



## **“Jesus walks on water”**

Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> August 2020 19<sup>th</sup> in Ordinary

Revd. Nico Hilmy-Jones and Revd. Jenny Pathmarajah.

*This short act of worship has been prepared for you to use as you are unable to attend church. If you are well enough why not spend a few moments with God, knowing that other people are sharing this act of worship with you.*

### **Welcome: The Lighting of a Candle & Call to Worship**

Come and worship, all you who love and serve our God, who surrounds us with unfailing love, and answers us when we call; who cares for the humble and lowly, and never abandons those in need. This is our God, worthy of our worship and praise. AMEN.  
*(based on Psalm 138)*

### **StF 353 Jesus is Lord!**

Jesus Is Lord!  
Creation's Voice Proclaims It,  
For By His Power Each Tree And  
Flower - Was Planned And Made.  
Jesus Is Lord!  
The Universe Declares It,  
Sun, Moon And Stars In Heaven  
Cry, 'Jesus Is Lord!'

*Jesus Is Lord! Jesus Is Lord!  
Praise Him With Hallelujahs  
For Jesus Is Lord!*

Jesus Is Lord!  
Yet From His Throne Eternal  
In Flesh He Came To Die In Pain  
On Calvary's Tree.  
Jesus Is Lord!  
From Him All Life Proceeding,  
Yet Gave His Life A Ransom  
Thus Setting Us Free.

*Jesus Is Lord! Jesus Is Lord!  
Praise Him With Hallelujahs  
For Jesus Is Lord!*

Jesus Is Lord!  
O'er Sin The Mighty Conqueror,  
From Death He Rose, And All His Foes  
Shall Own His Name.  
Jesus Is Lord!  
God Sent His Holy Spirit  
To Show By Works Of Power  
That Jesus Is Lord.

*Jesus Is Lord! Jesus Is Lord!  
Praise Him With Hallelujahs  
For Jesus Is Lord!*

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### **Prayer:**

Almighty God, you draw near to us in our joy and in our grief, in our hope and in our despair. We thank you for people who find joy in the midst of trials and difficulties. We thank you for those who are ever-generous in giving to others. We thank you for those who are quick to listen. We thank you for people who live out their faith by caring for others. We thank you that when we are bowed down, you raise each one of us up. We know that we cannot earn your love, but we can respond to your love. May

your Holy Spirit surround us and strengthen us, and through us bring glory to your own most precious name.

Loving God, we turn to you now in search of your healing touch, and ask that you move among us this hour. Forgive us when we neglect the cries of others, when we worry about trivial things and crowd out Your guiding voice. When we fill our lives with possessions and forget to be your Holy people and live in the Light. We ask that you Open our eyes, dispel our fears, and show us the real life you have to offer. As God loves us completely, be assured his care always surrounds those who truly repent of all their wrong doings. Sisters and Brothers, as you trust in God's healing love, know your sins are forgiven and be at peace. We ask all this in the name of Jesus. AMEN.

And now let us say the prayer that Jesus taught us to say.....  
Our Father, who art in Heaven, hallowed be thy name; Thy kingdom come; thy will be done; on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. AMEN.

### Young People

Melanie and her children, Jasper and Olivia, from Ebenezer, will be showing us how to make a melon boat with stick models of the Disciples and Peter in the sea sinking; with flags on the boat containing messages that say: have courage, do not be afraid, trust in God, you will not sink. The theme is hope, love, faith and knowing that Jesus will never abandon us in our time of need.

## StF 367 When I was lost

When I was lost you came and rescued me  
reached down into the pit and lifted me.  
Oh Lord, such love;  
I was as far from you as I could be.  
You know all the things I've ever done  
but Jesus' blood has cancelled every  
one. Oh Lord, such grace  
to qualify me as your own.

*There is a new song in my mouth,  
there is a deep cry in my heart,  
a hymn of praise to Almighty God -  
Alleluia!*

*And now I stand firm on this Rock,  
my life is hidden now with Christ in  
God, the old has gone and the new has  
come - Alleluia!*

Your love has lifted me.  
Now I have come into your family,  
for the Son of God has died for me.  
Oh Lord, such peace;  
I am as loved by you as I could be.  
In the full assurance of your love,  
now with every confidence we come.  
Oh Lord, such joy  
to know that you delight in us.

*Refrain*

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Matthew 14:22-33: Stepping Out of  
the Boat | The Noontimes  
[thenoontimes.com](http://thenoontimes.com)

## Today's Reading

from the New Testament

Matt. 14:22-33 Jesus walks on water

And immediately Jesus drove his learners to step into a ship, to go before him to the other side, whilst Jesus set free the throngs of people. After dismissing them, he ascended into the mountain by himself to pray. The evening was coming and he was all alone.

The ship, however, was already in the middle of the sea and was being tormented and tortured by the winds which were hostile and contrary.

The fourth watch of the night, Jesus walked at large on the sea. The learner's eyes popped and were overcome by terror and fear at the phantom they could see and they cried out in their agitation.

Immediately, Jesus speaks to them saying 'Be of good cheer!' and do not be terrified!

