

Teddington Circuit Worship Sheets

Sunday 13th December

This short act of worship has been prepared for you to use whilst we are unable to use Methodist Church premises. We invite you to spend a few moments with God, knowing that other people are sharing this act of worship with you.

Opening Prayer

Loving Lord, as we worship we join with all those who are worshipping this day. Whether alone at home, or online, whether in a building or in an open space amongst others. Constrained by circumstances, we lack opportunity to meet each other in love. Come amongst us generous, hospitable God, and welcome us into your loving presence as we worship you.
AMEN

Hymn: Singing the Faith 369

Sing/ Read /pray /proclaim the words
<https://www.methodist.org.uk/our-faith/worship/singing-the-faith-plus/posts/baptise-us-with-your-spirit-stf-369/>

Baptise us with your Spirit,
majestic, humble Christ,
to overcome temptation;
assailed, but not enticed.
Baptise us with your Spirit,
that in each other's eyes
we may discern your purpose,
and cast away disguise.

Baptise us with your Spirit
to careful, patient, thought,
and habit-forming virtues
aspired to, copied, taught,
till clothed with new creation,
self-critical, reformed,
we demonstrate the gospel,
to you alone conformed.

Baptise us with your Spirit
in unrestricted ways
that move us, mind and body,
to laugh and shout your praise.
Send us to clear the rubble

of each defensive wall,
inviting to your table
our neighbours, one and all.

Brian Wren (b. 1936)

Let us pray together

All seeing God,
You watch over every instant of our life,
showing us the glory of your creation
if we should but pause to look;
showing us the generosity of your Spirit
if we should but hold out our hands to
receive; showing us your work that needs to
be done if we should only use our eyes and
ears.
Turn us away, loving Lord, from our insistent
self
and lead us to see more clearly
what you give and what you ask of us this day
AMEN

Today's Gospel Reading: John 1; 6-8, 19-28

Time to Reflect

A few years back there was a small café in Church Road, Teddington that during the day served traditional English breakfasts and fry-ups. Yet in the evening it offered marvellous Turkish dishes along with delicious balloon bread.

Because the café was tucked away from the main shops it often suffered from being out of the way. In order to aid its visibility and trade the owner would employ someone to stand opposite to Tesco holding an eight-foot pole with a sign displaying the café name and the direction in which to find it.

Now, standing outside simply holding the sign wasn't the greatest job but it was important for getting the café and its whereabouts better known.

Pointing the way is a key role in the Gospels. When we start to read John's Gospel we are swiftly introduced (John 1: 6-8) to a man who undertook this key role. It's not Jesus. It is, in fact, John the Baptist, who should perhaps be called John the Pointer!

Over the years paintings of John the Baptist have often had him pointing to Jesus. There's a famous one by the Spanish painter Murillo, but if you put "Images of John the Baptist pointing at Jesus" into your search engine you will find dozens of them.

John's Gospel tells of the occasion when the religious leaders in Jerusalem sent a deputation to out check out John the Baptist (John 1:19-28). This group of Priests and Levities wanted to know exactly who he was and what were his credentials. Could John be the Messiah, or the returning Elijah or a great Prophet?

The answer to all the questions was No! He's not!

John uses a quote from the book of Isaiah, which they instantly recognised, to tell them that he was the voice crying out in the wilderness, the one who is preparing the way for the Lord.

Then, he really shocks them. He tells them that the Messiah is alive and living among them. Imagine the impact that had when they got back to the Temple and told the top leaders.

Despite the fact that John the Baptist came to a sticky end, each one of us is called to take up the role of pointing to Jesus. We can't leave this task just to our religious leaders. It is vital that we play our part.

Pointing the way may seem easy but you do need to have certain essential bits of

knowledge to do it well. You need to understand who you are pointing to, and the correct direction to point.

You probably won't need to wear funny clothes or eat honeyed locusts, but your message is exactly the same as John the Baptist. Jesus is here; right with us now! If you have said "Yes Jesus, come into my life, Lord", he is present within you.

So where do we point to show his presence?

He's in the hearts of believers, working with them and through them. Think of all the challenges in your life: he's with you in all of them.

Christ's Holy Spirit also works collectively. It works through churches and faith groups. When we pray, when we worship, when we study the Bible, he's there. He's in our Christian outreach, in our fight for justice, in our support for the oppressed and marginalised.

And Jesus is here for sharing!

Look at our world, feel its pain and brokenness; yet rejoice in the love, forgiveness, and salvation that Jesus brings.

When you are pointing to Christ you probably won't get a deputation from the authorities to check out who you are pointing out. But you will get noticed. Your Christian values and beliefs send out an essential sign exposing God's love. Yes, of course, you'll get things wrong, plenty of times, but your persistence and patience, empowered by the Holy Spirit will ensure that your life points to Jesus.

So, the next time you see someone standing in the street with a sign pointing to a local shop or café; remember, pointing and telling is your job too!

Take a time to sit quietly



During this season the Methodist Church is proclaiming "God is with us". God is with us is more than a

statement. It's a reminder that God is always with us. We are encouraged to share our story (and other people's stories) of walking with God in this extraordinary year. How might you share how God has been with you this week? Find out more here

<https://www.methodist.org.uk/christmas/>

A time of prayer

Answering God

we pray today for all those who have unanswered questions
we pray for refugees and displaced people, for the homeless and those who ask "when shall I have a home".

We pray for those worried about loss of work, shortage of money, collapse of plans, who ask

"what happens now"?

We pray for the lonely, the scared, and the vulnerable who ask "who can help me"

We pray for those on our own hearts at this time.....For Hampton, the Hestia Project and Palestine.

Answering God, bring your love to these your people in need
and help them to see you in their life.
AMEN

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father

Hymn: Listen to Singing the Faith 175

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CBKzCpkXJR4>

or sing a verse of a hymn that comes to mind

Light of the world,
you stepped down into darkness,
opened my eyes, let me see
beauty that made this heart adore you,
hope of a life spent with you.

So here I am to worship,
here I am to bow down,
here I am to say that you're my God,
and you're altogether lovely,
altogether worthy,
altogether wonderful to me.

King of all days
oh so highly exalted,
glorious in heaven above.
Humbly you came
to the earth you created,
all for love's sake became poor.

So here I am to worship ...

And I'll never know how much it cost
to see my sin upon that cross.
And I'll never know how much it cost
to see my sin upon that cross.

So here I am to worship ...

Tim Hughes

A prayer of blessing

May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with us in this week

May the love of God steer us in our actions this week

and may the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be beside us this week

AMEN

Original Materials by Pat Heynes

All

Hymns reproduced under CCLi 1144191.

Local Churches please insert CCCLi No here

The Big Church Sing Christmas Special was broadcast live on the Methodist Church's YouTube channel on Sunday 29 November. Have you seen it yet? If you have access to the

internet go to

<https://www.youtube.com/methodistchurch>