

Twenty-third Sunday after Pentecost – Year A

Sunday 5 November 2023

The Faith Action Programme would like to thank Rev Dr Carolyn Kelly, Chaplain at the University of Glasgow, for her thoughts on the 23rd Sunday after Pentecost.

Weekly Worship, based on the Revised Common Lectionary, is for everyone – in any capacity – who is involved in creating and leading worship.

It provides liturgical material that can be used for worship in all settings. Our writers are asked to share their approaches to creating and delivering this material to equip leaders with a greater confidence and ability to reflect on their own worship practice and experience and encourage them to consider how this material might be adapted for their own context.

We would encourage continual reflection on the changing patterns of worship and spiritual practice that are emerging from disruption and how this might help identify pathways towards development and worship renewal.

An archive of resources for daily worship can be found on the Sanctuary First website:
<https://www.sanctuaryfirst.org.uk/daily-worship>

We may not all be gathered in the same building, but at this time, when we need each other so much, we are invited to worship together, from where we are – knowing that God can hear us all and can blend even distant voices into one song of worship.

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Introduction

'Crossing' as called people

In these notes my approach is shaped by several key thoughts or background themes. As well as the lectionary texts, my reflection was informed by an awareness of the Church undergoing a profound and at times painful 're-making', with all the uncertainty and difficulty associated with that. My approach was also informed by the more general awareness of the impact of the complex, global realities that hover in the background of people's lives, heightened in my daily encounters as Chaplain in a large university, like a shadow that obscures the sun. It is no wonder 2023 has been named the year of 'hyper-fatigue'.

In relation to the scriptural texts themselves, some key ideas persisted. From Joshua 3 as the primary text arose the theme of crossing: the physical and existential transition from one way of life to a new future called forth by God, all the time wrestling with an all-too-human ambivalence and fear from within, as well as the external impediments and risks encountered on the way. The dismantling and re-making of the people's *self*-understanding and identity is a key aspect of this text and background passages in the Torah. This crossing of the river Jordan was a defining moment in the narrative of deliverance and identity-shaping, which of course had its precedent and echo in the sea crossing narrated in Exodus under the leadership of Moses. We know the story so well... might it yield fresh insight on the call of the Church facing a 'risky' and uncertain future, and even on our understanding of new life in Christ?

So, linking to the other main theme arising from the New Testament texts is the question, what does it mean to "lead a life worthy of God" (1 Thess 2:12)? When so much is uncertain in our contemporary setting and uncomfortable in our personal experience of change, it can feel more secure to be bounded by what is known and familiar, and to limit the possibilities of a life called forth by God into a future that is unknown. How we read scripture is pertinent here, and how we respond to the "one instructor, the Messiah" (Matthew 23:10) to teach us the true nature of the gospel of God (1 Thess 2:9), the content and the promise of God's justice and grace.

[Joshua 3:7-17](#)

This passage, beginning with God's encouragement of Joshua, ("this day I will ... exalt you in the sight of all Israel so that they may now that I will be with you as I was with Moses") is in part a validation of Joshua's leadership in the great shadow of Moses. If exploring this angle

of leadership, see other references to Joshua and Moses in Exodus 33:11, Deuteronomy 31,34, Joshua 1.

However, the narrative promptly turns to Joshua's leadership and his role in mustering collective action. Joshua must shape and lead the community's response to God's call so this crucial finale in the eventful journey might finally occur. It echoes that earlier crossing in Exodus, (even repeating some words; note "heap" in Josh 3:13 occurs in Exodus 15:8). Finally, the river Jordan, a physical *and* symbolic boundary, the crossing of which was delayed by the long time in the wilderness, will be crossed by the people. Re-reading the Exodus and Deuteronomic texts, the challenges of self-understanding and identity were a recurring theme leading to this momentous event, a salutary reminder of the limits and possibilities of collective responses to a vision or project of significant change.

The "ark of the covenant of the Lord of all the earth" (v11) is a central feature mentioned in nearly every verse, the only precious object to be carried across the river and symbolising God's presence. It contains the tablets of the commandments and the "mercy seat" so is the central, concrete form in the worship and representative of the much fuller catalogue of aspects of worship (see Exodus 35-40). When carried across the river by the priests, it triggers the miraculous halting of the water, representing God's own saving presence.

Joshua had earlier commanded his officers to get the people to prepare their possessions (chapter 1, v11), so all the community are instructed to decide what is important and what they can carry. As for the limitations on the objects of worship, the physical act of crossing requires them to take only light loads; to be nimble.

