



~AT HOME WORSHIP~

Sunday 9th May



Theme: Friends

Preparation:

Call to worship

Jesus said: 'No one has greater love than this,
to lay down one's life for one's friends.'
So, let us join together as friends, Jesus' friends,
to worship and serve the one who,
because of his great love, gave his all for us

Amen

Traditional Hymn

What A Friend We Have In Jesus [What a friend we have in Jesus - YouTube](#)

- 1 What a friend we have in Jesus,
all our sins and griefs to bear!
What a privilege to carry
everything to God in prayer!
O what peace we often forfeit,
O what needless pain we bear,
all because we do not carry
everything to God in prayer!
- 2 Have we trials and temptations?
Is there trouble anywhere?
We should never be discouraged;
take it to the Lord in prayer!
Can we find a friend so faithful
who will all our sorrows share?
Jesus knows our every weakness;
take it to the Lord in prayer!
- 3 Are we weak and heavy laden,
cumbered with a load of care?
Precious Savior, still our refuge--
take it to the Lord in prayer!
Do your friends despise, forsake you?
Take it to the Lord in prayer!
In his arms he'll take and shield you;
you will find a solace there.
- 4 In His arms he take and shield thee;
thou wilt find a solace there.
(repeat)

Opening Prayers:

Saying Sorry:

Dear Lord, your love is so precious;
but we have turned away from you when our lives have been easy
– forgive us and help us to turn back to you.

You have commanded us to love others;
but we have turned away from them when their lives have been difficult
– forgive us and help us to be there for them.

You have shared with us your ministry of welcome;
but we have turned people away
– forgive us and help us always to be open to them.

For the sake of Jesus, whose life and death, deeds and words have saved us.

Amen.

God of hope and healing:

for choosing us – **we thank you.**

For trusting us – **we thank you.**

For befriending us – **we thank you.**

For empowering us – **we thank you.**

For loving us – **we thank you.**

And for forgiving, redeeming, and blessing us –

we thank you, in Jesus' name.

Amen.

Prayer for the Day:

Risen Christ,
by the lakeside you renewed your call to your disciples:
help your Church to obey your command
and draw the nations to the fire of your love,
to the glory of God the Father.

Amen

BIBLE READINGS



Acts 10.44-48 From The Message Translation

44-46 No sooner were these words out of Peter's mouth than the Holy Spirit came on the listeners. The believing Jews who had come with Peter couldn't believe it, couldn't believe that the gift of the Holy Spirit was poured out on "outsider" non-Jews, but there it was—they heard them speaking in tongues, heard them praising God.

46-48 Then Peter said, "Do I hear any objections to baptizing these friends with water? They've received the Holy Spirit exactly as we did." Hearing no objections, he ordered that they be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ.

Then they asked Peter to stay on for a few days.

John 15.9-17 NIV

⁹ "As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love. ¹⁰ If you keep my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commands and remain in his love. ¹¹ I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete. ¹² My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you.

¹³ Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends. ¹⁴ You are my friends if you do what I command.

¹⁵ I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you. ¹⁶ You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you so that you might go and bear fruit—fruit that will last—and so that whatever you ask in my name the Father will give you. ¹⁷ This is my command: Love each other.

Children may choose to use the Activity Sheet:

Worship Song for Children: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a9UfVDm-FB0>

REFLECTION TIME



Short Reflection by Angela

On the morning of January 13, 1982 Arland Williams, a 46-year-old father of two and a banker, made his way across a frozen Washington DC to the airport. As he boarded his business return flight to Florida, he could not have known the tragedy that lay just minutes ahead. During an extraordinary period of freezing weather, Air Florida Flight 90 took off but failed to gain altitude, and crashed into the 14th Street Bridge, where it hit six cars and a truck killing four motorists. The plane then plunged into ice and the freezing Potomac River. Soon only the tail section remained afloat and only six of the airliner's 79 occupants survived the initial crash.

The TV cameras watched hopelessly by as a helicopter arrived and let down a life-belt to a man struggling in the water. Arland Williams grabbed the line but swam in the icy water to another survivor, clipped the woman in and she was hoisted to safety. In water this cold, seconds mean life or death. The helicopter let down the line again, and again Arland swam to someone else. He helped all five survivors to be rescued, before finally, exhausted he himself drowned.

What do people remember the most from that tragedy? The terrible loss of life, or the heroism and sacrifice. Probably all of it. Arland Williams made the incredible choice to save others, sacrificing his own life in the process. A greater love has no-one.



