

Sunday 24th May 2020

This short act of worship has been prepared for you to use whilst we are unable to use Methodist Church premises. If you are well enough why not spend a few moments with God, knowing that other people are sharing this act of worship with you.

Opening Prayer

Sing to God, sing praises to his name; lift up a song to him who rides upon the clouds—his name is the LORD—be exultant before him. (Psalm 68)

As I come before you God help me to praise your name. Focus my mind on your presence with me and remind me that I am joined together with people around the world worshipping at home. May your name be glorified in our worship. Amen.

Hymn: Earth's creator, everyday God

Singing the Faith 45

Sing, read or pray the words or listen here:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F1oNP4vaW_c

(or sing a verse of a hymn that comes to mind)

Earth's creator, everyday God,
Loving Maker, O Jesus,
you who shaped us, O Spirit,
recreate us, come, be with us.

In your presence, everyday God,
we are gathered, O Jesus,
you have called us, O Spirit,
to restore us, come, be with us.

Life of all lives, everyday God,
love of all loves, O Jesus,
hope of all hopes, O Spirit,
light of all lights, come, be with us.

In our resting, everyday God,
in our rising, O Jesus,
in our hoping, Spirit,
in our waiting, come, be with us.

In our dreaming, everyday God,
in our daring, O Jesus,
in our searching, O Spirit,
in our sharing, come, be with us.

God of laughter, everyday God,
God of sorrow, O Jesus,
home and shelter, O Spirit,
strong and patient, come, be with us.

Way of freedom, everyday God,
star of morning, O Jesus,
timeless healer, O Spirit,
flame eternal, come, be with us.

Word of gladness, everyday God,
word of mercy, O Jesus,
word of friendship, O Spirit,
word of challenge, come, be with us.

Gentle father, everyday God,
faithful brother, O Jesus,
tender sister, O Spirit,
loving mother, come, be with us.

Our beginning, everyday God,
our unfolding, O Jesus,
our enduring, O Spirit,
journey's ending, come, be with us.

Alleluia, everyday God,
now and always, O Jesus,
alleluia, O Spirit,
through all ages, come, be with us.

Bernadette Farrell (b. 1957)

Let us pray together

Everyday God,

We praise you that you are with us in every part of our lives and you never stop loving us.

We praise you for the world you created and the beautiful things we see around us.

We praise you that you came to earth in Jesus to show us in person how much you care about us and the world we live in. As we remember your ascension we thank you that you did not leave us alone but sent your Spirit so that we can always know you are with us.

You invite us to join in your work of loving people and the planet and we pray that you show us how we can share in your mission of love. In Jesus name we pray, Amen.

A Collect for Aldersgate Sunday

God of overwhelming grace,
you ignited the spark of your grace in John and Charles Wesley and a passion for holiness, justice and sharing your great love with others.

Warm our hearts that we may trust in you.
Renew our conviction and inspire us to embrace new opportunities even in difficulty.
Pour out your spirit on your people that we may be united in your love and ready to share hope with the world through Jesus who is one with you.

Amen

Today's Reading from the New Testament:

Acts 1: 6-14

The Ascension of Jesus

So when they had come together, they asked him, 'Lord, is this the time when you will restore the kingdom to Israel?' He replied, 'It is not for you to know the times or periods that the Father has set by his own authority. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.' When he had said this, as they were watching, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight. While he was going and they were gazing up towards heaven, suddenly two men in white robes stood by them. They said, 'Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking up towards heaven? This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven.'

Matthias Chosen to Replace Judas

Then they returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, a sabbath day's journey away. When they had entered the city, they went to the room upstairs where they were staying, Peter, and John, and James, and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James son of Alphaeus, and Simon the Zealot, and Judas son of James. All these were constantly devoting themselves to prayer, together with certain women, including Mary the mother of Jesus, as well as his brothers.

Today's Gospel Reading: **John 17: 1-11**

Jesus Prays for His Disciples

After Jesus had spoken these words, he looked up to heaven and said, 'Father, the hour has come; glorify your Son so that the Son may glorify you, since you have given him authority over all people, to give eternal life to all whom you have given him. And this is eternal life, that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent. I glorified you on earth by finishing the work that you gave me to do. So now, Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had in your presence before the world existed.

