



Worship at home'

Sunday July 14th 2024



We come to worship today knowing that
when we dwell in Christ,
the Spirit of God dwells in us.

Opening: Psalm 24

*The world and all that is in it
belong to the Lord; the earth
and all who live on it are his.
He built it on the deep waters
beneath the earth and laid its
foundations in the ocean
depths. Who has the right to
go up the Lord's hill? Who
may enter his holy Temple?
Those who are pure in act
and in thought, who do not
worship idols or make false
promises. The Lord will bless
them and save them; God will
declare them innocent. Such*

*are the people who come to
God, who come into the
presence of the God of
Jacob. Fling wide the gates,
open the ancient doors, and
the great king will come in.
Who is this great king? He is
the Lord, strong and mighty,
the Lord, victorious in battle.
Fling wide the gates, open the
ancient doors, and the great
king will come in.
Who is this great king? The
triumphant Lord - he is the
great king!* *Good News Bible*



**Reflect on the world we live in, and think
about a place in this world that
takes your breath away: a
place of great beauty and wonder.**

**How do you feel when you
think about this place?**

**Does it prompt you to
prayer and praise?**

**Take a few moments to praise God
for the beauty of our earth.**

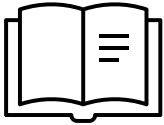


Prayer of Thanksgiving:

It is your desire, O Creator, to draw all that is into the heart of your being. You are love and you are made known in the giving and receiving of love. Through the incarnation of Christ you befriended creation and revealed, in body, your absolute love. In silence we become aware of your love in beauty, in tenderness, in times of strength, in moments of abandon. Let us be still now and recall your great love. We praise and adore you O God. Amen.

Together in Worship and Praise year B, Mediacom 2017. p162

Ephesians 1:3-14



*All praise to
God, the
Father of our
Lord Jesus
Christ, who*

has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly realms because we are united with Christ. Even before he made the world, God loved us and chose us in Christ to be holy and without fault in his eyes. God decided in advance to adopt us into his own family by bringing us to himself through Jesus Christ. This is what he wanted to do, and it gave him great pleasure. So we praise God for the glorious grace he has poured out on us who belong to his dear Son. He is so rich in kindness and grace that he purchased our freedom with the blood of his Son and forgave our sins. He has

showered his kindness on us, along with all wisdom and understanding.

God has now revealed to us his mysterious will regarding Christ—which is to fulfill his own good plan. And this is the plan: At the right time he will bring everything together under the authority of Christ—everything in heaven and on earth. Furthermore, because we are united with Christ, we have received an inheritance from God, for he chose us in advance, and he makes everything work out according to his plan.

God's purpose was that we Jews who were the first to trust in Christ would bring praise and glory to God. And now you Gentiles have also heard the truth, the Good News that God saves you.

And when you believed in Christ, he identified you as his own by giving you the Holy Spirit, whom he promised long ago. The Spirit is God's guarantee that he will give us

the inheritance he promised and that he has purchased us to be his own people. He did this so we would praise and glorify him.

New Living Translation



Do you enjoy looking through old scrapbooks, old memorabilia of times gone by? As we read this first chapter of Ephesians we are reminded of people, places, events that have long since been forgotten. Verses 3-14 are like a scrapbook for the

church, tracing the history of our relationship with God to its beginnings, and even before its beginnings, to the foundation of the world. The passage is one part of the whole story of Scripture, reminding us of God's saving love, and God's presence with us for all time; past, present and future. God loves us and wants us to live in relationships of love.

based on ministrymatters.com

One of the big stories of the Old Testament was the Exodus, the escape from Egypt, through the desert to the promised land. In this story, the Hebrew people knew the promise of God to be with them always. As Christians we base our story on Jesus Christ and his incarnation, through which we come to know God's presence with us in new ways.

If you were asked to share your story of God's saving grace what would you say?

Take some time to think about your own story now.

You might write down what you would share with someone who wanted to know more about the Christian story, and then take some time to pray and praise God who is always with you.



Tom Wright says ‘Telling the story like this – the story of Jesus the Messiah, and the meaning of his death, told in such a way as to bring out the fact that it’s the fulfillment of the Exodus story – is a classic Jewish way of celebrating the goodness of God. Worship, for Christians, will almost always involve *telling the story* of what God has done in and through Jesus. From the beginning such storytelling built on the stories of God’s earlier actions on Israel’s behalf. The prayer will now conclude by moving forwards from the Christian version of the Exodus to the Christian version of the promised land.’

- Tom Wright. *Paul for Everyone, The Prison Letters*. SPCK. 2002

It’s important to be reminded of what and why we believe, sometimes in the fullness and drama of life we can easily get drawn in and forget the bigger picture. It is helpful to be reminded from time-to-time what God has done in reaching out to us. God took the first step in befriending us, all we need to do is respond.

Prayer

- Give thanks for your story and your experience of the Spirit of God at work in your life
- To seek opportunities to show love and serve others as God guides and empowers you
- Pray for the story of our church, the connections between people made possible through our involvement in communities of faith, and our ongoing Covenant with First Nations people
- Pray for the ongoing journey of the Uniting Church as the national Assembly meets this week in Sydney



Closing

It is God's pleasure to lavish us with grace
and embrace us as beloved daughters and sons.

That, my friends, is what we are!

Go forth to live in love, knowing you are offspring of the Sacred
Love in which all creation lives in harmony.

And now God our Mother - Father; Jesus the Christ, our brother;
and the Spirit who is in all is with us always. Amen

- *Together in Worship and Praise year B, Mediacom 2017. p164*