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ORDINARY 19A

13th August 2023

A short act of worship and daily devotions

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Opening Prayer

If you have a candle, find it and something to light it. Put it somewhere you can see it. If you do not have a candle, use a lamp.

As you light the candle, or light the lamp, say these words:

“The light shines in the darkness and the darkness can never put it out.”

Sit in silence and notice the light and the shadows in the room.

When you are ready, offer this time of worship to God:

“Jesus, you are the light of the world, the light of my life, I offer this time to you in worship and prayer and praise. Amen”

You may now wish to say the Lord’s Prayer in a version or translation with which you are most familiar.

Reading: Matthew 14:22-33 – [Click for reading](#)

Responding to the reading

Do you recognise yourself in this story?

Perhaps you feel like you’re in a boat on a stormy sea, with something difficult happening in your life. Maybe you’re holding onto the boat, but you’re feeling tossed about, with things you’re afraid or worried about or the busyness of life.

Or maybe you feel like you’re the one climbing over the side of the boat, doing something new, stepping out into a new adventure with bravery, and it’s scary and exciting all at once and a bit overwhelming.

Or maybe you’re watching on as somebody else looks like they are sinking. Perhaps you are friends or family with somebody who is struggling to stay afloat and you’re not sure what to do to help them.

Or maybe you feel like you’re sinking yourself. Maybe things feel a bit much and you really need Jesus to reach out and pull you out of the water.

Or maybe you’ve just seen God do something amazing, you’re sitting in the boat watching as Jesus miraculously comes towards you. You’ve just seen God turn up in your life.

Spend a few minutes reflecting on where you are in this story. You might like to read the Bible passage over again.

- *what are you looking at?*
- *how does it feel?*
- *have you ever felt like this in your life?*
- *what are your hopes and dreams at this point in the story, or in your life.*

Sometimes it might feel like this story is all about Peter. If only he had enough faith or courage he wouldn’t have doubted and he wouldn’t have sunk.

When Peter steps out of the boat, his lack of faith seems to be the problem, but that's not what the story is about at all. The story is about Jesus, moving towards us. Jesus who is with us, whoever we are.

Whoever you relate to in the story, however you're feeling now, even if you feel like you aren't full up enough with faith or courage, Jesus is with you. Jesus is drawing near, in your doubt or your joy or your fear or worry or relief or happiness. Whoever you are, Jesus is with you.

Responding in music

367 STF – When I was lost, you came and rescued me - [YouTube](#)

696 STF – For the healing of the nations - [YouTube](#)

Responding in prayer:

Loving God, thank you for all that you are doing in my life, and in the world, to break down barriers, to enable everyday-miracles and make space for grace.

Be at work in me this day, to show me how to step out of the boat, and see what it is that is mine to do.

Come, by your Spirit, Lord, Amen.

Blessing

Go then,
Leave this space,
Knowing God is with you,
Knowing you will be richly blessed,
Knowing that you are called to make a difference,
Knowing that God will bless others through you,
Knowing the overwhelming love of the living God.

Amen.

Prayers and Prayer Pointers for the Week

Monday 14th August

- On this day in 2021, while the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic were still being felt, a 7.2 magnitude earthquake hit the Caribbean Island of Haiti, killing over 2,000 people and creating a humanitarian crisis.
- Today we pray for all those affected by this and other humanitarian crises around the world – for those grieving the lost, traumatised by the events, and working to rebuild infrastructure and livelihoods in Haiti and elsewhere.

Tuesday 15th August

- Today is marked as VJ day amongst some communities in the UK – marking the end of World War Two.
- In your prayers today, pray for peace, and the end to war, and the glorification of war, around the world and in your community.

Wednesday 16th August

- Be still for a moment.
Spend a minute deciding on a mantra that will help you today. A mantra is a short prayer that you can pray over and over again today – ideally only a few words, like ‘The Lord my God, the Lord is one’ or ‘Show me what is mine to do’ or ‘thank you for loving me, God’.
- Once you have found a sentence that might help you, write it down and put the piece of paper in your pocket or stick it somewhere you will see it lots today. Every time you see or touch the paper today, pray your little mantra.
- If this is helpful, write yourself a new one tomorrow.

Thursday 17th August

- On this day in 1945, the novella Animal Farm by George Orwell was first published, and has been read by millions of people since. The story is about animals, but is really about politics and power.
- Today, let us pray for all people in power everywhere – pray that they may have grace not to let the corrupting effects of power change their nature or behaviour, and pray for the power we ourselves wield in the world. May grace and love be the guiding principles in how we use that power.

Friday 18th August

- Read this poem “blessing and rest” by Malcolm Guite. Consider the blessings you have received today. Give thanks for them. <https://malcolmguite.wordpress.com/tag/sabbath>

Saturday 19th August

- Heavenly Father and Mother,
God my little sister and my big brother,
God my friend and my lover,
Come close to me today, that I may know more you,
That I may see your love for me,
And represent that love in the world.
Amen.