

## Wesley Methodist Church 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2020

Welcome to worship this morning. You are joining with others who are following this service in their own homes too. We are the church gathered but not together. We are joining with the whole company of heaven and the church militant on earth. We meet in God's presence, held by his redeeming grace. If you have a hymn book with you that is great. For this week only the words have been printed in the text. In future weeks links will be given or hymn books distributed. Feel free to sing the hymns or simply read these great words of our faith. You may want to read the words out loud or recite them in your head. There are optional activities listed at the end of the service.

### Prayer

Loving God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, we meet in your holy name to worship you the Creator, Saviour and Sustainer of the whole world. We ask that you come close to us this morning. In your presence may we know ourselves as part of your family.

### Hymn 17 With gladness we worship (H&P 19)

With gladness we worship, rejoice as we sing,  
free hearts and free voices how blessed to bring;  
the old thankful story shall scale thine abode,  
thou King of all glory, most bountiful God.

Thy right would we give thee – true homage thy due,  
and honour eternal, the universe through,  
with all thy creation, earth, heaven and sea,  
in one acclamation we celebrate thee.

Renewed by thy Spirit, redeemed by thy Son,  
thy children revere thee for all thou hast done.  
O Father! Returning to love and to light,  
thy children are yearning to praise thee aright.

We join with the angels and so there is given  
from earth alleluia in answer to heaven.  
Amen! Be thou glorious below and above,  
redeeming, victorious, and infinite Love!

### Lent Liturgy

Lent speaks to us of God's love and commitment to us. It culminates in the Passion of Christ on the cross on Good Friday. God's extraordinary compassion invites a response. In the New Testament we read of commandments to love. Each Sunday in Lent we will focus on one such command.

This week we hear 'Love each other'.

**We choose to love each other**

### Prayer

Praise to you, Lord our God – King of Creation;  
Maker and minder of all we know: the very heart of all being.  
We praise you.  
Your glory is seen in majestic grandeur,  
in intricate miniature,  
in beauty and truth,  
in love, in laughter,  
in tears, in joy.

Praise to you, Lord our God – come amongst us.  
Redeemer of the world: healing brokenness,  
speaking truth,  
showing love,  
giving self on the Cross in Christ.

Praise to you, Lord our God,  
coming now,  
giving life,  
breathing hope,  
lighting minds,  
lifting hearts,  
falling fresh on all who call.

Praise to you, Lord our God. Amen.

(‘The Word in the World’ Donald Hilton)

Lord’s Prayer – on the inside back cover of the hymn book

Pause/Reflection – what can you see through your window that warms your heart? Look at whatever it is and enjoy.

Hymn 102 For the beauty of the earth (H&P 333)

For the beauty of the earth,  
for the beauty of the skies,  
for the love which from our birth  
over and around us lies.

*Gracious God wo you we raise  
this our sacrifice of praise.*

For the beauty of each hour  
of the day and of the night,  
hill and vale, and tree and flower,  
sun and moon and stars of light.

*Gracious God wo you we raise  
this our sacrifice of praise.*

For the joy of ear and eye,  
for the heart and mind’s delight,  
for the mystic harmony  
linking sense to sound and sight

*Gracious God wo you we raise  
this our sacrifice of praise.*

For the joy of human love,  
brother, sister, parent child,  
friends on earth, and friends above,  
pleasures pure and undefiled.

*Gracious God wo you we raise  
this our sacrifice of praise.*

Readings - Psalm 34 read it slowly maybe twice. What stands out for you?  
Why do you think those words/word stood out?

Hymn 160 Powerful in making us wise to salvation (H&P 479)

Powerful in making us wise to salvation  
witness to faith in Christ Jesus the Word;  
breathed out for all by the life-giving Father –  
these are the scriptures, and thus speaks the Lord.

Hammer for action and compass for travel,  
map in the desert and lamp in the dark;  
teaching, rebuking, correcting and training –  
these are the scriptures, and this is their work.

Prophecy, history, song and commandment,  
gospel and letter and dream from on high;  
words of the wise who were steered by the Spirit –  
these are the scriptures; on them we rely.

