

Morning Prayer

at home with your
Parish Church

in the Diocese of Birmingham



ALL SAINTS
KINGS HEATH

Trusting God's Call Sunday 13th August 2023

Preparation

You may wish to mark your time of worship by arranging a table with a cloth, a candle and your Bible, or anything, such as flowers, that makes it a special reflective space.

Music: click on the links to hear and join in the music. Click stop at the end of each.

HYMN *Today we meet Elijah, agonising at a time of terrible inter-cultural conflict. In anticipation, we sing [For the healing of the nations](#)*

1. For the healing of the nations,
Lord, we pray with one accord;
for a just and equal sharing
of the things that earth affords.
To a life of love in action
help us rise and pledge our word.

2. Lead us, Father, into freedom,
from despair your world release;
that, redeemed from war and hatred,
all may come and go in peace.
Show us how through care and goodness
fear will die and hope increase.

3. All that kills abundant living,
let it from the earth be banned;
pride of status, race or schooling
dogmas that obscure your plan.
In our common quest for justice
may we hallow life's brief span.

4. You, creator-God, have written
your great name on humankind;
for our growing in your likeness
bring the life of Christ to mind;
that by our response and service
earth its destiny may find.

At home, we pause to remember those gathered in Church who, in turn remember us.

We take this time, united in Christ, to offer our praise and thanksgiving, to hear and receive God's holy word, to pray for the needs of the world, and to seek the forgiveness of our sins, that by the power of the Holy Spirit we may find new ways to serve God.

Prayers of Penitence

We confess:

Jesus Christ, risen Master and triumphant Lord, we come to you in sorrow for our sins, and confess to you our weakness and unbelief. We have lived by our own strength and not by the power of your resurrection. In your mercy, forgive us.

We have lived by the light of our own eyes, as faithless and not believing.
In your mercy, forgive us.

We have lived for this world alone and doubted our home in heaven.
In your mercy forgive us.

We keep silence, then pray:

May almighty God who forgives all who truly repent have mercy upon us, pardon us from all our sins, confirm and strengthen us in all goodness and keep us in eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

The Word of God

OLD TESTAMENT READING 1 Kings 19:9-18

At that place Elijah came to a cave, and spent the night there.

Then the word of the LORD came to him, saying, 'What are you doing here, Elijah?' He answered, 'I have been very zealous for the LORD, the God of hosts; for the Israelites have forsaken your covenant, thrown down your altars, and killed your prophets with the sword. I alone am left, and they are seeking my life, to take it away.'

He said, 'Go out and stand on the mountain before the LORD, for the LORD is about to pass by.' Now there was a great wind, so strong

that it was splitting mountains and breaking rocks in pieces before the LORD, but the LORD was not in the wind; and after the wind an earthquake, but the LORD was not in the earthquake; and after the earthquake a fire, but the LORD was not in the fire; and after the fire a sound of sheer silence. When Elijah heard it, he wrapped his face in his mantle and went out and stood at the entrance of the cave. Then there came a voice to him that said, 'What are you doing here, Elijah?' He answered, 'I have been very zealous for the LORD, the God of hosts; for the Israelites have forsaken your covenant, thrown down your altars, and killed your prophets with the sword. I alone am left, and they are seeking my life, to take it away.' Then the LORD said to him, 'Go, return on your way to the wilderness of Damascus; when you arrive, you shall anoint Hazael as king over Aram. Also you shall anoint Jehu son of Nimshi as king over Israel; and you shall anoint Elisha son of Shaphat of Abel-meholah as prophet in your place. Whoever escapes from the sword of Hazael, Jehu shall kill; and whoever escapes from the sword of Jehu, Elisha shall kill. Yet I will leave seven thousand in Israel, all the knees that have not bowed to Baal, and every mouth that has not kissed him.'

PSALM 85 *If you are able, you might stand to read this psalm aloud.*

LORD, you were favourable to your land;
you restored the fortunes of Jacob.
You forgave the iniquity of your people;
you pardoned all their sin.
You withdrew all your wrath;
you turned from your hot anger.

Restore us again, O God of our salvation,
and put away your indignation towards us.
Will you be angry with us for ever?
Will you prolong your anger to all generations?
Will you not revive us again,
so that your people may rejoice in you?
Show us your steadfast love, O LORD,
and grant us your salvation.

Let me hear what God the LORD will speak,
for he will speak peace to his people,
to his faithful, to those who turn to him in their hearts.
Surely his salvation is at hand for those who fear him,
that his glory may dwell in our land.

Steadfast love and faithfulness will meet;
righteousness and peace will kiss each other.
Faithfulness will spring up from the ground,
and righteousness will look down from the sky.
The LORD will give what is good,
and our land will yield its increase.
Righteousness will go before him,
and will make a path for his steps.

GOSPEL READING Matthew 14:22-33

Immediately Jesus made the disciples get into the boat and go on ahead to the other side, while he dismissed the crowds. And after he had dismissed the crowds, he went up the mountain by himself to pray. When evening came, he was there alone, but by this time the boat, battered by the waves, was far from the land, for the wind was against them. And early in the morning he came walking towards them on the lake. But when the disciples saw him walking on the lake, they were terrified, saying, 'It is a ghost!' And they cried out in fear. But immediately Jesus spoke to them and said, 'Take heart, it is I; do not be afraid.'