One further implication to acknowledge in reading this text (see 3:10) is how we read and understand scripture, especially that the narrative affirms *this* people are called by God to a land "promised," but which is already inhabited by other peoples. This is an unsettling angle in our current reading of these texts and invites careful unpacking if attended to.

[Psalm 107:1-7, 33-37](#)

This psalm is an invitation to give thanks in tangible and multi-faceted expressions for God's steadfast love or *hesed*: that great biblical theme of God's lovingkindness and covenant loyalty to Israel. Yet God's steadfast love has wider, universal scope and we count ourselves, Christian communities and indeed the whole of creation within that invitation to give expressions of thanks in worship.

A reflective and pastoral approach to this Psalm could explore what engenders trouble (v2), and to take time expanding on contemporary causes of such troubles as listed here (in verses 4-6): the different forms of wandering or finding no way, being hungry and thirsty, or experiencing distress. Some of these I have developed in the intercession prayer based on Joshua 3.

Likewise, you could then explore what being redeemed (v2) gathered in or delivered (v6) might mean today for your people and those beyond, in both literal and metaphorical terms; as well as what it means to be satisfied and filled with good things. This might naturally lead to reflecting on and sharing Communion, the breaking of bread together.

The final few verses 33-37 invite an ecological theme or response, to ponder some manifestations of a creation disrupted and destroyed by human exploitation. Recently some of these effects have come ever closer to home: UK rivers are now putrid channels that cannot sustain life; land that was once productive and fruitful is over-farmed and reduced to a salty waste. You might explore what or who are the agents of this destruction, in verses 33-34. The ancient psalm poses these ecological disasters as the result of human “wickedness” but framed as acts of retribution by God in view of human wrongdoing. Likewise, God is the agent of the reversal of the destruction in verse 35 (“He turns a desert into pools of water”). However you understand and frame this theologically, this passage is an opportunity to explore human stewardship and care of creation, and the destruction unleashed when that calling – that delegated power or agency is distorted – and God’s sovereignty over, and delight in, creation is ignored.

[1 Thessalonians 2:9-13](#)

This passage from one of Paul’s earliest letters touches on his role as an apostle and his personal involvement in the church, as well as more general theological themes characteristic of other letters: life in the church, salvation, sanctification, exhortation, and the call to live in the power of God’s word. Here Paul reminds them of his personal investment, his labour and toil (v9) and uses familial language to underscore that relationship (brothers and sisters) and especially the reminder that he dealt with each one ...like a father with his children (v11).

Thematically, the progression of the passage could be approached in a three-fold structure:

- **The Pastor:** Paul reflects on his leadership, his example and conduct, his relationship with the Thessalonian community

- **The People:** Paul appeals to the people to remember, to be witnesses, to “lead a life worthy of God” (v12)
- **The Spirit and the word:** Paul affirms the basis of their life and identity, and call to holiness

This latter theme or idea struck me afresh, and may invite fruitful reflection on the nature of the word of God and a human word (v13): what is the difference between them and how do we tell? How do we understand and receive the gospel as God’s word as communities, especially in view of contested ethical positions and very different readings of what it means to be faithful, to be pure, upright and blameless in conduct (v10) in the church today?

[Matthew 23:1-12](#)

This passage prompts reflection on discipleship, the role of the teacher or rabbi in relation to the Messiah (as instructor) and the one Father... in heaven (v9), as well as the integrity of leaders in Christian fellowship and status or authority in the community of believers who gather around the one Lord. Jesus speaks to the crowds and to His disciples of what is to characterise this new community, contrasting with behaviours of the scribes and the Pharisees (v2) and the status attributed to them in: “they do... but you are not to”. The summary in verses 11-12: “the greatest among you will be your servant [and] all who exalt themselves will be humbled...” might be very familiar, so will require fresh application to fully appreciate the radical nature of its implications.

Questions which might prompt such reconsideration and reflection could include:

- What are aspects of integrity we find personally challenging?
- Collectively, are there features of our church culture, behaviours or modes of leadership and teaching that bear *any* resemblance to those ridiculed here? How might outsiders regard this? (Are there current equivalents to “being seen by others” or having “the place of honour at banquets and the best seats in the synagogues” vv5-6?)
- Can you think of any areas which are “heavy burdens”, expectations which are “hard to bear” in your own discipleship or church practice? (Who is placing those expectations; is God inviting reconsideration of any of them?)

