



Call : Welcome. Here you belong. Here you are loved. Here you can rest. Here you can lay your burdens down. Here you can breathe. Here you can think. For here you are home. Here God meets with us and we with Him. And here we will sing our hymns of praise.

Hymn 34 O worship the Lord

Watch on YouTube : https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ytBTMrOK__I

O worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness,
bow down before him, his glory proclaim;
with gold of obedience and incense of lowliness,
kneel and adore him the Lord is his name.

Low at his feet lay your burden of carefulness,
high on his heart he will bear it for you,
comfort your sorrows and answer your prayerfulness,
guiding your steps in the way that is true.

Fear not to enter his courts in the slenderness
of the poor wealth you would count as your own;

truth in its beauty and love in its tenderness
these are the offerings to bring to his throne.

These, though we bring them in trembling and
fearfulness,
he will accept for the name that is dear;
mornings of joy give for evenings of tearfulness,
trust for our trembling and hope for our fear.

O worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness,
bow down before him, his glory proclaim;
with gold of obedience and incense of lowliness,
kneel and adore him the Lord is his name.

Prayers :

Lord God, we praise You because You are a God who makes room. From the beginning, You have desired to dwell with Your people. You call us into relationship, You welcome us into Your family, and You invite us to sit at Your table.

We worship You because Your love is generous. You do not hold Yourself at a distance, but draw near to us in Jesus Christ. Jesus, You welcomed people others overlooked. You ate with sinners, spoke with strangers, touched those who were rejected, and made people feel seen and valued.

You showed us that hospitality is more than opening a door—it is opening our hearts. We praise You, Lord, because there is always room in Your kingdom for those who come to You.

Confession : Lord, we confess that we do not always make room. Sometimes our lives are so full that we have no time for others. Sometimes we choose the people who are comfortable and familiar, rather than reaching out to those who are different from us. Sometimes we see someone who is lonely but walk past them. Sometimes we welcome people with our words but fail to make space for them in our lives. Forgive us, Lord.

Forgive us when hospitality becomes about entertaining rather than loving, about impressing rather than serving, or about giving to those who can give something back. Forgive us for forgetting that everything we have is a gift from You. Teach us to welcome as You welcome—freely, generously and without condition. Give us courage to notice those who feel left out, compassion for those who feel alone, and generosity to those in need.

Thanksgiving : Father, we thank You for the gift of welcome. Thank You for the people who have opened their homes and their hearts to us. For meals around tables, for conversations over cups of tea, for laughter shared, for tears that have been listened to, and for friendships that have grown through simple acts of kindness.

Thank You for the places where we have felt that we belong, and thank You that, through Christ, You have welcomed us home. Help us now to become people who welcome others. May our homes be places of peace. May our tables become places of fellowship. May our churches become places where strangers become friends. And may our lives reflect the generous welcome we have received from You. Lord, give us open hands, open hearts and open doors.

Teach us to see every person not as an interruption, but as someone made in Your image. And may everyone who encounters us catch a glimpse of Your welcoming love. **Amen.**

Hymn 443 Come let us sing of a wonderful love Watch on YouTube : <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2dOSfceRw0U>

Come, let us sing of a wonderful love,
tender and true,
out of the heart of the Father above,
streaming to me and to you:
wonderful love
dwells in the heart of the Father above.

Jesus is seeking the wanderers yet;
why do they roam,
Love only waits to forgive and forget;
home, weary wanderers, home!
Wonderful love
dwells in the heart of the Father above.

Jesus, the Saviour, this gospel to tell,
joyfully came,
came with the helpless and hopeless to dwell,
sharing their sorrow and shame;
seeking the lost,
saving, redeeming at measureless cost.

Come to my heart, O thou wonderful Love,
come and abide,
lifting my life till it rises above
envy and falsehood and pride;
seeking to be
lowly and humble, a learner of thee.

Bible Readings :

1 Peter 4:8-11 : Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins. Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling. Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms. If anyone speaks, they should do so as one who speaks the very words of God. If anyone serves, they should do so with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ. To him be the glory and the power for ever and ever. Amen.

Mark 7:24-30 : Jesus left that place and went to the vicinity of Tyre. He entered a house and did not want anyone to know it; yet he could not keep his presence secret. In fact, as soon as she heard about him, a woman whose little daughter was possessed by an impure spirit came and fell at his feet. The woman was a Greek, born in Syrian Phoenicia. She begged Jesus to drive the demon out of her daughter. "First let the children eat all they want," he told her, "for it is not right to take the children's bread and toss it to the dogs." "Lord," she replied, "even the dogs under the table eat the children's crumbs." Then he told her, "For such a reply, you may go; the demon has left your daughter." She went home and found her child lying on the bed, and the demon gone.

Hymn 611 Brother sister let me serve you Watch on YouTube : <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0JahFRDrSCs>

Brother, sister, let me serve you;
let me be as Christ to you;
pray that I may have the grace to
let you be my servant too.

I will hold the Christ-light for you
in the nighttime of your fear;
I will hold my hand out to you,
speak the peace you long to hear.

When we sing to God in heaven,
we shall find such harmony,
born of all we've known together
of Christ's love and agony.

We are pilgrims on a journey,
and companions on the road;
we are here to help each other
walk the mile and bear the load.

I will weep when you are weeping;
when you laugh I'll laugh with you;
I will share your joy and sorrow,
till we've seen this journey
through.

