



‘Worship at home’ Sunday August 4th 2024



As we come to worship today
we celebrate the gifts, skills and talents
we each have, and give thanks for
the incredible richness and diversity
this brings to our communities.

Opening

Even when we are apart, we are part of God’s community
for we are the Body of Christ.

We bring our diverse gifts, skills, and abilities,
to build each other up in love.

There are different ways of serving God:
but it is the same Lord who is served.

God works through people in different ways:
**but it is the same God whose purpose is achieved
through us all.**

Together we are the body of Christ:
and individually members of it.

based on Ephesians 4:1-16, 1 Corinthians 12:4ff and Basis of Union, para 13

**Did you learn to write with pen and ink?
If you made a mistake, what did you do?**

If you use a pencil, it is easy to erase any mistakes, and try again. Likewise, a computer allows us to backspace and re-type, much easier than a manual typewriter does. When we make mistakes in our lives, sometimes we cannot erase them. If we say or do something hurtful, it is hard to undo. We all say and do things, intentionally or otherwise, that separate us from God and from others. We may call this “sin”. We are assured that when we confess our sin to God, and say sorry for our mistakes, God will forgive us and give us the opportunity to try again. This does not always shield us from the consequences of our sin, but allows us to be freed from being bound forever by those consequences.

**Spend some time reflecting on the things which
separate you from God's love.**

Prayer of Confession

based on Psalm 51:1-12

Be merciful to me, O God, because of your constant love.

Because of your great mercy wipe away my sins!

Wash away all my evil and make me clean from my sin!

I recognise my faults; I am always conscious of my sins.

I have sinned against you

and done what you consider wrong.

So you are right in judging me;

you are justified in condemning me.

Create a pure heart in me, O God,

and put a new and loyal spirit in me.

Do not banish me from your presence;

do not take your holy spirit away from me.

Give me again the joy that comes from your

salvation, and make me willing to obey you.



Assurance of Forgiveness

We know the good news, that in Christ we are made new.

Our sins are forgiven. **Thanks be to God!**



Consider some of your unique characteristics.

We each have our own likes, preferences, skills and experiences, and these are all different. We

use our various abilities to work together to serve God and to help each other. Each person is called

to serve in their own way, and we don't have to all

try to be the same. When we each live as God calls us to, although we are separate and different from each other, together we are the body of Christ, the church. And when each of us does our part, we grow in faith together, building each other up in love and showing Christ's love to those around us.

Ephesians 4:1-16

*I urge you, then - I who am a
prisoner because I serve the*

*Lord: live a life that measures
up to the standard God set 2*

when he called you. Be always humble, gentle, and patient. Show your love by being tolerant with one another. Do your best to preserve the unity which the Spirit gives by means of the peace that binds you together. There is one body and one Spirit, just as there is one hope to which God has called you. There is one Lord, one faith, one baptism; there is one God and Father of all people, who is Lord of all, works through all, and is in all. Each one of us has received a special gift in proportion to what Christ has given. As the scripture says, "When he went up to the very heights, he took many captives with him; he gave gifts to people." Now, what does "he went up" mean? It means that first he came down to the lowest depths of the earth. So the one who came down is the same one who went up, above and beyond the heavens, to fill the whole universe with his presence. It was he who "gave gifts to people"; he appointed some to be apostles, others to be prophets, others to be

evangelists, others to be pastors and teachers. He did this to prepare all God's people for the work of Christian service, in order to build up the body of Christ. And so we shall all come together to that oneness in our faith and in our knowledge of the Son of God; we shall become mature people, reaching to the very height of Christ's full stature. Then we shall no longer be children, carried by the waves and blown about by every shifting wind of the teaching of deceitful people, who lead others into error by the tricks they invent. Instead, by speaking the truth in a spirit of love, we must grow up in every way to Christ, who is the head. Under his control all the different parts of the body fit together, and the whole body is held together by every joint with which it is provided. So when each separate part works as it should, the whole body grows and builds itself up through love. Good News Bible



What skills and gifts and abilities do you bring to your community?

Some of us may be able to identify many of our own skills and gifts and abilities, others may struggle to name even one. We are each at different places in our faith and spiritual maturity, and at various phases of our lives we may not have the capacity or desire to be involved in a community of faith. That is part of what the author of Ephesians means when he writes about us becoming mature people, becoming one in our faith. We are called to be faithful to God in who we are, preserving unity, bringing peace, and acting in love at all times.

Each of us has been gifted by God, and called to use our gifts in service. We are also called to be part of the body of Christ, with a particular purpose. Even if we are unable to attend worship regularly, we are part of God's people, and like a jigsaw, if one is missing, the picture is incomplete.

Prayer Gracious and loving God, you call us into relationship with you, and with each other. As the body of Christ, we are your people together. We pray for ourselves, that we might grow in your likeness, maturing in faith and embracing the gifts you have given us to serve others, in love. We pray for our church, and for churches everywhere, and give thanks for generations of faithful servants who have proclaimed the gospel by word and deed, encouraging and building up the body of Christ. We pray for our world, for those who hunger and thirst, for those who are bound, for those who live in despair. We pray for those who are ill, or suffering, or mourning. We pray for those affected by violence and oppression. Hear our prayers, gracious God. Hold us in love and grace, and keep us walking with you. Amen.



Closing

During this next week, you are invited to look out for the diverse expressions of God's love you see around you, and seek ways to show this love to others.