

Let us build a home



Call to Worship

You who live in the shelter of the Most High, who abide in the shadow of the Almighty, will say to the Lord, “My refuge and my fortress; my God, in whom I trust.” Psalm 91:1-2

“Come to me, all you who are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Mathew 11:28

Hymn StF 409 Let us build a house Watch on YouTube <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FhPnjA7wsIY>

Let us build a house
Where love can dwell
And all can safely live
A place where
Saints and children tell
How hearts learn to forgive

Built of hopes and dreams and visions
Rock of faith and vault of grace
Here the love of Christ shall end divisions

All are welcome, all are welcome
All are welcome in this place

Let us build a house where prophets speak
And words are strong and true
Where all God's children dare to seek
To dream God's reign anew

Here the cross shall stand as witness
And a symbol of God's grace
Here as one we claim the faith of Jesus

All are welcome ...

Let us build a house where love is found
In water, wine and wheat
A banquet hall on holy ground
Where peace and justice meet

Here the love of God, through Jesus
Is revealed in time and space
As we share in Christ the feast that frees us

All are welcome ...

Paul Tate / Marty Haugen

Adoration Prayer : Magnificent God, you raise the lowly and welcome everyone. Your mercy extends from generation to generation, creating a home for all who seek You. We worship You for preparing a place of grace and welcome, where all are embraced, the hungry find good things to eat, and those who are low shall be restored in Your tenderness. Your greatness is revealed in your acceptance of all people, and we worship you for your boundless grace. **Amen.**

Confessional Prayer : Compassionate God, We confess our hardness of heart, which has caused us to close the doors to those searching for a home. Forgive us when, in our pride, we have excluded others instead of welcoming them as you do. Remind us that Your kingdom exalts the humble and opens wide the door to the marginalised. Turn our hearts back to your radical hospitality and inclusion through Christ. **Amen.**

Hymn StF 687 One human family God has made Watch on YouTube <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QnBjppHddkl>

One human family God has made
and all for each to care.

One world, to be the home of all
with all its wealth to share.

One Christ, to manifest on earth
love's ultimate design.

One Church to know the mystery
of broken bread and wine.

One race, one world - yet torn apart,
we spurn the way of love.

But still ahead, the Christ leads on
and calls his Church to move
from love of power to power of love,
to give the word to all -

to trust the love that conquered death
outside the city wall.

And are we brave enough to join
with that great company -
the cost not less than all we have
and are or hope to be -
the bitter cup of human sin
to drink with him who died,
and take his love outside the wall
to all the crucified?

Claim him who claims us for his own,
to share his pain and grief,
to bear the scars that stamp us his -
the hallmark of belief.
As partners of the living Christ,

who risk the path he trod,
with wondering love we find we share
the timeless joy of God.

Rosemary Wakelin (b.1932)

Bible Readings:

Hebrews 2:10-12 (NRSV)

It was fitting that God, for whom and through whom all things exist, in bringing many children to glory, should make the pioneer of their salvation perfect through sufferings. For the one who sanctifies and those who are sanctified all have one Father. For this reason, Jesus is not ashamed to call them brothers and sisters, saying, "I will proclaim your name to my brothers and sisters; in the midst of the congregation, I will praise you."

Mark 10:2-16 (NRSV)

Then in the house the disciples asked him again about this matter. He said to them, "Whoever divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery against her, and if she divorces her husband and marries another, she commits adultery."

People were bringing children to him in order that he might touch them, and the disciples spoke sternly to them. But when Jesus saw this, he was indignant and said to them, "Let the children come to me; do not stop them, for it is to such as these that the kingdom of God belongs. Truly I tell you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will never enter it." And he took them up in his arms, laid his hands on them, and blessed them.

Hymn StF 703 In an age of twisted values Watch on YouTube <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PN39uLkXB10>

In an age of twisted values,
we have lost the truth we need.
In sophisticated language, we have justified our greed.
By our struggle for possessions,
we have robbed the poor and weak.
Hear our cry and heal our nation; your forgiveness,
Lord, we seek.

