



# 'Worship at home'

## Sunday September 10<sup>th</sup> 2023

We come to worship God,  
who we find in the holy spaces and the  
ordinary places of our lives, sometimes in unexpected ways.  
As we do so, we are reminded that each of us  
Is part of the story of God's people,  
and we find our identity in God, the source of our being.

### Opening

*Come, let us praise God!*

*Sing a new song - a song of God's  
goodness and mercy, faithfulness and love.*

*For God delights in God's people,  
crowning them with honour and glory!*

*Let us worship God! based on Psalm 149:1-4*



From the time of God's covenant with Abraham, the ancient Israelites had known themselves as God's chosen people. They were to keep God's law and be faithful to God's ways, and God would protect and provide for them. Abraham's descendants were from Canaan, however, during a time of famine, many moved to Egypt looking for food. They settled there for several generations, until a new Pharaoh felt they were a threat and took measures to subdue them.



The book of Exodus takes up the story of God's people, with the call of Moses from a burning

bush, and the confrontations with Pharaoh. Today's Scripture gives instructions to the Israelites as they prepare to flee from Egypt and the Pharaoh.



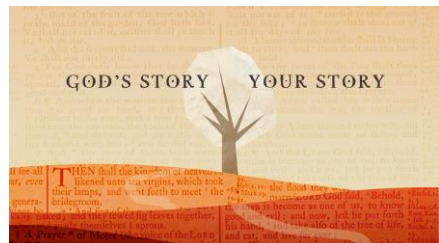
## Exodus 12:1-14

The Lord spoke to Moses and Aaron in Egypt: "This month is to be the first month of the year for you. Give these instructions to the whole community of Israel: On the tenth day of this month each man must choose either a lamb or a young goat for his household. If his family is too small to eat a whole animal, he and his next-door neighbour may share an animal, in proportion to the number of people and the amount that each person can eat. You may choose either a sheep or a goat, but it must be a one-year-old male without any defects. Then, on the evening of the fourteenth day of the month, the whole community of Israel will kill the animals. The people are to take some of the blood and put it on the doorposts and above the doors of the houses in which the animals are to be eaten. That night the meat is to be roasted, and eaten with bitter herbs and with bread made without yeast. Do not eat any of it raw or boiled, but eat it roasted whole, including the

head, the legs, and the internal organs. You must not leave any of it until morning; if any is left over, it must be burned. You are to eat it quickly, for you are to be dressed for travel, with your sandals on your feet and your walking stick in your hand. It is the Passover Festival to honour me, the Lord.

"On that night I will go through the land of Egypt, killing every first-born male, both human and animal, and punishing all the gods of Egypt. I am the Lord. The blood on the doorposts will be a sign to mark the houses in which you live. When I see the blood, I will pass over you and will not harm you when I punish the Egyptians. You must celebrate this day as a religious festival to remind you of what I, the Lord, have done. Celebrate it for all time to come."

Good News Bible



**Reflect on your own life. Are there family stories which ground you and form part of your self-identity?**

**What makes them important for you?**



This story of the Israelites escaping from Egypt forms the basis of the Jewish Passover festival. The instructions are specific: “this month is to be the first month of the year for you”; this is to be a new start. There is to be just enough for each person, and they are to share what they have. They are to make sure there is none left behind, for there is no coming back. There is no time to add yeast and wait for the bread to rise, for they must make haste, without rushing. They are to eat quickly, dressed for travel, with their sandals and walking sticks, ready to move as God calls. This meal marks freedom from slavery and the hope of a new beginning. Each year, as Jewish people re-enact this event, the symbolic acts of eating the lamb, unleavened bread and bitter herbs are reminders of God’s saving actions and embodiments of hope. The celebration of this story is crucial to the Jewish identity as God’s people.



We recall that the institution of the Last Supper has its origins in the Passover festival, when Jesus celebrated this meal with his followers on the night he was betrayed. In re-enacting and celebrating this event, as Holy Communion, Christians find identity and meaning. In the teachings, death and resurrection of Christ, God’s salvation and mercy has been made known for all people. We too are offered freedom from slavery and the hope of a new beginning. In and through Christ, we all become part of the story of God.

As God’s people, we are grounded in the stories that form the foundation of our faith. They are part of our self-identity. Yet we are a pilgrim people, always on the way towards a promised goal. We are grounded in tradition, while dressed for travel and ready to move as God calls. This week marks the beginning of spring in Australia. Soon, as buds blossom and sheep lamb, we will see signs of new life emerge. We are reminded again that Christ gives hope for new beginnings.

**What is one thing you hope for in this next season?  
For yourself? For the people of God?**

**Pray** for hope for new beginnings:  
for yourself, for your church community, for the world.



**Closing:** Reflect on and pray through the lyrics of **We walk on**, a song which was written in response to the Covid pandemic, but can also be considered in the light of current global uncertainty, as we think through how the church might respond and adapt, while remembering the truth of Christ, with us always. The music, lyrics and a video can be found at <https://craigmitchell.com.au/music/>

*We are a body  
We're bothered and broken  
We are a family  
so fractured and frail  
Here is a household  
We're doubtful, divided  
We are all pilgrims  
together alone  
We are a people  
We're holding a promise  
Once were full-bodied  
yet now we are bones  
Here was a heart-beat  
still heaving and hoping  
Life-blood now seeping  
as cold as a stone  
We are all travellers  
with little direction  
We are all followers  
with future unknown  
God of the twilight  
God of the morning  
God who stands by us  
Our story unfolds*

*We are all worriers  
We're anxious,  
despairing  
We are all dreamers  
still longing for home  
Spirits are broken  
Our hearts are wide open  
just for ourselves and  
just for our world  
This is our journey  
a wilderness people  
This is our yearning  
of healing for all  
Behind and before us  
Within and beside us  
Christ in the pathway  
Christ in the call  
And so we walk  
And so we walk  
We walk on  
Lord, we walk on*



*Words by Craig Mitchell  
Music by Leigh Newton, 2020*