



**Call to Worship - Psalm 107:23-25**

Some went out on the sea in ships; they were merchants on the mighty waters.  
They saw the works of the Lord, his wonderful deeds in the deep.  
For he spoke and stirred up a tempest that lifted high the waves.

**Hymn STF113 - O worship the King, all glorious above - Watch on YouTube [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Dv2BqFgm6\\_M](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Dv2BqFgm6_M)**

O worship the King, all-glorious above;  
O gratefully sing his power and his love:  
our shield and defender, the Ancient of Days,  
pavilioned in splendour, and girded with praise.

O tell of his might, O sing of his grace,  
whose robe is the light, whose canopy space;  
his chariots of wrath the deep thunder-clouds form,  
and dark is his path on the wings of the storm.

The earth with its store of wonders untold,  
almighty, your power has founded of old;  
established it fast by a changeless decree,  
and round it has cast, like a mantle, the sea.

*Robert Grant (1779-1838)*

**Prayer**

Loving God, we praise you for the wonders of your love. For glimpses of your glory in the clouds and stars above;  
For life and growth around us through the seasons of the year; For the past and for the future, and your promise to be near.  
Loving God, we thank you for the good things you provide; For home and health and friendship, for those who teach and guide.  
Thank you, Lord, for Jesus in whose name we gather here; Bring us now to know in him your presence to be near.  
Loving God. We're sorry for the things that we've done wrong: The ways we've hurt each other or refused to get along.  
Fill us with your mercy, take away from us all fear; Help us find fresh courage in your promise to be near.  
Loving God, we're ready to receive the truth you give, Ready to obey you as you show us how to live.  
Pour on us your Spirit till we hear you loud and clear; Let our lives be governed by your promise to be near.

*Dominic Grant ©The United Reformed Church 2024*

**Lord's Prayer .. Our Father, who art in heaven ..**

**Hymn STF7 - God who made the stars of heaven – Watch on YouTube <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cpVJ0IFyh4Y>**

*Ruth C Duck (born 1947)*

God, who made the stars of heaven,  
God who spread the earth,  
breath of every living being,  
fount of life and birth,  
you have formed a servant people,  
led us by your hand.  
Light of nations, shine in us;  
brighten every land.

Living Christ, the light of nations,  
radiant as the sun,  
build us up, a growing body;  
knit your church as one.  
May our loving be a witness  
all the world may see.  
Send your spirit, bond of peace,  
source of unity.

Your bountiful care what tongue can recite?  
It breathes in the air, it shines in the light;  
it streams from the hills, it descends to the plain,  
and sweetly distils in the dew and the rain.

Frail children of dust, and feeble as frail,  
in you do we trust, nor find you to fail;  
your mercies how tender, how firm to the end,  
our maker, defender, redeemer, and friend.

O measureless might, ineffable love,  
while angels delight to hymn you above,  
your ransomed creation, though feeble our praise,  
with true adoration our voices we raise.

Spirit God, equip your people,  
all with gifts to share:  
messengers to speak the gospel,  
ministers of care.  
So may valleys rise to greatness,  
mountains be a plain.  
Come, surprise us; change our lives;  
heal each heart in pain.

So may nations praise your greatness,  
do your will on earth,  
free the captives from their prisons,  
treat the poor with worth.  
So may desert, coast and village  
sing new songs to you.  
Light of nations, fill the world,  
making all things new

**Reading - Job 38:1-11** *The Lord speaks*

**Reading - Mark 4:35-41** *Jesus calms the storm*

**Hymn STF256 - When I needed a neighbour – Watch on YouTube [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=quBKGe8\\_hw](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=quBKGe8_hw)**

When I needed a neighbour were you there, were you there?  
there?  
When I needed a neighbour were you there?  
*And the creed and the colour and the name won't matter,  
Were you there?*

I was hungry and thirsty, were you there, were you there?  
I was hungry and thirsty, were you there?  
*Chorus*

I was cold, I was naked, were you there, were you there?  
I was cold, I was naked, were you there?  
*Chorus*

When I needed a shelter were you there, were you there?  
When I needed a shelter were you there?  
*Chorus*

When I needed a healer were you there, were you there?  
When I needed a healer were you there?  
*Chorus*

Wherever you travel I'll be there, I'll be there,  
Wherever you travel I'll be there.  
*And the creed and the colour and the name won't matter,  
I'll be there.*  
Sydney Carter (1915-2004)

### **Sermon - Boundaries (Job 38:11)**

*“This far you may come and no farther; here is where your proud waves halt”*

Sanctuary Sunday, falling today, is “the Sunday at the end of Refugee Week. This is opportunity to annually reflect, pray, and commit ourselves to celebrate and continue to build hospitality and sanctuary for all, especially those whose lives are most vulnerable, and most in danger.” At risk of over simplifying things, safety is dependent on boundaries, borders and buildings. In different ways those three things afford safety and shelter for those on the right side of them because they set limits.

Sometimes danger can be locked in, and not locked out; and sometimes, like Job in the Old Testament reading, we find ourselves challenging the limits set. We may not trust them, or we may not like them.