'I have made your name known to those whom you gave me from the world. They were yours, and you gave them to me, and they have kept your word. Now they know that everything you have given me is from you; for the words that you gave to me I have given to them, and they have received them and know in truth that I came from you; and they have believed that you sent me. I am asking on their behalf; I am not asking on behalf of the world, but on behalf of those whom you gave me, because they are yours. All mine are yours, and yours are mine; and I have been glorified in them. And now I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them in your name that you have given me, so that they may be one, as we are one.

Time to Reflect

"Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking up towards heaven?"

They hadn't really had a chance to think about it. Surely it's the most human thing in the world to keep watching the space where someone was, to need to see to be able to believe and start to understand, to need some time to adjust to a huge change in the features of your everyday life?

There has started to be talk in the media about a "new normal". Many of us had already started to experience the creeping realisation that things will not quickly or immediately go back to exactly how they were. Our lives are going to look different for a significant period of time, or for some of us forever if we too have lost people who made up the fabric of our lives.

Jesus' disciples have a promise, of the Holy Spirit to help them, but they don't know when. Like us they must adjust as best they can to the new circumstances of their lives.

I wonder what they understood of the ascension they had witnessed and the prayers they may have heard Jesus utter like the one we read in today's Gospel.

In this Jesus asks that he be glorified, not for himself but for his followers. As Jesus ascends he brings all his human experience with him so that it is known within God. Remember that how ever you are feeling today God is with you.

Jesus asks that God will protect his followers so that they might be united, one as Jesus and the Father are one.

What might we learn about unity and fellowship from our experience of isolation? -How might we draw closer to God and to other people as we emerge into a new normal?

Take a time to sit quietly

A time of prayer

God our protector,

We come before you in prayer for your world,
your children and ourselves.

We pray for the world that you have made. We
thank you for the renewal of creation springing
up as human activity has been restricted. We
pray that we will learn to value these gifts and to
live more gently in the future.

We pray for the leaders of nations making
impossible decisions on our behalf. We pray that
they will speak and act with integrity and protect
those who are most vulnerable.

We pray for our church communities. We bring
you our sadness at not being able to meet
together and we thank you for the people finding
it easier to explore faith at this time. We pray
that we will find new ways to reach out to the
world.

We pray for the people we miss. Our friends and
families and those we long to see face to face.
We pray for safety and protection for our loved
ones.

We pray for those who have lost someone they
love and haven't been able to say goodbye. We
pray that they will know the comfort of your
loving presence and that you will show us how to
reach out in love and friendship.

We pray for ourselves in these difficult days
shared by so many people but also lived in
isolation. Help us to know your protecting love
and to live in the power of your Spirit.

In Jesus' name we pray. Amen

The Lord's Prayer
Our Father

Hymn: Hail the day that sees him rise
Hymns and Psalms 197

Sing, read or pray the words or you can find an
older version of this hymn at
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7b_ODz_jgT_S

Hail the day that sees him rise, Alleluia!
ravished from our wistful eyes! Alleluia!
Christ, awhile to mortals given, Alleluia!
re-ascends his native heaven: Alleluia!

There the glorious triumph waits: Alleluia!
lift your heads, eternal gates; Alleluia!
wide unfold the radiant scene; Alleluia!
take the King of Glory in! Alleluia!

Him though highest heaven receives, Alleluia!
still he loves the earth he leaves; Alleluia!
though returning to his throne, Alleluia!
still he calls the world his own: Alleluia!

See! He lifts his hands above; Alleluia!
see! He shows the prints of love; Alleluia!
hark! His gracious lips bestow Alleluia!
blessings on his Church below: Alleluia!

Master, parted from our sight, Alleluia!
high above the azure height, Alleluia!
grant our hearts to you may rise, Alleluia!
following you beyond the skies: Alleluia!

Charles Wesley (1707-1788)

A prayer of blessing

Holy God,
be with me as I leave this time of worship.
May I know your presence in my everyday and
live your message of love and hope.
Amen

Original Materials by Alison Seren