

Worship at Home - Sunday 3rd April 2022 – Lent 5

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 Words

When the Lord restored his people's
fortunes
we were like those who dreamed.
Our mouths were filled with laughter.
The nations around us said:
"The Lord has done great things for them."
Our tongues praised God with songs of
joy.
The Lord indeed does great things for us
and we are filled with joy.

(Ps 126 NIV adapted)

Hymn: StF 94 – To God be the glory
Sing/ Read /pray /proclaim the words or listen to
it here: [To God Be The Glory \(Royal Albert Hall,
London\) - YouTube](#)

To God be the glory, great things he has
done!
So loved he the world that he gave us his
Son,
who yielded his life in atonement for sin,
and opened the life-gate that all may go
in:

Praise the Lord! Praise the Lord!
Let the earth hear his voice!
Praise the Lord! Praise the Lord!
Let the people rejoice!

O come to the Father, through Jesus
the Son;
and give him the glory -- great things
he has done!

O perfect redemption, the purchase of
blood,
to every believer the promise of God!
And every offender who truly believes,
that moment from Jesus a pardon
receives:

Great things he has taught us, great things
he has done,
and great our rejoicing through Jesus the
Son;
but purer, and higher, and greater will be
our wonder, our rapture, when Jesus we
see:

Frances Jane van Alstyne, (Fanny Crosby) (1820-1915)

Let us pray together

God, Lord of history and beyond, you were
before the beginning, and will endure
beyond, time. We worship you.

In recognising your greatness, we
acknowledge how small we are, how little
we understand, how often we fail to see
the bigger picture of your kingdom behind
the events of our times and lives. We bow
before you.

Yet you know us; you have called us your people, by name, as you have called people from the beginning of time. You have created us for your purpose and shaped us through our experiences. You surprise us by your actions and refresh us with water in dry places. We adore you.

In Jesus you have demonstrated your humility and love, undertaking the struggle against evil, sin and death on our behalf and offering us not only forgiveness, but new life in his name. We thank you.

Forgive us if we take your love for granted, or dismiss your kindness as being of little worth. Restore our sense of your calling to us, until we pour out our lives as a gift of gratitude and reflection of our joy in being yours. Through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen

Today's Reading from the Old Testament:

Isaiah 43:16-21

Thus says the Lord,
who makes a way in the sea,
a path in the mighty waters,
who brings out chariot and horse,
army and warrior;
they lie down, they cannot rise,
they are extinguished, quenched like a wick:
Do not remember the former things,
or consider the things of old.
I am about to do a new thing;
now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?
I will make a way in the wilderness
and rivers in the desert.
The wild animals will honour me,

the jackals and the ostriches;
for I give water in the wilderness,
rivers in the desert,
to give drink to my chosen people,
the people whom I formed for myself
so that they might declare my praise.

Today's Gospel Reading: John 12:1-8

John 12:1-8

Six days before the Passover Jesus came to Bethany, the home of Lazarus, whom he had raised from the dead. There they gave a dinner for him. Martha served, and Lazarus was one of those at the table with him. Mary took a pound of costly perfume made of pure nard, anointed Jesus' feet, and wiped them with her hair. The house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume. But Judas Iscariot, one of his disciples (the one who was about to betray him), said, 'Why was this perfume not sold for three hundred denarii and the money given to the poor?' (He said this not because he cared about the poor, but because he was a thief; he kept the common purse and used to steal what was put into it.) Jesus said, 'Leave her alone. She bought it so that she might keep it for the day of my burial. You always have the poor with you, but you do not always have me.'

Time to Reflect

When Covid-19 appeared in the world, it changed our lives in ways we would never have imagined. It has changed how we work, how we relate, and how confident we may be in the plans we make for the future. As I write this, war has begun in Ukraine: people are on the move; whole

neighbourhoods have been shattered by bombardment. The future is uncertain, not just in the region, but across the world. Politicians and journalists are saying that the world has changed - again. The God who spoke, through the prophet Isaiah, to warn his people that failure to change their ways would lead to exile and destruction is the same God who, in our reading today, promises a return and restoration. Not only that, but he will smooth the path into their new future. God invites the people to clear their minds of hopes of returning to the way things used to be. He is doing something new. It is already in process; we just may not have perceived it yet.

Isn't this always the case? We are in constant change as individuals. Society and technology continually alter as innovation and development goes on. New discoveries and fresh ideas arise that challenge our former knowledge and presuppositions. Sometimes those things are welcome, sometimes not. But in the ebbs and flows of history, somehow, God is doing a new thing; always doing new things.

So, in the life of Jesus, he is doing something uniquely new. He is wrapping up the sacred history of the past, focussed on one family, one nation, in the story of one man who fulfils the calling of Ancient Israel; and through his dying and rising, Jesus opens up the presence of God to all people. He preaches a message of a new age already here among us, and brings that age to birth, empowering those who take him at his word to continue his work of welcome and transformation across all time and in all places.

Now, in Lent, we journey with him through the high drama, from Bethany to Gethsemane to Golgotha; from table to cross to grave. Today Mary foreshadows

what is to come, as she pours rich oils on Jesus' body; a sign for those who can perceive it, that the God who does new things is doing new things again.

Take a time to sit quietly

Where, in the twists and turns of your life and the life of the world today, do you glimpse God's new beginnings?

A time of prayer

Unchanging God, always moving on, never still, no matter how much we call for stability, hear our prayer:

for your church, rich in history and tradition, yet challenged by a new world and ever-developing need;

for our world, swept along in the currents of history, driven by political and economic forces, causing the rise and fall of nations and peoples;

for our country, seeking the common good, yet struggling with the challenge of making a fair future for all and needing fresh vision for the task;

for people wrapped up in the circumstances of their days, trying to make ends meet, to find freedom and satisfaction, dealing with illness, grief or loss;

Unchanging God, open our eyes to your new possibilities, and our hearts to your courage in the face of the unknown.

Through Jesus Christ our Lord

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father

Hymn: Listen to We seek your kingdom

[We Seek Your Kingdom \(Official Video\) |](#)

[Noel Robinson, Lou Fellingham, Andy Flannagan, Donna Akodu - YouTube](#) or

sing a verse of a hymn that comes to mind

A prayer of blessing

May the God of new beginnings hold us in peace, fill us with hope and guide us by wisdom as we step each day into the unknown future with him. **Amen.**

Original Materials: Revd. Dave Bonny, East Staffordshire and South Derbyshire Circuit

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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.

For more worship resources see

[The Bible \(methodist.org.uk\)](http://methodist.org.uk)

[Singing the Faith Plus \(methodist.org.uk\)](http://methodist.org.uk)