The text I shared is God’s response to Job’s questioning of him. God challenges Job by asking him exactly what part he played in the setting of the limits that define land and sea, the big things of creation. Job could not answer any more than you or I could respond sensibly to a similar challenge.

The sea is big, powerful and seemingly limitless. For those who love and respect it the draw is magnetic. From the earliest of times people have wondered what was beyond the horizon and according to the Psalm, Merchants criss-crossed the sea on their travels looking for new markets. As a by-product they saw things at which they marvelled and knew that a great storm was uncontrollable for them.

It is no small wonder that in the ancient, semitic world, the control of the boisterous sea was a unique symbol of Divine Power and Authority. The Lord controls it; or as he described his control to Job, he was the one who said ‘*This far you may come and no farther; here is where your proud waves halt*’.

In our day we too grapple with a balance of understanding. Our heads tell us that geography is such that limits exist and risk is avoidable, while experience says that for some people, living by the sea, working on the sea of using it as an escape route to sanctuary the dangers are as real as ever.

There are misfortunes of human making; we do not have to go out in boats. But stop there – natural disasters threaten boundaries as when tsunamis come or volcanoes change the landscape. Were we to be living in Iceland now we would know the reality of that. And what about those balancing one risk against another and deciding that the risk of the cruel sea is a smaller risk than that of a cruel persecutor, a vicious tyrant, or a brutal famine on land.

Our Gospel reading tells the story of a lake crossing and a storm boiling up. We can question the need for the group to have crossed the lake by boat but in our hearts we know that we too would have travelled that way too if the weather was

fair and it was the best way to a destination. Apparently, Lake Galilee is notorious for sudden squally storms and while they may be of no risk to an ocean going liner, the same is not true for those in a small passenger boat.

Some in the group slept soundly and others were afraid. No doubt some too knew that it was necessary to keep control and battle on. Whether asleep, afeared or at work did all have within them a sense deep down that there was a limit? *'This far you may come and no farther; here is where your proud waves halt'* where 'here' in this case is defined by the sides of the boat.

The frightened said to the relaxed, don't you care – an interesting statement to make to Jesus himself but the very sort of lashing out in frustration that is the hallmark of many a frightened person...don't you care? Can't you do something?

Whether Jesus calmed the sea or whether he spoke knowing that the storm would go as suddenly as it came, the effect was the same; order was restored: *'This far you may come and no farther; here is where your proud waves halt'*. The authoritative voice of God controls but it calms too, reminding the hearer that the crisis of the moment is only a moment in the enormous everlasting perspective.

That is difficult though. Were we crossing the sea in search of sanctuary, or when we hear of those who do so, our reaction is the same...is there no one to care?

Then later on, Job replies to God. He says [Job 40:3-5] 'I am unworthy. How can I reply to you?' And again, [Job 42:1-6], 'surely I spoke of things I did not understand.'

Well yes, but when did that stop us lashing out? It is human nature; we may not know what we are talking about but we talk anyway. Boundaries become blurred, safety is threatened and vulnerable souls question even the most solid of boundaries.

*'This far you may come and no farther; here is where your proud waves halt'*.

People needing sanctuary, shelter from disaster do not need academic debate about the power of God. Whatever they are flying from, theory matters less than to feel safe again; that comes by resetting boundaries and giving back control or being convinced that a good agent is in control; one who means *'This far you may come and no farther; here is where your proud waves halt'*.

For Christians, Jesus is that 'good agent', having Authority that convinces us of security, taking away the uncertainty of what we do not understand. In Job, God referred to the sea, in the gospel it was the same, and likewise for us too, but not any sea, the sea of death itself. At the cross Jesus set a limit: *'This far you may come and no farther; here is where your proud waves halt'*.

Like the disciples on the lake or Job in his disaster it can be hard to believe, but believing is the point of faith with which the Spirit helps us when declaring to our waves of doubt:

*'This far you may come and no farther; here is where your proud waves halt'*.

**Amen.**

**Hymn STF645 - Will your anchor hold – Watch on YouTube <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e66LrJWaUnU>**

Will your anchor hold in the storms of life,  
when the clouds unfold their wings of strife?  
When the strong tides lift, and the cables strain,  
will your anchor drift, or firm remain?

*We have an anchor that keeps the soul  
steadfast and sure while the billows roll;  
fastened to the Rock which cannot move,  
grounded firm and deep in the Saviour's love!*

Will your anchor hold in the straits of fear,  
when the breakers roar and the reef is near?

While the surges rave, and the wild winds blow,  
shall the angry waves then your bark o'erflow?  
*Chorus.*

Will your anchor hold in the straits of fear,  
when the breakers roar and the reef is near?  
While the surges rave, and the wild winds blow,  
shall the angry waves then your boat o'erflow?  
*Chorus.*

Will your anchor hold in the floods of death,  
when the waters cold chill your latest breath?  
On the rising tide you can never fail,  
while your anchor holds within the veil.  
*Chorus.*

Will your anchor hold in the floods of death,  
when the waters cold chill your latest breath?  
On the rising tide you can safely stay,  
while your anchor holds in life's ebbing day.

