

Teddington Circuit Worship at Home Sheets

Sunday 30th August 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 Joyce Pegg and the Connexional team.

Opening Prayer

Lord, I draw near with faith. Open my eyes to see and ears to hear what you have for me, today and every day. **Amen**

Hymn: StF 608 All Praise to Our Redeeming Lord

Sing/ Read /pray /proclaim the words or listen to it here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bhE-Moyghul>

All praise to our redeeming Lord,
who joins us by his grace,
and bids us, each to each restored,
together seek his face.

He bids us build each other up;
and, gathered into one,
to our high calling's glorious hope
we hand in hand go on.

The gift which he on one bestows,
we all delight to prove;
the grace through every vessel flows,
in purest streams of love.

E'en now we think and speak the same,
and cordially agree;
concentred all, through Jesu's name,
in perfect harmony.

We all partake the joy of one,
the common peace we feel,
a peace to sensual minds unknown,
a joy unspeakable.

And if our fellowship below
in Jesus be so sweet,
what heights of rapture shall we know
when round his throne we meet!

Charles Wesley (1707-1788)

A Time of Prayer

Lord God, we pray to you, as Father Son and Holy Spirit, to praise you, For You are our God. We pray to thank you for all that You have done for us, for you are always there. We pray to You as our God, who made the world, died for us, rose again to show us the way to heaven, and lives in us all. We bring before you the burden of all the sins we have committed, and we

say Lord God, we are sorry for them. We know that such is your Love, we are forgiven our sins. Thanks be to you, Our God, **Amen**

Today's Reading from the Old Testament: Exodus 3:1-15

Today's New Testament Reading: Romans 12:9-21

Time to Reflect

The smart shoes that have been packed away since March finally had an outing last Sunday. This year we have lived in flip flops, sandals or sneakers, and relaxed barefoot in front of the TV at the end of the day. We've also walked barefoot around the garden, enjoying the feel of soft grass between our toes, before the lawn turned to straw.

So, what about the instruction to take your shoes off because you're on holy ground?
Is it simply reverential - respecting the sacred space?
Or to be comfy and relaxed, at home - many of us will remove our shoes when we arrive home?

But wouldn't you think twice about taking your shoes off on scrubby, stony land? Wouldn't you think twice if you were near a fire? The ground being hotter the closer you get?

Moses didn't walk away from the blazing bush - warned not to get closer, he removed his sandals and touched the holy ground with his feet. He made contact with the ground, a close (physical) connection with God.

But we get ahead of ourselves:

Moses' upbringing straddles two families and cultures, the things that confer status and position. He's a man out of place, a migrant and fugitive from justice. Now he is settled with his own family and job. Shepherding in the lonely places of the Sinai would seem to be an ideal spot for Moses to belong - to hang out and just be ordinary.

But God seems to have a soft spot for shepherds, from Abraham and David to the Bethlehem shepherds and

the Good Shepherd, God values the outsider and has a habit of calling and giving them key roles.

A shepherd has responsibilities to lead and keep the flock well fed, watered and safe, even though they're not his sheep. So, when Moses spots out of the corner of his eye, an untended fire in the wilderness, it's no wonder he turns aside. We've been disturbed by news footage of Australian Bush fires, more recently Californian forest fires and closer to home Chobham Common - fires which quickly get out of hand, ravage land and dwellings, threaten wild life and farm animals. Wild fires have consequences. It's not merely curiosity when Moses turns aside but an imperative to look and act.

Now, having found that this is no ordinary fire, Moses feels compelled to take time for a second look, a closer look. This is something exceptional and inexplicable - there is a strangeness, a specialness to this blazing bush which doesn't burn to ash. It is as if it's an eternal flame reminding us of the enduring and everlasting nature of God.

Having attracted our attention, would we stop for a second look? What would make us stop what we're doing, our ordinary job, our chores, to turn aside? Our lives can feel too busy to turn aside. Perhaps after lockdown, we have slowed down, we're more tuned in - we've heard bird song in the quiet evening, delighted in watching seeds grow, wondered at the colourful blaze of a kingfisher and stopped for a second, closer look. During lockdown many of us have had opportunity to turn aside and be reminded again of the eternal and enduring presence of God.

Moses seems a pretty confident man, he's turned aside, heard his name and now responds, drawing closer. What do you do when you hear your name called, perhaps by a voice you sort of recognize, although you can't see who? The voice, your name, draws you in. The obvious thing is to respond "Yes, I'm here - where are you? What do you want?" Although having heard what's wanted, we might choose to refuse!

An encounter with God is special but Moses is far from being overwhelmed with the otherness of God. He has a conversation, asks questions. God isn't letting him off lightly but God does promise to be with him. This is the right time for Moses to move on and fulfil God's mission for him.

