



# 'Worship at home' January 28<sup>th</sup> 2024



We come to worship God in this season of Epiphany, when we are reminded of the many ways in which God is revealed in our world, sometimes unexpectedly.

As we worship, we come to know more fully who we are, and embrace the love of Christ who shapes and guides us.

## Opening

Speak with authority in our lives, Christ.

Speak to us, and to what is in us, so that we might be whole.

Speak to us,

with love, with hope, and with strength,

so that we might hear you,

and know, deep inside,

that we are your people,

and that you are our God.

Let it be so.

~ written by Richard Bott, **Sharing Liturgy**. <http://liturgy.richardbott.com/>

## Mark 1:21-28

*Jesus and his disciples came to the town of Capernaum, and on the next Sabbath Jesus went to the synagogue and began to teach. The people who heard him were amazed at the way he taught, for he wasn't like the teachers of the Law; instead, he taught with authority.*

*Just then a man with an evil spirit came into the synagogue and screamed,*

*"What do you want with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Are you here to destroy us? I know who you are - you are God's holy messenger!"*

*Jesus ordered the spirit, "Be quiet, and come out of the man!" The evil spirit shook the man hard, gave a loud scream, and came out of him. The people were all so amazed that they started saying to one another,*

*"What is this? Is it some kind of new teaching? This man has authority to give orders to the evil spirits, and they obey him!"*

*And so the news about Jesus spread quickly everywhere in the province of Galilee.*

*New International Version*

As Jesus begins his public ministry, the author of Mark is clear about who Jesus is and what is important to him. After calling disciples to help and journey with him in his ministry, he begins to teach. He teaches with authority, and people are amazed. He then shows his ministry of healing, again revealing his authority in ways that are perhaps unexpected.



From the outset, the author of Mark shows the power and authority that Jesus holds. This is indeed Emmanuel, God with us, revealed in human form. Jesus Christ is the presence of God with us, and his words and his actions reflect this. Later in Mark we will hear Jesus send his disciples out to preach and heal, giving them that same authority. They too are to embody the power and presence of God in both their words and their actions.

**In what ways do your words reveal the presence of God to those around you?**

**In what ways do your actions reveal the presence of God to those around you?**

### **Prayer**

Loving God,  
you call us to live  
as your people.  
This call brings with it  
responsibility to love,  
to show compassion,  
to work for justice and peace.

These are not always easy,  
and sometimes ask more of  
us than we feel we can give.  
Challenge us, O God.  
Show us how to live with  
integrity, as Christ did.  
Amen.

Like those disciples, each of us is called into relationship with God, and each of us is gifted to serve and minister in some way. We too embody the power and presence of God, with our words and our actions. At this time of year, many faith communities, along with service groups and other community or sporting clubs, are planning their activities for the year, choosing and commissioning leaders and volunteers. God gives us authority to serve as we are gifted.



In this season of Epiphany we are reminded that God is sometimes found where and when we least expect. In this scripture passage, God is found in the act of healing, as Jesus freed the man from that which was binding him. Brought to wholeness, he was enabled to live as he was called to. We each have things that threaten to overwhelm and pull us into darkness and away from God's love. We are assured that Christ can meet us in our struggles and need, bringing healing and the opportunity to change our lives. We can live as we are called to.

**Are there things that hold you back from knowing God's love and grace?**

**Ask God to set you free from these things, to bring healing to your life.**



In the verses to follow in the gospel of Mark, after teaching and healing Jesus withdraws to a quiet place to pray. We are reminded of the importance of prayer, quiet time, and an enduring relationship with God to sustain our faith and empower us for ministry.

## Prayer

Merciful God, abounding in steadfast love,  
we come before you in need  
of hope, of light, and of love.  
We pray for those places in us  
which are bound and in need of freedom.  
Our community comes before you in need  
of vision, of courage, of resources, and of initiative.  
We pray for your church throughout the world  
- for its leaders and its brokenness.  
We pray for those places in your church  
which are bound and in need of freedom.  
Our world comes before you in need  
of solidarity, compassion, cooperation, and equity.  
We pray for all nations and our world  
- for peace and justice for all peoples.  
We pray for those places in your world  
which are bound and in need of freedom.  
May your Spirit of freedom break forth  
at the dawning of a new day  
and may we join you in the creation of shalom.  
In Christ's name we pray. Amen.

*Together in Worship at Praise, year B, MediaCom, 2017*

## Closing

As God's people,  
    may we be confident in who we are,  
                                    and in whose we are.  
May we be empowered  
    to follow      to speak      to act      to embody  
                    to be the presence of Christ to another;  
Because we know –  
    it is out of God's authority,  
                    it is out of God's love,  
                                    that we live.  
Alleluia! Thanks be to God!

~ adapted from Richard Bott,

Sharing Liturgy <http://liturgy.richardbott.com/>

