



Worship at Home—14 February 2021



Opening Call To Worship

In the heights of wellbeing
May God's presence shine in ordinary ways
And in the depths of our pain and struggle
May God's presence give courage and peace
May God's light, shining in the face of Christ
Brighten this day and illumine all our days.

Prayer

Living, Loving, Eternal God
High in the heavens, yet kneeling at our feet
As we draw near to You,
my we find that You are already on Your way to meet us
Bridging gulfs, breaking down walls
So that Your love can win through

Here and now search our hearts
Shine healing light upon us and
Grant to us your pardon and your peace
That we may be cleansed from all our failings or sin
Forgive us for choosing bleakness instead of blessedness
Into our wintry world let the hope of summer come
Healing us from all weariness and doubt
To serve you with a quiet mind

In this sacred time,
Shine your glory into our lives
let us pray quietly
Let us listen attentively
Let our thoughts and words praise you
Let our actions praise you
So that even now, even apart
Our lives may be lived to the Glory of God
Through Jesus Christ our Lord
Who taught us to pray. . .

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 debts, as we forgive our debtors.
Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, for ever.

Amen.

The scripture reading is taken from 2 Kings 2: 1-12

Elijah Taken Up to Heaven

When the Lord was about to take Elijah up to heaven in a whirlwind, Elijah and Elisha were on their way from Gilgal. Elijah said to Elisha, "Stay here; the Lord has sent me to Bethel."

But Elisha said, "As surely as the Lord lives and as you live, I will not leave you." So they went down to Bethel.

The company of the prophets at Bethel came out to Elisha and asked, "Do you know that the Lord is going to take your master from you today?"

"Yes, I know," Elisha replied, "so be quiet."

Then Elijah said to him, "Stay here, Elisha; the Lord has sent me to Jericho."

And he replied, "As surely as the Lord lives and as you live, I will not leave you." So they went to Jericho.



The company of the prophets at Jericho went up to Elisha and asked him, “Do you know that the Lord is going to take your master from you today?”

“Yes, I know,” he replied, “so be quiet.”

Then Elijah said to him, “Stay here; the Lord has sent me to the Jordan.”

And he replied, “As surely as the Lord lives and as you live, I will not leave you.” So the two of them walked on.

Fifty men from the company of the prophets went and stood at a distance, facing the place where Elijah and Elisha had stopped at the Jordan. Elijah took his cloak, rolled it up and struck the water with it. The water divided to the right and to the left, and the two of them crossed over on dry ground.

When they had crossed, Elijah said to Elisha, “Tell me, what can I do for you before I am taken from you?”

“Let me inherit a double portion of your spirit,” Elisha replied.

“You have asked a difficult thing,” Elijah said, “yet if you see me when I am taken from you, it will be yours—otherwise, it will not.”

As they were walking along and talking together, suddenly a chariot of fire and horses of fire appeared and separated the two of them, and Elijah went up to heaven in a whirlwind. Elisha saw this and cried out, “My father! My father! The chariots and horsemen of Israel!” And Elisha saw him no more. Then he took hold of his garment and tore it in two.

Sermon

Today’s scripture is about leadership. The backdrop of the text is that after the reign of King David, and King David’s Son Solomon Israel split into two kingdoms. The kingdoms became separate and divided, and after Solomon died, they were now ruled, not by God-fearing kings, but by corrupt and cruel men who worshipped pagan idols.

Amidst all the self-serving hypocrisy and brutality of these tyrant kings, one leader stood up and stood out. Elijah was God’s prophet, called by God to preach the Truth, to call for, honesty, authenticity and accountability. Elijah’s most important leadership skill was that he was faithful to God. And God anointed him with a remarkable power to preach and reveal the right way for the people to follow. When Elijah came face to face those who were unfaithful and full of ill-will—God bestowed spiritual power—to bring rain after drought, to bring dry bones to life—to show the people the real God whom they should follow and worship.

He has therefore always been revered as a great father figure and hero of the Jewish faith. Elijah reminded the people of Israel how to live up to their calling as the people of God. Elijah was a unifying force restoring peace and justice to a fractious and divided people and nation. That was his legacy. The people of Israel were in awe of him. None more so than his own beloved pupil and disciple Elisha was in awe of him.