Peter then answered Jesus and said Lord, if you are who you say you are, command me to step down into the water. Jesus said, come into this place. Peter walks on water coming towards Jesus, but then perceiving, feeling and then seeing the aggressive wind, his phobia kicked in and began to plunge into the sea, croaking, shrieking and spluttering "Lord rescue me from my destruction!"

Immediately, Jesus stretching out his hand, grabbed him and said to him "you trusted too little, why did you hesitate and waiver?"



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## Time to Reflect:

*Just keep your eyes fixed on him.*

You probably didn't recognize that translation. That's because you won't have heard this one before. This is another well-known and beloved reading and when I looked at the Greek, it was too interesting not to do my own translation and hard as I try, I'm compelled to tell you about some of the fascinating Greek that's going on here.

*And immediately Jesus drove his learners to step into a ship, to go before him to the other side, whilst Jesus set free the throngs of people. After dismissing them, he ascended into the mountain by himself to pray.*

We're so used to hearing the word disciples, but the traditional word for disciples isn't used here, the word meaning learner or pupil is. Most translations would say Jesus made the disciples get into a boat. But the Greek uses a stronger verb to get the disciples in a ship - not a boat. This isn't just a row boat, or a small fishing vessel, this is a ship. The Greek uses a verb which means necessitate, to drive, compel, force. It's not a polite request it's more of a 'get in now before I change my mind and we won't get ice cream!' Most of you know I'm a Guide leader and I can resonate with this feeling of herding cats and trying to get a group of people to be somewhere on time.

We often think of this scene and the disciples in a little boat in the middle of the sea of Galilee and the winds pick up and it's a bit rough a ready. But the way the greek describes what's going on, it's like a horror scene from Moby Dick! The Greek uses a verb which has a dictionary definition of similar to properly,

1. to testing the integrity of metals by touchstone.
2. to question by applying torture.
3. to torture
4. universally, to vex with grievous pains (of body or mind), to torment

This poor ship, not a boat, was under massive strain and being attacked by the wind and weather, pummeled, tossed and turned; the wind and weather was out to destroy this ship.

As if the weather wasn't bad enough and many of the disciples are seasoned fisherfolk, they are grabbing against the weather to stay safe and then they see what the Greek literally describes as a 'phantom' it's the same word we have in English and related to the word phobia which comes later on in the reading.

Jesus speaks to the disciples and is quite jolly with his retort of 'be of good cheer and don't be terrified. So Peter, clearly recognizes Jesus' voice and wants to double check who this is. Which means actually poor Thomas who's known as doubting Thomas is getting a raw deal, because Peter is here doubting first...

Jesus invites Peter, not into the water, but into this place. The place where he is inhabiting. Peter comes towards him and gets distracted by everything going on around him, his phobia of dying kicks in and starts plunging into the sea, but Jesus is totally in control right now and grabs his hand and saves. The Greek doesn't say 'oh yea of little faith' it says 'you trusted too little'. Faith and trust are quite different things.

I'm fascinated by what's going on here, because the story I know so well and like you, probably grew up with, feels quite different when it's

presented with a different translation. We're surrounded by the sea here in Jersey and we know it's perils and dangers so well. You're like me and probably have your favourite bay, favourite bit of beach and favourite view of the coast.

But you're also aware of the bays which are treacherous, the places where the rocks are and currents will eat you up and smash you into the cliffs. But there is a place in Jersey where you can walk on water when the tide is right. In St Helier by St Aubin's bay, you can walk around the edge of the tidal swimming pool and if you time it right, it looks like you're walking on water as the tide comes in.

But what does this passage have to do with me and you right now? What's the message? Where is the hope? Where are you in this story right now?

Maybe you're the ship. You've been strong, sturdy and reliable for so many people, serving faithfully for so long, but you're being battered around right now and you're not sure you can cope in this environment of just being attacked continuously, vexed, tortured, tested, have so much pressure on you.

Maybe you're one of the learners in the ship. You've been doing this faith stuff all your life, but for some reason at this moment in time, the ship that's carried you so faithfully all the days of your life is in peril. Doubts about where God is in the pandemic, in your family, in your work, in your - you fill in the blanks. You're doubting whether this church thing is even for you, or whether you want to go back or a revelation that you've experienced God more during the pandemic than you ever have and 'normal' church just doesn't feel right anymore.

Maybe you're the wind. You're angry, upset, antagonistic, hostile and feel contrary to everything that's going on around. I can get in moods like that and whatever someone says I'm going to take the opposite view just to be a pain and make their life miserable. I don't do it so much now you'll be pleased to know! But if you feel like this, the Greek for what the wind is doing is probably striking a chord.

You can't think straight for the raw emotion that's swarming round you right now and you're just filled with this energy that's expressing itself in battering everything around you regardless of the consequences.

Maybe you're Peter. You've been trying to so hard and you want to be this special person, you want to do what God wants for you and you're so keen; but in the corner of your eye you can see and feel the haters, then the rain starts falling and you think 'maybe I'll start it another day,' the wind picks up and pushes you around and you think 'it's too strong, it's too hard, it's not safe' and you start talking yourself out of it.

