

**Materials for Virtual Worship**  
**Seventh Sunday after Trinity, 18 July 2021**

*Please use this material with the order of Virtual Service for  
the Linton Team of Churches Ordinary Time*

**Collects**

Lord of all power and might,  
the author and giver of all good things:  
graft in our hearts the love of your name,  
increase in us true religion,  
nourish us with all goodness,  
and of your great mercy keep us in the same;  
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.

Or

Generous God,  
you give us gifts and make them grow:  
though our faith is small as mustard seed,  
make it grow to your glory  
and the flourishing of your kingdom;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

**Readings**

**Jeremiah 23:1-6**

**Restoration after Exile**

Woe to the shepherds who destroy and scatter the sheep of my pasture! says the Lord. Therefore, thus says the Lord, the God of Israel, concerning the shepherds who shepherd my people: It is you who have scattered my flock, and have driven them away, and you have not attended to them. So I will attend to you for your evil doings, says the Lord. Then I myself will gather the remnant of my flock out of all the lands where I have driven them, and I will bring them back to their

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fold, and they shall be fruitful and multiply. I will raise up shepherds over them who will shepherd them, and they shall not fear any longer, or be dismayed, nor shall any be missing, says the Lord.

### **The Righteous Branch of David**

The days are surely coming, says the Lord, when I will raise up for David a righteous Branch, and he shall reign as king and deal wisely, and shall execute justice and righteousness in the land. In his days Judah will be saved and Israel will live in safety. And this is the name by which he will be called: 'The Lord is our righteousness.'

### **Mark 6:30-34, 53-end**

#### **Feeding the Five Thousand**

The apostles gathered around Jesus, and told him all that they had done and taught. He said to them, 'Come away to a deserted place all by yourselves and rest a while.' For many were coming and going, and they had no leisure even to eat. And they went away in the boat to a deserted place by themselves. Now many saw them going and recognized them, and they hurried there on foot from all the towns and arrived ahead of them. As he went ashore, he saw a great crowd; and he had compassion for them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd; and he began to teach them many things.

#### **Healing the Sick in Gennesaret**

When they had crossed over, they came to land at Gennesaret and moored the boat. When they got out of the boat, people at once recognized him, and rushed about that whole region and began to bring the sick on mats to wherever they heard he was. And wherever he went, into villages or cities or farms, they laid the sick in the market-places, and begged him that they might touch even the fringe of his cloak; and all who touched it were healed.

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### Reflection from 11 July 2021

**Trinity 6 Proper 10 Year B 2021 Linton 2 Samuel 6.1-5,12b-19 Mark 6:14-29**

It was on this particular Sunday, 21 years ago, that I preached my first ever sermon wearing a dog-collar, after my ordination the previous week. And frankly I was not amused. I thought it was pretty rotten of my training vicar to ask me to launch my preaching ministry with the beheading of John the Baptist. And so, now that I'm my own boss, I hope you'll excuse me for not talking about it today. Instead, I want to talk about worship.

Our first reading this morning told how King David brought the Ark of the Covenant in a great procession to Jerusalem. It must have been a truly fantastic sight, but I was struck today by the verdict of Saul's daughter Michal. Did you notice it? Let me remind you:

'As the ark of the Lord came into the city of David, Michal daughter of Saul looked out of the window, and saw King David leaping and dancing before the Lord; and she despised him in her heart' (v16)

Now the story doesn't tell you at this point, but Michal is not only Saul's daughter, she is also David's first wife. It also doesn't explain exactly why the sight of David's leaping and dancing made her despise him. We just don't know. It occurs to me that maybe, as the daughter of a king and the wife of a king, she thought he was behaving in an undignified way. He was a great military leader, the head of the royal household; so what was he doing cavorting about, making a fool of himself in a religious procession.

Well maybe that is what Michal thought. Or maybe it's just my own prejudice showing. After all, the story tells us that it wasn't just David, but 'all the house of Israel [who] were dancing before the Lord with all their might, with songs and lyres and harps and tambourines and castanets and cymbals' (v5). Maybe David was just doing what everyone did back then, and Michal had other reasons for despising

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him. I don't know. But, as I've hinted, I know my own prejudice. As a somewhat inhibited white, English, Anglican male, it's not the kind of worship style I'm into.

Of course, anyone with a fairly wide experience of the church will know that styles of worship owe much to local culture and taste. The first time I visited the Anglican cathedral in Kigali, for example, someone asked me, "How can you sing without moving your body?" In Rwanda, as in many other places near and far, it's common to see worshippers dancing with all their might. So maybe I'm the odd one out.

I guess it's inevitable that religious people will sometimes find unfamiliar styles of worship strange, but to a complete outsider I suppose that worship *itself* is the strangest thing. I mean, what is the point of worship? What is worship for? There are many ways to answer that, some of which would start by deconstructing the question itself: Is worship supposed to have a *point*? Is it *for* anything? Or is it just something people do?

The all-consuming intensity of David's worship suggests that it is a significant and demanding activity. Perhaps the key to understand what's going on is the fact that it is done in God's presence - a point made twice in the reading, if you remember: 'David and all the house of Israel were dancing *before the Lord*' and 'Michal ... saw King David leaping and dancing *before the Lord*'.

It seems to me that this is how we need to approach worship – with a sense that it brings us into the presence of God. Though in fact we believe that God is always present, so perhaps it is better to say that in worship we specially acknowledge God's presence.