So when the time was drawing near when Elijah was passing on and Elisha knew God was calling him home to heaven, it created uncertainty. We know the expression where there is no vision, the people perish. When there is no leadership or poor leadership it can destabilize people and nations. When people in power are bad or cruel, abusive or egotistical. We only need to look at the news to see that people get restless, and begin to feel uncertain. Deep down we long for leaders who will keep us on a sure footing. To use the biblical model, we look for leaders who will shepherd us. King David was always known as the Shepherd King. Jesus himself described himself as the Good Shepherd.

Elijah was such a leader. In Second Kings, it is clear that Elijah knows that Elisha must follow on from him to be the next prophet.

And so, as Elisha prepares to face a great personal loss, a final separation from his beloved teacher—he is troubled. He feels unprepared to take on the leadership responsibility, he is not at all confident about stepping into Elijah’s shoes, or in the story the mantle of authority is symbolized by his Holy Cloak.

And so Elisha, like a son, asks for an inheritance. Not a financial inheritance—Elisha prays for is a double portion of same Spirit with which God anointed Elijah.

Elisha is asking to be blessed and equipped to lead after Elijah's loss. He wants the spirit of Elijah to remain with him—the spirit of his teacher who raised him in faith and taught him to love God. Elisha knows that no matter how much he has learned, listened, or tried—he will never cut the grade of taking over Elijah's ministry if it isn't the will of God. God's Holy Spirit is often called the Comforter. This comes from the Latin words *com* meaning with and *forte* meaning strength. Elijah seeks the Spirit of God for strength as well as comfort.

This beautiful story teaches us about the unique nature of Christian leadership. Firstly leadership needs to be taught, handed down and handed on. This is the model of Discipleship which Jesus has given us. Jesus leads his followers by example and his followers down through the generations hand on the mantle of faith. The story illustrates that Christian leadership isn't just about skill. It is about character, integrity, selflessness, patience, compassion and faithfulness. These are the gifts with which God anoints each of us when we pray.

The story also reminds us that God doesn't choose the leaders we expect—not always the persuasive or powerful, not the richest or most educated. God picks ordinary people—sometimes the weaker people who are keenly aware that if they are to lead, they cannot do it alone or in their own strength. Elisha knew that he needed the wisdom of his teacher but a double portion perhaps of God's blessing and help. That is what he prayed for. Elisha became a great prophet in his day - not because he was sure of himself. He became a great leader because he was sure of God.

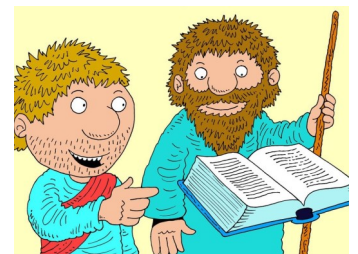
Our world is facing complex and troubling crises. We look to the scientists as leaders but we are aware that there are so many people who are working all around us to lead with courage, integrity, and faith. Let us all, together and apart ask God for a double portion of his blessing, His Spirit and Comfort. Amen.

The following is a link to Heather's video followed by the script for those unable to log on.

<https://photos.app.goo.gl/hCgD48k7TNLjQTKw6>

Who do you learn from? For young people it's often teachers, parents, older young people, sports or club leaders or instructors. There's a lot of people involved in teaching and raising children and young people. For adults our learning circle is perhaps smaller – we look to family members, friends, our children maybe, a few specific people that we admire or look up to and trust to give us guidance. Our learning often has to be self propelled.

In today's story Elisha is the student of Elijah – learning from him how to be a prophet, how to share God's messages with the people and how to be bold and stand firm in faith even when there is so much and so many against them.



But also other prophets and the people of Israel themselves look to Elijah as the one who points them to God and instructs them in how to live God's way. After Elijah is taken it says that Elisha picked up Elijah's cloak and went back to the Jordan. He did the same miracle Elijah had just done and the river water parted before him. The people watching knew then that the same power that was in Elijah was now in Elisha but they weren't quick to let their leader go.

In verses 15-18 of 2 Kings chapter 2 we read this:

The company of the prophets from Jericho, who were watching, said, "The spirit of Elijah is resting on Elisha." And they went to meet him and bowed to the ground before him. "Look," they said, "we your servants have fifty able men. Let them go and look for your master. Perhaps the Spirit of the Lord has picked him up and set him down on some mountain or in some valley."

