

Sunday 7 February 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.

Call to Worship

The Lord heals the broken-hearted,
and binds up their wounds.
The Lord determines the number of
the stars;
he gives to all of them their names.
Great is our Lord, and abundant in
power.
(Psalm 147 vv3-5)

Hymn: 726 Come to us creative spirit

Sing/ Read /pray /proclaim the
words or listen to it here

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IRUjmvAmCyU>

Come to us, creative Spirit,
in our Father's house,
every natural talent foster,
hidden skills arouse,
that within your earthly temple
wise and simple
may rejoice.

Poet, painter, music-maker,
all your treasures bring;
artist, actor, graceful dancer,
make your offering;
join your hands in celebration!
Let creation
shout and sing!

Word from God eternal springing,
fill our minds, we pray,
and in all artistic vision
give integrity.
May the flame, within us burning,
kindle yearning
day by day.

In all places and for ever
glory be expressed
to the Son, with God the Father,
and the Spirit blest.
In our worship and our living,
keep us striving
towards the best.

David Mowbray (b. 1938)

Let us pray together

Creator God, we marvel at all that you have made, from vast galaxies to tiny flowers, from mountains and forests to the delicacy of a spider's web. We marvel too that in your generosity you have given us the gift of creativity, we weave new materials out of old bottles and tyres, we find new ways to tell your age-old story of redemption and we learn new ways to heal and prevent disease.

Father forgive us that we have been arrogant and misused this gift of creativity, we have exploited the earth and each other, and cared only for ourselves. Teach us how to care for one another and the world as you care for us, that your will may be done and your kingdom come.

Assurance of forgiveness:

Here is good news: Jesus came into the world to save sinners to accept us as we are, set us free from evil's power and enable us to live new lives in him. Amen.

Today's Gospel Reading: Mark 1 vv 29-39

Jesus Heals Many at Simon's House

As soon as they left the synagogue, they entered the house of Simon and Andrew, with James and John. Now Simon's mother-in-law was in bed

with a fever, and they told him about her at once. He came and took her by the hand and lifted her up. Then the fever left her, and she began to serve them.

That evening, at sunset, they brought to him all who were sick or possessed with demons. And the whole city was gathered around the door. And he cured many who were sick with various diseases, and cast out many demons; and he would not permit the demons to speak, because they knew him.

A Preaching Tour in Galilee

In the morning, while it was still very dark, he got up and went out to a deserted place, and there he prayed. And Simon and his companions hunted for him. When they found him, they said to him, 'Everyone is searching for you.' He answered, 'Let us go on to the neighbouring towns, so that I may proclaim the message there also; for that is what I came out to do.' And he went throughout Galilee, proclaiming the message in their synagogues and casting out demons.

Time to Reflect

In Luke's gospel Jesus sets out his priorities in what we sometimes call his manifesto (Luke 4 vv 14-21), but Mark chooses to let us know what Jesus' priorities are by giving us a whirlwind tour of what Jesus was *doing* at the beginning of his ministry. Jesus teaches in the synagogue where he heals a man with an unclean spirit. Straight afterwards, he goes to the house of Simon, one of the disciples he's called just recently. There he finds Simon's mother-in-law in the grip of a fever and heals her. Then, as the news spreads through the town, people come to him in droves, and he heals them, freeing them from whatever is holding them captive, whether it's physical illness or what were then seen as demons. The kingdom is proclaimed in actions, whether that's in the freeing of a particular individual from illness or the healing of crowds of people. Mark sees the individual healings as important both for the person concerned and as signs of the kingdom.

After the evening healing people in Capernaum, Jesus gets up early and goes off to a quiet place to spend time with God his Father. When Simon and the others come to find

him, expecting him to return to the town, Jesus is sure that it's time to move on; his mission is not just to Capernaum, but to the other local towns, the whole region, and even wider than that.

Over Christmas there was a programme about Princess Diana; we saw just a few minutes of it by chance, but those few minutes showed Diana reaching out to shake hands with people with Aids, breaking down the prejudice which entrapped and isolated them. Like those handshakes Diana gave, the freedom Jesus came to bring from all that holds us captive is not some abstract idea; it's real and tangible. At a time when our inability to touch each other is especially painful, Jesus still reaches out to touch us and lift us up as he did Simon's mother-in-law. The good news of the kingdom is for all; but it's also for each of us individually and personally. However unloveable or unforgiveable we may feel we are, we matter and God in Jesus reaches out to us.

Take a time to sit quietly

A time of prayer

Loving God, we pray for the community and country of which we are a part. For those who are exhausted with caring for others and long for a break. For those who have had enough of

restrictions, of not being able to meet with friends and family, and feel they cannot stand it any longer, and for those who are angry and frightened, who feel their only hope is just to try and hang on until things get better.

Loving God, we pray for the leaders of the world, as they try and bring the pandemic under control.

Give them the wisdom and courage to respect every human life and seek freedom, justice and peace for all people.

Loving God we pray for the church, unite us by your Spirit, and enable us to witness to the hope we have in you.

Loving God, come to us now, as you have come to your people in every age. We thank you for all who have reflected the light of Christ. Help us to follow their example and bring us with them to live for ever in your kingdom. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father

Hymn: Listen to Seek ye first the kingdom of God (StF254)

Or sing a verse of a hymn that comes to mind

<https://youtu.be/4C-fIDs33Dg>

Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness,

and all these things shall be added unto you;

Allelu-, alleluia:

Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia,
allelu-, alleluia!

Ask, and it shall be given unto you;
seek and ye shall find;
knock, and the door shall be opened unto to you;

Allelu-, alleluia:

We shall not live by bread alone,
but by every word
that proceeds from the mouth of the Lord;

Allelu-, alleluia:

Karen Lafferty (b. 1948)

A prayer of blessing

May God, the giver of hope, fill us with all joy and peace because we trust in him, and the blessing of God Father, Son and Holy spirit be with us all. Amen

Original Materials by Jean Ware

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Local Churches 263610

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.