

Sunday 30 January 2022

This short act of worship has been prepared for you to use at home. We invite you to spend a few moments with God, knowing that other people across the Methodist Connexion are sharing this act of worship with you.

Opening Prayer

Lord, I worship you and seek your word. I long to share worship with others, but know I can offer you the worship of my heart. Amen.

Hymn: StF 443 "Come let us sing of a wonderful love"

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

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XCSx7ZZ3-2I>

Come, let us sing of a wonderful love,
tender and true;
out of the heart of the Father above,
streaming to me and to you:
wonderful love
dwells in the heart of the Father above.

Jesus, the Saviour, this gospel to tell,
joyfully came;
came with the helpless and hopeless to dwell,
sharing their sorrow and shame;
seeking the lost,
saving, redeeming at measureless cost.

Jesus is seeking the wanderers yet;
why do they roam?
Love only waits to forgive and forget;
home, weary wanderer, home!
Wonderful love
dwells in the heart of the Father above.

Come to my heart, O thou wonderful love,
come and abide,
lifting my life, till it rises above
envy and falsehood and pride;
seeking to be
lowly and humble, a learner of thee.

Robert Walmsley (1831-1905)

Let us pray together

Lord, I look in wonder at the world you have created, a world that sustains life. I thank you for the gift of life and the joy of living in fellowship with others. I confess that I have failed to live as you would have me live. Yet, even in confession, I know your forgiveness through the suffering and death of your Son, Jesus Christ. Amen.

Today's Reading from the Old Testament

Jeremiah 1: 4 – 10

Jeremiah's Call and Commission

⁴ Now the word of the Lord came to me saying,

⁵ 'Before I formed you in the womb I knew you,

and before you were born I consecrated you;

I appointed you a prophet to the nations.'

⁶ Then I said, 'Ah, Lord God! Truly I do not

know how to speak, for I am only a boy.’⁷ But the Lord said to me, ‘Do not say, “I am only a boy”; for you shall go to all to whom I send you, and you shall speak whatever I command you.

⁸ Do not be afraid of them, for I am with you to deliver you, says the Lord.’

⁹ Then the Lord put out his hand and touched my mouth; and the Lord said to me,

‘Now I have put my words in your mouth.

¹⁰ See, today I appoint you over nations and over kingdoms, to pluck up and to pull down, to destroy and to overthrow, to build and to plant.’

Today’s Epistle Reading:

1 Corinthians: 13: 1 – 13

The Gift of Love

¹ If I speak in the tongues of mortals and of angels, but do not have love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. ² And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. ³ If I give away all my possessions, and if I hand over my body so that I may boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing.

⁴ Love is patient; love is kind; love is not envious or boastful or arrogant ⁵ or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; ⁶ it does not rejoice in wrongdoing, but rejoices in the truth. ⁷ It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

⁸ Love never ends. But as for prophecies, they will come to an end; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will come to an end. ⁹ For we know only in part, and we prophesy only in part; ¹⁰ but when the complete comes, the partial will come to an end. ¹¹ When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child; when I became an adult, I put an end to childish ways. ¹² For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then we will see face to face. Now I know only in part; then I will know fully, even as I have been fully known. ¹³ And now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; and the greatest of these is love.

The Song of Simeon (StF 794)

NUNC DIMITTIS (The Song of Simeon)

Now, Lord, you let your servant go in peace:

your word has been fulfilled.

My own eyes have seen the salvation which you have prepared in the sight of every people;

A light to reveal you to the nations and the glory of your people Israel.

Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit; as it was in the beginning is now and shall be for ever. Amen.

