

Teddington Circuit Worship Sheets

Sunday 10th January 2021

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. With thanks to Nick White and the Connexional team for the content.

Opening Prayer

We gather before you creator God,
To bring you our praise and worship,
And to experience your love for us.
Be with us, unite us with our family of faith
Refresh us body, mind and soul
And open our hearts to your word.
Amen.

Hymn: 161 Speak O Lord,

Sing/ Read /pray /proclaim the words or listen to it
here <https://youtu.be/ubRIJj8xkds>

Speak, O Lord, as we come to you
to receive the food of your holy word.
Take your truth, plant it deep in us;
shape and fashion us in your likeness,
that the light of Christ might be seen today
in our acts of love and our deeds of faith.
Speak, O Lord, and fulfil in us
all your purposes, for your glory.

Teach us, Lord, full obedience,
holy reverence, true humility.
Test our thoughts and our attitudes
in the radiance of your purity.
Cause our faith to rise, cause our eyes to see
your majestic love and authority.
Words of power that can never fail;
let their truth prevail over unbelief.

Speak, O Lord, and renew our minds;
help us grasp the heights of your plans for us.
Truths unchanged from the dawn of time
that will echo down through eternity.
And by grace we'll stand on your promises,
and by faith we'll walk as you walk with us.
Speak, O Lord, till your Church is built
and the earth is filled with your glory.

Keith Getty (b. 1974) and Stuart Townend (b. 1963)

Let us pray together

Almighty God,
We search for words to truly tell your glory,
But there are none.
We look for ways to describe your creation,

But can't express its beauty and complexity.
We long to show you how much we love you,
But struggle to achieve our goal.
You, O God are our greatest love, your service our
deepest desire, your love for us our most precious gift
and more than anything we want you to know that we
adore you. Amen.

Today's Gospel Reading: Mark 1:4-11 NRSV

Time to Reflect

People often talk about life-changing experiences.
Indeed, the current pandemic is one.

We say, " Things can never be the same again".
Sometimes it is after a tragic accident. Or an illness.
And sometimes, it is a moment of joy – a marriage, or
the birth of a child.

All these events qualify for the people concerned. Life
will never be the same again.

But there is only one event which has changed the
whole world throughout human history.

There has only been one event since the beginning of
time, when God created the world.

And that is the coming to Earth of Jesus Christ, God's
only son. We mark it with our dates.

Indeed, before political correctness, the year numbers
were labelled to remind us of it. Dates were either BC,
Before Christ, or AD, Anno Domini, years since His
arrival on Earth. This acknowledged when He arrived,
and also the fact that He is still alive and with us.

This is the Year of our Lord 2021. It is the 2021st year
since Christ came to save us. From that moment in the
stable in Bethlehem, foretold by prophets many
centuries before, the world could never be the same
again. The world had changed, totally, for everyone.

This Sunday we focus on Christ's baptism, rather than His birth - a moment of affirmation, and a moment of confirmation that He was, indeed, the changer, the Saviour of the world.

The voice came from Heaven, affirming, "This is my Son, with whom I am well pleased", and confirmation following affirmation, as the Holy Spirit descended upon Him like a dove.

As we embark on a new year, facing unprecedented uncertainty of what the year will bring, it is appropriate that we take stock of our relationship with this Jesus who came to Earth.

We may have marked the first Sunday of the year last week with a Covenant service. The Covenant prayer calls us to confirm, "We are longer ours but His", that we're changed.

But to do so, we must ask ourselves if our encounter with Him really was life changing.

When Paul reached Ephesus, we read how the people there knew nothing of the Spirit.

They had only received baptism in water, courtesy of Apollos, called John's baptism.

John had called them to repent, and Paul had acknowledged this was a vital first step.

But to enable their lives to be changed, so they were able to declare that, "Jesus is Lord", they needed the Holy Spirit, bringing with it the evidence of a new life through its gifts.

So Paul then offered to complete the work Apollos had begun, by baptism in the Spirit.

This transformation, this metamorphosis into a completely new being, is a life changer.

When Nicodemus came to Jesus at night, searching for understanding of who He was, Jesus told him that in order to receive Him as a Saviour, he needed to be "born again".

Nicodemus of course misread this as a literal statement of the need to re-enter the womb.

But what Jesus meant, and what applies to us too, is that we need our lives to change.

In Romans, Paul refers to the "old man being dead", meaning we have cast off our old self. We are unrecognisable as the same person. We are transformed. We are made new.

This year is unique in the lifetimes of most people today. We hesitate to be optimistic. Not since the last World War has the human race been in such doubt about the future. We try hard to sustain hope as it springs eternal in the human breast, but find it difficult. We fear not just for our own future, but for future generations too. Will it work out OK?

How can our faith sustain us and those around us, so we can look ahead with confidence?

The answer, as ever, lies in our faith in Jesus, our Saviour. He knows our situation now.

He knows our anxieties, our sadness, even our despair. The Holy Spirit is the comforter.

Jesus can guide us. He is the Wonderful Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Prince of Peace.

If we ever feel tempted to despair at our current circumstances, let us never forget that.

If we ever become downhearted by the current restrictions on life, or fears for the future, let us remember Jesus came to give us comfort. He said, "Do not be worried or upset.

Believe in God, believe also in me". We know this life is but a foretaste of the life to come.

God spoke and creation burst into life out of nothing. God spoke and the Holy Spirit came. Jesus came to Earth, lived and died, and rose again, and with that everything changed. And everything included each one of us. We are changed by knowing Jesus as our Lord.

As the baptism of Jesus in the Jordan, all those years ago, confirmed Him as God's Son, so our faith in Him ensures that nothing at all, not even the pandemic which is gripping us,

can ever separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen

Take a time to sit quietly

A time of prayer

Please pause to consider each situation

Father God, we come to you with open hearts and minds to pray for our world,

For all who are working to help others. For East Molesey Church and for The Summers Project.

For all who are unwell in body, mind or soul.

For all who fear violence, in the streets or their own homes.

For all who struggle to fill their daily needs and fear for their future.

For all who feel alone or isolated.

For Church, family, friends and neighbours.

For ourselves, right here and now, all we are and think and feel.

Father we place our world into your hands, particularly today we pray for Peru and the work of the Methodist Church there supporting communities during COVID.

In all things and all places may your will be done
Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father

Hymn: Listen to <https://youtu.be/iEPclC92yLg>

or sing a verse of a hymn that comes to mind

A prayer of blessing

Loving God, be with us this day and always, flow in us and through us, cleanse, renew and reshape us. Reminding us always that no matter what, you remain with us. Amen.

Materials by Liz Wood

All Hymns reproduced under CCLi 1144191.

Local Churches please insert CCCLi No here

Note from the Connexion: We are grateful to all the Ministers and Local Preachers from around the Connexion who have contributed to Worship at Home. This resource is administrated by Ministries: Vocations and Worship in the Connexional Team. We aim to continue to provide these resources until the end of August 2021.