John chs.14-17 is often called **the Last Supper Discourse** because it was Jesus' last time of teaching with the twelve disciples. He is already looking over the cliff, into the darkness. Jesus is about to fall with the cross and about to give his life for all of us – the greatest sacrifice. A few hours after He finishes these words, He is arrested, tried, and crucified. Yet with all the horror facing Him, He still wants to prepare the disciples for His departure as best He can.

The significance of the context now becomes clear. When someone is nearing death, what do they talk about? What do they want to say? It's often words of great importance; words that reveal the deep loves and concerns of their heart. People facing death have a clarity and simplicity in what they want to pass on to their loved ones. Jesus tells the disciples that **he loves them and to remain in His love**. And part of remaining in his love is living by his command which itself is to love. Jesus keeps the teaching straightforward - Love and obedience are the essentials. Love has a nice ring to it doesn't it – perhaps warm and fuzzy feelings. But we might not be so comfortable about obedience and all that we associate with that word. The love of God is far greater than our vision of romantic love, or family love, as amazing as they are. God loves us unconditionally and he rescues us. His love is costly in a way we can't even imagine. He loves us so much that he creates us to be free beings, free to live in relationship with He who created us or free to reject him. Free to love others and free to hurt and damage. But we are not left alone, God teaches us the right way to live, and also gives us

the power of the Holy Spirit to live that way. We have God's teachings of how to live in the bible, and also scribed on our hearts. Obedience is a choice. But if we grasp that God loves us through and through, we trust that his ways are right, and obedience will not be a chore. When you love someone deeply, you naturally want to do what is right by them – it's not a struggle for us to live in ways which bring them happiness. Jesus tells us in this passage that remaining in his love is connected to keeping his commands. There is a relationship between the two. What connects them is love. Sacrificial love. Love which is costly and active. Love each other as I have loved you, Jesus says.

For Jesus, love is less about feelings and more about actions. And yet, despite love being costly, it mysteriously can reveal the joy of Jesus and completes our joy. Loving God and others brings a completeness and a knowledge of what we are here for, whether life is going smoothly or not. It is knowing that we are loved by God, and can remain in that love which comforts and inspires. Showing love to those around us comforts and inspires them too.

Jesus uses the word friend in this and other passages to describe the way that he shares his life with us. What we receive from Jesus is a life which transforms us, rather than a relationship between a master to their servant which requires obedience without understanding.

Think of a good friend of yours; what is it about them that is so special to you? It could be any number of things, but there will be a generosity of some sort. A generosity of time, of treats, of making us laugh, generosity of compassion, generosity of help? Friendship gives us a glimpse of sacrificial love, albeit not perfectly. But it helps us to understand how enriching love in action is. We want the best for our friends.

It is often not difficult to love our friends, because we have shared experiences or shared interests. But Jesus tells us to love one another; not only loving those that are easy to love or just those that reciprocate our love. Arland Williams showed the highest sacrificial love for people he had never met. And that sacrifice impacts all who hear of it because it is radical. We're not all called to such dramatic sacrifices but we are called to live generously. To give what we can, and then to try to give a little more.

The kingdom of God asks for radical love, where we give without counting the cost and without expectations. But we can only live that sacrificially when our own need for love is met in Jesus. How do we remain in his steadfast love? We study his promises. We thank Jesus that he died painfully for us on the cross to save us. And we experience his love by the Holy Spirit who we invite in. The apostle Peter and the roman centurion Cornelius in the early church had no shared backgrounds or interests; they were very different. But they grew in friendship based on the grace that flowed from the risen Christ, in the gift of the Holy Spirit. God doesn't ask for an obedience of friendship and love, without providing the means to do it.

Living in God's love and grace is the means by which we can love sacrificially.

1 John 4:16 **NIV**

¹⁶And so we know and rely on the love God has for us.

God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in them.

Some questions to ponder:

- Since friendship is by its very nature, mutual, reciprocal: what kind of friend do you think Jesus wants us to be? And are we? And if not, what can we do about it?
- What daily practices might we develop which will help us to remain in love? We're remaining in some trains of thought most of the day. How can we replace 'remaining in worry', 'remaining in disappointment', 'remaining in fear', with **remaining in love**? Perhaps it will help to take a few moments at the end of the day to think about where our minds 'remained' for most of the day. And then asking Jesus to help us to remain in his love. Perhaps you can take some time to think about what practices you might develop and pray about them.

Before Jesus died, what was foremost in his mind was for his friends to remain in his love. He wanted them to have a complete joy, the joy of being loved and of giving love. This is the most important message for each of us. Today and always. To live lives of love.