From Common Worship

Today’s Gospel Reading: Luke 4: 21 -30

The Rejection of Jesus at Nazareth

²¹ Then he began to say to them, ‘Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.’ ²² All spoke well of him and were amazed at the gracious words that came from his mouth. They said, ‘Is not this

Joseph's son?' ²³He said to them, 'Doubtless you will quote to me this proverb, "Doctor, cure yourself!" And you will say, "Do here also in your home town the things that we have heard you did at Capernaum." ' ²⁴And he said, 'Truly I tell you, no prophet is accepted in the prophet's home town. ²⁵But the truth is, there were many widows in Israel in the time of Elijah, when the heaven was shut up for three years and six months, and there was a severe famine over all the land; ²⁶yet Elijah was sent to none of them except to a widow at Zarephath in Sidon. ²⁷There were also many lepers in Israel in the time of the prophet Elisha, and none of them was cleansed except Naaman the Syrian.' ²⁸When they heard this, all in the synagogue were filled with rage. ²⁹They got up, drove him out of the town, and led him to the brow of the hill on which their town was built, so that they might hurl him off the cliff. ³⁰But he passed through the midst of them and went on his way.

Time to Reflect

The Song of Simeon celebrates his recognition of the baby Jesus as the Messiah.

This recognition contrasts starkly with the rejection Jesus experiences in the synagogue in Nazareth about 30 years later as told in our Gospel reading.

In a similar way Jeremiah writes confidently at the start of his work "Now the word of the Lord came to me", yet when, following God's word, he took the message to God's people he, and God's word, were initially met with rejection.

When we hear God's word do we accept it or reject it? This is not an easy question, as we must first ask if it is really God's word. Jesus himself warns us to beware of false prophets. So we cannot simply accept any notion that occurs to us, or message we are given, as being the word of God.

At this time our ability to ask if this is the Word of God may be limited if we cannot attend our normal worship and have only limited contact with others.

We can, however, start by asking of the word we have received, be that directly by God speaking to us or through the witness of a fellow Christian, does it reflect the loving God we know? Paul helps us answer that question with his explanation of the love of God in 1 Corinthians 13. This may not be the end of our journey, but may be a very good beginning.

Once we know if it is the word of God, can we follow it and proclaim it as Simeon and Jeremiah?

Take a time to sit quietly

A time of prayer

I thank you Lord for the gift of your Son: for his life, sufferings and death and for his Resurrection and Ascension, for the witness, salvation and hope he gives.

I thank you for the gift of your Holy Spirit to those who follow you, and especially for the gift of that Spirit in your Church. I rejoice in the work and witness of your Church and pray that it may continue to strive to fulfil your work and proclaim your Love.

I pray for the needs of the world, thinking especially for all those suffering in any way.

Especially be with..... (people known to me or personal concerns). I give thanks for those who seek to help and comfort those in need.

Be with those whose lives impact others: leaders in government or the workplace, health care and emergency workers, teachers and all those on whom people depend. Grant them the wisdom and the strength to know and to follow your way.

I pray that, in my own life, I might better know your Love in Jesus, and may be strengthened by your Spirit to follow you.

Amen

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father

Hymn: Listen to "Have you heard God's voice?" (StF 662)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0LeBah4tflg>

Have you heard God's voice; has your heart been stirred?

Are you still prepared to follow?

Have you made a choice to remain and serve,
though the way be rough and narrow?

Will you walk the path that will cost you much

and embrace the pain and sorrow?

Will you trust in One who entrusts to you

the disciples of tomorrow?

Will you use your voice; will you not sit down

when the multitudes are silent?

Will you make a choice to stand your ground

when the crowds are turning violent?

In your city streets will you be God's heart?

Will you listen to the voiceless?

Will you stop and eat, and when friendships start,
will you share your faith with the faithless?

Will you watch the news with the eyes of faith

and believe it could be different?

Will you share your views using words of grace?

Will you leave a thoughtful imprint?

We will walk the path that will cost us much

and embrace the pain and sorrow.

We will trust in One who entrusts to us the disciples of tomorrow.

Jacqueline G. Jones

A prayer of blessing

May God be gracious to us and bless us.

May God's face shine upon us.

May God's ways be known upon earth,
his saving power among the nations.

May the blessing of God

the Father, Son and Holy Spirit

be with us all, this day and always.

(Includes vv1,2 from Psalm No 67)

Original Materials by Ralph Frankland,
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Local Churches CCCLi 363610

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