

Sunday 10th January 2021

This short act of worship has been prepared for you to use whilst we are unable to use Methodist Church premises. We invite you to spend a few moments with God, knowing that other people are sharing this act of worship with you.

Opening Prayer

We gather before you creator God,
To bring you our praise and
worship,
And to experience your love for us.
Be with us, unite us with our family
of faith
Refresh us body, mind and soul
And open our hearts to your word.
Amen.

Hymn: 161 Speak O Lord,
Sing/ Read /pray /proclaim the
words or listen to it here
<https://youtu.be/ubRIJj8xkds>
Speak, O Lord, as we come to you
to receive the food of your holy
word.
Take your truth, plant it deep in us;
shape and fashion us in your
likeness,
that the light of Christ might be
seen today
in our acts of love and our deeds of
faith.
Speak, O Lord, and fulfil in us
all your purposes, for your glory.

Teach us, Lord, full obedience,
holy reverence, true humility.
Test our thoughts and our attitudes
in the radiance of your purity.
Cause our faith to rise, cause our
eyes to see
your majestic love and authority.
Words of power that can never fail;
let their truth prevail over unbelief.

Speak, O Lord, and renew our
minds;
help us grasp the heights of your
plans for us.
Truths unchanged from the dawn of
time
that will echo down through
eternity.
And by grace we'll stand on your
promises,
and by faith we'll walk as you walk
with us.
Speak, O Lord, till your Church is
built
and the earth is filled with your
glory.

*Keith Getty (b. 1974) and Stuart
Townend (b. 1963)*

Let us pray together

Almighty God,
We search for words to truly tell
your glory,
But there are none.
We look for ways to describe your
creation,
But can't express its beauty and
complexity.
We long to show you how much we
love you,
But struggle to achieve our goal.
You, O God are our greatest love,
your service our deepest desire,
your love for us our most precious
gift and more than anything we
want you to know that we adore
you. Amen.

**Today's Gospel Reading: Mark 1:4-
11 NRSV**

⁴ John the baptizer appeared in the wilderness, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. ⁵ And people from the whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem were going out to him, and were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. ⁶ Now John was clothed with camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. ⁷ He proclaimed,

"The one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to stoop down and untie the thong of his sandals. ⁸ I have baptized you with water; but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit."

⁹ In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. ¹⁰ And just as he was coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens torn apart and the Spirit descending like a dove on him. ¹¹ And a voice came from heaven, "You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased."

Time to Reflect

I'd like to invite you to take a few moments to think about water.

The gentle way it washes dirt from our skin

The powerful force that carves channels through rock.

The refreshing, heaven sent gift that brings life to our world.

A few years ago I visited Bushmead in Zimbabwe and the school my church has helped to fund there.

It was, as you might imagine a life changing experience, I was welcomed into the community and family home as both dear sister and

honoured guest. Unlike many homes in Zimbabwe there was running water which meant that while my hosts took turns in the same bath water I was given the luxury of my own bathroom.

I'd been fundraising for the school for years so I knew what life in Zimbabwe was like or I thought I did. But the shock of turning on the tap to find no water (common place for them) was very real.

I have never been without easy access to clean water, even during essential plumbing works provision has always been made and I have known when water will be restored.

Of course, my hosts were prepared, in my excitement and wonder at all around me and the love I'd been shown I'd failed to notice the most basic, there in the corner was a pack of bottled water, ready for us.

Water is life, life without water cannot exist.

So what better symbol for baptism could there be, water's ability to cleanse, its power to transform and reshape and our total inability to live without it tells us much about the Spirit of God.

Through Baptism in Christ we have been washed clean and offered a source of ongoing renewal.

Through Baptism in Christ we have received the Holy Spirit, God's presence in our lives, helping us to change and reshape ourselves into the people we are called to be.

Through Baptism in Christ we have been given life, true life, eternal life.

God is with us, flowing through us and out from us into our world. The source of life for all, a force which can never be completely cut off, a blessing that will never leave us.

There may be times when we don't notice God's presence, when we feel he is distant or has abandoned us and the tap gives nothing.

Don't be fooled, God is always with us, waiting for us to discover him, turn to him, rely on him, waiting to wash through us and make us truly alive.

Take a time to sit quietly

A time of prayer

Please pause to consider each situation

Father God, we come to you with open hearts and minds to pray for our world,

For all who are working to help others.

For all who are unwell in body, mind or soul.

For all who fear violence, in the streets or their own homes.

For all who struggle to fill their daily needs and fear for their future.

For all who feel alone or isolated.

For Church, family, friends and neighbours.

For ourselves, right here and now, all we are and think and feel.

Father we place our world into your hands, in all things and all places may your will be done
Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father

Hymn: Listen to

<https://youtu.be/iEPclC92yLg>

or sing a verse of a hymn that comes to mind

A prayer of blessing

Loving God, be with us this day and always, flow in us and through us, cleanse, renew and reshape us.

Reminding us always that no matter what, you remain with us. Amen.

Materials by Liz Wood

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Local Churches CCCLi 363610

We are grateful to all the Ministers and Local Preachers from around the Connexion who have contributed to Worship at Home. This resource is administrated by Ministries: Vocations and Worship in the Connexional Team. We aim to continue to provide these resources until the end of August 2021.

Due to Covid, some services in person are currently suspended.
Please check local arrangements before you leave home.