"No," Elisha replied, "do not send them."

But they persisted until he was too embarrassed to refuse. So he said, "Send them." And they sent fifty men, who searched for three days but did not find him. When they returned to Elisha, who was staying in Jericho, he said to them, "Didn't I tell you not to go?"

The prophets were dependent on Elijah. They didn't recognise that God was really their teacher and Elijah was just a man God spoke through. Elijah was not afraid to be leaving this world. He didn't ask God if he could stay a bit longer, if he could teach Elisha a few more things or visit a few more people before he left earth. Elijah knew that the work he was doing was ultimately God's work and God was not going to let it fall, he wouldn't let his people stumble simply because Elijah's time on earth was up. Elijah and Elisha knew their job was to point to God not themselves and they knew that when they left the earth someone else would take on their work.

God uses people to be involved in His work on earth. Some people he uses as ministers or Sunday school leaders, but he also uses every single person to help spread the Good news. This work isn't ours, it's God's and it's not for our own fame but for His glory.

You are part of God's church. Whether you're 2 or 92, older, younger or anywhere in between you are part of God's church. You may not be a church leader or think you're important but God has chosen you. Maybe that seems crazy to you that God would choose someone like you, but throughout the Bible we see God choosing unexpected people to be part of His team, His family – fishermen, shepherds, foreigners, and sinners. He used people that were far from perfect. And he chooses to use you, he wants you. Does it excite you that you get to be part of God's mission? How prepared are you for that task?

We can always trust God to provide the right people for the task, and that might be us, even if we feel unqualified or unworthy. Moses didn't think he could lead God's people but God helped him to speak; Peter thought he had let Jesus down when he betrayed him but he started the church; David stood in front of a giant unafraid because he knew God was on his side and would help him to win; Joseph, Daniel, Esther, Stephen, Mary, all of them knew they were powerless without God and so they turned to Him for strength.

God doesn't need us to do his work, but he chooses to invite us to be a part of it. And if we get it wrong or make mistakes, which we will likely do, God doesn't condemn us or kick us out, he forgives and he continues to love us and he gives us more opportunities to serve him and show others who He is and what He's like.

After Jesus rose from death he told his disciples to carry on the work he had begun and promised that he would be with them to help them. God sent the gift of the Holy Spirit to live inside all those who follow Him to help them, to give them courage and help them know how to live God's way. In 1 Corinthians 3:16 it says: "Surely you know that you are God's temple and that God's Spirit lives in you!"

Even while we can't be together physically, even when we have to social distance from other, God's gift of the Spirit means that He is with us no matter where we are and can help us reach out to one another. So who can you reach out to this week with a message of love or hope or kindness that comes from an overflow of God's love and blessings to you?

Sunday Club is taking place on Zoom this term. Fortnightly beginning on Sunday 24th January at 4.30pm. We'll have a Bible story, games and activities together for around 45 minutes. If your child would like to join in then contact Heather at familyworker_jvp@outlook.com for details.

Kirk Contacts

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Session Clerk: Hamish Leal—Tel: 449 3288 email: hamish@hamishleal.co.uk

Family worker: Heather Merriman email: Familyworker_JVP@outlook.com

Please get in touch with Nina at the Kirk Office—451 5141

email currie_kirk@btconnect.com> if you need anything.

We have friends willing to listen, shop, walk a dog, fix a garden.

Website: [//www.curriekirk.org/](http://www.curriekirk.org/) or [//www.facebook.com/CurrieKirk/](https://www.facebook.com/CurrieKirk/)

All sermons from Currie Kirk can be found on the Kirk's website and on YouTube—search Currie Kirk

The Kirk Session is meeting this Wednesday at 7 pm on Zoom

Pastoral Prayer

Faithful God

Thank You because you are true,
You are light and in You there is no darkness at all
You are ever to be trusted, and Your love is constant.
You, God are our strength and hope
Your grace is sufficient for all that every day might bring
We can celebrate fellowship in Your company
Wherever we may be.

We pray for the leaders of our country, and all whose work
Shapes and guides our every-day living
We pray for greater cooperation between the nations
To combat Covid, climate change, and all forms of injustice

We pray with gratitude for those working in the National Health System
May your love sustain them, may our prayers encourage them
Bless those for whom they care today, those at home or in hospital
Those in Intensive Care, those going through any form of treatment.

