

# Teddington Circuit Worship at Home

Sunday July 19<sup>th</sup> 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 Vicci Davidson, Mark Gilks, Paul Barker and the Connexional team for their contributions.

## Call to worship from Genesis 28:14

“And all the families of earth shall be blessed in you and in your offspring.”

As we journey through this act of worship, we reflect on our part in the story of God's promise to Jacob and we ask ourselves: In what way am I and my church a blessing to the families of earth?

## Hymn: Amazing Grace StF440 HP 215

Sing/ Read /pray /proclaim the words or listen to it [here](#)

<https://youtu.be/NFL36m1VFdY>

Amazing grace -- how sweet the sound --  
that saved a wretch like me!  
I once was lost, but now am found,  
was blind, but now I see.

God's grace has taught my heart to fear,  
his grace my fears relieved;  
how precious did that grace appear  
the hour I first believed!

Through many dangers, toils and snares  
I have already come;  
God's grace has brought me safe thus far,  
and grace will lead me home.

The Lord has promised good to me,  
his word my hope secures;  
he will my shield and portion be  
as long as life endures.

And, when this heart and flesh shall fail  
and mortal life shall cease,  
I shall possess within the veil  
a life of joy and peace.

When we've been there ten thousand years  
bright shining as the sun,  
we've no less days to sing God's praise  
than when we first begun.

*John Newton (1725-1807) (alt.)*

## Prayers

Dear Lord

We are a mixed bunch!

There's great good in the world alongside powerful evil.

Our Church gets many things right but is also capable of not doing what Jesus would have us do.

And each of us are like that too!

Sometimes we successfully live out the Christian life with love, energy, and compassion. Yet other times we know we get it wrong, with thoughts, words and actions that are essentially evil.

We need your forgiveness. Yes, every day we need your forgiveness.

We need the Holy Spirit to lead us back onto the path of true faith.

We need tolerance of others when we perceive them as doing and saying wrong things. We need to enhance our ability to forgive, to be less judgemental, and to build up our compassionate action.

We marvel at the promise of salvation through the sacrifice and love of Jesus for all.

May that love empower our lives and engulf us at the hour of judgement.

Amen

## Today's Reading from the New Testament

Romans 8 v 12 - 25

## Reflection

I don't know if many of you take an interest in the stock market. The news bulletins often refer to FTSE 100 and whether the closing figure is higher or lower than the previous day. This index is often used as a barometer for the financial wellbeing of the nation.

Before the lockdown was enforced on 23<sup>rd</sup> March the FTSE index was showing that the top 100 companies

share value was looking quite healthy. Then with one announcement from our Prime Minister, these same companies were worth hundreds of millions of pounds less.

Some of you may have shares in a company that you worked for, or a financial institution when it was sold off. Each year you look forward to receiving a dividend payment, the value of which depends on the value of the shares at the time the dividend is due.

But when times are hard those that hold shares in a company have a responsibility to help bail them out and may be asked to give them some money to see them through the difficult times.

As children, I guess many of us were taught to share the things we have with others. This may have been our toys, or a bag of sweets. We were taught to share the good things we had. We were never asked to share the nasty things that happened, like a cut knee or broken bike.

Sharing can also be a costly business. In John's account of the feeding of the 5,000, in chapter 6, a young lad had 5 barley loaves and 2 fish. This was his lunch!! We are not told how willing the lad parted with his food, but this small investment paid a great return.

This investment was in the right hands. The lad shared all that he had and watched on as Jesus fed the vast crowd.

When the stock market is having a rough time shareholders will often be advised to "ride the storm" and wait for the financial climate to improve, rather than cut their losses and sell up.

This can be a lesson for us in our Christian lives. Do you and I feel like "selling up" when things are tough and not going your way. You may be facing redundancy, ill health or relationship difficulties, your "share value" appears to be falling through the floor and you are really suffering. But our Lord and Saviour knows a thing or two about suffering, so we are in good company!!

Paul, in his New Testament letters, refers to suffering on several occasions, but is often accompanied with upside. For example, Romans 8:17 We share in His sufferings in order that we may also share in His Glory.

We can be certain that if we invest our lives in following Jesus we can be sure of a glorious return when our final "dividend" is paid out!!

**Today's Gospel Reading:** Matthew 13 v 24 – 30, 36 – 43

### Reflection

Jesus often used the natural world as a means of helping his disciples explore the Kingdom of God. In today's Gospel reading Jesus gives us one of the parables of the Kingdom which tells us about the way that plants grow. Here both the good crop and the weeds which are planted later begin to grow; as they grow, they merge together.

Jesus knew about the impact of good and evil which was to find its full force as he walked the way of the cross. He knew about human nature. He knew that goodness, truth and justice are in the world but oppression, injustice and conflict are there also. Just like the plant and the weeds which grow together in this parable, so the complexity of human experience both good and bad exist alongside one another.

The crop and the weeds grow together as do good and evil and so does opportunity and oppression, hope and despair, light and darkness. It is only when the harvest is brought in that the weeds and the crop can be separated. Here is a parable of the end times, but it was also a parable of the hope of the Kingdom which means that forgiveness is always offered and when accepted has a transformational impact on the way that life can be lived and hope is shared.

What though might this mean for us today? We live in an imperfect world, where human beings do the best of things and the worst of things. Jesus knew that, finding the best when he took the smallest offering of 5 loaves and 2 fish which fed the crowd of well over 5000 people and yet finding the worst in a crowd crying, 'Crucify'.

Paul, in our reading from his letter to the Romans, tells us that the whole creation eagerly awaits redemption. Here is the deeper hope, a moment when all may find redemption offered through the cross and the renewal that it brings. After all, as Jesus shows us, there is hope for all in what God has done and in what God is doing. May that hope be seen in our response to the world as we discover and share God's love which continues to bring light into the darkness of our mixed up, imperfect world.

- The parable tells us that the weeds and the good crop grow together; can good and evil ever be untangled in this world? What challenge does this present to our living as God's faithful people in the world today?

Take a time to sit quietly

### **A time of prayer**

We pray for the world around us; for the environment; for peace where there is conflict; for racial and social justice to be seen throughout the world. We think especially of Montenegro today and the leaders of the church there.

We pray for our communities; for those who are shielding; for those who are fearful, for those working for the good of others in many different ways in our community.

We pray for all who work in the NHS and for all key workers and those on whom we rely.

We pray for our church community as we seek new ways of fulfilling our calling as the Church in these times. We think especially of East Molesey and the Guides in our circuit today.

We pray for our families, friends, and neighbours.

We pray for those who are ill and for those who are struggling financially or emotionally at this time.

We pray for those who are grieving as we remember those who have died.

In the stillness we take a moment we bring our prayers to God...

### **The Lord's Prayer**

*Our Father .....*

### **Hymn: Listen to Bernadette Farrell's song 'Everyday God'**

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F1oNP4vaW\\_c](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F1oNP4vaW_c)

**or sing a verse of a hymn that comes to mind**

### **A prayer of blessing**

The blessing of God, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit be upon us, now and always. Amen.