A less familiar and more discomfiting response I found myself wrestling with is the implication of historic Christian Antisemitism on the interpretation of this passage. (Note: fewer commentators refer now to 'Anti-Semitism' because the racial category 'Semite' is unfounded and therefore problematic). Having learned from Jewish scholars and commentators more of the experience of Antisemitism in church history and arising from use of New Testament writings, I can no longer read such texts without recognising, and having to unpack, their possible role in informing anti-Jewishness.

Nevertheless, Jesus is a decidedly *Jewish* Messiah, and some of the polemical contrasts and strong language in Matthew's gospel were informed by the early church's fragile identity and self-definition vis-à-vis that tradition, so this is not to suggest that a simple erasure of such texts is sufficient. Rather, exploring and discerning the different strands at play in history means acknowledging the complexity of current Jewish identity and experience in both our UK setting and contemporary Israel, in view of a covenantal reading of the identity of the people of Israel (such as is manifest in the Joshua text). The *Cambridge Companion to Antisemitism* edited by Stephen Katz (2021, Cambridge University Press) and Willie James Jennings' *The Christian Imagination: Theology and the Origins of Race* (2010 Yale University Press) are helpful if challenging texts in this regard.

Sermon ideas

Joshua 3

As I prepare these notes, I am also preparing to attend the Greenbelt festival. We are camping. That means long car journey, a late-night arrival, and pitching a tent; carrying everything we need on our backs or a borrowed trolley for the long weekend, in all possibilities of weather. (Quite a challenge, especially for those of us who are not minimalists!) The experience has reminded me how such a journey requires a concentration of the mind and a focus on what is really, *really*, necessary to take.

The traversing of the river Jordan in chapter 3 took some preparation, even though they had been 'camping' for some years, and required a similar focus (and probably, some serious downsizing). Given several days to prepare by Joshua and his officers (1:11), they no doubt wrestled with some of the decisions about what to carry. But whilst the deadline was given with short notice, the crossing had been a long, long time coming. It was a much-anticipated final chapter in this part of their story, and the beginning of the next part. It followed a protracted, often painful 40-year wandering – a whole generation – since that first epic crossing in the Exodus under Moses' leadership, and a lot of soul searching in the desert places in between. But this crossing also followed and was the culmination of God's shaping of them, God's *wooing* of them, into a people to be in unique relationship with

God's very self. That covenant was written on two precious slabs and carried in a wooden ark; a singular piece lovingly crafted to exact specifications, symbolically and aesthetically weighty. It was the one item for collective worship they were to take with them, and the main player in this part of the narrative we see recorded in Joshua.

What do we take with us? A good question for anyone undertaking a journey, whether for a festival long weekend, or a more permanent change in life and a border crossing. It is a question the many thousands of refugees and asylum seekers may not have much warning to think about. For those of us gathered to worship and hear God's word, it invites meaningful reflection on our priorities and habits.

It is also a good question for a church in transition. For the people who Joshua led, there was only one way across that river (that's not yet to mention the problem of the water in the way), and it involved taking one defining piece that would be the sign of God's presence and saving power. It was tied up with the content of God's call to the people, and God's promises about their future. And the physical act of crossing requires a limiting of the burden: and the necessity to be nimble.

There is much that is not able to be taken across the river: what is important?

Sermon alternatives and supplementary material: Images for creating reflective space within or before the Service

1. 'Returning and into your arms'

James Pfaff's 2021 installation in Glasgow's Cathedral of St Mungo during COP26, *Returning and into your arms* [Returning And Into Your Arms — James Pfaff](#) is an image that could touch on these texts, with themes of crossing boundaries and as we think of and pray for the future of the Church. It is beautifully open-ended and may invite reflection on journeying towards (or returning?) to a land of promise, and our identity as people called by God.



2. 'In a New Light'

Peter and Heidi Gardner's installations can help us think afresh about inhabiting space, identity and the nature of God's call and 'promise' in a time of great change and uncertainty [Gardner & Gardner – Visual artist duo based in Glasgow \(gardnerandgardner.co.uk\)](http://gardnerandgardner.co.uk).

PathFootPath, an installation in public and secular space at the University of Stirling in 2022, 'navigated alternative routes through the well-trodden corridors, inhabiting overlooked spaces and places.'

In a New Light (below) was a temporary intervention for Easter Sunday 2021 sited in Pollock Park Glasgow. The repurposed communion linen was given a new use as a visual pathway in and through an unexpected setting, on a day that was full of surprises ... the material intervention of the crisp white linen across the organic forest floor perhaps echoes other fragile and surprising crossings: of a motley people through an ancient river to a destination of 'promise', or the unexpected crossing of a crucified body from a grave to new life ...