We have built discrimination on our prejudice and fear.
Hatred swiftly turns to cruelty,
if we hold resentments dear.
For communities divided by the walls of class and race,
hear our cry and heal our nation; show us, Lord, your
love and grace.

When our families are broken,
when our homes are full of strife,

when our children are bewildered,
when they lose their way in life,
when we fail to give the aged all the care
we know they need,
hear our cry and heal our nation;
help us show more love, we plead.

We who hear your word so often choose
so rarely to obey.
Turn us from our wilful blindness;
give us truth to light our way.
In the power of your Spirit come to
cleanse us, make us new;
hear our cry and heal our nation
till our nation honours you
Martin Leckebusch (b. 1962).

Sermon : Let us build a home

When this sermon is printed and used, the 3Generate, a great Methodist assembly of kids and youngsters, will be happening in Birmingham. Interestingly, October 6th also celebrated Homelessness Sunday. For many, a home is a place of comfort, familiarity, and safety—a physical space where we retreat from the world. But today, I want us to think beyond the bricks and walls, beyond the physical location we call home. The gospel reading explicitly discusses a 'home affair' about making and sustaining a home, family, and children.

The gospel reading consists of two stories that seem to be independent. Scholars differ in a common theme in these two stories: some say discipleship with its demands and character, and some say Christian marriage and Baptism. However, reading these texts led me to a different line towards power and position. It is indisputable that the background of the Bible is patriarchal in culture and practice. Keeping that in mind, my thoughts dragged me to find why the question of divorce in that context aroused Jesus and could be a hot topic to discuss and address. The historical context tells us that the commercialisation of land and tenancy fragmented kinship bonds and family values. As the need for commercial cultivation

grew, land displacement became widespread. Most peasants were displaced from their ancestral land, making alienation and tenancy common features. This affected the families and relationships of that time.

According to Elisabeth Malbon's fascinating analysis of Mark's depiction of the home, the house is vital in Mark's Gospel because its activities are similar to those in a synagogue, including healing, teaching, preaching, and disagreement. In Mark's gospel, the synagogue is replaced by the house, where a new community has a new gathering place. Jesus explains a house's design and character here, 'in the house'.

A home of belonging. In reply to hook question, Jesus took their shared family history back to the very beginnings, to God's original plan in creating humanity. He quoted the two different stories in which Genesis described human origins, highlighting a central point of each of them. When Jesus said, "God made them male and female," everyone needs to accept the fact of the image of God. Additionally, when Jesus recited the statement from Genesis 2 about the man leaving his father and mother to cling to his wife, he recalled the whole story in which God declared that humans were not made to be alone; they belong to one another.

According to the law of the day, men alone had the right to initiate a divorce and adultery was considered a violation of a man's property rights. Jesus' teaching gave women the same dignity and responsibility as their male counterparts. When his examiners brought up the question of divorce, Jesus turned it into a discussion of the dignity of each person and the fact that human beings are made to love one another as truly as we are made to love God.

In short, Jesus placed God's original intention for marriage over and above the considerations of the Mosaic Law and its patriarchal practice. His reference to the beginning of creation made it clear to them that God's will for man and woman at creation was that they are for each other and be united into "one flesh" as persons of equal worth and dignity.

Today, Jesus asks us whether our home has an atmosphere of belonging, whether I am a person of belonging, and whether my church is a place of belonging. That sense of belonging may solve many problems within our home, church, and society.

Home of acceptance

In the succeeding event, Jesus' vision of an alternative household was demonstrated: acceptance of the lowest person in strata. Reidner Aasgaard, who studied children in antiquity extensively, observed that children were marginalised, belonged to the lowest social classes, and represented the opposite construction of strength and power in this environment. They were believed to be vulnerable, reliant, inferior, and helpless. When disciples used power to control the lowest person in the strata, Jesus overruled them and told them not to prevent the children. Jesus also gives a reason for his ruling: for of such is the Kingdom of God.