Peter answered him, 'Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water.' He said, 'Come.' So Peter got out of the boat, started walking on the water, and came towards Jesus. But when he noticed the strong wind, he became frightened, and beginning to sink, he cried out, 'Lord, save me!' Jesus immediately reached out his hand and caught him, saying to him, 'You of little faith, why did you doubt?' When they got into the boat, the wind ceased. And those in the boat worshipped him, saying, 'Truly you are the Son of God.'

AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

We stand and turn to look in the direction of Church, to emphasise our gathering around a precious, shared story.

We proclaim our trust in the promises of God, made by our Lord Jesus Christ:

**Blessed are the poor in spirit,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
Blessed are those who mourn,
for they shall be comforted.
Blessed are the meek,
for they shall inherit the earth.
Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness,**

**for they shall be satisfied
Blessed are the merciful,
for they shall obtain mercy.
Blessed are the pure in heart,
for they shall see God.
Blessed are the peacemakers,
for they shall be called children of God.
Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.**

(Matthew 5:3-10)

Prayers

We pray THE COLLECT for the tenth Sunday after Trinity.

Let your merciful ears, O Lord, be open to the prayers of your humble servants; and that they may obtain their petitions make them to ask such things as shall please you, through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

LORD'S PRAYER

We pray with confidence as our Saviour has taught us:

All: Our Father in heaven...

FOR REFLECTION

It's striking that Elijah hides in a cave and feels depressed and disillusioned when he has just had a spectacular victory over the prophets of Baal (chapter 18) Their queen Jezebel has sworn to pursue and kill Elijah who, in fear and depression fled and slumped down, asking God to end his life as he felt he was a failure. (19:4).

This is his crying need as he hides in the cave. God finds him there and all the rage of creation passes by, storm, earthquake, fire, but it is in the deep silence that follows that God's intimate loving presence is felt. All the elemental anger around us and within us distracts from the quiet fundamental fact of God's love, which is the source and purpose of our existence.

Many whom we regard as successful inside feel they are a failure. Many in positions of power and leadership live with impostor syndrome. Many of us live with depression of different kinds and degrees. Elijah treads a fine line, risking self pity and the paradoxical arrogance of self criticism. There is a risk he will give up, while claiming to be depressed on God's behalf. When God tells him to go out of the cave onto the mountain he does not. He stays at the entrance looking out. But it is enough, just enough, for him to witness what God would have him see. God asks him the same question a second time What are you doing here, Elijah (using his name). He gives exactly the same answer, but somehow he has moved on. He is now ready to hear the firm word of hope God has for him: he will endure, this will pass, the integrity of the Hebrew faith will be restored.

God knows us very well, and the mingling of God's call, God's strength, God's will with our more vulnerable, flawed selves is the way God will work in the world. In the minx of God's call and our response there is the essence of life.

We see it enacted beautifully and almost comically in Peter's reaching out to Jesus walking towards them on the water. Again, Jesus embodies God's stillness in the midst of the world's storms. He comes towards us in our bewilderment. He invites response. There's a funny push-me-pull-you going on as Peter says "If you call me I will come to you. Tell me to walk towards you. I want to, but daren't, but want to, so tell me to and I will...." He does, but then looks down and starts to sink. In the end they are all right. They shift from terror to devotion. It seems God does not expect or need perfection from his followers. He needs just enough, like Elijah just peering out of the cave. If we find it hard to trust ourselves, we're in good company, can Peter and Elijah encourage us nonetheless to step up and trust enough that God trusts us?

Perhaps now we have something to pray for ourselves and for our leaders.

We turn our reflection into PRAYERS:

Bring to mind some of the anger, conflict, destructiveness and turbulence that dominate the news and threaten to overwhelm us.

Yet another boat overwhelmed in the Mediterranean, some forty souls missing.

An austere barge floats in a harbour, its ugliness bringing sinister pleasure to those who would belittle and dehumanise migrants.

Fires still threaten European, Canadian and other communities, destroying not merely holidays, but livelihoods and habitats. We wonder if God's voice is in this fire.

Bring to mind some of the world's leaders, especially those who, contrasting Elijah, appear to believe too much in themselves.

Pray for people who live with depression, especially those in positions of responsibility and public roles. Among those who are ill we pray for Jenny Watling, Kathy Farbrother and Adrian Kozlowski. We pray that they know and hear the still small voice of God, as close as can be.

Among those who mourn we pray for the families and friends of Dadlin Williams, Amanda Swain, Joan Davies and Ernie Humpage.

We each pray for ourselves, for enough belief in God's belief in us to take the next step forward.

HYMN

1. [Thou, whose almighty word](#)

chaos and darkness heard,

and took their flight;

hear us, we humbly pray, and where the gospel day

sheds not its glorious ray, let there be light.

2. Thou, who didst come to bring on thy redeeming wing,

healing and sight,

health to the sick in mind, sight to the inly blind,

O now to humankind let there be light.

3 Spirit of truth and love, life-giving, holy Dove,
speed forth thy flight;
move on the water's face, bearing the lamp of grace,
and in earth's darkest place let there be light.

4. Holy and blessed Three, glorious Trinity,
Wisdom, Love, Might;
boundless as ocean's tide rolling in fullest pride,
through the earth far and wide let there be light.

*(words: John Marriott alt;
music: Melody from Madan's 'Collection' [1769], adapted by Felice de Giardini)*

Imagining all whom we miss, we pray for each other:

**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.**

Common Worship: Services and Prayers for the Church of England

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