



**Church at Home 22  
for Abridge  
Sunday 9th August 2020**



***A voice said to him,  
"Elijah, what are you doing here?"***  
1 Kings 19: 13

At Lambourne and Stapleford Abbots last Sunday we had our first services since March 15<sup>th</sup>. It was a little odd seeing a congregation of what could have been masked desperadoes looking at me. It was also odd to say the words of the hymns and to only have bread for communion. But it was great to be back and see each other in the flesh and not just on a computer screen or on a phone. 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. Some may still be unable to venture out and so we plan to continue to make this resource available, at least for August, and maybe longer, depending on the future course of this virus. Below is a photo of the inside of AEFC ready for its first service last Sunday.



**Today's readings: 1 Kings 19: 9- 13.** Elijah had struggled on against a hostile world where all his fellow prophets had dwindled away and he hid away in a cave, a Biblical lockdown. God did not yell or threaten but came as a still small voice. **Psalm 105** is a reminder of the Exodus and the escape from their slavery in Egypt. **Romans 10 :5-15** with Paul's new-found discovery that the good news was for everyone, not just the Jews, was the desire to let everyone know. He urges us all to share that Gospel news that all may rejoice and be glad. **Matthew 14: 22-33.** Even in the storms of life in the dark and

screaming with fear, Jesus was with his disciples and in their uncertain attempts to follow, he held them up.

**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:** [O for a closer walk with God](#); [I the Lord of Sea and Sky](#)

**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. As perhaps we falter in the storm, let Jesus reach out his hand saying, "Why did you doubt?"

*Pause*

Receive God's forgiveness afresh through Jesus Christ. Ask the Holy Spirit to pour out God's love into our hearts.

[Turn your eyes upon Jesus](#)

### **Thoughts on today's readings**

Elijah was having a pretty rough time. All his fellow prophets had either quit or been killed. Everyone in authority seemed out to get him and very often the God who got him to make these unpopular stands was not there. It was frightening and annoying and it led to the retreat into a cave. The Old Testament lockdown. It was necessary to start with, but gradually God eased him out and finally asked, 'Why are you

still here?'. As lockdown ends, we are forced outside to seek again the path God has for us. That path will not be back to business as usual but maybe to stand out, to speak out, to care more. The disciples had discovered that when Jesus swayed whole crowds with his stories and his healing, it was a good feeling to be his disciples, but there were times in a boat in a storm that they were terrified, indeed screaming with fear. Following, as Peter found when he launched out into the waves, was a scary business. But in every circumstance Jesus was there to reach out his hand.

And so, as we emerge from the cave of lockdown, will we seek business as usual and will the government also seek the same old policies? For individuals and the country, the old was clearly not working. The gap between rich and poor, the violence and cruelty around the world - and in many homes in this country -, the destruction of God's creation in the name of progress, and many other signs show that we need a new way.

And so, God calls us to the mouth of the cave and says, 'Why are you standing there?'

*I wonder what new aspect of these readings have struck you today, as you have reread them?*

*What is one thing you hope will change beyond the pandemic?*

*How will you try to live differently in response to God's call to share the good news?*

To help you explore the Gospel story further, there is a **reflection sheet** and also **all-age activities** 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](http://www.lambournechurch.com) [www.abridgeevangelicalchurch.org](http://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, and all those on the quest for an affordable vaccine for all.
- For those we know who are holidaying this month
- For those we know who are sick, at home or in hospital and those whose families have disintegrated during the crisis. For the refugee, the homeless, the overcrowded and all who are least in a position to avoid the pandemic.

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

[Jesus, lover of my soul](#)



*The hand of  
rescue*

*by Dante Gabriel  
Rossetti 1828 -  
1882 in pencil*

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