

Teddington Circuit Worship at Home Sheets

Sunday 11th July

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:

Beautiful God, thank you that you are with us as we gather in your Spirit – wherever we are – we thank you that you are with us all and each. We pause and recognise you are with us and bind us all together in your love. (pause) Amen.

Hymn: StF 8 God with us: Creator, Father,
Sing/ Read /pray /proclaim the words or listen to it here <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jkaih98SO2A>

God with us: Creator, Father,
bringing everything to birth;
Mother of the whole creation,
fire of stars and life of earth:
down the countless years composing,
from the earth's evolving night,
love's response to love, and forming
mind and soul to seek your light.

God with us: Redeemer, Brother,
Friend for ever at our side,
here, in flesh, you walked among us,
taking up your cross, you died.
Crucified, despised, rejected,
Perfect Love, who shared our shame,
streaming from the cross, your judgement,
full of mercy, clears our name.

God with us: Unwearied Spirit,
from the birth of time and space,
surging through unconscious being,
joyful, Life-Creating Grace:
through the centuries you find us;
you, as God, inspire our prayer;
Life and Power at work within us,
Love for ever, everywhere!

God, Transcendent, far beyond us,
closest Friend, unfailing Guide:
through the ages, wronged, affronted,
in your poor, still crucified!
God with us: convict, forgive us;
by your holy love destroy

all that hinders peace and justice:
fill this aching world with joy!

Alan Gaunt (b. 1935)

Let us pray together

God of Love and beauty, God for us, God with us, but
God not only with us and for us – God with and for
every person – we praise you, we worship you.
For your all encompassing love that sets us free, for
your transforming power that changes our lives. We
praise you, we worship you.
We praise you God, for Jesus – for his coming to be
among us, to show us what love is like by how he
lived, how he engaged with people, how he
welcomed, how he mixed with rich and poor alike,
how he did not just sympathise, but challenged, and
spoke up for justice. We praise you: we worship you.

We confess that our own lives do not always reflect
your love, and your care for all. We ask your
forgiveness (silence as we ask).

Thank you that you offer your forgiveness. We praise
you, we worship you.

Thank you God for your Spirit to help us in our
weakness and in our troubles, to comfort us in our
pains, to infuse our lives with your joy and peace, we
praise you, we worship you.

We bring our prayers in Jesus name. Amen.

Today's Gospel Reading: Mark 6: 14-29

Time to Reflect

We have heard a great deal recently from Dominic
Cummings, the former Chief Advisor to the Prime
Minister. Stepping aside from the content, it raises
the interesting point about who politicians, leaders,
and indeed ourselves choose as advisors.

Who do you listen to, who is your go-to person when
you need a bit of wisdom?

When we are young, it's normally your parents or
family who provide this role. Ideally this guidance
from home and perhaps church, builds up your moral
values and your own judgement. In the early years of
work, many people have benefited from mentors who
can help the inexperienced through what can often be
a hostile place.

Just pause and think of those who have given you
sound advice over the years. What have been the
characteristics of such folk? Does this tell you
something about yourself? Who do you trust? Who do
you believe?

Sadly, some advisors have their own agenda, and will temper what they say for their own purpose. It is easy to misguide someone who is vulnerable. Our news programmes are full of stories such as the “grooming” of innocent children leading them into sexual abuse, or even the indoctrination of children to use them as child soldiers.

This is nothing new. Herodias was once married to Philip, the brother of King Herod Antipas, but she became Herod’s wife, despite Philip being alive. She famously gave an evil piece of advice to her daughter Salome. You will find the story in the Gospel of Mark 6:14-29. Herodias’ marriage was challenged by the “voice of one crying in the wilderness”, John the Baptist. It was something that Herod did not want to hear. He could have had John killed, but he was fearful of John’s status as a Holy Man, so he just locked him up. Herodias hated John the Baptist, because of the truth he had imparted to Herod and to all who would listen, and she wanted him dead.

The chance falls into her lap when the teenager Salome entices Herod, her uncle and stepfather, with what is often regarded as an erotic dance at Herod’s birthday bash. Herod makes Salome an offer to grant her anything she wishes. She’s a child, she doesn’t know what to ask. So, she goes to her mother for advice. The result is that John’s blooded head is presented to the child on a dish.

John’s death is a warning shot for Jesus. This is how authority will deal with truth. It was not long before the Jewish Council of the day is forcefully advising the Roman Commander that Jesus also must die.

Yes, evil still stalks in the advice to rulers, politicians, and military leaders. Our duty as Christians is to call it out. We are to support actions and policies that work against war and bloodshed, that work against the trafficking of youngsters for the sex industry. At a local level, we are to call out bullying, even within marriages, partnerships, and our own social circles.

To do this well we need not only wisdom and discernment we must also base our advice on extensive listening, empathy, prayer, and Christian love. Let’s lovingly share our understanding of difficult situations with fellow Christians before we give our advice. It’s how a church family should work.

Very few of us will have to face a Parliamentary Select Committee, like Dominic Cumming, to vouch for the advice we have given. Yet we all are accountable to God for the guidance we give. Our prayer is for the

Holy Spirit to fill us with Holy wisdom and Christian love so that we can share our guidance wisely and lovingly with others.

You see, your advice counts. So, make sure it’s what Jesus wants you to say!

Mark Gilks

Hampton Mission Partnership

Take a time to sit quietly.

Thank: thank God for God’s grace in your life.

Think: how you can contribute to the graciousness of the church – from home, online, in conversations, in prayer?

Act: Who are you in contact with? Who could you pray for? How could you spread grace and peace, even from your own home?

If you have internet access, perhaps take some time to read the new Strategy for Justice, Dignity and Solidarity

https://www.methodist.org.uk/media/21045/council_mar_21_mc21-32-strategy-for-justice-dignity-and-solidarity.pdf and Positive Working Together

<https://www.methodist.org.uk/for-churches/guidance-for-churches/introducing-positive-working-together/>

How might these inform how we are as a church?

A time of prayer.

At ‘(pray)’, please pray for people and situations known to you.

We pray Lord God as your co-carers for your world.
We pray for people suffering. (pray) Please bring relief, help and healing.
We pray for people in power. (pray) Please give wisdom, compassion and commitment to justice.
We pray for people in wars and disputes. (pray) Please bring wisdom and a way to peace.
We pray for our church – locally and nationally. (pray) Please give your wisdom, your guidance, and help us to understand your heart.
We pray for ourselves. (pray).
We bring our prayers in Jesus’ name. Amen.

The Lord’s Prayer
Our Father

Hymn: Listen to <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=czxd5oa-gi0>

Turn your eyes upon Jesus, look full in his wonderful face. And the things of earth will grow strangely dim, in the light of his glory and grace. (traditional)

A prayer of blessing

May our beautiful God, who holds us each and all in love, keep you close, help you to know that, and help you to live in the light of God's love and grace. Amen.

Original Materials by Ruth Yorke

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