

Teddington Circuit Worship at Home Sheets

Sunday 24th May 2020

This short act of worship has been prepared for you to use whilst we are unable to use Methodist Church premises. If you are well enough why not spend a few moments with God, knowing that other people are sharing this act of worship with you. With thanks to David Innes, Vicci Davidson, Robert Mortimer and the Connexional team for their contributions

Opening Prayer

Sing to God, sing praises to his name; lift up a song to him who rides upon the clouds—his name is the LORD—be exultant before him. (Psalm 68)

As I come before you God help me to praise your name. Focus my mind on your presence with me and remind me that I am joined together with people around the world worshipping at home. May your name be glorified in our worship. Amen.

Hymn: Crown him with many crowns (Singing the Faith 347)

www.youtube.com/watch?v=s7OCs0d_4vM

Crown him with many crowns,
the Lamb upon his throne.
Hark! how the heavenly anthem drowns
all music but its own.
Awake, my soul, and sing
of him who died for thee,
and hail him as thy matchless King
through all eternity.

Crown him the Son of God,
before the worlds began;
and ye who tread where he has trod,
crown him the Son of Man,
who every grief has known
that wrings the human breast,
and takes and bears them for his own,
that all in him may rest.

Crown him the Lord of life,
who triumphed o'er the grave,
and rose victorious in the strife
for those he came to save.
His glories now we sing,
who died, and rose on high;
who died, eternal life to bring,
and lives, that death may die.

Crown him the Lord of peace,
whose power a sceptre sways
from pole to pole, that wars may cease,
absorbed in prayer and praise.
His reign shall know no end,

and round his pierced feet
fair flowers of paradise extend
their fragrance ever sweet.

Crown him the Lord of love;
behold his hands and side -
rich wounds, yet visible above,
in beauty glorified.
All hail, Redeemer, hail!
for thou hast died for me;
thy praise and glory shall not fail
throughout eternity.

Let us pray together

Everyday God,

We praise you that you are with us in every part of
our lives and you never stop loving us.

We praise you for the world you created and the
beautiful things we see around us.

We praise you that you came to earth in Jesus to show
us in person how much you care about us and the
world we live in. As we remember your ascension we
thank you that you did not leave us alone but sent
your Spirit so that we can always know you are with
us.

You invite us to join in your work of loving people and
the planet and we pray that you show us how we can
share in your mission of love. In Jesus name we pray,
Amen.

A Collect for Aldersgate Sunday

God of overwhelming grace,
you ignited the spark of your grace in John and
Charles Wesley and a passion for holiness, justice and
sharing your great love with others.

Warm our hearts that we may trust in you.
Renew our conviction and inspire us to embrace new
opportunities even in difficulty.
Pour out your spirit on your people that we may be
united in your love and ready to share hope with the
world through Jesus who is one with you. Amen

Hymn: The Saviour when to heaven he rose (Singing the Faith 669)

www.youtube.com/watch?v=moD8YT4hpg0 (tune only)

The Saviour, when to heaven he rose,
in splendid triumph o'er his foes,
scattered his gifts on us below,
and wide his royal bounties flow.

Hence sprung the apostles' honoured name,
sacred beyond heroic fame;
in lowlier forms, to bless our eyes,
pastors from hence, and teachers rise.

From Christ their varied gifts derive,
and, fed by Christ, their graces live;
while, guarded by his mighty hand,
midst all the rage of hell they stand.

So shall the bright succession run
through the last courses of the sun;
while unborn Churches by their care
shall rise and flourish large and fair.

Jesus our Lord their hearts shall know -
the Spring whence all these blessings flow;
pastors and people shout his praise
through all the round of endless days. Amen

Reflection on 1 Peter 4:12-14, 5: 6-11

I am quite of fan of Bear Grylls not just for his life as adventurer/presenter or as the youngest man (at the time) to climb Mount Everest, or as Chief Scout of the United Kingdom and Oversea Territories, but as a committed Christian. I was given, last Christmas, 'Soul Fuel, a Daily devotional by Bear Grylls'. A few days ago, he quoted Proverbs 14:31 'when you are kind to the poor, you honour God.' Words not far from the words of Jesus in Matthew 25: 45 'whatever you did for the least of these you did for me.' Words too which echo those of John Wesley (quoted below) for us to remember on this, Aldersgate Sunday.

Life is tough for everyone as we cope with the effects of the covid 19, but may I suggest that however tough life is for us, it is part of our Christian calling to remember the needs of others less fortunate than ourselves. In the epistle for today, 1 Peter 5: 9 we read 'stand... firm in the faith because you know that

your brothers throughout the world are undergoing the same kind of sufferings'.

When I read the Proverbs quote my mind went to Uganda and I emailed Moses Zimbe, head of Nakulabye Primary School, Kampala, in which, many will know, Margaret and I have had an interest since I first visited in May 2003, to ask how they are coping with the coronavirus. In many parts of the world the poorest in community can only just survive by street trading - anything they can grow, buy cheaply and sell to passers-by. With a complete lockdown on movement and transport 'petty trading' as it is known becomes almost not existent and the result is no money to buy food. For many of the poorest in the world hunger and starvation is an even bigger threat than covid 19. Lockdown in this country has meant no Christian Aid Week collecting and, like me, many sharing in this service will have received appeals from charitable organisation desperately trying to help the poorest in different parts of the world. On this 'Aldersgate Sunday', I am reminded too of the words of John Wesley.