We pray for those involved in education of the young
Who are struggling to give virtual lessons
We pray for parents trying to home-school
For children whose health and wellbeing is suffering
From lack of contact with friends and teachers.

We pray today for our homes, and the people we hold dear
May they know peace and joy.
We ask you to bless each one participating or watching now
Help us to lean on your wisdom and courage
For our lives, our world and its changing needs
Grant us health and healing
Laughter and love
Spirits full of generosity and compassion
And wherever we are unite us as your people
So that we may find ways to be your community of faith
And continue to put your Love into practice
Choosing kindness and doing the good
And holding one another in prayer.

Amen

Currie Kirk Guild



The sun is shining and there is a beautiful blue sky, but, according to my phone, the temperature is a chilly - 8 degrees so perhaps better to stay inside.

We had another informal coffee and chat last Tuesday with about 20 people joining in. I had hoped to go to the foodbank before that, but weather was not conducive to driving so hopefully I will manage this Tuesday.

Our meeting this Tuesday will start at 11am. We do not have a speaker therefore I will be doing a short quiz then we can just chat. If you are not a Guild member and would like to join us, email me and I will send you the link – elf.lamont@blueyonder.co.uk

In the meantime, stay safe and keep warm. Glad to say, many of us, including, myself, have had our first vaccination so that is a positive sign.

Louise Lamont Guild President

Elijah and Elisha

These resources are designed to help you explore the Bible as a family together at home while we can't go to church. Be as creative as you want to be and enjoy spending time with each other and with God.

Prepare yourself...

God, you can make ordinary things special, you can surprise us when we least expect it.

Show us something more of who you are and how awesome your presence is.

Help us to be open to encountering you in unexpected ways and forgive us for when we think we know all there is to know about you and your world.

May we worship you today with joy and wonder.

Amen.



Question...



What has been your biggest “wow” moment in the past week?
What about in your life?

Challenge...

In today's story one man has to keep watching so he doesn't miss what happens. Have a staring competition with another person. The last one to blink or look away is the champion!



Read the Bible...

Today's verses are found in 2 Kings 2:1-12. You can read them in a Bible or find them here.

You could try reading the verses in different versions to see if it adds to your understanding of the passage.

This video tells the story well: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Faf-K4qe-W0> or you could try drawing pictures of the story as it's read.

Talk together...



Elijah was a prophet of God and Elisha the man chosen by God to take over from him. Elijah taught and trained Elisha until the day came when Elijah was taken into heaven.

- * Talk about a time you saw something unexpected.
- * How would you have felt if you had been there with Elijah and Elisha?
- * What miracles happen in today's story? What are the "wow" moments?
- * What did the prophets at Jordan see happen through Elisha? What did this convince them of?
- * How did God ensure that his plans for his people continued beyond the life of Elijah?

Elijah knew that the work he was doing was not his work but God's work – he was simply the tool God was using at that time. He knew that when he left earth the work would continue.

- * Who does God choose to be His voice and witnesses in the world today?
- * In what ways can we show to people who God is and what He's like?

Play together...

Over and under. You'll need a coat or jumper.

Stand in a line one behind the other. The person at the front passes the coat over their head. The person behind takes it and passes it under their legs. Keep passing it back alternating over and under until the coat reaches the person at the back. They then run to the front of the line and start again. The game continues until the original person is at the front again. How fast can you do it?

Pray together...

May God be your strength this week.
May Jesus bless you in a new way.
May the Holy Spirit bring a "wow" moment to
celebrate and to share.
Amen.

Do something...

Go outside and cloud watch. What can you see? Can you spot clouds that resemble things in the story? (whirlwind, chariot, robe etc.)

Make something...

Whirlwind in a jar. You'll need: a clean, see-through, empty, round jar with a lid (glass or plastic), water and washing up liquid.

Fill the jar almost to the top with water. Add a little squeeze of washing up liquid then put on the lid. Swirl the jar round in circles for 30 seconds then stop and watch the whirlwind inside! Once it's stopped you can spin the jar again and another whirlwind will appear.

You can also add a few drops of food colouring to the water too.

How do you think it felt for Elijah to be taken away into heaven by a whirlwind? What do you think it was like to watch?



Praise together...



[What a mighty God we
serve
I'm trusting you](#)