

## Worship at Home - Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> 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

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

### **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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CCLI 603987

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)

### **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.

### **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.'