3. 'Let it go.'

Michael Leunig's cartoon-poems in *Short Notes from the Long History of Happiness* (Penguin Books, 1996) are also invitational, and whimsically open up to possibilities of promise through a difficult journey, such as 'How to get there', or 'Let it go':

Let it go. Let it out.
Let it all unravel.
Let it free and it can be
A path on which to travel.

Prayers

These first prayers are based on Psalm 107 and could be used as an integrated whole rather than separately.

Call to worship and gathering prayer

Lord, we come today to give You thanks,
To acknowledge Your goodness
and recall Your steadfast love.

Where we stumble, hold us
When we falter, guide us
Wherever we wander, gather us.

Restore us to a straight path
Lead us on a way that's sure, and true.

When our souls faint, restore us
When we're lost to You, redeem us
When distressed, Lord, notice us.

In Your mercy, Oh God
deliver and restore us.

When we cry to You,
Lord hear us
When we don't listen,
incline our ears

that we might hear You.

For we are thirsty
and You promise to satisfy
For we are hungry
and You fill us with good things!

Lord, we come today to give You thanks,
to acknowledge Your goodness
and recall Your steadfast love.

Amen

Confession and Repentance

The words in bold and in brackets may be used as congregational response

A. Based on Joshua 3

Lord, here we go
heading off... again.
This time: venturing to the water's edge
not sure how we'll get across
Or what we'll find on the other side.
(We hope You know what You're doing)

But first, the people need preparing:
tent pegs need lifting
the bare essentials packing –
and it's quite a small list.

There's much to leave behind:
precious things we can't carry
mementoes of those before us
'Pilgrim' ways we got used to
while sojourning...
All that time, we've been here.

It's funny how we became accustomed
to something meant to be temporary,
ironic that we settled in so well
on this side of the Jordan.

Have we got the energy
to do it all over again?
When we leave all that behind
what will we have left?
Who will we be?
(What are You calling us on to, Lord?)

And what's more, this time
there's no Moses,
no trusted superhero to follow
who's done it all before.
So, we're not sure we'll make it over
and what's waiting on the other side –
even with those promises ringing in our ears.

After all this time.
(How will we know You will deliver again?)

Half-remembering that other time:
Another body of water
Another day You made a way
Another time You contained chaos
Another moment of crippling fear –
all held back.
'Let them through' You said.
And so we went.

***(This time,
If we carry You, Lord, will You carry us?)***

B. A Trinitarian prayer of confession and repentance – based on Thessalonians: “Live a life worthy of God” (Note the suggestions in brackets)

How do we come to You, Holy God?

And what do You say to us:
When we are confused [*by the complexity of the world today*]
When we feel overwhelmed [*by what is happening around us*]
When we are weary of struggle and change [*in our church*]

When it is so hard to be real, or to speak honestly
When we avoid difficult truths about ourselves
When we shun people or situations we find difficult
When we feel resistant to others' cares or suffering
When we are discouraged by our own frailty
Remind us of Your promises today.

Living Christ: how do You come to us?

Speaking peace
Inviting freedom
Shining light
Travelling with us
To the other side.

Spirit of Truth: what will You do in/through us?

Comfort us
Re-create us
Call us forward
In Your power and gentle presence
To live a life worthy of God.

Amen

Thanksgiving and gratitude

So, Lord we come today: to give You thanks,
for Your wonderful works to humankind.
We acknowledge Your goodness
and recall Your steadfast love,
this day and all days

Amen

Prayers of Intercession, for others

A. This prayer of intercession uses images and ideas from Joshua 3 and Psalm 107 and applies these to contemporary journeys, and the loss of homes and habitats in the world today.

“When the people set out from their tents to cross over the Jordan” – *Joshua 3*:
“[God] turns a desert into pools of water, a parched land into springs of water” *Ps 107:35*

Loving God of the desert-dweller

You brought into being Your people in the desert,
kept them alive, invited them to worship
and called them to inhabit a land of promise.

Lord, now watch over those who have lost their homes:

all who spent this night in tents,
another night of cold and instability,
who face another day, beginning many days
of an uncertain future with no land of promise.

We pray especially for victims of the earthquakes in Syria and Turkey [in February]
facing another winter, a lack of provisions, personal loss.

