



(The Call to Worship and Prayers are taken from the Church of Scotland

<https://www.churchofscotland.org.uk/worship/weekly-worship/2025-july/sunday-20-sixth-sunday-after-pentecost-year-c>)

Call to Worship : Come, let us worship the God of abundance and love. May our hearts be open to receive God's generosity and may our lives overflow with kindness to others. As we gather, may the Spirit of Hospitality fill our midst, that we may welcome the stranger, feed the hungry, and clothe the naked. Let us celebrate the gift of life and the gift of community, and may our worship reflect God's boundless generosity towards us.

Hymn: StF 409 Let us Build a House

Watch on YouTube <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N9bOiAxwi4U&list=RDN9bOiAxwi4U>

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 as symbol of God's grace;
here as one we claim the faith of Jesus.
All are welcome, all are welcome,
all are welcome in this place.

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,

Prayers

Dear God, We come before You with humility and reverence, acknowledging Your majesty and power. You are the creator of the universe, the source of all life and wisdom. Your love and mercy endure forever.

We confess that we have not always lived according to Your will. We have sinned in our thoughts, words, and actions. We have fallen short of Your glory and disappointed You. We have failed to be generous to others. We have failed to be hospitable to our brothers and sisters.

Forgive our transgressions. Cleanse us from all unrighteousness. Help us to turn away from our sinful ways and to walk in the path of righteousness.

May Your Holy Spirit guide us and empower us to live a life that honours You. Give us the strength to resist temptation and to choose Your way.

We thank You for Your unfailing love and mercy. May Your name be glorified in our lives, and may we reflect Your goodness and grace. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

is revealed in time and space;
as we share in Christ the feast that frees us.
All are welcome, all are welcome,
all are welcome in this place.

Let us build a house where hands will reach
beyond the wood and stone
to heal and strengthen, serve and teach,
and live the Word they've known.
Here the outcast and the stranger
bear the image of God's face;
let us bring an end to fear and danger.
All are welcome, all are welcome,
all are welcome in this place.

Let us build a house where all are named,
their songs and visions heard
and loved and treasured, taught and claimed
as words within the Word.
Built of tears and cries and laughter,
prayers of faith and songs of grace,
let this house proclaim from floor to rafter.
All are welcome, all are welcome,
all are welcome in this place.

Reading: John 1 v 14-43

Hymn: StF 250 Jesus, calls us o'er the tumult

Watch on YouTube <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TLAkxWKQnww&list=RDTLakxWKQnww>

Jesus calls us o'er the tumult
of our life's wild restless sea;
day by day his voice still calls us
saying, 'Christian, follow me.'

As of old, apostles heard it
by the Galilean lake,
turned from home and work and kindred,
leaving all for Jesus' sake.

Jesus calls us from the worship
of the vain world's golden store,

from each idol that would keep us,
saying, 'Christian, love me more.'

In our joys and in our sorrows,
days of toil and hours of ease,
Jesus calls, in cares and pleasures,
'Christian, love me more than these.'

Jesus calls us: by your mercies,
Saviour, may we hear your call,
give our hearts in glad obedience,
serve and love you best of all.

Message:

How would you define a home? I guess one's first thought goes to bricks and mortar and 'things'. We've moved several times in the course of my ministry and with each move comes the question you get for a while afterwards, 'Do you feel settled yet?', to which my usual reply has been that once our familiar things had been unpacked and were around us it felt like 'home'.

But, of course, a home is more than things and more than four walls and a roof. It has to do with the people around us and with feelings. Home is where we feel secure, safe, comfortable and free to be ourselves, knowing we are accepted by those around us. I wonder how you would describe the feelings you associate with a good home. Hold those thoughts. We'll return to them later. At the beginning of his Gospel, John makes three blockbuster claims about Jesus. Two of these would have resonated with Jewish minds and those familiar with the Old Testament. The other would have spoken to those familiar with Greek philosophy.

1) Jesus is the one through whom all things were made

For us, John's Gospel is the fourth book in the New Testament so we don't tend to think of it beginning anything but, if you think about it, for anyone starting to read any of the four Gospels at the outset, it was the beginning of something new. So, note how John chooses to begin.

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

What does that remind you of? It takes you right back to another beginning. It takes you back to the Book of Genesis and the beginning of the Jewish scriptures, where we read ...

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters. And God said, "Let there be light," and there was light. God saw that the light was good, and he separated the light from the darkness.'

You don't need to be a genius to spot the connection that John is very deliberately making. Jesus (the Word), he is claiming, is the one through whom everything was made and he provides the light that shines in the darkness and can never be put out. Incidentally, that idea of the unextinguishable light is at the beginning of the Bible; here; and at the end of the Bible too, where we read of the heavenly city:

that will never go out is book ended at the end of the Bible too. '

The city does not need the sun or the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and the Lamb is its lamp.

(Revelation 21)

There will be no more night. They will not need the light of a lamp or the light of the sun, for the Lord God will give them light. (Revelation 22)

That's a huge claim for John to make but he's only just getting started. There are still two more to go.

2) Jesus is the one who is full of God's presence

The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth. (John 1:14)

No one has ever seen God, but the one and only Son, who is himself God and is in closest relationship with the Father, has made him known. (John 1:18)

John says that Jesus became a human being and made his dwelling among us. In Greek this literally says that Jesus pitched his tent among us. Now, you can see how that can be used as an expression to cover all sorts of 'moving in' but, for those who knew their scriptures, those words would have carried a much greater significance. The Old Testament, particularly in its early books, speaks of the Tabernacle. This was a special tent that accompanied the Israelites as they journeyed through the Wilderness and which held the glory of God's presence. As the dwelling place of God it was replaced by the Holy of Holies when the Jerusalem Temple was built. Imagine standing outside that tent or outside the Holy of Holies. Imagine knowing that the glory of God was inside but you couldn't go there. That glory of God's presence although close was invisible to you.