'Do all the good you can, by all the means you can, in all the ways you can, in all the places you can, at all the times you can, to all the people you can, as long as ever you can.'

I think the apostle Peter would agree. There is an urgent and growing need to support food banks in this country. TMC is a Partner church for All We Can. Other Circuit Churches may be also, or have particular aid agencies like Tearfund, MAF, Afrinspire or Leprosy Mission which they support. May we all do all we can through whatever agency we support, that we may echo the words of Jesus 'whatever you did for the least of these you did for me.'

Amen

The Lord's Prayer *Our Father*

Hymn: Hail the day that sees him rise
Hymns and Psalms 197

Sing, read or pray the words or you can find an older version of this hymn at

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7b_ODz_jgTs

Hail the day that sees him rise, Alleluia!
ravished from our wistful eyes! Alleluia!
Christ, awhile to mortals given, Alleluia!
reascends his native heaven: Alleluia!

There the glorious triumph waits: Alleluia!
lift your heads, eternal gates; Alleluia!
wide unfold the radiant scene; Alleluia!
take the King of Glory in! Alleluia!

Him though highest heaven receives, Alleluia!
still he loves the earth he leaves; Alleluia!
though returning to his throne, Alleluia!
still he calls the world his own: Alleluia!

See! He lifts his hands above; Alleluia!
see! He shows the prints of love; Alleluia!
hark! His gracious lips bestow Alleluia!
blessings on his Church below: Alleluia!
Master, parted from our sight, Alleluia!
high above the azure height, Alleluia!
grant our hearts to you may rise, Alleluia!
following you beyond the skies: Alleluia!

Charles Wesley (1707-1788)

A prayer of blessing

Holy God,
be with me as I leave this time of worship.
May I know your presence in my everyday and live
your message of love and hope.
Amen

Original Materials by Alison Seren

A Pastoral Letter from Rev. Vicci Davidson

Brothers and Sisters in Christ

As I return to work after my Sabbatical, I am blown away by the innovative and caring ways in which so many of you have responded to this unprecedented emergency. I laughingly said to the stewards that it was difficult to imagine anything too drastic happening while I was away and yet "too drastic" has indeed happened. This Circuit, with its competence and its love, has responded by telephoning, delivering food and services, writing and creating worship to be delivered on paper, via email, via You-Tube and I know that there will be many individual stories that I may never hear of pastoral care and Christian love.

For most of us, the idea that there could ever be a situation in which we were required to close our churches was unfathomable four months ago and yet here we are wondering how and when we will be able to open safely again. Meanwhile, we are discovering new language and competencies as we engage in different ways with all that technology can offer and already we are being asked to consider what of these new ways of working we should take forward into the future.

Even as we humans stay at home and reduce our consumption, the natural world is benefiting and yet also we are forced to confront the uncomfortable truth that it is easier for those of us with gardens, with larger houses, with online access, with bank cards, with cars, than it is for those without. More than anything we see the reality that we are not in the same boat as our brothers and sisters; on the same sea yes, but some in leaky life-rafts and others on luxury cruisers. We must surely give thought to the inequalities with which we live as we go on together.

What then does Scripture say to us in these difficult times? We could look at the story of Noah and the great flood and see some similarities in this opportunity to re-set the way in which the world works. But we might want to remember that God promised that he would never again destroy the world. It would be dangerous I think to suggest that this is in some way divine punishment. Nevertheless, there will be an opportunity to exit the ark and build anew when all of this is over.

We could look at the prophets Zechariah and Haggai and consider what it was like for those Jews who been in exile and who returned to try to build the temple and the city anew. Those who had remained behind

did not see the need to change what they were already doing and those who came back started with great plans but ended up being more interested in their own homes than in the temple and the worship of God. Zechariah and Haggai both have harsh things to say to the people, yet also that wonderful promise in Zechariah 8:23: This is what the Lord of Hosts says: "In those days, ten people from all languages and nations will take firm hold of one Jew by the hem of his robe and say, 'Let us go with you, because we have heard that God is with you.'" We know that has been a significant increase in interest in the things of God during this time. It is stated in the Guardian that 25% of the British public have tuned in to a religious service and websites from Wales to Leicester talk of millions rekindling an interest in religion. Perhaps it was always there but there was no time to express it. Perhaps in times of trouble people look outside themselves for help. How might we continue to speak to such seekers in the times to come?

Those of us in lockdown with families might turn to the story of Mary and Martha as people deal with things differently and those who bake, cook and clean may be tempted to feel aggrieved at those who use the opportunity to read and watch television. We are each of us different, and each of us will be learning more of our preferred modality as we continue to socially distance. Perhaps when we step "out of the ark", we can use what we have discovered about ourselves to reflect on whether we are contributing to our church family in the ways that suit our abilities best – although we might also need to think on those hard words of the Covenant Prayer that remind us that sometimes we are called to do things that are not our natural inclination.

I am currently telephoning members of the congregations where I have pastoral charge with the hope of speaking to each of you before I leave the Circuit at the end of July. However, if you need to speak to me before I get to you on my list, do please ring (07535511421) or email (rev.vicci@mail.com) and I will get back to you as soon as I can. In the meantime, let us all continue to explore the best ways of being Church now and in the future.

God bless,

Vicci