

Teddington Circuit Worship at Home Sheets – from the Connexional Team

Sunday 27 December 2020

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

Gentle, nurturing God,
Breathe your still calm voice
into this time and this space.
Enfold me in your loving embrace
as we share in this,
your holy fellowship.
In the name of Jesus, born amongst us, I pray.
Amen.

Hymn: Come, Thou Long-expected Jesus (169 StF)

Sing/Read/Pray/Proclaim the words or listen to it
here: <https://youtu.be/JEE0uWnDGs>

Come, thou long-expected Jesus,
born to set thy people free,
from our fears and sins release us,
let us find our rest in thee.

Israel's strength and consolation,
hope of all the earth thou art,
dear desire of every nation,
joy of every longing heart.

Born thy people to deliver,
born a child and yet a king,
born to reign in us for ever,
now thy gracious kingdom bring.

By thine own eternal Spirit
rule in all our hearts alone;
by thine all-sufficient merit
raise us to thy glorious throne.

Charles Wesley (1707-1788)

Let us pray together

God of life and light
who came and lived amongst us,
Christ made man, son of Mary,
who grew from child of hope to Man of God
I praise your holy name.

God of forgiveness and grace,
I ask your healing forgiveness for all that does not
honour and serve your love,
and trust in your unchanging promise:
I give thanks that you forgive my sins.

God of time and patience
whose eternal spirit reaches out to us
and brings time to pause, to wait,
for your still small voice of calm
Holy Spirit, our great companion.
move amongst us
and reveal your kingdom
in this time and this place.
In the name of God, our creator, redeemer, and
sustainer I pray. Amen.

**Today's Reading from the Old Testament: Isaiah
61:10-62:3**

Today's Gospel Reading: Luke 2:22-40

Time to Reflect

I am writing this blog at the beginning of Christmas week. The weekend that has just past has seen the introduction of the new tier 4, which effects many people, including ourselves. Tier 4 is essentially "lockdown" for those areas where the virus is spreading more rapidly, and the sudden announcement last Saturday left a lot of people's plans for celebrating the festive season in chaos.

Many people who thought they were going to visit family and friends found themselves hurriedly visiting the supermarket to purchase some Christmas fare, while others were expecting a house full now how rather a lot of turkey spare!!

For some, Christmas 2020, will be remembered as a rather messy affair with arrangements being changed at what appeared to be the eleventh hour. For the family at the centre of the first Christmas, messy sums up the situation quite well. What could be messier than giving birth among all the farm animals. Changing the baby would also have been a rather interesting experience!! Was this the birth of "messy church"!!

But out of the chaotic and messy Christmas, zoom and facetime rode to the rescue. Carol and Christmas services could be enjoyed from the comfort of our living rooms as we joined together in worshipping the Christ-child, it was certainly a very different

experience. iPads will adorn many Christmas dinner tables as we try to create a “being together” experience.

Although it is a traditional at this time of year for families to gather together, it is worth reminding ourselves that families and friends are not just for Christmas!! This is also true for Jesus’ family. They did not stay in the stable for too long, life moved on.

In Luke 2:21 we read that eight days after the birth Mary and Joseph took Jesus to the temple in Jerusalem, to present Him to the Lord and to offer a sacrifice, which was in keeping with the law. We are then introduced to Simeon, who is described as a righteous and devout man.

Although we are not told how old Simeon was, he must have been getting on a bit as it appears, he was almost waiting to die. Luke explains that the Holy Spirit had revealed to Simeon that he would not do so until he had seen the Lord’s Christ (2:26). Without any word of introduction from the parents, Simeon took the baby in his arms and praised God.

He was now ready to meet his maker. Like all doting parents, Mary and Joseph were chuffed to hear the words spoken about “their” son. In verses 39 & 40 we learn that they returned to the family home in Nazareth – life moved on.

Christmas is a time to revisit the birth of our saviour, but once the celebrations are over, and the decorations come down - life moves on, whatever it holds for us in the coming days. But like Simeon we can take comfort in the fact that we have met with the Lord’s Christ during this period.

Life, I guess will remain messy and unpredictable, especially in the next few months, but the light of the world that came down to earth on that first Christmas, goes before us to light up the way ahead.

Paul Barker

Hampton Mission Partnership

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

Enduring, eternal God, of Abraham and Sarah, Jacob and Joseph,
who left all behind them to follow you.
We ask for your strength and guidance to follow in their footsteps.