Ephesians 3:18-19 ¹⁸*may have power, together with all the Lord's holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ,* ¹⁹*and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.*

Psalm 98 - Sing Unto the Lord – by Shane and Shane

Christian Worship Music <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fbOd8Uc8Js0>

- ¹ Sing to the Lord a new song,
for he has done marvelous things;
his right hand and his holy arm
have worked salvation for him.
- ² The Lord has made his salvation known
and revealed his righteousness to the nations.
- ³ He has remembered his love
and his faithfulness to Israel;
all the ends of the earth have seen
the salvation of our God.
- ⁴ Shout for joy to the Lord, all the earth,
burst into jubilant song with music;
- ⁵ make music to the Lord with the harp,
with the harp and the sound of singing,
- ⁶ with trumpets and the blast of the ram's horn —
shout for joy before the Lord, the King.
- ⁷ Let the sea resound, and everything in it,
the world, and all who live in it.
- ⁸ Let the rivers clap their hands,
let the mountains sing together for joy;
- ⁹ let them sing before the Lord,
for he comes to judge the earth.
He will judge the world in righteousness
and the peoples with equity.

Time for Prayer: Let us pray

O Lord our God you are the shepherd of your sheep;
of those who are faithful and stay near,
of those who wander and are far off,
of those who know you and those who don't,
of those who have heard your name
and those for whom your name is a mystery yet to be revealed.
Shepherd of the sheep,
we bring our prayers for them all.

For those who are lost or alone or lonely,
struggling through life with no one to guide them,
to protect and shelter them, to care for and sustain them;
for those without family, without friends, without roots, without homes.
Shepherd of the sheep,
we bring our prayers for them all.

For those with no food and no money to buy it,
for those who struggle from day to day to feed themselves and their family
and who feel they have nowhere to turn and no-one to turn to;
praying especially for those in our own country who need to use food banks,
that they may find there the support and lifeline they need in these times;
praying too for the people of Brazil, especially those in the favelas where over half have
barely enough food for one meal a day.

Shepherd of the sheep,
we bring our prayers for them all.

For those who struggle with damaged relationships and domestic violence,
those who feel trapped and who see little option but the life they have and the path it has
taken;

that someone somewhere, will show them a better way, a safety net,
a safe house and home and way of life.

Shepherd of the sheep,
we bring our prayers for them all.

O Lord our God, you are the shepherd of your sheep,
bless all those for whom we have prayed
and bless us, each one of us as we seek to help those we can,
those we encounter as we live out our lives.

Amen.

Lord's Prayer

**Our Father in heaven,
Hallowed be your name,
Your kingdom come,
Your will be done
On earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread
Forgive us our sins
As we forgive those who sin against us
Lead us not into temptation
But deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power,
And the glory are yours
Now and for ever. Amen.**

Closing Prayer

God of all,
we give you thanks for the gift of friendship:
for the giving and the receiving;
for the opportunities and the challenges;
for the laughter and the tears;
for the conversations and the silence;
for the moments and the memories.
Draw us deeper into your love,
and bless us with the confidence
to proclaim Jesus as our dearest friend, teacher and Saviour.
We ask this in his name.

Amen.

Traditional Hymn

O Jesus I Have Promised [O Jesus I have promised - YouTube](#)

- 1 O Jesus, I have promised
To serve thee to the end;
Be thou forever near me,
My Master and my friend;

I shall not fear the battle
If thou art by my side,
Nor wander from the pathway
If thou wilt be my guide.

- 2 O let me feel thee near me!
The world is ever near:
I see the sights that dazzle,
The tempting sounds I hear.
My foes are ever near me,
Around me and within;
But, Jesus, draw thou nearer,
And shield my soul from sin.
- 3 O let me hear thee speaking
In accents clear and still,
Above the storms of passion,
The murmurs of self-will.
O speak to reassure me,
To hasten or control;
O speak, and make me listen,
Thou guardian of my soul.
- 4 O Jesus, thou hast promised
To all who follow thee
That where thou art in glory
There shall thy servant be.
And, Jesus, I have promised
To serve thee to the end;
O give me grace to follow,
My Master and my friend.

Dismissal

Lord Jesus, we rejoice
that you have chosen us to be your friends.
Help us to be a friend to you by obeying your commands.
As we go out into your world,
help us to live a life that reflects your love,
by being a friend to others.
Amen.

May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,
and the love of God,
and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit,
be with us all, evermore. **Amen**

God bless you now and always