You get distracted by the desire to get that buzz, to do something else, to go back to your old ways because it's easier.

Maybe you feel like Jesus. You're the solid person at work, in the family, whose seeing everything being tossed around like rag dolls, but you have the strength to see those who are drowning and you reach out and pick them up. But just remember, in order for Jesus to do all of this, he spent time alone in prayer.

I don't know where you fit into the story. But I know that when Peter sets his eyes upon Jesus and trusts, he's ok. Peter tests God and says "if it's

really you, do this." Friends, trust me, making bargains with God is a dangerous business, believe me when I say, God always wins! But Jesus in this situation humours Peter and invites him into this place. Not the sea, but in this place; a place of craziness, a whirlwind of destruction and terror around when everything feels out of control. Yet Jesus is the source of calmness and stillness.

Whether you're the ship, the wind, the disciples, or clinging on to Jesus right now, know this. Jesus is the rock which will not move. Trust in him and he will not let you go, the wind and tempestuous wind will not overcome you. You will not drown in the pile of work you have to do or with the horrific thing you're facing right now. He's got you. Just keep your eyes fixed on him.

## StF 624 Calm me, Lord,

Calm me, Lord,  
as you calmed the storm,  
still me, Lord, keep me from harm.  
Let all the tumult within me cease,  
enfold me, Lord, in your peace.

Calm me, Lord,  
as you calmed the storm;  
still me, Lord, keep me from harm.  
Let all the tumult within me cease,  
Lord, enfold me in your peace.

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## **A time of prayer**

Loving God, we thank you that you are constantly at work in us, remaking, moulding, striving to make us your hands, your feet, your eyes, your ears and your heart in the world.

And so, we lift up our world which is filled with so much pain, so much need and sorrow; a world you care for so deeply and we ask that you reach out again in mercy, and heal our wounds.

We bring to you the causes of so much suffering; greed, that denies the many their share of the earth's resources. Waste that squanders the resources you have given, with no thought of future generations.

Intolerance and hate that divides families, communities and countries through refusing to engage in dialogue. Indifference that cares too little about others who are suffering and in need of help.

We bring to you those who pay the price of human greed, ignorance and selfishness, the poor and the hungry, the homeless and dispossessed,; the isolated, crushed and forgotten. All who are deprived of love and denied hope, especially the children and those who have no voice.

We bring to you countries whose people cry out for justice and compassion.

Troubles in the World and ongoing internal and external struggles.

Victims of war and violence, crime and cruelty, the tortured and the abused, those who are being killed for their faith and imprisoned by people who use your most Holy name to justify their actions.

We bring to you those Churches who fail to honour you in all they do, torn apart by divisions, for those among us whom have lost their faith or are faltering on their journey.

Give us strength and courage to speak for those who have no voice, to stand up for those who cannot stand up for themselves, to take action on behalf of those people who are too afraid to speak or act out, because it is too dangerous for them to do so.

We bring to you those amongst us, those people, those places, those situations whom are on our hearts who we know are in need of healing, in need of being seen and whom are afraid and unsure and so we lift them up, silently, by name to you now.....

We ask for your Holy Spirit to bring courage and patience in all suffering, for goodness to be spread to every difficult and painful experience and that you reach out again in mercy, and heal our wounds.

Lord in your mercy.....hear our prayer

Gracious God, you know what is on our hearts. Our own fears and struggles that we carry around, deep within which can defeat us and cause us to question, to mistrust, to feel lost and ashamed.

Be with those in our precarious world who live in those dark corners unwilling and unable to see your light. Sustain them with your healing presence and give them, and all of us, courage to withstand the pain.

We ask that you surround all our sisters and brothers, around the world, with your comfort, your grace, your life giving Spirit and your healing love so they can be lifted up in their time of need. We ask all this in your precious and holy name AMEN

## StF 364

### O for a thousand tongues

- 1 O for a thousand tongues to sing  
my great redeemer's praise,  
the glories of my God and king,  
the triumphs of his grace!
- 2 Jesus - the name that charms our  
fears,- that bids our sorrows cease;  
'tis music in the sinner's ears,  
'tis life, and health, and peace.
- 3 See all your sins on Jesus laid:  
the lamb of God was slain;  
his soul was once an offering made  
for every soul of man.
- 4 He breaks the power of cancelled  
sin, - he sets the prisoner free;  
his blood can make the foulest  
clean, - his blood availed for me.
- 5 He speaks; and, listening to his  
voice,- new life the dead receive;  
the mournful, broken hearts  
rejoice;- the humble poor believe.
- 6 Hear Him, ye deaf;  
His praise ye dumb,  
your loosened tongues employ,  
Ye blind behold your Saviour come.  
And leap, ye lame, for joy.
- 7 My gracious Master, and my God  
assist me to proclaim.  
To spread through all the earth  
abroad,- The honours of Thy name.

*Charles Wesley (1707-1788)*

## A prayer of blessing

May God protect you along the way;  
May Christ Jesus keep you alert  
and prepared;  
And may the Holy Spirit give you  
courage and calm all your fears.

May the blessing of God the Father,  
Son and Holy Spirit,  
be among us  
and remain with us always.  
AMEN.

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