

# Teddington Circuit Worship at Home Sheets

**Sunday 22nd November 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 Mark Gilks and the Connexional Team for their contributions.

## Opening Prayer

Loving God we come before you today to worship you. Wherever we may be may we know your presence with us. Amen.

## Hymn: StF 264 Make way, make way for the King of Kings

Sing/ Read /pray /proclaim the words or listen to it here

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aICQ7fb0hEA>

Make way, make way, for Christ the King  
in splendour arrives;  
fling wide the gates and welcome him  
into your lives.

Make way (Make way), make way (make way),  
for the King of kings (for the King of kings);  
make way (make way), make way (make way),  
and let his Kingdom in.

He comes the broken hearts to heal,  
the prisoners to free;  
the deaf shall hear, the lame shall dance,  
the blind shall see.

And those who mourn with heavy hearts,  
who weep and sigh,  
with laughter, joy and royal crown  
he'll beautify.

We call you now to worship him  
as Lord of all,  
to have no gods before him,  
their thrones must fall!

*Graham Kendrick (b. 1950)*

Let us pray together

Loving God we come before you in adoration and praise for all that you have done for us. At this difficult time it can sometimes feel that we are alone and that you are not with us. But you have promised you will always be there and will never abandon us and for that we praise you.

We are truly sorry for the times that we have let you down. When we have failed to help those we ought to

help, when we have passed by on the other side instead of helping people who need our help. Forgive us Lord and help us to share your love with others.

We give you thanks for all your gifts to us. Help us to share them with others that they too may come to know you more and more, that they will learn who you are and the impact that you can have on their lives.

We ask these and all our prayers in the name of Jesus. Amen.

**Today's Reading from the Old Testament:** Psalm 100

**Today's Gospel Reading:** Matthew 25:31-46

## Time to Reflect

It was a wet, windswept day in the autumn half-term. As I made my way along Hampton Hill High Street, I spotted it. There, collecting raindrops was a Gopak table and on it were a handful of plastic bags with fruit and other food inside them. The bags were clearly the remnant of earlier activity, left on the unattended table along with a tub of hand sanitiser. Along the front of the table a number of A4 sheets had been taped in a row. The first one proclaimed "Free lunches for children", The other four sheets carried the slogan

"No child should ever go hungry"

This beautiful act of kindness by a local parent was just one part of the campaign championed by the young Manchester United footballer, Marcus Rashford. Marcus had argued for food vouchers to be available to needy children during the half term.

Many individuals, organisations and some local Councils stepped up to the plate and provided food to local children. A wave of compassion and charity spilled out across the land, not just in Hampton Hill.

The campaign worked. Food vouchers will be provided during school holidays up to and including Easter next year.

Action for justice and charitable works is the territory well known by Christians. Indeed, so many charities have their origins in the warmth of Christian love.

Locally, charitable work by The Extra Mile and Baby Basics have between them supported over 2,000 local children. Local Foodbanks often rely on Christian volunteers and donations. While international charities like Action for Children, Christian Aid, Tearfund and All We Can benefit from churches who daily act out the second most important command to "love your neighbour".

Do Christians do this in the hope of gaining eternal life? Absolutely not!

Salvation can't be earned by good deeds and charity. We are saved by God's freely given love and grace.

Christians engage in charity work because they want to share the love that God pours down on them. Compassion is the result of love not fear.

But if you ask what does the Bible say about the situation when we don't have compassion, when we don't act in love and charity? Well the go to Gospel passage for this question is Matthew 25:31-46. The story of the sheep and the goats.

The story tells of the end of time, when Jesus will judge everyone and sort them into two categories: sheep, who have done the caring, compassionate things to the "least", and goats who haven't.

Neither group seems to know what Jesus means. So, he points out that when the "least" are fed, clothed, visited it was him, Jesus, who was helped.

This is powerful stuff. When we act in charity, we are actually helping the Son of God.

Now it is fair to say that you can argue that the "least" are actually the disciples, the believers who take the Christian faith out into the World. This makes the judgement about how disciples and believers are received.

Yet if we take the "least" to refer all human beings in need, it squares completely with many other Gospel passages about loving our neighbours, and the Church bias to the poor.

So, let's embrace both ways of looking at this text. You see, the big message is that Jesus teaches that what we choose to do makes a difference. He says

clearly and forcefully that those who think that there are no consequences to their actions are mistaken.

In a world that can seem too big to be changed, our lives, our own choices have more meaning and value than we imagine.

Loving those for whom Jesus gave his life, particularly those who are undervalued is a primary expression of our love of God and of our experience of God's love for us.

Take a time to sit quietly

### **A time of prayer**

Loving God we come before you now to pray for our world. The world which you created, in which there is so much trouble. Help us to mend your broken world that all may live in peace. We pray for world leaders as they seek to do the best they possibly can in leading us through the pandemic. Give them guidance and wisdom in all their decision-making as they seek to bring the virus under control.

We pray for the church across the world as it seeks to serve and to share the good news amidst the pandemic. We think today of the church in Pakistan, often in challenging situations, may they speak for justice and act in love. Give strength and peace to our church leaders as they seek to guide us throughout this difficult time. May they find rest and renewal in you when they need it. We pray for our own churches, especially for Sunbury and the Friendly Club and for the day in which we can all safely meet together for worship once more.

We pray for all those who are in need of our prayers at this time, those in hospital and those who care for them, those struggling with mental health problems, those who feel alone with no one to whom they can turn. We pray for those on the frontline who are working to overcome the virus. May they know your peace, strength and love. We bring before you our concerns for people we know who are in need of our prayers at this time.

We commend to you those who have died, knowing that you welcome them home with open arms. We place them into your care knowing that we will be reunited with them one day. Comfort those who mourn their loss and may they know your presence with them at this difficult time.

We pray for ourselves. You alone know what we need right now. Give us what we need to face the days

ahead as we continue to wrestle with this pandemic which affects us all in some way or another. We ask these and all our prayers in Jesus' name. Amen.

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

*Our Father .....*

**Hymn: Listen to StF 693 Beauty for Brokenness**  
(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=08utbDFP9AE>)

Beauty for brokenness,  
hope for despair,  
Lord, in your suffering world  
this is our prayer.  
Bread for the children,  
justice, joy, peace,  
sunrise to sunset,  
your kingdom increase!

Shelter for fragile lives,  
cures for their ills,  
work for all people,  
trade for their skills;  
land for the dispossessed,  
rights for the weak,  
voices to plead the cause  
of those who can't speak.

God of the poor,  
friend of the weak,  
give us compassion we pray:  
melt our cold hearts,  
let tears fall like rain;  
come, change our love  
from a spark to a flame.

Refuge from cruel wars,  
havens from fear,  
cities for sanctuary,  
freedoms to share.  
Peace to the killing-fields,  
scorched earth to green,  
Christ for the bitterness,  
his cross for the pain.

Rest for the ravaged earth,  
oceans and streams  
plundered and poisoned --  
our future, our dreams.  
Lord, end our madness,  
carelessness, greed;  
make us content with  
the things that we need.

Refrain

Lighten our darkness,  
breathe on this flame  
until your justice burns  
brightly again;  
until the nations  
learn of your ways,  
seek your salvation  
and bring you their praise.

Refrain

*Graham Kendrick (b. 1950)*

### **A prayer of blessing**

Lord,

As Christmas draws nearer may we share your love  
with others. Help us to show them who you are that  
they may discover you for themselves. Amen.

Original Materials by Rebekah Fairhurst, Bolton Methodist Mission  
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