*Will you walk the path that will cost you much
and embrace the pain and sorrow?
Will you trust in One who entrusts to you
the disciples of tomorrow.*

Will you watch the news with the eyes of faith
and believe it could be different?
Will you share your views using words of grace?
Will you leave a thoughtful imprint?

*We will walk the path that will cost us much
and embrace the pain and sorrow.
We will trust in One who entrusts to us
the disciples of tomorrow.*

Jacqueline G Jones

A prayer of blessing

Power of God, be our protection;
wisdom of God, be our guide;
word of God, be our inspiration;
shield of God, be our defence;
hosts of God, be our deliverance;
Son of God be our salvation;
now and always. Amen

St Patrick's Breastplate, Book of Armagh (9th Century)