

PASSIONATE CONTEXTUAL WORSHIP for such a time as this

Passionate contextual worship is the second theme of our new strategy for resourcing your mission: *for such a time as this*

Following from our bedrock of growing discipleship, our attention turns to worship.

Our acts of worship must always be occasions when congregations expect to encounter the presence of God. Or to put it another way, how often do you come out a service thinking “If only I had invited my friend/ family member/ neighbour/ colleague. They would have loved it” How does our worship need to change so that they would, and we do?

Passion is partly something we each bring to worship. Many years ago a wise friend remarked that the more he came to church expecting to meet God, the more often he would find God in worship. That has stuck with me ever since. It is so easy for any regular pattern to become a routine, and a routine at times to become a chore. If this is you, what would once again make worship something you cherish?

Context is equally important. What combination of excellence, awe, accessibility and welcome would enable people around you to meet with God? Especially those who have not done so for a long time? Indoors or outdoors? Messy or ordered? High tech or homespun? What liturgical calendar would you create for distribution centre workers, call centre staff or students? Does your worship relate to a geographic place, or to dispersed people connected by a common identity?

The language of worship can feel deeply ironic under lockdown. How can we be a congregation when congregating is prohibited? What is a public act of worship within private homes? Amidst the frustration and isolation of lockdown and a law against singing together, is there an opportunity for rewilding of our worship, allowing worship to spill out into all aspects of our daily lives.

Imposition of lockdown has started a technological revolution in our worship. We have all had to re-invent how we curate and access worship, grapple with technology and deconstruct old habits. This seismic shift has been exhausting and bewildering. One day we will look back on our early experiments the way we now look back at the first motorised flying machines. Digital worship is here for good, not just for lockdown. We will support you to keep **growing your online worship, so that lockdown becomes the start of an era of complementary dispersed and gathered worship.**

As a district, we are here to support you in making your worship more relevant, more confident and more present.

If relevant to you, do join our [digital worship resources group on facebook](#) or watch the [recording of our hybrid worship webinar](#). Our [district worship from 3 January](#) is still available online for individuals or to use as part of your local worship. Do let us know what else would be most helpful for you, for now or in preparation for an unwritten future.

I hope you are able to join us in praying for PASSIONATE CONTEXTUAL WORSHIP at [1pm on Thursday 14 January](#) or [8pm on Monday 18 January](#). A recording of last week's prayers is [available on youtube](#).

Neil Harland, Mission Development Support

