

SOUTH WEST TYNESIDE METHODIST CIRCUIT

CHURCH AT HOME SERVICE

Sunday 4th October 2020



This short act of worship has been produced for our churches to worship together at home. We hope you may spend a few moments with God, knowing that other people are sharing this act of worship with you.

Opening Prayer

You may like to be still, light a candle, listen to a calming piece of music as we gather in worship.

Holy God, as we come to worship you, help us to remember, that though apart, we belong to your church, your people, your world, we are not alone. The Psalmist writes of the heavens declaring the glory of God. As we worship today may we, like the heavens, declare your glory, be assured of your love, experience your grace and be restored in our hope. Draw us together by your Spirit as we worship. Amen.

(Prayer based on the words of Psalm 19)

Sing/ Read /pray /proclaim these words...

Hymn: Oh the life of the world (StF 114)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iy4t01ZWQFc>

Oh the life of the world is a joy and a treasure,
unfolding in beauty the green-growing tree,
the changing of seasons in mountain and valley,
the stars and the bright restless sea.

Oh the life of the world is a fountain of goodness,
overflowing in labour and passion and pain, in the
sound of the city and the silence of wisdom, in the
birth of a child once again.

Oh the life of the world is the source of our
healing. It rises in laughter and wells up in song;
it springs from the care of the poor and the broken
and refreshes where justice is strong.

So give thanks for the life and give love to the
maker,
and rejoice in the gift of the bright risen Son,
and walk in the peace and the power of the Spirit
till the days of our living are done.

Kathy Galloway (b.1952)

Let us pray together

Eternal God and Father, you are the source of all life, the fount of all wisdom, the well-spring of all grace. Your days are without end, your loving mercies without number. We depend on you: and we remember your goodness to us and to those who have gone before us.

We tell your story in every generation:
God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob,
God of Sarah, Rebekah and Rachel,
God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,
God of a pilgrim people, your Church.

You are our God, ahead of us, leading us, guiding us and calling us;
you are the Lord God,
the all-wise, the all-compassionate.
To you we lift up our hearts and we worship you,
one God for ever and ever. Amen.
(Methodist Worship Book, *Second Service*, p.40)

Today's Reading from the New Testament

Philippians 3:4b-14

Today's Gospel Reading: Matthew 21:33-46

Time to Reflect

When I first saw the Gospel Reading set for today I have to admit I was a little perturbed. I wondered how to even begin to share anything on this parable. Yet I was inspired by seeing Jesus again in conversation.

In all his encounters with those who oppose him, disagree with him, and seek to ridicule him, Jesus shows grace and a willingness to engage in conversation. Jesus doesn't just dismiss the views of others, he listens, he challenges and he

responds, sometimes forcefully. He doesn't collude with what he knows to be unjust. I wonder how we respond when faced with those who profoundly disagree with us? Do we listen well?

The religious leaders rail against Jesus because he consistently fails to conform to the expectations they have of him. He eats with the wrong people. He speaks in stories and riddles. He won't answer their questions directly. He challenges their authority. Yet Jesus is unwilling to give up the dialogue with them, to give up sharing the good news, engaging in conversation and seeking to include all. Is this how we live as followers of Christ? Even giving a hearing to those who oppose us?

In his 'explanation' of the parable, Jesus speaks of producing the fruits of the kingdom (v.43). What do you think of as the fruits of God's kingdom? If we want to see what the fruits of the kingdom are we have the example of Jesus before us. Love, mercy, forgiveness, justice, generosity, compassion, presence, wisdom, truth, healing, reconciliation, joy, thanksgiving, peace, lament, obedience, humility. Perhaps as we hear again the parable of the wicked tenants, we can long and pray to be those who live the kingdom values of Jesus in the vineyards of our lives.

Take a time to sit quietly. You may wish to listen to a piece of quiet music or simply be still.

A time of prayer

Holy God, we come to you today with our prayers:

We pray for our world...

Your kingdom come, your will be done.

We pray for the Church...

Your kingdom come, your will be done.

We pray for all those striving for justice...

Your kingdom come, your will be done.

We pray for those suffering with COVID-19 and its effects...

Your kingdom come, your will be done.

We pray for those we know and love who need our prayers...

Your kingdom come, your will be done.

We offer all our prayers in and through the name of our living Lord Jesus Christ, Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father

Hymn: Love divine, all loves excelling (StF 503)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sw5ZCZeS32M>

Love divine, all loves excelling,
joy of heaven to earth come down,
fix in us thy humble dwelling,
all thy faithful mercies crown.
Jesu, thou art all compassion,
pure, unbounded love thou art;
visit us with thy salvation,
enter every trembling heart.

Come, almighty to deliver,
let us all thy life receive;
suddenly return, and never,
never more thy temples leave.
Thee we would be always blessing,
serve thee as thy hosts above,
pray, and praise thee, without ceasing,
glory in thy perfect love.

Finish then thy new creation,
pure and spotless let us be;
let us see thy great salvation,
perfectly restored in thee:
changed from glory into glory,
till in heaven we take our place,
till we cast our crowns before thee,
lost in wonder, love, and praise!

Charles Wesley (1707-1788)

A prayer of blessing

'Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice. Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near. Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.' Amen

(Philippians 4:4-7)

Original Materials by Rev Miriam Moul

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