You might think that 'tabernacle' is a special theological term but the truth is that it simply derives from the Hebrew word for a tent and that's exactly how it would have been used in everyday usage. Now can you see the images that John conjures up when he talks about Jesus coming to us and pitching his tent. He is claiming that Jesus is the human tent that contains God's presence. Now he claims the glory of God can be seen by all. Jesus, he says, has made the Father known to us and we have seen his glory.

3) Jesus holds all of the answers

You may have come across a TV comedy series from a few years ago called Chuck. Chuck was someone who worked with computers in a very minor way and who, after receiving an encoded email from an old college friend now working for the CIA, ended up with the only remaining copy of a CIA software program embedded in his brain. Cue lots of comic adventures and top-secret missions. That's kind of what John is talking about when he speaks about the Word, or Logos to quote it in Greek. Logos was a term that Greek philosophers had been knocking around for quite a while. They used it to talk about how the principles behind which the world was rationally ordered. Some saw it as a force within the world keeping everything as it should be.

So, when John borrows the word Logos to speak about Jesus he is sending a very clear message to those philosophers. He is claiming that there are answers to be found. There are principles behind which this world is created and sustained but you won't find them in a philosophy or a force. You'll find them in a person whose name is Jesus. It's like the answers to life, the universe and everything are embedded within him just like that software program in Chuck. Jesus, through whom all things were made. Jesus, in whom is the glorious presence of God. Jesus, who contains all of life's answers. Those are the blockbuster claims that John makes about Jesus and, he says, this Jesus became one of us. He moved in with us. He made his home with us.

Now, what happens when someone moves in new to your street. It's not usually long before either you invite them round or you invite them round. That's just what happened in our reading. John the Baptist has told everyone to watch out for Jesus and how great he's going to be. Two of John's disciples meet Jesus in the street and get invited back to his place where, it says, they spend the rest of the day. That's the first stage of Jesus' invitation to us. Come to my home temporarily. Come and see. Come and find out more. Maybe you're at that stage and, if you are, go on finding out more so that you're ready for the next stage of the invitation. What happens next? Jesus invites people to spend time with him on a permanent basis. Jesus invites them to become his disciples and make their home with him. He has made his home with us. Now he is inviting us to make our home with him, wherever he goes.

And, were we to flick on to Chapter 14 of John's Gospel, we would see that Jesus promises his disciples and us a permanent home with him. *My Father's house has many rooms; if that were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am.* What does home mean to you? That was the question with which we started this sermon. One quote I saw defined it as the place where, when you have to go there, they have to take you in. If that is so then home is where Jesus is because Jesus will never turn you away. Jesus puts his three-stage invitation to us in terms of dwellings and homes.

- Come and see the home where I am staying. Come and find out more.
- Come and make your home with me live with me on the road. Come and be my disciples.
- Come and make your forever home with me. Come to my Father's house.

What was your answer when we asked what home means to you? A place of love, acceptance, security, forgiveness and so much more? That's how Jesus wants you to feel in your relationship with him. He doesn't want you to be afraid or insecure or doubting his love or acceptance of you. Take a little time, at the end of this sermon, to reflect before Jesus and let him show you that, with him, home means exactly what he says on the tin.

Hymn: StF 175 Light of the World Watch on YouTube <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zsxkuR3GpY4>

Light of the world

You stepped down into darkness
Opened my eyes, Let me see
Beauty that made this heart adore you
Hope of a life spent with you

Here I am to worship
Here I am to bow down
Here I am to say that you're my God
You're altogether lovely
Altogether worthy
Altogether wonderful to me

King of all days, oh, so highly exalted
Glorious in heaven above
Humbly you came to the earth you created
All for love's sake became poor

Here I am to worship
Here I am to bow down
Here I am to say that you're my God
You're altogether lovely
Altogether worthy
Altogether wonderful to me

I'll never know how much it cost
To see my sin upon that cross

Here I am to worship
Here I am to bow down
Here I am to say that you're my God
You're altogether lovely
Altogether worthy
Altogether wonderful to me

Intercessory Prayer : Creator God, We come before You with requests and concerns for those in need. May our generosity and hospitality reflect Your love. Pray for those who are struggling financially, that we may be generous in our giving and support. May our actions demonstrate Your provision and care.

For those who are lonely or without a home, may we show them kindness and welcome. May our homes be places of refuge and comfort, where Your love is shared.

Guide us to be good stewards of the resources You've entrusted to us. May our generosity inspire others to join in acts of kindness and compassion. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

[Please add your own prayers dependent on your concerns and circumstance]

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be your name; your kingdom come; your 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 yours is the kingdom, the power and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

Hymn: StF 331 King of Kings Watch on YouTube <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZKAQvIEotc8>

King of kings, Majesty
God of Heaven living in me
Gentle Saviour, closest friend
Strong Deliverer, beginning and end
All within me falls at Your throne

Your Majesty, I can but bow
I lay my all before You now
In royal robes I don't deserve
I live to serve Your Majesty

Earth and Heaven worship You
Love eternal, Faithful and True

Who bought the nations, ransomed souls
Brought this sinner near to Your throne
All within me cries out in praise.

Your majesty, I can but bow
I lay my all before You now
In royal robes I don't deserve
I live to serve Your Majesty

Your majesty, I can but bow
I lay my all before You now
In royal robes I don't deserve
I live to serve Your Majesty