Loving God of the desert-dweller

Comfort those who dwell in tents, impermanent and insecure
move in the hearts and wills of those who control their lives
and those with the means to provide homes and support, we pray.

Loving God of those who journey:

Lord, You walked with others on difficult pathways.
You travelled in boats on rough seas, and calmed storms.

We pray for all setting out from their homes this day:
who face dangerous crossings, evading mines, gunfire or persecution
[in Ukraine, Tigray, Eritrea, Sudan, Afghanistan..]
Who climb into trucks or small boats
taking their children to seek safety
and longing for belonging, a place to lay their heads
but face uncertain arrivals.

Loving God of those who journey:

Guide their steps to solid ground, bring them to the other side.
Engender the political will for safe crossings and arrivals
and empower our desire and means to provide sanctuary, we pray.

Loving God who separated the seas and the dry land:

And called forth life on this earth, our common home,
sustaining human communities and wondrous biodiversity.

We pray for all whose homes have been destroyed:
by floods and erosion [in Spain, USA, Chile...]
by fire [in Hawaii ...] and rising sea levels in Pacific islands
by deforestation in the Amazon.

We pray for this earth in all its fullness and beauty,
for the protection of ecosystems to host wildlife,
for habitats increasingly fragile and straining to sustain life:
rivers turned into lifeless channels,
fruitful land now become salty wastes (*Psalm 107*).

Loving God, creator of the seas and the land

Restore to us Your love for this earth,
grant us the will and ability to contain the damage done for human gain, we pray.

Other published prayer suggestions

B. Prayer from the Church in Nicaragua

(from the *Wee Worship Book WWB* p39 Morning Liturgy E. F)

'Lord,
Prevent us from falling into the sin
Of believing that the slavery of Egypt
Is better than the struggle in the desert.'

C. 'New Ways'

from *The Pattern of our Days: Liturgies and Resources for Worship*. Edited by Kathy Galloway (1996 The Iona Community), p142.

God of our lives
You are always calling us
To follow you into the future,
Inviting us to new ventures, new challenges,
New ways to care,
New ways to touch the hearts of all.
When we are fearful of the unknown, give us courage
When we worry that we are not up to the task,
Remind us that you would not call us
If you did not believe in us.

When we get tired,
Or feel disappointed with the way things are going,
Remind us that you can bring change and hope
Out of the most difficult situations.

Note also: Liturgy of Exile or Promised Land p 39 *The Pattern of our Days* edited by Kathy Galloway, P31

Blessing or Closing prayers and benedictions
(*picking up themes of pilgrimage; presence of Christ*)

A. Closing responses based on the Hymn of St Patrick/Breastplate from the *Wee Worship Book: Fourth Incarnation* (Wild Goose Publications, 1999) p 79

From where we are
To where you need us
Christ be beside us.

From what we are
To what you can make of us.
Christ be before us.

From the mouthing of generalities
To making signs of your kingdom,
Christ be beneath us.

Through the streets of this world
To the gates of heaven,
Christ be above us.

Surround us with your presence,
Inspire us with your purpose,
Confirm us in your love.
Amen

B. 'Wherever we go'
from: *The Pattern of our Days* ed by Kathy Galloway, p 166

Wherever we go,

May the joy of God the gracious
Be with us.
Wherever we go,
May the face of Christ the kindly
Be with us.
Wherever we go,
May the compassing of the Spirit of grace
Be with us.
Wherever we go,
The presence of the Trinity around us
To bless and keep us.

Musical suggestions

Our [online music resource](#) is on the Church of Scotland website; you can listen to samples of every song in the Church Hymnary 4th edition (CH4) and download a selection of recordings for use in worship. You will also find playlists for this week and liturgical seasons and themes on the *Weekly Worship* and *Inspire Me* tabs.

You can find further musical suggestions for this week in a range of styles on the [Songs for Sunday blog](#) from Trinity College Glasgow.

