

Teddington Circuit Worship at Home Sheets

Sunday 18th October 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 Hazel Greasby, David Priddy and the Connexional team for their contributions.

Opening Prayer

To You we rise, in You we rest
We stay at home, we go on quest,
Still You are our abode (from H and P 39, v5 alt.)

Hymn: 608 All Praise to our redeeming Lord who joins us by His grace

(for an organ version see:

<https://youtu.be/VQQwzluYBaw>

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)

Prayer of Approach

Heart-stirring God,
You know each of us by name
and day by day we discover your favour afresh.
Your love is new every morning.

Your Presence remains with us,
whether we are called to travel or need to stay put.
You are our rest-giver and the source of our peace.

We marvel that you choose to be gracious to us.
We are touched and humbled by the mercy You extend.

We ask You to stir our hearts and teach us Your ways
so that we who belong to You may know more of You.
Show us Your glory.

Open our eyes to it, stretching in beauty over the face
of the earth,

shining in the face of Christ Jesus and smiling in the
faces of every life lighted by Your Spirit,
so that we and all Your people may give You glory and
worship You in Spirit and in Truth.

Amen (prayer inspired by Exodus 33 vv. 12-23)

Prayer of Confession

(You can begin this prayer with your hands held shut)

Giving and forgiving God, You are rich in mercy and
generous to all.

Help us to see clearly the priorities, prejudices and
anxieties in our lives.

Help us to face honestly the injustice, greed and
exploitation of the society in which we live.

Forgive us when our concerns have been limited and
we have behaved as if our lives and resources were
ours to use as we wished.

Forgive us when we have failed to let Your big-
heartedness open our hearts and hands.

(Open your hands)

Merciful God, give us the grace and courage to open
our hearts and hands.

Shape our lives and use us for we belong to You.

Amen

Assurance of Forgiveness

Receive the riches of God's mercy and grace.

Know beyond any doubt that You are loved and
forgiven in Jesus

Today's Reading from the Old Testament

Today's Epistle Reading

Hebrews 06:19

Today's Gospel Reading

Matthew 22 vv. 15-22

Time to Reflect

At the tender age of 6 my parents insisted that I went to a church-based activity that was linked to the Boys' Brigade – the BB which was then for those aged 8 and up. The deal was that I would go for a couple of weeks and see how I got on. I got on quite well as it happened and the two weeks turned into 25 years, with the end coming when I was part of the team which planted Ashford Common Baptist Church.

BB taught me many things through its twin pillars of faith and discipline. The 'faith' aspect led me towards Jesus and I asked His forgiveness and put my faith in Him, which I expressed in believers' baptism in 1970.

The BB had a motto, which was included in our badge: 'Sure and Stedfast' or 'Steadfast' as it has recently been changed to.

The motto was based on Hebrews 6:19a - 'We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, sure and stedfast.' The verse pointed to the symbol of the BB – an anchor.

We often sang a hymn which was wrongly described as 'The BB hymn'. You'll find it as 645 in 'Singing the Faith'; verse 1 and the chorus go like this:

Will your anchor hold in the storms of life,
When the clouds unfold their wings of strife?
When the strong tides lift, and the cables strain,
Will your anchor drift or firm remain?

We have an anchor that keeps the soul
Stedfast and sure while the billows roll,
Fastened to the Rock which cannot move,
Grounded firm and deep in the Saviour's love.

It was however (at least for me) one of the hymns that you sang without really understanding the significance of the words. I suppose to some extent it symbolized BB rather than Jesus.

I know Jesus better now!

I've been exploring anchors a little in my preaching lately and that has brought the words of the hymn

more into focus. At this time, people around the world are experiencing many storms, with one in particular affecting people 231 countries or territories (as of 11th October). The storm has many effects – but is affecting billions of people as a real 'storm of life'. Sadly, many have died leaving their families under clouds of 'strife' and grief.

Many have had their livelihoods taken away or income severely reduced. Add the 'normal' difficulties to coronavirus and life could seem very stormy indeed – akin perhaps to a tsunami which could sweep away any vessel anchored at sea or in a harbour – however strong the anchor and however big the rock it hung on to.

How do we cope or even survive? In my years as a boy in BB I attended the weekly Bible Class – a sort of Sunday School. We were taught many things, but the answer to many of the questions was 'Jesus'. How true – it was then and is now.

Our best anchor is not a physical anchor – like that on the BB badge – but a spiritual one which is unailing and in which we can totally rely. Why? – because as we saw in the hymn it is 'Grounded firm and deep in the Saviour's love.'

David, the shepherd-cum-king knew many storms in his life, but he knew God's love and protection which he expressed in his psalms:

In Psalm 33: 18 David wrote: 'But the eyes of the LORD are on those who fear him, on those whose hope is in his unailing love.'

He was able to express his reliance on God by crying out to Him – He wrote 'Turn, O LORD, and deliver me; save me because of your unailing love.' - Psalm 6:4

Those verses seem a good way forward - anchoring our lives on God the Rock, whose love gives us real hope as we cry out to Him in our time of our own and nation's need.

You can find the hymn on YouTube here:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_Ez6Zh77RQs

A time of prayer

'Looking out for number one' is rife in the way of the world, Lord. We pray for all who work for selfish gain to the detriment of others. Help them – and us – to see that working purely for personal pride and satisfaction is futile, and that serving you leads to everlasting joy.

We pray for the lives of those who are neglected – speak into their lives, Lord. Help them – and us – become aware of the relationship with you that can transform lives.

We pray for those living in parts of the world where there is conflict – pour out your breath of peace that people may listen to one another, may respect one another, may honour one another,

We pray for those who are ill and suffering at this time, may they know your peace in their lives.

We pray for ourselves Lord, help us to understand that true wisdom and happiness can only be found only in you. Amen

Amen

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father

Hymn: Listen to StF 615 Let Love be real

<https://youtu.be/SkBAxZw5NxU> (Matt Beckingham) **or sing a verse of a hymn that comes to mind**

Let love be real, in giving and receiving,
without the need to manage and to own;
a haven free from posing and pretending,
where every weakness may be safely known.
Give me your hand, along the desert pathway,
give me your love wherever we may go.

*As God loves us, so let us love each other:
with no demands, just open hands and space to grow.*

Let love be real, not grasping or confining,
that strange embrace that holds yet sets us free;
that helps us face the risk of truly living,
and makes us brave to be what we might be.
Give me your strength when all my words are
weakness;
give me your love in spite of all you know.

Let love be real, with no manipulation,
no secret wish to harness or control;
let us accept each other's incompleteness,
and share the joy of learning to be whole.
Give me your hope through dreams and
disappointments;
give me your trust when all my failings show.

Michael Forster (b. 1946)

May God our Father inspire and strengthen us in our work of faith

May Christ Jesus our brother motivate and sustain us in our labour of love

May the Spirit our helper establish and build in us a steadfast hope.

That our living may be a reason for thanksgiving and bring Glory to God.

Amen.

Original Materials by [Miriam Stevenson](#)

All

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A prayer of blessing