Gift for God's servants to fit them completely,  
fully equipping to walk in his ways;  
guide to good work and effective believing –  
these are the scriptures; for these we give praise.

Reflection/Question

Today is Mothering Sunday. This is the reason for the particular Gospel reading. In our present culture the focus is on Mothers' Day. Years ago the focus was on the Church as our mother. Consider when has the Church acted like a mother to you? Give thanks for those times.

How might that relationship which Jesus initiates between Mary and John be a model of Christian fellowship? Loving each other as if the other is our son/mother. Would this enable us to relate better? Would we be more open or kind or thoughtful?

Hymn 88 Praise to the Lord (H&P 16)

Praise to the Lord, the Almighty, the King of creation  
O my soul, praise Him for He is thy health and salvation!  
All ye who hear, brothers and sisters draw near  
praise Him in glad adoration

Praise to the Lord, who doth prosper they work and defend thee  
surely His goodness and mercy here daily attend thee  
ponder anew what the Almighty can do  
who with His love doth befriend thee

Praise to the Lord, who doth nourish thy life and restore thee,  
fitting thee well for the tasks that are ever before thee,  
then to thy need he like a mother doth speed,  
spreading the wings of grace o'er thee.

Praise to the Lord, who when darkness of sin is abounding,  
who when the godless do triumph, all virtue confounding,  
sheddeth his light, chaseth the horrors of night,  
saints with his mercy surrounding.

Praise to the Lord, O let all that is in me adore Him!  
All that hath life and breath, come now with praises before Him  
Let the 'amen' sound from His people again  
gladly for aye we adore Him

### Prayers

You might prefer to spend this time quietly praying your own prayers. You might consider praying around the subject of motherhood. Alternatively, you might use the following:

Gracious God, you love the world so much that you gave all you are to save it. Please hear our prayer for your world. Where there is fear conquer it with your perfect love. Where difficult decisions need to be made guide those making them. Where there is war and conflict strengthen the arm of those seeking to bring justice and peace.

Silence

Gracious God, we come to pray for this nation. Our prayer, loving God, is that the present crisis will result in us being more caring and tolerant. Our prayer is that we will learn your art of caring and sharing so that all may benefit from the resources you have given. Give us a commitment to love our neighbour in practical ways.

Silence

Gracious God, we pray for your church. May we model the life of community you long for all to embrace. Forgive the times when we fall short – insensitive words, thoughtless actions, selfish decisions, careless conversation. (Pause)

Forgive us and guide your church, Lord, in your ways.

Silence

Gracious God, we pray for those who need our prayers today .....

We thank you that you are present in each of the situations for which we have prayed.

Gracious and loving God, we offer these prayers in faith and in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour. Amen

### Hymn 563 O Jesus, I have promised (H&P 704)

O Jesus, I have promised  
to serve Thee to the end;  
Lord, be for ever near me,  
my master and my friend;  
I shall not fear the battle  
if Thou art by my side,  
nor wander from the pathway  
if Thou wilt be my guide.

O, let me feel you near me;  
the world is ever near;  
I see the sights that dazzle,  
the tempting sounds I hear;  
my foes are ever near me,  
around me and within;  
but, Jesus, now draw nearer,  
and shield my soul from sin.

O, let me hear you speaking,  
in accents clear and still,

above the storms of passion,  
the murmurs of self-will;  
O, speak to reassure me,  
to hasten, or control;  
O, speak, and make me listen,  
O Guardian of my soul.

O Jesus, you have promised  
to all who follow you,  
that where you are in glory  
your servant shall be there too;  
and Jesus, I have promised  
to serve you to the end;  
O, give me grace to follow,  
my master and my friend.

Grace (say these words to those who are sharing this worship & hear them

saying the words to you)

May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all.

Amen

#### Possible Activities

- a. I wonder if children/young people/adults would like to write a poem about God's love for us.
- b. Draw a picture about what's happening in the world.
- c. Find a poem on the internet which you really like and share it with someone.
- d. Write a letter/send a picture/poem to someone. Tell them you're thinking of them and praying for them. Enable them to know they may be isolated, but they are not forgotten.