

Sunday 28th 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.

Opening Prayer

Jesus lead us to the Father by your Spirit; help us draw near. As we come with awe and gladness, help us draw near. Amen (Selected lines from STF 29)

Hymn: The God of Abraham Praise (STF 91)

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

<https://www.methodist.org.uk/our-faith/worship/singing-the-faith-plus/hymns/the-god-of-abraham-praise-stf-91/>

The God of Abraham praise,
who reigns enthroned above,
Ancient of everlasting Days,
and God of love.
Jehovah! Great I AM!
By earth and heaven confessed;
I bow and bless the sacred name
for ever blessed.

He by himself has sworn,
I on his oath depend:
I shall, on eagles' wings upborne,
to heaven ascend;

I shall behold his face,
I shall his power adore
and sing the wonders of his grace
for evermore.

The God who reigns on high
the great archangels sing;
and 'Holy, holy, holy,' cry,
'Almighty King,
who was and is the same,
and evermore shall be;
Jehovah, Father, great I AM,
we worship thee.'

Before the Saviour's face
the ransomed nations bow;
o'erwhelmed at his almighty grace,
for ever new:
he shows his prints of love,
they kindle to a flame,
and sound through all the worlds
above
the slaughtered Lamb.

The whole triumphant host
give thanks to God on high;
'Hail, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost!'

they ever cry.
Hail, Abraham's God, and ours!
We join the heavenly throng,
and celebrate with all our powers
in endless song.

Thomas Olivers (1725-1799)

Let us pray together

God of all grace
We come before you to praise you,
mindful that you are the God of our
ancestors, the God who made and
keeps your promises. In Christ you
showed us love that was willing to
die on a cross for us. The Holy Spirit
lives in our hearts and we rejoice
that she binds us together as a family
of faith. For these things we rejoice.

We are thankful for the wonder of
nature that captivates us. We are
thankful for all those people we love
and care about and who bring great
joy to our lives.

Yet we know that we do not live as
your children or keep your
commandments. If you kept a record
of our sins, we could not stand.
Joyously we know that through
Christ's abundance grace we are
forgiven.

Thanks be to God.

Amen

Today's Reading from the Old

Testament Genesis 17:1-7, 15-16

When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the Lord appeared to Abram, and said to him, 'I am God Almighty; walk before me, and be blameless. And I will make my covenant between me and you, and will make you exceedingly numerous.' Then Abram fell on his face; and God said to him, 'As for me, this is my covenant with you: You shall be the ancestor of a multitude of nations. No longer shall your name be Abram, but your name shall be Abraham; for I have made you the ancestor of a multitude of nations. I will make you exceedingly fruitful; and I will make nations of you, and kings shall come from you. I will establish my covenant between me and you, and your offspring after you throughout their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your offspring after you.

God said to Abraham, 'As for Sarai your wife, you shall not call her Sarai, but Sarah shall be her name. I will bless her, and moreover I will give you a son by her. I will bless her, and she shall give rise to nations; kings of peoples shall come from her.'

Today's Gospel Reading:

Mark 8:31-48

Then he began to teach them that the Son of Man must undergo great suffering, and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests, and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again. He said all this quite openly. And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. But turning and looking at his disciples, he rebuked Peter and said, 'Get behind me, Satan! For you are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things.'

He called the crowd with his disciples, and said to them, 'If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake, and for the sake of the gospel, will save it. For what will it profit them to gain the whole world and forfeit their life? Indeed, what can they give in return for their life? Those who are ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of them the Son of Man will also be ashamed when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.'

Time to Reflect

Do you always manage to do something you have said you will do? Or do you sometimes like me find time runs away with you, you simply forget or that it just proves to be impossible?

In today's Bible passages we see the opposite we see a God who is faithful and who always does what has been promised. We have already been assured of pardon for our knowing that is true because 'if we confess our sins, he who is faithful and just will forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness' (1 John 1:9)

In our Genesis reading we see the making of the Covenant with Abraham. Even Abraham's name was changed from Abram to reflect this. We know that God's people did not always follow God but we do know that God kept that covenant for God is faithful.

Perhaps the ultimate expression of God's faithfulness was Christ- God incarnate- dying on the cross for us. In our gospel reading Jesus makes it clear that he must suffer and die, choosing to suffer for us out of pure obedience and love.

Jesus offered us a challenge as to whether we are prepared to take up

our cross and follow him? In Lent we traditionally think about temptation. Perhaps the ultimate temptation is not to be faithful to Christ. We know that because he was faithful to his calling we can be equipped in the power of the Holy Spirit to be faithful to our calling to follow him.

Take a time to sit quietly

A time of prayer (please add your own prayers where the ellipses are)

Loving God,

We pray for our world. Particularly thinking of those places we know that are on our screens on the news this week...

We pray for our communities and particularly those parts of our communities where hurt or division is felt...

We pray for those we know who are sick and suffering and ask that they know your presence...

We remember all who have died and their families and ask that you comfort the bereaved and hold those who have died in your eternal care...

Merciful God accept these prayers for the sake of your Son our saviour Jesus Christ. Amen

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father

Listen to Faithful (Lou Fellingham)

<https://youtu.be/h0vm5JNfJ34>

or sing a verse of a hymn that comes to mind

A prayer of blessing

May we know the faithfulness of God in our lives, may we live with the assurance we are children of God and know ourselves to be loved. May we find ourselves faithful even amidst temptation.

And the blessing of God the Three in One reside with us always. Amen

Original Materials by James Blackhall

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Local Churches 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.