These suggestions for listening and reflection or to sing with (if you have the music and accompaniment), are around the ideas and themes of fear, journeying, following Christ and the 'way/s' of peace:

- “Nothing to fear” – (The Porter’s Gate with Audrey Assad), ‘when you pass through the waters I will be with you’
[The Porter’s Gate - Nothing to Fear \(feat. Audrey Assad\) - YouTube](#)
- “All of your ways are peace” (The Porters Gate with Jessica Fox)
[All of Your Ways Are Peace \(feat. Jessica Fox\) - YouTube](#)
- “The Greatest Commandment (The Porters Gate with Paul Zach)
[The Porter's Gate - The Greatest Commandment \(feat. Paul Zach\) \(Official Live Video\) - YouTube](#)

Songs of Taizé:

- “Bless the Lord, my soul”
- “I am sure I shall see”
- “O God, keep me safe” (Behute mich, Gott)

Versions of St Patrick’s Breastplate:

- CH4 577 – “Christ be beside me”
- CH4 639 – “I bind unto myself today”

Praise and thanksgiving – for opening

- CH4 71 – “Give thanks unto the Lord our God” (Psalm 107)
- CH4 124 – “Praise to the Lord, the Almighty”
- CH4 125 – “Lord of all being, throned afar”
- CH4 127 – “O worship the King, all glorious above”

Journey of faith: God’s call, guidance, protection; Pilgrimage; Water/River themes

- CH4 159 – “Lord, for the years your love has kept and guided”
- CH4 161 – “O God, our help in ages past”
- CH4 167 – “Guide me, O thou great Jehovah”
- CH4 191 – “Do not be afraid, for I have redeemed you”
- CH4 192 – “All my hope on God is founded”
- CH4 268 – “O God of Bethel! by whose hand” (Scottish paraphrase 2)
- CH4 270 – “Put all your trust in God, in duty’s path go on”
- CH4 334 – “On Jordan’s bank the Baptist’s cry announces that the Lord is nigh”
- CH4 509 – “Jesus calls us! O’er the tumult”
- CH4 511 – “Your hand, O God, has guided “
- CH4 516 – “We are marching in the light of God”
- CH4 520 – “Ye who the name of Jesus bear, his sacred steps pursue”
- CH4 530 – “One more step along the world I go”
- CH4 533 – “Will you come and follow me if I but call your name?”

Lordship, Mercy of Christ - relating to Thessalonians and Matthew 23 themes:

- CH4 133 – “Source and Sovereign, Rock and Cloud”
- CH4 344 – “And Jesus said: Don’t be afraid”
- CH4 355 – “You, Lord are both Lamb and Shepherd”
- CH4 464 – “Though hope desert my heart”
- CH4 506 – “All I once held dear, built my life upon”
- CH4 548– “Approach, my soul, the mercy seat”
- CH4 739 – “The Church’s one foundation is Jesus Christ her Lord”

Reflecting on our worship practice

Since the start of the pandemic in 2020, the way we worship has changed and we need to reflect on the changing or newly established patterns that emerged and continue to emerge as a result of the disruption.

We can facilitate worship for all by exploring imaginative approaches to inclusion, participation and our use of technologies in ways that suit our contexts. This is not an exhaustive list, but some things we could consider are:

- Framing various parts of the worship service in accessible language to help worshippers understand the character and purpose of each part. This is essential for creating worship for all (intergenerational worship) that reflects your community of faith.
- Holding spaces for reflection and encouraging prayer to be articulated in verbal and non-verbal ways, individually and in online breakout rooms.
- In online formats the effective use of the chat function and microphone settings encourages active participation in prayer, e.g. saying the Lord’s Prayer together unmuted, in a moment of ‘holy chaos’.
- If singing in our congregations is restricted, we can worship corporately by using antiphonal psalm readings, creeds and participative prayers.
- Using music and the arts as part of the worship encourages the use of imagination in place of sung or spoken words.
- Use of silence, sensory and kinaesthetic practices allow for experience and expression beyond regular audio and visual mediums.

The following questions might help you develop a habit of reflecting on how we create and deliver content and its effectiveness and impact, and then applying what we learn to develop our practice.

- How inclusive was the worship?
Could the worship delivery and content be described as worship for all/
intergenerational? Was it sensitive to different “Spiritual Styles”?
- How was the balance between passive and active participation?
- How were people empowered to connect with or encounter God?
What helped this? What hindered this?
- How cohesive was the worship?
Did it function well as a whole?
How effective was each of the individual elements in fulfilling its purpose?
- How balanced was the worship?
What themes/topics/doctrines/areas of Christian life were included?
- How did the worship connect with your context/contemporary issues?
Was it relevant in the everyday lives of those attending and in the wider parish/
community?
How well did the worship connect with local and national issues?
How well did the worship connect with world events/issues?
- What have I learned that can help me next time I plan and deliver worship?

Useful links

Up to date information for churches around Covid-19 can be found [here](#)

You can listen to samples of every song in the Church Hymnary 4th edition (CH4) and download a selection of recordings for use in worship [here](#)

You can find an introduction to spiritual styles online [here](#)

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