

Sunday 31st 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.

Opening Sentence

Our God set his people free and made an eternal covenant with them. Holy and mighty is our God! (Psalm 111 v.9)

Hymn: 'From the highest of heights to the depth of the sea' – StF 48

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

<https://youtu.be/eK4NqGqmVt8>

From the highest of heights to the depths of the sea,
creation's revealing your majesty.
From the colours of fall to the fragrance of spring,
every creature unique in the song that it sings,
all exclaiming:

Indescribable, uncontainable,
you placed the stars in the sky and you know them by name.

You are amazing, God,
all powerful, untameable.
Awestruck we fall to our knees as we humbly proclaim,
you are amazing, God.

Who has told every lightning bolt where it should go
or seen heavenly storehouses laden with snow?
Who imagined the sun and gives source to its light
yet conceals it to bring us the coolness of night?
None can fathom.

Indescribable, uncontainable,
you placed the stars in the sky and you know them by name.
You are amazing, God,
incomparable, unchangeable.

You see the depths of my heart and you love me the same;
you are amazing, God.

Laura Story and Jesse Reeves

Let us pray together

Generous God we praise you, for the beauty and diversity of your creation – each of us placed here with a purpose – each of us called to love and care – each of us welcomed to share in your bountiful goodness. We thank you for each new day and the opportunities we have to worship, to learn and care, to serve and to witness – help us to know how to share the good news of Jesus with our families, our friends and our neighbours.

We confess that there have been times in the past week when we have not lived up to the challenge of being a disciple – may the assurance of your forgiveness give us the wisdom and strength to know the right words and actions to use to reflect your love out into the world for everyone to see. Amen.

Today's Reading from the Old Testament

Deuteronomy Ch 18: 15 to 20

Today's Gospel Reading:

Mark Ch 1: 21 to 28

'They went to Capernaum; and when the sabbath came, he entered the synagogue and taught. They were astounded at his teaching, for he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.' vv. 21, 22

Time to Reflect

A response of 'sticks and stones may break my bones but words will never hurt me' isn't true, is it? Words can hurt – and can be used with the intention of hurting – and the healing can be as hard as if we had been pelted with sticks and stones. Words are powerful – for bad and for good – and we see this in our Gospel reading today. In Mark we aren't told what Jesus said in the synagogue, but we read that people were amazed at the way he taught and that he spoke with authority – his words are powerful.

But the power of words can diminish if they are not matched by actions. Jesus acted to heal the man with an evil spirit. His words and actions were gentle but carried authority which the people around him recognised, and again they were amazed. This was not the power of kings and occupying forces that oppressed. It was a power that responded in word and action to each encounter to bring wholeness.

We are all called to speak and act when we find a neighbour in need – a gentle word or an act of kindness can bring wholeness. We are not alone – the Gospel story teaches us how, and our faith communities and others of goodwill share the task.

None of us is too small for our words and actions not to make a difference. So speak and act with gentleness and with power to bring wholeness to your neighbourhood and to the world.

Take a time to sit quietly

A time of prayer

We pray for the world and ask that we can better care for and share its riches so that all people and nature can flourish. We pray for all health workers, carers and everyone providing vital goods and services we depend upon. We pray for our leaders to have care for lives and livelihoods so that everyone is

valued for who they are. I especially want to pray for

We pray for the Church to have the boldness to speak and act for peace and justice. Through Jesus Christ our Saviour and our Friend. Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father

Hymn: listen to

'Jesus Christ is waiting' – StF 251

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O6ilgzTu9P4>

or sing a verse of a hymn that comes to mind

Jesus Christ is waiting,
waiting in the streets;
no one is his neighbour,
all alone he eats.
Listen, Lord Jesus,
I am lonely too:
make me, friend or stranger,
fit to wait on you.

Jesus Christ is raging,
raging in the streets,
where injustice spirals
and real hope retreats.
Listen, Lord Jesus,
I am angry too:
in the Kingdom's causes
let me rage with you.

Jesus Christ is healing,
healing in the streets,
curing those who suffer,
touching those he greets.
Listen, Lord Jesus,
I have pity too:
let my care be active,
healing, just like you.

Jesus Christ is dancing,
dancing in the streets,
where each sign of hatred
he, with love, defeats.
Listen, Lord Jesus,

I should triumph too:
where good conquers evil
let me dance with you.

Jesus Christ is calling,
calling in the streets,
'Who will join my journey?
I will guide their feet.'
Listen, Lord Jesus,
let my fears be few:
walk one step before me;
I will follow you.

John L. Bell (b. 1949) and Graham Maule (b. 1958)

A prayer of blessing

May Jesus Christ, who by his birth brought
together heaven and earth, fill our lives with
light and joy and peace. Amen

Original materials by Neil Manthorpe

All hymns reproduced under CCLi 1144191.

Local Churches please insert CCCLi 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.

Deuteronomy Ch18: 15 to 20

The LORD your God will raise up for you a
prophet like me from among your own people; you
shall heed such a prophet. This is what you
requested of the LORD your God at Horeb on the
day of the assembly when you said: 'If I hear the
voice of the LORD my God any more, or ever again
see this great fire, I will die.' Then the LORD replied
to me: 'They are right in what they have said. I will
raise up for them a prophet like you from among
their own people; I will put my words in the mouth
of the prophet, who shall speak to them
everything that I command. Anyone who does not
heed the words that the prophet shall speak in my
name, I myself will hold accountable. But any
prophet who speaks in the name of other gods, or
who presumes to speak in my name a word that I
have not commanded the prophet to speak—that
prophet shall die.'

Psalm 111

Praise the LORD!

I will give thanks to the LORD with my whole heart,
in the company of the upright, in the
congregation.

Great are the works of the LORD,
studied by all who delight in them.

Full of honour and majesty is his work,
and his righteousness endures for ever.

He has gained renown by his wonderful deeds;
the LORD is gracious and merciful.

He provides food for those who fear him;
he is ever mindful of his covenant.

He has shown his people the power of his works,
in giving them the heritage of the nations.

The works of his hands are faithful and just;
all his precepts are trustworthy.

They are established for ever and ever,
to be performed with faithfulness and
uprightness.

He sent redemption to his people;

he has commanded his covenant for ever.

Holy and awesome is his name.

The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom;
all those who practise it have a good
understanding.

His praise endures for ever.

Mark Ch1: 21 to 28

They went to Capernaum; and when the sabbath
came, he entered the synagogue and taught. They
were astounded at his teaching, for he taught
them as one having authority, and not as the
scribes. Just then there was in their synagogue a
man with an unclean spirit, and he cried out,
'What have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth?
Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are,
the Holy One of God.' But Jesus rebuked him,
saying, 'Be silent, and come out of him!' And the
unclean spirit, throwing him into convulsions and
crying with a loud voice, came out of him. They
were all amazed, and they kept on asking one
another, 'What is this? A new teaching—with
authority! He commands even the unclean spirits,
and they obey him.' At once his fame began to
spread throughout the surrounding region of
Galilee.