

26th July 2026 – Morning Service

Holidays

Liam Hodgetts

CMP 729 – We have come into his house

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| 1) We have come into His house,
and gathered in His name to worship Him.
We have come into His house,
and gathered in His name to worship Him.
We have come into His house,
and gathered in His name
to worship Christ the Lord,
worship Him, Christ the Lord. | 3) Let us lift up holy hands
and magnify His name and worship Him.
Let us lift up holy hands
and magnify His name and worship Him.
Let us lift up holy hands
and magnify His name
and worship Christ the Lord,
worship Him, Christ the Lord. |
| 2) So forget about yourself
and concentrate on Him and worship Him.
So forget about yourself
and concentrate on Him and worship Him.
So forget about yourself
and concentrate on Him
and worship Christ the Lord,
worship Him, Christ the Lord. | |

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Introduction

Have you ever felt like you wanted to take a break from school, your job, or your friends? What would you do to get away? Where would you go? Even when we do get away, God is still with us. I'm glad that he is.

Do you think God would ever like to take a break from us?

Let's see what King David knew about God's presence with us.

Where could I go to escape from you?
Where could I get away from your presence?
If I went up to heaven, you would be there;
if I lay down in the world of the dead, you would be there.
If I flew away beyond the east
or lived in the farthest place in the west,
you would be there to lead me,
you would be there to help me.

(Psalm 139: 7-10 (GNT))

God doesn't just "camp out" in one place or another. How does it make you feel to know that God is everywhere, all the time?

I feel comforted, because I know that God is always present. I remind myself that God is by my side, he's my friend and companion, he loves me without conditions. He never takes annual leave or days off! He is always there for me.

Let's pray: Dear God, thank you for always being with us and for never taking a day off. We can count on you to be there for us, and we praise you. **Amen.**

StF 536 – He’s got the whole world in his hand

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| 1) He’s got the whole world in his hand.
He’s got the whole world in his hand.
He’s got the whole wide world in his hand.
He’s got the whole world in his hand. | 4) He’s got the little tiny baby in his hand.
He’s got the little tiny baby in his hand.
He’s got the little tiny baby in his hand.
He’s got the whole world in his hand. |
| 2) He’s got you and me, brother, in his hand.
He’s got you and me, brother, in his hand.
He’s got you and me, brother, in his hand.
He’s got the whole world in his hand. | 5) He’s got everybody here in his hand.
He’s got everybody here in his hand.
He’s got everybody here in his hand.
He’s got the whole world in his hand. |
| 3) He’s got you and me, sister, in his hand.
He’s got you and me, sister, in his hand.
He’s got you and me, sister, in his hand.
He’s got the whole world in his hand. | 6) He’s got the whole world in his hand.
He’s got the whole world in his hand.
He’s got the whole wide world in his hand.
He’s got the whole world in his hand. |

African-American traditional song

StF 36 – There’s a quiet understanding

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| 1) There's a quiet understanding
When we're gathered in the Spirit,
It's a promise that he gives us,
When we gather in his name.
There's a love we feel in Jesus,
There's a manna that he feeds us,
It's a promise that he gives us,
When we gather in his name. | 2) And we know when we're together,
Sharing love and understanding,
That our brothers and our sisters
Feel the oneness that he brings.
Thank you, thank you, thank you, Jesus,
For the way you love and feed us,
For the many ways you lead us;
Thank you, thank you, Lord;
Thank you, thank you, Lord. |
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Opening Prayer

Heavenly Father, we praise and thank you for the many blessings you have poured into our lives.

We thank you for the gifts and abilities with which you have equipped each one of us, and for every opportunity to use them in your service and for your glory.

We thank you for the gift of life itself; for the days you give us, for our work and our leisure, for our homes, our families and friends, and for all the joys and blessings we so often take for granted.

We thank you for times of rest and renewal, when we are able to step aside from the demands of daily life. We thank you for moments of quietness, for opportunities to reflect, to pray, to learn, and to discover anew the beauty of your creation and the richness of your presence.

As many begin their summer holidays, we thank you that wherever our journeys may take us, you are with us. Whether we travel far or remain close to home, help us to recognise your hand at work around us and to find refreshment in body, mind and spirit.

Pour out your Holy Spirit upon us, we pray. Renew our strength, deepen our faith, and fill us with your love, that we may serve you with gladness and live each day as faithful disciples of Jesus Christ.

Grant us grace to be still before you, to rest in your presence, and to know the peace that only you can give.

