

Worship At Home Sheet for Sunday 22nd November

We have been called into the pastures of God,
where there is nurture, a place to rest,
safety, and kindness among all.
Let us draw near, in the goodness of God,
to be with each other, and to praise
the shepherd who has gathered us here.

BEFORE GOD

God, we have been a scattered people,
roaming, looking for places to call home.
You have called us home, gathered us in,
given us a land of belonging where all are welcome.
You have sought us out, brought us in,
and held us in this great story.
We come to you,
people who are hungry,
people who are thirsty,
strangers, imprisoned, exposed,
knowing that you have come to us, too,
in these same guises.
In our brokenness, welcome us.
And open up our defences as we come to you,
O Lord of many guises.

I CONFESS MY SIN *(in quiet confess your sins)*

Truly, we say to you that we have seen the broken
and have not been moved to compassion.
Truly, we say to you that we have heard people mourning
and have not given them our time.
Truly, we say to you that we have witnessed oppression
and have not raised our voices.
Truly, we say to you that we have seen the stranger
and not said a word.
God, hiding in all strangers, all around us,
we are truly sorry for what we have done,
and what we have not done.
And we ask you to deepen your welcome in us,
so that we might deepen our welcome around us.

Hear God's Word of grace & forgiveness.
"Your sins are forgiven"

BIBLE READING: [Matthew 25.31-46](#)

REFLECTION:

When you care for someone very much you want things to be OK, and if something goes wrong/adrift you have a real desire to make it better. Even if you can't sort or fix it, it doesn't stop you wanting things to be different. Covid has brought that home to us in a new way. At first glance this reading is gloomy but look closer and you will find a thread of hope 'one day'. That hope becomes real in Jesus and continues in our kingdom living. That is a message we need to hear for, even without Covid, the world still knows sadness, hurt, injustice and we need to hold on to God's big picture. That's the reminder of Advent, that season of countdown of days/sleeps to Christmas. When Vice President of Conference Gill Baker said it was not about us counting but about how much we count/matter to God. The latin *advenio* means to come towards, not us getting nearer to Christmas but rather God coming to us so that life and our living might be different. In Jesus, the Word became flesh, born as a baby, a language that we can all understand. Reading seems unlikely for Advent. It has nothing to do with Mary and Joseph, the Wise Men, of shepherds watching their flock. Instead it is a lesson about being alert, prepared, getting ready, looking up not bowed down by the details of life. Nor is it about a fix it God but the God who is with us for the long haul. This is the big picture of God's hope – and for that thanks be to God.

Rev. Chris Hawke Supernumerary Minister/Synod Sec.

PERSONAL PRAYER

Sometimes I am tired,
or I'm preoccupied with other demands.
Help me take time, help me make time, for kindness,
so that rush can take its lower place,
and kindness can rise up.
Because you had much to do –
but made time anyway. Hear me, Amen.

PRAY FOR OTHERS:

For the times when we are sick:
(*pray also for those known to you)
may we have healing.
For the times when we are isolated *
may we have company.
For the times when we are oppressed: *
may we have justice.
For the times when we are exposed: *
may we have dignity.
For the times when we are mistreated: *
may we have humanity.
For the times when we are ignored: *
may we be heard.
For the times when we ignore, or isolate,
or oppress, ^{SEP}or expose or mistreat:.... (silence)
may we change.

Pray for the bereaved, your church/neighbours, your family
& yourself.....

The Lord's Prayer

O God of kindness, may I have more time for interruptions,
and have the generosity for kindness, so that I might see you here and everywhere. Bless me
now and always. Amen

The Grace.