Wildfire has consequences - resources lost, environmental damage, lives changed. For Moses,

there are certainly consequences following the burning bush encounter with God. It changed him; it changed his life. But wherever he went and whatever her did, God would be a constant presence with him.

Are we prepared to turn aside, ready with ears and eyes open to hear our name being called and move closer?

As we are invited to remove our shoes, to plant ourselves on holy ground, will we renew our connection with God?

Are we ready for the implications of meeting God, knowing we will be changed by the encounter, knowing God will be with us and that we too have a role to play in God's work?.

Take a time to sit quietly

A time of prayer

Gracious God, we bring before you our prayers for the world

We pray for all those who lack physical things, food, shelter, water, and all of life's necessities. Particularly those on the Island of Nauru, left out of the mining wealth and materialism it has brought.

We pray for those who mourn, and those who ail. Lord, for those we may help, may our hands work quickly, and for those we personally cannot help, we pray for the hands that will.

We pray for all those who work to provide care and help to others. Lord bless them and keep them from tiredness and error, and those they care for, keep them from despair. We bring the names of those known to us before you...

We pray for all in spiritual distress, who struggle to hear your message, or to come to you in prayer. Lord, help them to heed.

We pray for ourselves. For Hampton Methodist Church and the Gospel Illusions project. Strengthen us to come through renewed in faith in certainty.

We pray for our land and nation. Lord, help us all to endure, to do our duty and to serve you faithfully. May our land be brightened by the Light of Lord as we leave these times behind.

Lord, we ask these things, knowing that when we pray, wherever we pray, you hear our prayers. Thanks be unto you, Father Son and Holy Spirit, Amen

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father

Hymn: Listen to May the Mind of Christ my Saviour(StF 504) <https://www.methodist.org.uk/our-faith/worship/singing-the-faith-plus/hymns/may-the-mind-of-christ-my-saviour-stf-504/>

or sing a verse of a hymn that comes to mind

May the mind of Christ my Saviour
live in me from day to day,
by his love and power controlling
all I do or say.

May the word of God dwell richly
in my heart from hour to hour,
so that all may see I triumph
only through his power.

May the peace of God my Father
rule my life in everything,
that I may be calm to comfort
sick and sorrowing.

May the love of Jesus fill me,
as the waters fill the sea;
him exalting, self forgetting --
this is victory.

May I run the race before me,
strong and brave to face the foe,
looking only unto Jesus
as I onward go.

Katie Barclay Wilkinson (1859-1928)

A prayer of blessing

Lord, as we go forth, may we see all the things you
long for us to notice. May we be your people in all we
do and say. Amen

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Exodus 3: 1-15

Moses was keeping the flock of his father-in-law Jethro, the priest of Midian; he led his flock beyond the wilderness, and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. There the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a flame of fire out of a bush; he looked, and the bush was blazing, yet it was not consumed. Then Moses said, 'I must turn aside and look at this great sight, and see why the bush is not burned up.' When the Lord saw that he had turned aside to see, God called to him out of the bush, 'Moses, Moses!' And he said, 'Here I am.' Then he said, 'Come no closer! Remove the sandals from your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground.' He said further, 'I am the God of

your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.' And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look at God.

Then the Lord said, 'I have observed the misery of my people who are in Egypt; I have heard their cry on account of their taskmasters. Indeed, I know their sufferings, and I have come down to deliver them from the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land to a good and broad land, a land flowing with milk and honey, to the country of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites. The cry of the Israelites has now come to me; I have also seen how the Egyptians oppress them. So come, I will send you to Pharaoh to bring my people, the Israelites, out of Egypt.' But Moses said to God, 'Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh, and bring the Israelites out of Egypt?' He said, 'I will be with you; and this shall be the sign for you that it is I who sent you: when you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall worship God on this mountain.'

But Moses said to God, 'If I come to the Israelites and say to them, "The God of your ancestors has sent me to you", and they ask me, "What is his name?" what shall I say to them?' God said to Moses, 'I am who I am.' He said further, 'Thus you shall say to the Israelites, "I am has sent me to you." ' God also said to Moses, 'Thus you shall say to the Israelites, "The Lord, the God of your ancestors, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you":

This is my name for ever,

and this my title for all generations.

Romans 12: 9-21

Let love be genuine; hate what is evil, hold fast to what is good; love one another with mutual affection; outdo one another in showing honour. Do not lag in zeal, be ardent in spirit, serve the Lord. Rejoice in hope, be patient in suffering, persevere in prayer. Contribute to the needs of the saints; extend hospitality to strangers.

Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them. Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep. Live in harmony with one another; do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly; do not claim to be wiser than you are. Do not repay anyone evil for evil, but take thought for what is noble in the sight of all. If it is possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all. Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave room for the wrath of God; for it is written, 'Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord.' No, 'if your enemies are hungry, feed them; if they are thirsty, give them something to drink; for by doing this you will heap burning coals on their heads.' Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.