

Teddington Circuit Worship Sheets

Sunday 28th February 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.

Opening Prayer

Jesus lead us to the Father by your Spirit; help us draw near. As we come with awe and gladness, help us draw near. Amen (Selected lines from STF 29)

Hymn: The God of Abraham Praise (STF 91)

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

<https://www.methodist.org.uk/our-faith/worship/singing-the-faith-plus/hymns/the-god-of-abraham-praise-stf-91/>

The God of Abraham praise,
who reigns enthroned above,
Ancient of everlasting Days,
and God of love.
Jehovah! Great I AM!
By earth and heaven confessed;
I bow and bless the sacred name
for ever blessed.

He by himself has sworn,
I on his oath depend:
I shall, on eagles' wings upborne,
to heaven ascend;
I shall behold his face,
I shall his power adore
and sing the wonders of his grace
for evermore.

The God who reigns on high
the great archangels sing;
and 'Holy, holy, holy,' cry,
'Almighty King,
who was and is the same,
and evermore shall be;
Jehovah, Father, great I AM,
we worship thee.'

Before the Saviour's face
the ransomed nations bow;
o'erwhelmed at his almighty grace,
for ever new:
he shows his prints of love,
they kindle to a flame,
and sound through all the worlds above
the slaughtered Lamb.

The whole triumphant host
give thanks to God on high;
'Hail, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost!'
they ever cry.

Hail, Abraham's God, and ours!
We join the heavenly throng,
and celebrate with all our powers
in endless song.

Thomas Olivers (1725-1799)

Let us pray together

God of all grace
We come before you to praise you, mindful that you are the God of our ancestors, the God who made and keeps your promises. In Christ you showed us love that was willing to die on a cross for us. The Holy Spirit lives in our hearts and we rejoice that she binds us together as a family of faith. For these things we rejoice.

We are thankful for the wonder of nature that captivates us. We are thankful for all those people we love and care about and who bring great joy to our lives.

Yet we know that we do not live as your children or keep your commandments. If you kept a record of our sins, we could not stand. Joyously we know that through Christ's abundance grace we are forgiven. Thanks be to God.
Amen

Today's Reading from the Old Testament Genesis 17:1-7, 15-16

Today's Gospel Reading:

Mark 8:31-48

Time to Reflect

There is a famous story about Margaret Thatcher when she was Prime Minister. She visited an Old People's home and strode up to an elderly lady sitting in the resident's lounge, shook her hand, and in a loud voice, said "Do you know who I am? The old lady

smiled and replied “No, but don’t worry my dear. If you ask one of the staff, they’ll remind you”.

Identity is important but getting a true picture of who you are dealing with can be difficult. The recent Presidential Election in the United States has vividly highlighted the alternative facts and contradictions that supporters and campaign organisers project about their leaders and their opponents.

In a way this is not surprising for not only is the prize for winning so great, but every Leader needs to ensure their followers and detractors do really understand the angle from which they see the world. Dictators and dictatorial regimes often have chilling ways of letting the people know what will happen to any dissent. The ordinary folk of Myanmar, Belarus, Russia, and Hong Kong have a noticeably clear notion of their leader’s identity.

At the very mid-point in Mark’s Gospel Jesus needs to find out what his motley crew of followers make of him. He asks two key questions: “Who do the public think I am?” and then, “who do you think I am?”.

Throughout his Gospel Mark plays a double game with Jesus’ identity. It’s best described as an “open secret”, at the same time it is both hidden and revealed. It’s not surprising that Peter, the front man and spokesperson for the disciples, gets his answer to Jesus’ two questions half right and half wrong.

Peter has made the breakthrough realisation that Jesus is the long-awaited Messiah, the Christ, the Son of God. However, when Jesus points out that “yes” he is the Son of Man and that means his rejection, suffering and death; well, Peter is having none of it. Jesus firmly puts Peter in his place, and that place for Peter is to reject the world view of what the Messiah will be and get behind Jesus as a disciple.

It’s easy for us to be critical of Peter, with the great benefit of hindsight, but we must remember that we have Jesus’ question to answer ourselves. Peter has not been the only follower of Christ who has embraced the worldly view of power. It only requires a superficial knowledge of Church history to realise that the church down the centuries has been more in tune with Peter’s ideas of power rather than those of Jesus.

And that brings the story right to us. Right here and now. That seemingly old question is still relevant and, in fact, really urgent: “Who do people say Jesus is?”. In order to answer it we need to add a second question: “What do people say about Christians

today?”. We don’t just share a family likeness to Jesus, but as we often say, “we are the only Bible that most people read”. The world will get to understand who Jesus is, in the main, through our behaviour, words, and actions.

This is particularly the case as the Pandemic has closed many of our church buildings. We are out of our comfort zones. We are out in the marketplace with power mongers, fake news, and commerce. But the message is the same: The Kingdom for which we are made is not built on the love of power but on the Power of Love.

God works through people who are willing to let love in. Who they are doesn’t seem to bother God. Perhaps there will be some surprises in Heaven as new arrivals exclaim “was it you all the time and I didn’t realise?”.

People will know Jesus’ identity when we reveal it by revealing ourselves. In the words of Rosemary Wakelin:

You take the stuff of chaos, fear, and dread.

And make a path that we must bravely tread.

And follow where your gracious footsteps lead.

To share the work to meet each others need

Take a time to sit quietly

A time of prayer (please add your own prayers where the ellipses are)

Loving God,

We pray for our world. Particularly thinking of those places we know that are on our screens on the news this week...

We pray for our communities and particularly those parts of our communities where hurt or division is felt...

We pray for those we know who are sick and suffering and ask that they know your presence...

We remember all who have died and their families and ask that you comfort the bereaved and hold those who have died in your eternal care...

Merciful God accept these prayers for the sake of your Son our saviour Jesus Christ. Amen

The Lord’s Prayer
Our Father

Listen to Faithful (Lou Fellingham)

<https://youtu.be/h0vm5JNfJ34>

or sing a verse of a hymn that comes to mind

A prayer of blessing

May we know the faithfulness of God in our lives, may we live with the assurance we are children of God and know ourselves to be loved. May we find ourselves faithful even amidst temptation.

And the blessing of God the Three in One reside with us always. Amen

Original Materials by James Blackhall

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Local Churches please insert CCLI No here

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.