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ORDINARY 19A

9th August 2026

A short act of worship and daily devotions

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Opening Prayers

Sit down, close your eyes and breathe three deep, slow breaths.

Keeping your eyes closed, pay attention to your breath for a minute or more and in doing so, when you breathe in, imagine you are breathing in the love of God.

When you open your eyes look around you, what do you notice in your room that reminds you of the love of God?

If this is something you can hold, hold it, if it is to be looked at, look at it. As you do so, remember that you are in the presence of God.

When you are ready, offer this time of worship to God, you might like to say these words out loud:

Around me and within me, Spirit of God I thank you for your presence here. I offer each breath in worship to you.

Amen.

You may now wish to say the Lord's Prayer in a version or translation with which you are familiar.

Readings: Matthew 14:22-33 – [Click for reading](#)

Responding to the reading

As we step into this story in the middle of Matthew's gospel, we recognise that this day in the Jesus-story has already been extraordinary. Five thousand people have been fed, and now, as evening falls, Jesus sends the disciples ahead by boat while he climbs the mountain to pray.

The disciples are left to cross the lake alone. Before long, the wind rises, the waves grow stronger, progress becomes difficult. They find themselves battered by forces beyond their control.

It is a scene that feels surprisingly familiar. There are seasons in every life when we feel as though we are rowing against the wind. We may be facing illness, grief, uncertainty, conflict, or simply the exhaustion of trying to keep going. We wonder whether God has sent us into the storm and then disappeared.

But while the disciples cannot see him, Jesus has not forgotten them. In the darkest part of the night, he comes towards them.

At first, they don't recognise him. Fear often distorts our vision. They think he is a ghost. Then comes one of the most repeated commands in Scripture: "Take heart, it is I; do not be afraid."

Not because the storm has stopped, not because everything has suddenly become easy, but because God is present within the storm. Present for us today, as he is for the disciples in the story.

Peter responds with characteristic courage, and perhaps a little impulsiveness: "Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water."

Jesus simply replies: "Come."

And remarkably, Peter does. For a few moments, he walks on the water. It is only when he shifts his attention from Jesus to the strength of the wind that fear takes hold, and he begins to sink.

We are often taught that this story is about Peter's lack of faith, but perhaps there is another way to read it. Peter is the only one who gets out of the boat.

His faith is imperfect, his courage wavers, he becomes afraid. Yet when he cries out, "Lord, save me!", Jesus reaches out immediately.

There is no lecture. No disappointment. No delay. Only an outstretched hand. For those of us following Jesus today, this is deeply reassuring.

Discipleship is not about never feeling afraid. It is not about walking perfectly across every storm. It is about trusting that when fear overwhelms us, Christ's hand is already reaching towards us.

Perhaps the greatest danger is not sinking, perhaps it is never leaving the boat.

As we step into this next chapter of what it means to be the church in 2026, there will always be moments that feel risky. There will be a need to speak up for those who are excluded, we have to find ways to choose generosity over self-protection, to love across differences, to work for peace in a divided world, to redefine boundaries and borders we have taken for granted for many years or even decades.

The promise of this story is not that the waves disappear, it is that Christ is already there.

So today, you might like to reflect on these questions and pray about your responses:

- What "boat" feels safe but may be keeping you from deeper discipleship?
- Where is Jesus inviting you to take one courageous step, even if it feels uncertain?
- And when fear inevitably comes, can you trust that God's hand is already reaching towards you?

Faith is not the absence of storms. It is discovering, again and again, that we are never asked to face them alone.

May you have the courage to step beyond what feels safe, the humility to call for help when you need it, and the deep assurance that wherever the waters rise, Christ is already there, holding you with grace that never lets go.

Hymn / Song:

570 STF – As we gather, Father, seal us – [YouTube](#)

367 STF – When I was lost, you came and rescued me OR

Blessing

Go out into a world crying out for healing,
Go out to seek reconciliation, possibility, peace,
Go out, and may the Spirit of God go before you, lighting your path.
Go in peace, and serve the Lord.

Amen.

Prayers and Prayer Pointers For This Week

Monday 10th August

- Today is International Biodiesel Day, which is perhaps one of the more niche ‘international days’, and yet is part of an important conversation about the climate crisis and how we improve the environmental impact of our economy. Today, you might like to pray for all working on changing the status quo to help us reduce the drastic impact we are having on the planet.
- Come, Lord Jesus, and heal your world, I pray. Amen.

Tuesday 11th August

- Hold up your hand in front of you. With the index finger of the other hand, trace your hand. Guide your finger slowly around each finger and your thumb, breathing in as you move up, and breathing out as you move down. Repeat the pattern until you feel centred, calm and peaceful.

Wednesday 12th August

- Today is marked by the UN as International Youth Day. You might like to use this as a prompt to pray for the young people in your life, in your community, in your church.
- Come, Lord God, and bring hope, bring inspiration, bring peace, I pray. Amen.

Thursday 13th August

- Today is the day that the Lutheran Church mark the life and work of Florence Nightingale, the 'Lady with the Lamp' who effectively created the modern concept of nursing. Her work during the Crimean War, supporting and caring for soldiers, helped to change the way that we think about the role of the nurse and challenged social norms, including helping society to see the real cost of war to both sides.
- Today, you might like to pray for all involved in nursing, particularly all those working for the NHS to seek to bring care to our nation. If you know someone or some people who are working in this sector, you might like to pray especially for them today. If its appropriate, you could send them a message to let them know they have been in your prayers and ask if there is anything particular for which they would request prayer.

Friday 14th August

- With the index finger of one hand, write your name in the air. Remember you are chosen, named and loved by God. Now, write the name of someone you love who is on your mind as you pray for them.

Saturday 15th August

- Today is a day of many 'independences', it's the date of the Republic of Congo's independence from France in 1960, India's from the UK in 1947, and Korea's from Japan in 1945.
- You might like to pray for all working for the freedom and independence of their people, their nation state or their tribe. We know that there are still many people's in our world who are oppressed or ill-treated. Come, Lord Jesus, we pray, into those situations, and bring your liberating gospel. Amen.