



'Worship at home' January 14th 2024



We come to worship God
who loved us before we were yet born,
who knows us better than we know ourselves,
and whose love for us never ceases.

We are reminded that the Spirit of Christ is always with us,
sometimes in unexpected ways.



If possible, find a small hand **mirror**,
or sit beside a mirror where you will be able to see
your own reflection. Sometimes this makes us
feel uncomfortable, but take a moment
to look at yourself in the mirror.

What colour are your eyes?

Is your hair thinning, or thick and lush?

Smile, and watch the lines on your face change.

Can you roll your tongue?

Look at the freckles or skin spots on your face, arms and hands, and think about how many cells make up your body.

Can you find your pulse in your wrist or neck?

Did you know that the average person...

- has 100,000 hairs on their head?
- heart beats over 40 million times in a year?
- nose can recognise a trillion different scents?
- has a unique tongue print, just like their fingerprint?

Our bodies are amazing in so many ways. Each one of us differs, in our appearance, in our abilities, in our preferences, in our responses. Yet God knows and loves each one of us, uniquely and completely. God created us, redeems us, and calls us into relationship. There is nowhere we can go that separates us from God's presence and love. 1

God...
knows us,
is with us,
made us,
hears us,
leads us.

Psalm 139

Prayer

O Lord, you see me and know me. You know what I am thinking, before I say a word. You know everything about me. Search me, O God. Look deep within, connect with my sadness, my worries, my pain. Hunt out my inconsistencies, my lack of integrity, my dishonesty. Find me in the darkness, for darkness and daytime are as one for you. Call me to yourself, again and again. Even when I fail to listen.

Even when I choose to ignore.

Even when I am distracted by others.

Draw me back to you, loving God. Forgive me, cleanse me, make me whole. Place your hands around me, and protect me. Show me how to love you for ever, I pray.

Response

God who has made us is always with us.

God's love, in Christ, redeems us and makes all things new.

Psalm 139: selected verses

Lord, you know everything there is to know about me. You perceive every movement of my heart and soul, and you understand my every thought before it even enters my mind. You are so intimately aware of me, Lord. You read my heart like an open book and you know all the words I'm about to speak before I even start a sentence! You know every step I will take before my journey even begins. You've gone into my future to prepare the way, and in kindness you follow behind me to spare me

from the harm of my past. With your hand of love upon my life, you impart a blessing to me. This is just too wonderful, deep, and incomprehensible! Your understanding of me brings me wonder and strength. Where could I go from your Spirit? Where could I run and hide from your face? Wherever I go, your hand will guide me; your strength will empower me. It's impossible to disappear from you or to ask the darkness to hide me, for your presence is everywhere, bringing light



into my night. You formed my innermost being, shaping my delicate inside and my intricate outside, and wove them all together in my mother's womb. I thank you, God, for making me so mysteriously complex!

Everything you do is marvellously breathtaking. It simply amazes me to think about it! How thoroughly you know me, Lord! You even formed every bone in my body when you created me in the secret place, carefully, skilfully shaping me from nothing to something.

You saw who you created me to be before I became me! Before I'd ever seen the light of day, the number of days you planned for me were already recorded in your book. Every single moment you are thinking of me! How precious and wonderful to consider that you cherish me constantly in your every thought! O God, your desires toward me are more than the grains of sand on every shore! When I awake each morning, you're still with me. God, you know all about me.

The Passion Translation

This season of Epiphany reminds us that sometimes God is revealed in unexpected ways. Jesus Christ, babe in the manger, long awaited Messiah, Light of the World, found by the wise men in an ordinary house with ordinary parents.



It can be hard for us to believe that God who created the world, who shaped and formed us in our mother's womb, who knows how many hairs are on our heads, our every heartbeat, our innermost thoughts and feelings, better than we know ourselves, loves us intimately. God, who when our eyes are blind, our minds are doubting, our hearts are aching and our souls are searching, when we least expect, gently places loving hands around us, to protect us from all sides.

All our insecurities, our weaknesses, our failings... those things we try so hard to hide in the darkness and keep from others, God knows, and loves us anyway. God knows us not as an intruder whose presence is invasion in our lives, nor as a God who by careful surveillance keeps record of every right and wrong. This



is God who is ever in our midst, within and without us, who is part of every atom of creation, every fibre of our being, and who invites us into relationship. God who calls but never compels, who is continually shaping and forming us in love. God knows each of us

by name, knows who we are and what we can do, and enables us to do it. Each one of us has our own story, our unique gifts, our challenges and struggles and joys and sorrows. And we are each special to God, just as we are. We are God's precious children, called to live out God's purposes for us, in who we are and in what we do.

Pray for yourself, your faith community, and our world as you respond with the following prayer...

God whispers to each of us:
you are my beloved, created in love for love.

**My spirit answers,
Here I am, Lord. Speak to me anew.**



God breathes on us the Holy Spirit, shaping many members into one body, the body of Christ.

**Together we would answer,
Here we are Lord. Come, Holy Spirit.**

God has yet more vision for the people. Who will work to extend God's kingdom into our hurting world?

Here we are Lord. Empower us for your work.

God calls the small and helps them do great things.
God calls the weak and reveals their hidden gifts.
God calls the rejected and opens their eyes to their worth.

Here we are Lord, humble and waiting.

Give us the courage to dream God's dreams,
receive God's power, and do God's deeds.

**Here we are Lord. Shine the light of your love on us.
Kindle your Spirit within us.**

**Work your redeeming will in us, that all the world may be
one through the power of your love. Amen.**