Powerful, transforming God, of Isaiah and Ezekiel, Micah and Amos,
who spoke of you in their time and their place,
we ask for your powerful words and actions in places of need today.

Creating, unsettling God, of John the Baptist,
who prepared the way for your arrival,
help us to continue to prepare your way
and equip us in your service.

Parenting, nurturing, God. of Mary and Joseph,
we think of our families,
those we choose and those chosen for us,
We call them to mind:
bring us into your warm embrace
so that no matter how near or far
we know your love reaches out to us all.

Patient, hope-filled God, of Simeon and Anna
we give thanks for those whose testimony,
and fellowship to you crosses generations.
We pray for your church,
trusting that as we watch and wait,
work and pray,
we can bear witness to
the love of God,
the light of Christ
and the wisdom of the Spirit.
Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father

Hymn: Sing/Read/Pray/Reflect on the words to Mary and Joseph Came to the Temple (229 StF) or sing a verse of a hymn that comes to mind

<https://www.methodist.org.uk/our-faith/worship/singing-the-faith-plus/hymns/mary-and-joseph-came-to-the-temple-stf-229/>

Mary and Joseph
came to the Temple,
brought the boy Jesus,

offered him there.
People were waiting
wanting to greet him,
long had they sought him,
solace for care.

Anna had prayed there,
widowed, long waiting;
worshipping God by
day and by night.
Now she is praising,
filled with elation;
here is God's promise,
Christ is her light.

Simeon sings now
God offers blessing,
brilliantly gilding
dawn of his day;
light in the darkness,
never extinguished,
light of all nations,
light up our way.

Andrew Pratt (b. 1948)

A prayer of blessing

Now, Lord, you let your servant go in peace:
your word has been fulfilled.
My own eyes have seen the salvation
which you prepared in the sight of every people;
A light to reveal you to the nations
and the glory of your people Israel.
Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy
Spirit;
as it was in the beginning is now and shall be for ever.
Amen.

*From Common Worship)
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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>

Isaiah 61:10-62:3

I will greatly rejoice in the Lord,
my whole being shall exult in my God;
for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation,
he has covered me with the robe of righteousness,
as a bridegroom decks himself with a garland,
and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.

¹¹ For as the earth brings forth its shoots,
and as a garden causes what is sown in it to spring up,
so the Lord God will cause righteousness and praise
to spring up before all the nations.

^{62:1} For Zion's sake I will not keep silent,
and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest,
until her vindication shines out like the dawn,
and her salvation like a burning torch.

² The nations shall see your vindication,
and all the kings your glory;
and you shall be called by a new name
that the mouth of the Lord will give.

³ You shall be a crown of beauty in the hand of the Lord,
and a royal diadem in the hand of your God.

Luke 2:22-40

When the time came for their purification according to
the law of Moses, they brought him up to Jerusalem to
present him to the Lord ²³(as it is written in the law of
the Lord, 'Every firstborn male shall be designated as
holy to the Lord'), ²⁴and they offered a sacrifice
according to what is stated in the law of the Lord, 'a pair
of turtle-doves or two young pigeons.'

²⁵ Now there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was
Simeon; this man was righteous and devout, looking
forward to the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit
rested on him. ²⁶It had been revealed to him by the Holy
Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen
the Lord's Messiah. ²⁷Guided by the Spirit, Simeon came
into the temple; and when the parents brought in the
child Jesus, to do for him what was customary under the
law, ²⁸Simeon took him in his arms and praised God,
saying,

²⁹ 'Master, now you are dismissing your servant in peace,
according to your word;

³⁰ for my eyes have seen your salvation,

³¹ which you have prepared in the presence of all
peoples,

³² a light for revelation to the Gentiles
and for glory to your people Israel.'

³³ And the child's father and mother were amazed at
what was being said about him. ³⁴Then Simeon blessed
them and said to his mother Mary, 'This child is destined
for the falling and the rising of many in Israel, and to be a
sign that will be opposed ³⁵so that the inner thoughts of
many will be revealed—and a sword will pierce your own
soul too.'

³⁶ There was also a prophet, Anna the daughter of
Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was of a great age,
having lived with her husband for seven years after her
marriage, ³⁷then as a widow to the age of eighty-four.
She never left the temple but worshipped there with
fasting and prayer night and day. ³⁸At that moment she

came, and began to praise God and to speak about the child to all who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem.

³⁹ When they had finished everything required by the law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee, to their own town of Nazareth. ⁴⁰ The child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom; and the favour of God was upon him.