Brother, sister, let me serve you;
let me be as Christ to you;
pray that I may have the grace to
let you be my servant too

Sermon – Hospitality. I will never forget my trip to Taizé back in 1999. I don't know if you have ever been. It's a beautiful place. I went knowing nothing about Taizé or the man who started it all, Brother Roger. Brother Roger was born in 1915 into Switzerland. In 1940 he moved to France, to Taizé, Burgundy, where he began helping refugees, including Jews fleeing Nazi persecution. But in 1942 he had to leave, because the Gestapo were becoming interested in what he was doing. It was a dangerous place to be.

He was ordained as a Swiss Reformed pastor in 1943, and returned to Taizé in 1944, this time with several others. Together they started a small religious community, devoted to prayer, simplicity, reconciliation and Christian unity.

Over the years the society grew significantly. It was and is an ecumenical Christian community, welcoming both Catholics and Protestants to the fold. And so I arrived in Taizé, that day back in 1999, after a very long bus journey!

I first saw Brother Roger during worship. On one hand he looked just like a very ordinary man, but on the other, there was clearly something extraordinary about this man. Over the days I heard extraordinary stories about this man of God. For instance...

In 1976 he had travelled to Calcutta with other members of the Taizé Community, working alongside Mother Teresa and the Missionaries of Charity, particularly with abandoned and seriously ill children. It was there that he met a four-month-old baby girl called Marie. Her mother had died and the community thought she would too. And so, Mother Teresa handed the baby to Brother Roger and asked him to take her back to France. "If she stays here, she will die. If she goes with you, she will live"

When I was there in 1999 they were preparing for her wedding, I think if I remember correctly, the following week. I had been there a few days, with my mum by the way, when we were called in to a building along with many others and told that that evening we would be taken down to the house where the brothers lived to meet Brother Roger personally. I'll never forget it. Dusk was falling as we were led down to the house and that's when people started running. They were running to meet the man. I've never experienced anything like it before or since. In the house were plain wooden benches to sit on and there was Brother Roger sitting at a table. And the first thing he did was offer us...a rich tea biscuit! Well, half a biscuit actually. And he started talking about the importance of hospitality.

Hospitality? How would you describe it? "The opening up of home and heart to friend and stranger." That sounds good!

Malcolm Nicholas writes, "Hospitality does not begin with the home but with the heart. It is not merely a calculation of available space, food, or resources, but the generation of generous love, interest, acceptance..."

In our gospel reading today we read... "Jesus left that place and went to the vicinity of Tyre. He entered a house..." That's interesting. Whose house? I wish we had his name! I really do! Shall we call him Jason?

Jason truly was a hospitable man...opening his door to Jesus and his disciples and then to a desperate woman who needed Jesus's help.

This man opened his home and his heart to Jesus, and in that we see something of God.

So, the question has to be, would we have done the same?

I know Jesus isn't going to knock on my door this afternoon! He's been seated on the throne of glory for the past 2000 years plus! But I mustn't forget what he said in Matthew 25?

When you show hospitality to another, you are showing hospitality to me.

When we feed the hungry, when we give a glass of water to the thirsty, when we invite the stranger in, when we cloth those who need clothing, when we care for the sick, and when we visit those in prison, then we are caring for Him. FOR HIM!

In Hebrews 13 we are told

"Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for thereby some have entertained angels unawares."

Can you imagine that! Entertaining angels!

But beware! Wisdom teaches us that Christian hospitality isn't "I must trust everyone"! No!!

But it does teach us to treat everyone with dignity, respect and generosity, while using good judgment about what we entrust to them. That is hospitality. It's loving neighbour as we love ourselves.

And for those who choose the ministry of hospitality, for Love of God, they will one day hear Him say to them. Welcome! Come sit with Me and eat! My home is now yours. Amen

Hymn 409 Let us build a house

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

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.

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.

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.

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.

Prayers of intercession : Merciful Father, hear our prayers, offered on behalf of others. We pray for those who are alone: for those who have no one to call, for those grieving a loved one, and for those who feel invisible in the midst of a crowd. Bring them people who will listen, care and walk alongside them.

Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

We pray for those who are far from home: all who have been displaced. Give them safety and a place of belonging. Give us the courage to welcome the stranger and to recognise your image in every person we meet.

Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

We pray for those who have no place to call home. For those sleeping rough, living in temporary accommodation, or struggling to provide a safe home for their families. Inspire us to be generous, and give wisdom to those working to bring change. **Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.**

We pray for our church family. Make us a community where doors are open, tables are shared, and no one feels like a stranger. Help us to notice those on the edges and to make space for those who are searching for belonging.

Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

And we pray for ourselves. Show us where we can offer welcome this week. Give us courage to cross boundaries, generosity to share what we have, and patience to listen to those whose stories are different from our own. May our welcome reflect your welcome, and may our lives point others towards your love. Merciful God, receive our prayers, for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Hymn 323 I will sing the wondrous story

Watch on YouTube : <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7jk8J3VTd1w>

I will sing the wondrous story
Of the Christ who died for me
How He left the realms of glory
For the cross of Calvary

I was lost, but Jesus found me
Found the sheep that went astray
Raised me up and gently led me
Back into the narrow way

He will keep me 'til the river
Rolls its waters at my feet
Then at last He'll bring me over
Saved by grace and victory

Yes, I'll sing the wondrous story
Of the Christ who died for me
Sing it with the saints in glory
Gathered by the crystal sea

Yes, I'll sing the wondrous story
Of the Christ who died for me
Sing it with the saints in glory
Gathered by the crystal sea

Yes, I'll sing the wondrous story
Of the Christ who died for me
Sing it with the saints in glory
Gathered by the crystal sea

Blessing : May God fill our hearts with His generous love, so that we may welcome the stranger, make room for the weary, and share His grace with all. May our lives be places of welcome, and the blessing of God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit Be with us all, now and for ever more. Amen