



Welcome to written worship for the first week of Bible Month

As we gather for prayer and praise, to read scripture and to rest in God's presence, we invite you to find a comfortable and still place, and to pause and recognise God's presence with us...

Hymn: *Hark the glad sound! StF171, H&P 82, MP 210*

And so we pray...¹

Loving God,

*in Jesus and through the power of the Holy Spirit you show us that there is always room at your table for one more. **Alleluia!***

*There is always enough time for everyone to be listened to. **Alleluia!***

*There is always enough respect for everyone to be valued. **Alleluia!***

*There is always enough truth for everyone to grow and learn. **Alleluia!***

*There is always a second chance for those who once turned away. **Alleluia!***

*For the in-you crowd is always growing and always welcoming. **Alleluia!**
Amen.*

We make our confession...

God of truth and mercy,

where we break down – you build up;

where we damage – you repair;

where we blaspheme – you bless;

where we isolate – you include

where we go wrong – you put us right;

where we confess – you forgive;

where we begin again – you are with us.

*In Jesus' name. **Amen***

And we bring our praise and thanksgiving to God...

God of all the world,

we praise you for calling us into your family,

for choosing us even though we are imperfect,

for trusting us even though we make mistakes,

for not giving up on us even when we give up on ourselves,

for offering so much more – even when we would settle for less.

God of all the world,

for drawing us into a deeper relationship with you and with one another, we praise you –

*individually and together, we praise you. **Amen.***

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*“Tell me the stories of Jesus I love to hear;
Things I would ask him to tell me if he were here;
Scenes by the wayside, tales of the sea,
Stories of Jesus, tell them to me.”*

As we worship during June, we will read through the whole of Mark’s Gospel over the course of the month. Each week we will suggest a slightly different way of approaching the passage of scripture, hoping that this will both enrich our worship and maybe also offer us new ways of reading going forward.

This week we invite you to read as you would approach a novel, or another book you would read for pleasure. You might like to make a drink and settle yourself in a comfortable chair. Read at the speed which is comfortable to you...don’t struggle to pay particular attention because this is scripture. Remember that God is with us always, and will work within us in ways both expected, and unexpected. If you can, relax. If you find you are eager to know ‘the rest of the story’, you may choose to read the whole gospel at one sitting this week. This will lay foundations for the weeks to come, but is by no means essential.

Read: Mark 1:1-3:35, or further as suits you

Once you have read your passage for this week, you may find that there are thoughts you want to jot down, or other reflections you want to capture – in words, doodles, drawings or other creative ways. Take some time to do that now, if it’s helpful to you.

*Each week we are pointed towards a theme which emerges from the set passage, and we will offer a **reflection** based on that theme². This week that theme is Identity and Mission*

Who is He? Who are they? Who are we?

Who is He – the one who’s coming – as proclaimed in prophet’s words?

Who is He – now calling others for a mission he’s prepared?

Who is He – who shows compassion – healing ‘many’ of disease?

Who is He – who draws large crowds, challenging authorities?

Who are they – who first proclaimed Him – Isaiah’s words, John’s message clear?

Who are they - his first disciples – leaving all that they hold dear?

Who are they – the sick and troubled, finding help for various needs?

Who are they – who met objections from law-keepers, pharisees?

Who are they – the twelve apostles who would take his message out

² Reflections are offered to us by Moira Hunt, prayers by Erica Hartley

*to the others 'mothers', 'brothers' – what God's family is about?
Who are we – who read the stories and who wonder at the One
They portray – the long expected, the great healer, God's own Son?
Who are we – to whom the precious Gospel message is revealed
Of a loving, caring Saviour reaching out to those in need?*

*We are they who hear the challenge
"Follow me" and "fish for men"
We who now belong to Jesus,
Read Mark's stories once again.*

Hymn: Jesus calls us! O'er the tumult StF 250, H&P 141, MP 359

*Our prayers of intercession² this month will be picking out verses from our
long bible reading to lead us into our prayers for others.*

*Let us **pray**:*

*Now after John was arrested, Jesus came to Galilee, proclaiming the good
news of God. Mark 1:14*

*Lord, we ask for your blessing on all those who preach the Gospel here
and around the world, ministers and lay preachers who are in the pulpit
week by week and individuals who live out their gospel in their actions. May
all of us have the confidence to proclaim the Good News like John the
Baptist and Jesus.*

*They were astounded at his teaching, for he taught them as one having
authority, and not as the scribes. Mark 1:22*

*Lord, we ask for your blessing on those in positions of authority or have
influence on our world, political leaders, teachers, judges, police and
celebrities. We pray that they will see in Jesus a model of self-giving,
justice and peace.*

*When the scribes of the Pharisees saw that he was eating with sinners and
tax-collectors, they said to his disciples, 'Why does he eat with tax-
collectors and sinners?' Mark 2:16*

*Lord, we ask for your blessing on those who seem different to us, who have
different morals and practices. Instead of judging may we be open and
welcoming to those whose life is different to ours and who may be
struggling with circumstances beyond their control. We pray that they will
see your transforming power and accept you as Lord.*

² Reflections are offered to us by Moira Hunt, prayers by Erica Hartley

That evening, at sunset, they brought to him all who were sick or possessed with demons. Mark 1:32

Lord, we ask for your blessing on all those who are sick, in body, mind or spirit. We pray for healing if that is your will, and for your overwhelming peace when healing is not your plan for now.

We ask all these prayers and the prayers in our heart through your Son, Jesus Christ. Amen.

We pray the Lord's Prayer, in whatever language and version comes most naturally to us.

Our Father...

We draw our worship to a close with a hymn committing us to live as God's people, followers of Jesus, in the world God loves.

Hymn: Hear the call of the Kingdom StF 407, MP 1282

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