All this we ask with grateful hearts, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

The 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 for ever and ever. **Amen.**

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and for ever. **Amen.**

Song – If I go climbing

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| 1) If I go climbing, climbing, climbing,
If I go climbing, God is there.
If I go climbing on the highest mountain,
God is there, 'cause he is ev'rywhere. | 4) If I go driving, driving, driving,
If I go driving, God is there.
If I go driving far away,
God is there, 'cause He is everywhere. |
| 2) If I go rowing, rowing, rowing,
If I go rowing, God is there.
If I go rowing on the widest river,
God is there, 'cause He is everywhere. | 5) If I go flying, flying, flying,
If I go flying, God is there.
If I go flying on the biggest aeroplane,
God is there, 'cause He is everywhere. |
| 3) If I go swimming, swimming, swimming,
If I go swimming, God is there.
If I go swimming to the bottom of the ocean,
God is there, 'cause He is everywhere. | 6) If I go sleeping, sleeping, sleeping,
If I go sleeping, God is there.
If I go sleep on the darkest night,
God is there, 'cause He is everywhere. |

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Talk: Just in case

I'm going on holiday next week, and whenever I go away, I always have a few things with me... just in case! I wonder what you always pack when you go on holiday?

Some people wouldn't leave home without their phone charger. Others might say their favourite book, a teddy bear, a bucket and spade, or lots of snacks! We all have those things we take with us "just in case." I've brought my holiday suitcase today, and inside are some things that I always like to have with me. But each one reminds me of something much more important that God gives us, wherever we go.

Sunglasses

These help me to see clearly on a bright sunny day. But they remind me that God helps us to see the world differently — not just with our eyes, but with our hearts. Let's take a look at these words from Psalm 19:1:
"The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands."

Or we could remember Jesus' words from Matthew's Gospel (6:26):
"Look at the birds of the air..."

When we're on holiday, it's often easier to notice the beauty around us — a colourful sunset, the sound of the sea, the mountains, the flowers, or the stars at night. God is reminding us every day that his creation is wonderful.

Towel

A towel is very useful on holiday — especially if you're going swimming! But it reminds me that holidays often give us a chance to slow down and rest. Jesus knew that rest was important too. After the disciples had been working hard, he said to them in Mark's Gospel (6:31):
"Come with me by yourselves to a quiet place and get some rest."

Even Jesus needed quiet time to pray and be with his Father. Rest isn't being lazy — it's one of God's gifts to us.

Passport

Now this is something I definitely don't want to forget! A passport lets us travel to different countries. But it makes me wonder: where does God travel? We heard the answer a little while ago... wherever we go. Listen to these words from Psalm 121:8:

“The Lord will watch over your coming and going both now and for evermore.”

Whether we're travelling to another country, visiting family, spending a day at the seaside, or staying at home, God is already there.

Map

Maps help us find our way. Although these days many of us probably use sat-navs or our phones! The people of Israel didn't have a map in the wilderness, but they had something even better. In Exodus (13:21), God guided them with a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night.

God knew the way, even when they didn't. Sometimes we don't know what lies ahead either, but we can trust God to guide us one step at a time.

Bible

This is one thing I always take with me. The Bible reminds us that God can speak to us wherever we are. In Psalm 119:105 we read:

“Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.”

Whether we're at home or on holiday, God's Word continues to guide and encourage us.

Cross

This is probably the most important thing in my suitcase today. Not because it's lucky — it isn't — but because it reminds me of Jesus. At the end of Matthew's Gospel (28:20), Jesus promises:

“I am with you always.”

Not just in church. Not just at home. Always. That means Jesus is with us at the seaside, in the countryside, on a campsite, on an aeroplane, on a cruise ship, or simply at home.

Shell

When I hold a shell, it reminds me of the sound of the sea. It also reminds me to be quiet and listen. Sometimes holidays are one of the few times when life slows down enough for us to notice God. In 1 Kings (19:12), Elijah discovered that God wasn't in the wind, or the earthquake, or the fire, but in a gentle whisper. God still speaks today, often in the quiet moments when we take time to listen.

Compass

A compass tells us which direction to travel. Jesus said in John's Gospel (14:6):

“I am the way, the truth and the life.”

There are lots of choices in life, but Jesus invites us to follow him. He is the one who shows us the way to live.

So these are all things I've packed just in case. But they've reminded us of something even more important. Wherever we go this summer, God goes with us. He helps us to see his wonderful world, and invites us to rest. He watches over our journeys; he guides us when we're unsure. He speaks to us through his Word and he promises to be with us always. He meets us in the quiet and he shows us the right way to go.

So whether you're travelling a long way, having a day out, visiting family, or simply staying at home this summer, remember this: You never travel anywhere without God already being there.

StF 18 – Be still and know that I am God

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| 1) Be still and know that I am God,
Be still and know that I am God,
Be still and know that I am God, | 3) In you, O Lord, do I put my trust,
In you, O Lord, do I put my trust,
In you, O Lord, do I put my trust, |
| 2) I am the Lord who saves and heals,
I am the Lord who saves and heals,
I am the Lord who saves and heals, | |

Anon

StF 29 – Jesus lead us to the Father

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| 1) Jesus lead us to the Father
By your Spirit,
help us draw near.
Jesus lead us to the Father
By your Spirit,
help us draw near. | 2) As we come with awe
and gladness,
Help us draw near.
As we come with awe
and gladness,
Help us draw near. | 3) Alleluia, alleluia,
help us draw near.
Alleluia, alleluia,
help us draw near. |
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Prayers of Intercession

One of the joys of being part of a church family is that we share life together. We celebrate good news, we support one another through difficult times, and we bring the needs of our community and our world before God.

