



**Church at Home 21
for Abridge
Sunday 2nd August 2020**



***They said, 'We have only five loaves and two fish'
Jesus said, 'Bring them here to me.'***
Matthew 14:17-18

From this Sunday the churches in Lambourne and Abridge are both planning to hold 'normal services' in their church buildings for those who would like to come. After over 4 months of church-at-home, this will be a great joy for many; however, we are also very much aware that church-at-home has made it possible for many who can't get out (for all sorts of reasons) to join in with our shared worship. Because of that, we plan to continue to make this resource available, at least for August, and maybe longer, depending on the future course of this virus.



Last Sunday AEFC held its first service, outdoors, to celebrate Nick and Crystal's ministry there over the past 7 years and to pray for them as they move up to Foulsham in Norfolk at the beginning of August. Our Bible reading was about the mustard seed and the leaven, which reminded us of the mysterious and surprising way the Kingdom of God grows among us; this is such an encouragement to small mustard seed churches and fellowships of yeast such as ours, that God chooses to use in order to offer a home and a feast for all.

As a visual aid for today's Gospel story about the feeding of the 5,000, you might like to include a bread roll and a small tin of sardines on your focus table. It may not look much, but in Jesus's hands it is enough, because with God there is always more!

Today's readings: **Genesis 32:22-31** (where Jacob wrestles with 'an angel' and sees God face to face); **Psalms 17:1-7, 15** (in which David longs to stay close to God and 'behold his face'); **Romans 9:1-5** (in which Paul longs that his fellow Jews should come to know God in the face of Jesus Christ, just as he has done) and **Matthew 14:13-21** (Jesus and his disciples escape to a lonely place, only to be followed by a large crowd who by the end of the afternoon are very hungry!)

Before we sing, read or pray, pause to remember, name and pray for those who are sitting nearby in church this morning or who you know are at home but who are part of our church family. Some of us may be separated physically but nevertheless we are all united by our love and prayers through the Holy Spirit given to each one of us.

Suggested hymns to sing along to: [Break Thou the bread of life](#) ; [I am the bread of life](#) ; [Bread of heaven](#) ;

And two to listen to : [Bread of Life](#) ; [Remembrance](#) (Matt Redman) – with a focus on the bread at communion

Saying sorry: Bring the past week before God, remembering the good and the bad things that have happened; naming those moments that let God and other people down; asking forgiveness for the good we failed to do and the blessings we failed to pass on. Bring your hungry soul to the one who said, 'I am the bread of life'.

Pause

Receive God's forgiveness afresh through Jesus Christ. Ask the Holy Spirit to pour out God's love into our hearts. Bring the 5 loaves and two fish of our life to God who promises to multiply it beyond our imagining!

I'm accepted, I'm forgiven

Thoughts on today's Gospel

Jesus had just heard that John, his cousin, had been executed in prison. Clearly, he needed time to mourn and this is why he set off to the far side of Lake Galilee. But his popularity was at such a high point by now that the crowds got there ahead of him. Most of us would have been really angry about this, but in contrast Jesus is not sorry for himself any more, but for the people. He knows how much need there is in the world and he longs to do something about it. What should have been a quiet afternoon grieving turns into a busy time of healing and storytelling. Finally, his exhausted disciples just want everyone to go home for tea, when to their surprise Jesus suggests a picnic right there, even though they have barely enough to feed themselves. The little basket of bread and fish however was enough and blessed by Jesus it turned into plenty for everyone. This well-known miracle appears in all four gospels and was clearly a favourite story among the very first Christians. It reminded them that Jesus would always provide for them and that no situation was too big for him to handle. It also had links in their minds to the Last Supper before Good Friday where once again Jesus took bread, broke it and blessed it, not just for the 12 at the table but for all who would in future share in the memory of that meal down the ages; in fact far more than over 5000 have been fed by Jesus, because with God there is always more than enough for everyone with plenty left over.

I wonder what new aspect of this story has struck you today, as you have reread it?

I wonder if the crowds knew that such a big miracle had happened or was this for his disciples' eyes only?

I wonder how this story might inspire you to share the little you have this coming week?

I wonder what it means to you that Jesus offers to be the true bread for your life?

To help you explore the Gospel further, there is a **reflection sheet** and also **all-age activities linked to the passage**, that you might like to use, if you have access to the internet. You can find these resources on the websites of the two churches and here are the links: www.lambournechurch.com
www.abridgeevangelicalchurch.org

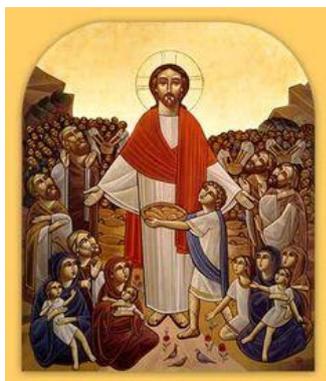
For our prayers, let us remember:

- The families and businesses of the village as they try and work out how to get back to a new normal after the past disrupted months
- Our leaders as they work out how best to handle spikes and fresh outbreaks of the virus here and abroad
- For those we know who are holidaying this month
- For those we know who are sick, at home or in hospital
- For those who are literally hungry for bread because locusts have destroyed harvests or war has destroyed lives and livelihoods

Add any particular people and situations that The Holy Spirit brings to your mind as you have been praying and then say our family prayer, **The Lord's Prayer**.

End your time of church-at-home by saying out loud the words of **The Grace**, reaching out your hands to include in your imagination all those you know and love, who live here in the village and beyond

It is well with my soul



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