Jesus designed a home where everyone, even the lowest person, will be accepted and valued. Jesus freely reached out to the hungry, the destitute, and the bereaved, regardless of whether they deserved it or not and regardless of their mindset, offering "uncovenanted mercies" that promised hope. God's unconditional love for all people is shown in Jesus' life as he accepts needy and defenceless children when they are brought to him. There can be no barriers to getting to Jesus. It is essential to see that welcoming children is more than a metaphor; it initiates social change by turning the social structures of inequality upside down. This reversal of expectation is precisely what Jesus is trying to teach his disciples: to make the insignificant indispensable, to create a new centre on the margins of society, and to value and love what society deems unimportant.

Conclusion : As we learn the lesson of belonging and acceptance, Mother Teresa would encourage us: "I see Jesus in every human being; I say to myself, this is hungry Jesus; I must feed him. This is sick, Jesus. This one has leprosy or gangrene; I must wash him and tend to him. I serve because I love Jesus.

Now, take a moment to imagine encountering yourself on the road. How would you treat yourself in that encounter? Would it be with kindness, patience, or perhaps even grace? This reflection forces us to consider how we view others, for if we are truly made in God's image, then each person we meet carries that same glory and honour.

Our calling as a community is to unearth this image of God—not only in ourselves but in every person we encounter—creating a space for love, peace, and justice to flourish. When we truly see the divine in others, it transforms how we engage with the world. It calls us to build relationships grounded in respect, to advocate for justice for the marginalised, and to foster peace in places of division. The challenge, then, is to always see through the eyes of Christ, where each encounter is an opportunity to reveal the beauty of God's image and bring forth a community that mirrors the kingdom of God. Let us make a home for everyone. ***Amen.***

Hymn of Dedication StF 702 I will speak out Watch on YouTube <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZCVPKzEQ1EQ>

I will speak out for those who have no voices
I will stand up for the rights of all the oppressed
I will speak truth and justice
I'll defend the poor and the needy
I will lift up the weak in Jesus' name

I will speak out for those who have no choices
I will cry out for those who live without love
I will show God's compassion
To the crushed and broken in spirit
I will lift up the weak in Jesus' name

Dave Bankhead, Ray Goudie, Sue Rinaldie, Steve Basset © 1990 Authentic Publishing

Intercessory Prayer

Creator God, we pray for those looking for a sense of belonging—those who feel alone, rejected or unloved. May your loving arms wrap around them and remind them they are part of your family.

Merciful God, we pray for our homes. May they be safe havens where every person feels valued and welcome. Help us create a space that reflects your love, where differences are celebrated and kindness rules.

Liberating God, we pray for those who have been discriminated against, abused and made to feel unwelcome in their communities. May your Spirit work through us to break down walls, build bridges, and make homes where everyone is welcome as they are.

Loving God, we pray for wisdom and courage for those who lead our communities. May they be guided by your compassion and ensure everyone has a place to call home, regardless of background, race, or circumstance.

Reconciling God, we pray for families, communities and countries struggling to create an atmosphere of peace and acceptance. Heal the wounds of division and misunderstanding, and fill their hearts with love and patience so they may reflect your unconditional love.

Living God, we pray for our church's mission. Help us to remember we are all pilgrims on the journey together, seeking the home that is found in you. We also offer up our personal prayers to you. Guide us and guard us.

In Jesus' name, we pray.

Lord's Prayer

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, forever and ever. Amen.

Hymn StF 699 God of justice, Saviour to all Watch on YouTube <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AZaKi4gOYBc>

God of Justice Saviour to all
Came to rescue the weak and the poor
Chose to serve and not be served

To act justly every day
Loving mercy in every way
Walking humbly before You God

Jesus You have called us, Freely we've received
Now freely we will give

You have shown us what You require
Freely we've received
Now freely we will give

We must go, Live to feed the hungry
Stand beside the broken, We must go
Stepping forward

Fill us up and send us out
Fill us up and send us out

Keep us from just singing

Fill us up and send us out Lord (REPEAT)

Move us into action, We must go

Blessing

May the grace of our Lord, who came to us as a child, the love of the Father, to whom we truly belong, and the fellowship of the Spirit, who heals and shapes us for God's Kingdom, be with us now and always. **Amen.**