So, I'm going to invite you to help shape our prayers. You may wish to share:

- some good news that we can give thanks for;
- something difficult or worrying, either for yourself or someone you know;
- or something happening in our community, our nation or the wider world that you would like us to pray for.

Loving God, we thank you for every joy that has been shared today. For holidays and times of rest, for family and friends, for answered prayers, for new opportunities, and for all the ways we have seen your goodness at work.

We bring before you all those carrying worries or burdens. Be close to those who are ill, anxious, lonely or grieving. Comfort those whose summer will not feel like a holiday. Give strength to those who continue to work through the summer months, especially those caring for others and serving our communities.

We pray for our local community, for schools as they finish for the summer, for teachers, pupils and families, and for all who are preparing to travel or welcome visitors. Keep people safe in their journeys. Grant patience when plans change, peace when unexpected storms arise, and joy in times of rest and refreshment.

We pray for our world. Where there is conflict, bring peace. Where there is injustice, bring hope. Where there is hunger, poverty or disaster, raise up people to bring help and healing. Guide those who lead the nations of the world, that they may seek wisdom, justice and the common good.

Finally, we thank you that wherever we go, you are there. Whether we travel far or stay close to home, may we know your presence with us, your guidance before us, your peace within us, and your love surrounding us.

We offer all these prayers in the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord. **Amen.**

StF 248 – I heard the voice of Jesus say

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| 1) I heard the voice of Jesus say:
'Come unto me and rest;
Lay down, O weary one,
lay down
Your head upon my breast.'
I came to Jesus as I was,
Weary and worn and sad,
I found in him a resting-place,
And he has made me glad. | 2) I heard the voice of Jesus say:
'Behold, I freely give
The living water; thirsty one,
Stoop down and drink and live.'
I came to Jesus, and I drank
Of that life-giving stream;
My thirst was quenched,
my soul revived,
And now I live in him. | 3) I heard the voice of Jesus say:
'I am this dark world's Light;
Look unto me, your morn
shall rise,
And all your day be bright.'
I looked to Jesus, and I found
In him my star, my sun;
And in that light of life I'll walk,
Till travelling days are done. |
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Horatius N Bonar

Final thoughts

As we come to the end of our worship, let's think back over where we've been this morning.

We began by asking whether God ever takes a holiday. The answer, of course, is no! The psalmist reminds us that there is nowhere we can go where God is not already present. Whether we climb the highest mountain or stand beside the sea, whether we travel to another country or simply return home after this service, God is there.

We've thought about the things we pack "just in case"—our sunglasses, towel, passport, map, Bible, cross, shell and compass. Each one reminded us of a promise: that God helps us to see his world, invites us to rest, watches over our journeys, guides our steps, speaks through his Word, stays with us always, meets us in the quiet, and shows us the way.

As many people begin their summer holidays, perhaps that's the most important thing we can remember. We may make careful plans, but not everything always goes according to plan. Journeys can be delayed. The weather can change. Life itself can bring unexpected twists and turns. Yet in every season—in times of joy and in times of difficulty—we have the assurance that Christ goes with us.

So whether you're setting off on holiday, welcoming visitors, working through the summer, or simply carrying on with everyday life, may you know the peace of God's presence.

And as we leave this place today, may we travel lightly, trusting not simply in the things we carry, but in the God who carries us.

StF 465 – Guide me O thou great Jehovah

In this hymn Welsh preacher William Williams compares earthly life to Israel's wilderness journey. Jesus proclaimed that he was the bread of heaven who provides true sustenance (John 6:51) and the living water who satisfies our thirst (John 4:14). The Spirit is our faultless guide (John 16:13). And, when we approach the prospect of death, we need not be afraid (1 Cor. 15:54–55). This is among the most-loved Welsh hymns (they even sing it at their rugby matches), and the harmonies in the chorus make it exhilarating for congregations.

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| 1) Guide me, O thou great Jehovah,
Pilgrim through this barren land;
I am weak, but thou art mighty;
Hold me with thy powerful hand:
Bread of heaven, Bread of heaven,
Feed me now and evermore.
Feed me now and evermore. | 2) Open thou the crystal fountain,
Whence the healing stream shall flow;
Let the fiery, cloudy pillar
Lead me all my journey through:
Strong Deliverer, Strong Deliverer,
Be thou still my strength and shield.
Be thou still my strength and shield. |
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3) When I tread the verge of Jordan,
Bid my anxious fears subside;
Death of death, and hell's destruction,
Land me safe on Canaan's side:
Songs of praises, Songs of praises
I will ever give to thee.
I will ever give to thee.

William Williams

The Grace

May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all,
now and evermore. **Amen.**