

Worship at Home - Sunday 20th February 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

You may like to be still, light a candle, or listen to a calming piece of music as you prepare to worship.

Holy God, as we come to worship you, help us to remember, that we belong to your church, your people, your world, we are not alone. Draw us together by your Spirit as we worship. Amen.

Hymn: In the wonder of creation (StF 110)

Sing/ Read /pray /proclaim the words

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X-DTv0f3xiM>

In the wonder of creation,
when all nature shares one song,
showing God's imagination,
all may see his love goes on.
Through the Holy Story spoken,
of God's people called as one,
gathered, exiled, saved and broken,
this we learn:his love goes on.

In the Christ who died to save us;
in God's risen, living Son;
through the Spirit, whom he gave us;
this we know:his love goes on.
In the telling of the gospel
Matthew, Mark and Luke and John
join the Church in testifying
through the years:his love goes on.

From the perfect days of gladness
when the sun has brightly shone,
to the slog of working madness,
all the while his love goes on.
Through the times of harsh temptation,
seeking strength but finding none,
in our human desperation,
mercy comes:his love goes on.

In the joys of celebration,
of new birth or victory won,
in the deep peace of salvation,
tell the world his love goes on!
Through the dark days of depression,
when all sign of faith is gone,
hope may find no fresh expression,
but we trust his love goes on.

Through the hopes of our tomorrows,
and the things we've left undone --
future joys and present sorrows --
through all time, his love goes on.
In our Kingdom-shaped endeavour,
when God's glorious work is done,
to the promise of forever,
God is here:his love goes on.

Andrew T. Murphy (b. 1981)

Let us pray together

Holy God, Creator, Redeemer and Sustainer,
You are the source of life, and love, and hope.
In love you sent your Son to live among your
people, to enter the frailty of human flesh.
Befriending the 'wrong' sort of people, Jesus,
powerfully proclaimed your message,
demonstrating the depth and breadth of your
great love, love too strong to be bound and
held by death, love that burst forth from a
tomb with the rising sun.

Holy Spirit of God, ignite your spark of love
within each of us that we may love and serve
our neighbours, our communities and above
all, you.

Holy God, we come also to ask your
forgiveness... (Time of quiet prayer)

Our liberating God of love, hope and peace,
forgives us in Christ, renews, inspires, and
enables us through the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Today's Gospel Reading: Luke 6: 27-38

Time to Reflect

'Do to others as you would have them do to you.'

In our gospel reading today we find Jesus offering some typically challenging words. Jesus calls us, his followers, to love our enemies, to do good to those who hate us, to bless those who curse us, to offer the other cheek if someone strikes us. These words are challenging because they are in themselves demanding. They are also challenging because they can so easily be taken out of context and become unhelpful if applied literally and without nuance, especially where matters of violence or abuse are concerned.

In this passage, Christ reminds his followers that discipleship is costly - 'if you love those who love you, what credit is that to you?' Perhaps this is a word of challenge for us in all aspects of our lives, in our homes, our communities, our churches. What might it mean to love, to withhold judgement, to pray for those whom we find difficult? We know that sometimes in our lives as disciples we will be asked to do things that make us uncomfortable. Christ continues to call us to stand against systems of injustice, prejudice and hurt rather than colluding with them.

This passage raises questions for our own reflections. How do we treat those we disagree with, struggle with, even, dare I say, hate? Are we too quick to judge others or make assumptions? Where do the bounds of our love cease? What steps might we take as disciples to continue to live out Jesus' words of love?

One of my favourite TV programmes is Call the Midwife and this beautiful quote appeared on an episode a few series ago. "And there was love, because love grows where nothing else is certain - changing its shape to fit the space required." As we reflect on the ever-challenging prophetic words of

Jesus, I pray that our love may grow when nothing else is certain – always changing its shape to fit the space required. Jesus' love for us is never-ending. How might we reflect that love more fully in the world?

A time of prayer

Fill in the spaces within these prayers with your own words or times of silence.

Holy God, we come to you today with our prayers:

We pray for our world...
Your kingdom come. Your will be done.

We pray for the Church...
Your kingdom come. Your will be done.

We pray for all those striving for truth and justice...
Your kingdom come. Your will be done.

We pray for those we know and love who need our prayers...
Your kingdom come. Your will be done.

We offer all our prayers in and through the name of our living Lord Jesus Christ, Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father

Hymn: Listen to For everyone born (a place at the table)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pfRSaFyfQP8>

A prayer of blessing (Singing the Faith 774)

'The peace of the earth be with you,
the peace of the heavens too;
the peace of the rivers be with you,
the peace of the oceans too.
Deep peace falling over you.
God's peace growing in you.

Guatemalan traditional melody
translated by Christine Carson (b.1965)

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)

Gospel Reading - Luke 6:27-38

27 'But I say to you that listen, Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, ²⁸ bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you. ²⁹ If anyone strikes you on the cheek, offer the other also; and from anyone who takes away your coat do not withhold even your shirt. ³⁰ Give to everyone who begs from you; and if anyone takes away your goods, do not ask for them again. ³¹ Do to others as you would have them do to you.

32 'If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them. ³³ If you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners do the same. ³⁴ If you lend to those from whom you hope to receive, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, to receive as much again. ³⁵ But love your enemies, do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return. Your reward will be great, and you will be children of the Most High; for he is kind to the ungrateful and the wicked. ³⁶ Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful. ³⁷ 'Do not judge, and you will not be judged; do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven; ³⁸ give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap; for the measure you give will be the measure you get back.'