I don't know about you, but I don't spend every hour of every day with a vivid sense that I am living *before the Lord*. I don't have a constant, unmistakable and overwhelming experience of God's immediate presence. And there is a danger, isn't there, that our sense of God's presence recedes so far into the background of our lives that it becomes almost an absence; in the same way that you stop noticing

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your new wallpaper after a few days – it's just a vague backdrop to the comings and goings of daily life.

So times of worship act like a kind of reawakening of ourselves to the presence of God. The question, then, is less about *how* we worship than *if* we worship. One of the characters in Peter Shaffer's play *Equus*, says, 'Without worship you shrink'. I think that's true; but I'd want to add that without worship God shrinks too – or at least, our sense of God shrinks.

The sense of God has been shrinking fast in our Western European culture. So I think that the practice of worship is absolutely central to the church's mission. From an outside point of view, worship is *strange*; but it is one of the ways in which we keep the rumour of God alive. And it is the lifeblood of our own spiritual renewal – the time when our general faith in God becomes focused in the present moment and we discover ourselves *before the Lord* once again. Some people will dance and sing; some will kneel; some will not quite know how to respond to the discovery that there is One who is closer to us than our innermost being. God is not more present if everyone gets excited about it. God is not less present if everyone falls silent. Your experience will be different from mine. The point is that we hold the worship space open, often, to invite the possibility of an encounter with the Living God.

Into your presence we come, O God of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob.  
Most glorious and holy Trinity, make yourself know to us we pray,  
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Alex Hughes

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### All hail the pow'r of Jesus' name!

1 All hail the pow'r of Jesus' name!  
let angels prostrate fall,  
let angels prostrate fall,  
bring forth the royal diadem,  
and crown him, crown him, crown him, crown him, and crown him Lord  
of all.

2 Crown him, ye martyrs of your God,  
who from his altar call,  
who from his altar call;  
praise him whose way of pain ye trod,  
and crown him, crown him, crown him, crown him, and crown him Lord  
of all.

3 Ye prophets who our freedom won,  
ye searchers, great and small,  
ye searchers, great and small;  
by whom the work of truth is done,  
now crown him, crown him, crown him, crown him,  
now crown him Lord of all.

4 Ye seed of Israel's chosen race  
ye ransomed of the fall,  
ye ransomed of the fall,  
hail him who saves you by his grace,  
and crown him, crown him, crown him, crown him,  
and crown him Lord of all.

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5 Let ev'ry tribe and ev'ry tongue  
to him their hearts enthral,  
to him their hearts enthral;  
lift high the universal song,  
and crown him, crown him, crown him, crown him,  
and crown him Lord of all.

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### **The Lord's my shepherd, I'll not want**

1 The Lord's my shepherd, I'll not want,  
He makes me down to lie  
in pastures green. He leadeth me  
the quiet waters by.

2 My soul he doth restore again,  
and me to walk doth make  
within the paths of righteousness,  
e'en for his own name's sake.

3 Yea, though I walk in death's dark vale,  
yet will I fear none ill.  
For thou art with me, and thy rod  
and staff me comfort still.

4 My table thou hast furnished  
in presence of my foes:  
my head thou dost with oil anoint,  
and my cup overflows.

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5 Goodness and mercy all my life  
shall surely follow me.  
And in God's house for evermore  
my dwelling-place shall be.

CCLI Song # 23608

Francis Rous | Jessie Seymour Irvine | William Whittingham

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### **Immortal love, for ever full**

1 Immortal love, for ever full,  
for ever flowing free,  
for ever shared, for ever whole,  
a never-ebbing sea.

2 Our outward lips confess the name  
all other names above;  
love only knoweth whence it came  
and comprehendeth love.

3 O warm, sweet, tender, even yet  
a present help is he;  
and faith has still its Olivet,  
and love its Galilee.

4 The healing of his seamless dress  
is by our beds of pain;  
we touch him in life's throng and press,  
and we are whole again.

5 Through him the first fond prayers are said  
our lips of childhood frame;  
the last low whispers of our dead  
are burdened with his name.

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6 Alone, O love ineffable,  
thy saving name is giv'n;  
to turn aside from thee is hell,  
to walk with thee is heav'n.

Words: John Greenleaf Whittier (1807-1892)  
Music: Probably by Jeremiah Clarke (c.1674-1707)

### Now let us from this table rise

1 Now let us from this table rise,  
renewed in body, mind, and soul;  
with Christ we die and live again,  
his selfless love has made us whole.

2 With minds alert, upheld by grace,  
to spread the Word in speech and deed,  
we follow in the steps of Christ,  
at one with all in hope and need.

3 To fill each human house with love,  
it is the sacrament of care;  
the work that Christ began to do  
we humbly pledge ourselves to share.

4 Then give us courage, living God,  
to choose again the pilgrim way,  
and help us to accept with joy  
the challenge of tomorrow's day.

Words: Fred Kaan (b.1929)  
Music: Traditional Swiss melody arr. Richard Lloyd (b.1933)  
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### Closing Prayer

Lord God, whose Son is the true vine and the source of life,  
ever giving himself that the world may live:  
may we so receive within ourselves  
    the power of his death and passion  
that, in his saving cup,  
    we may share his glory and be made perfect in his love;  
for he is alive and reigns, now and for ever. **Amen.**