*Chorus.*

Will your eyes behold through the morning light  
the city of gold and the harbour bright?  
Will you anchor safe by the heavenly shore,  
when life's storms are past for evermore?  
*Chorus.*

Priscilla Jane Owens (1829-1907)

## **Prayers of Intercession**

Today is Sanctuary Sunday. This year, prayers are brought to us by the Scottish Faiths Action for Refugees. These prayers and other resources can be accessed via the JPIT (Joint Public Issues Team) of which The Methodist Church is a part.

### ***Intercessions***

God of family, we bring before you the parents who are weeping and lamenting, who are waiting for their children, whose trace is lost in the sea, in the desert, on railway tracks, in shipping containers and uncertainty: men, women and children who had escaped from the war zones, the famine and poverty of this world, with the hope for a better, safer life.

God of life, we bring before you our lament for the dead, stranded at the borders of safety, who died fleeing through deserts, over mountains and seas. We call to you and join in the cry of all those who sought justice and a better life for themselves and their children and perished in the process.

God of justice, we bring before you political leaders, advisers and decision-makers who hold the fate of others in their hands. Make them aware of the causes of migration and flight. Keep their consciences alive so that refugees are offered protection and dignity. Let them agree rules of residence that are based on human rights and guided by solidarity compassion.

God of peace, give us the strength to be witnesses of the suffering of the world and fill us with the fire of your spirit to renew our efforts to serve those in need and give us the grace to welcome, learn and share our lives with people who come to live in our communities. Amen.

### ***Praying for Refugees***

On all days, but especially on Sanctuary Sunday, it is so important to keep in our prayers people around the world who have fled their homes in search of safety and peace. Across our world there are over 114 million individuals who have been displaced from their homes. This is a huge number and the scale of it can be overwhelming, so we have included some prayer points that you can incorporate into your worship, as well as pre-written prayers that can be used in worship.

### **Prayer Points**

#### **PRAY FOR REFUGEES ACROSS THE WORLD**

- Pray for nations where people are being displaced by wars i.e. Syria, Ukraine, Sudan, Yemen, Gaza .
- Pray for countries where people face persecution, including for their religious faith i.e. Afghanistan, Iran, Myanmar.
- Pray for all those around the world still in transit or living in refugee camps.

#### **PRAY FOR REFUGEES IN THE UK**

- Pray for people in the asylum system waiting on their cases to be heard. This is a stressful wait, and on top of that people are often surviving on as little as £8.50 per week and now living with the fear of being deported to Rwanda.
- Pray for people who have arrived to the UK through resettlement schemes. They often require support in learning English, finding work, and the difficulties of adjusting to a new life.
- Pray for the health and wellbeing of all refugees, with a special consideration for those suffering the effects of trauma, and the thousands of refugee children who arrive unaccompanied each year.

## PRAY FOR PEOPLE SUPPORTING REFUGEES

- Pray for charities and NGOs supporting refugees such as the Scottish Refugee Council, Maryhill Integration Network, Refuweegee, Refugee Sanctuary Scotland, and The Welcoming.
- Pray for Community Sponsorship groups who arrange for refugee families to be resettled and support them for their first two years.
- Pray for all the churches and faith groups who are providing a faithful welcome.

### ***Pray for the needs of people in your own community***

Loving God, we think of the people who live around us and who we see but may not know. We can be sure that there are many different needs that are on your radar if not on ours. We commend them all to your love and compassion.

We pray for the specific needs we do know of, and ask for your blessing. We think of anyone who is near the end of their mortal life and ask that they may know your deep and abiding comfort, just as we ask that you will console anyone who is mourning the loss of a family member or a friend.

### **Hymn STF255 - The Kingdom of God is justice and joy – Watch on YouTube <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KXZsAM4T7iU>**

The kingdom of God  
Is justice and joy,  
For Jesus restores  
What sin would destroy;  
God's power and glory  
In Jesus we know,  
And here and hereafter  
The kingdom shall grow.

Is mercy and grace,  
The captives are freed,  
The sinners find place,  
The outcast are welcomed  
God's banquet to share,  
And hope is awakened  
In place of despair.

The kingdom of God  
Is mercy and grace,  
The lepers are cleansed,  
The sinners find place,  
The outcast are welcomed  
God's banquet to share,  
And hope is awakened  
In place of despair.

The kingdom of God  
Is challenge and choice,  
Believe the good news,  
Repent and rejoice!  
His love for us sinners  
Brought Christ to his cross,  
Our crisis of judgement  
For gain or for loss.

The kingdom of God  
Is mercy and grace,  
The prisoners are freed,  
The sinners find place,  
The outcast are welcomed  
God's banquet to share,  
And hope is awakened  
In place of despair.

God's kingdom is come,  
The gift and the goal,  
In Jesus begun,  
In heaven made whole;  
The heirs of the kingdom  
Shall answer his call,  
And all things cry glory  
To God all in all!

The kingdom of God

Bryn Rees (1911-1983)

### **The Grace**

The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Love of God and the Fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all, evermore. Amen.