

Sunday 31st 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

Christ appears to His disciples saying, “peace be with you.” Holy Spirit, prepare my heart to know your peace afresh and to celebrate the Good News of God’s Kingdom.

Hymn: Breathe on me breath of God (StF 370)

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

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a9s8BFHThfc>

Breathe on me, Breath of God
fill me with life anew,
that I may love what thou dost love,
and do what thou wouldst do.

Breathe on me, Breath of God,
until my heart is pure;
until with thee I will one will,
to do and to endure.

Breathe on me, Breath of God,
till I am wholly thine;
until this earthly part of me
glows with thy fire divine.

Breathe on me, Breath of God:
so shall I never die,
but live with thee the perfect life
of thine eternity.

Let us pray together

Gracious God, in all places and at all times you are loving, generous, kind and compassionate. From the beginning of time, your Spirit has hovered on the surface of the deep and in that Spirit you have formed us; cherished and valued us. Let this be my song of praise; I love because you first loved me.

Amen

Generous God, give me a heart of gratitude for all those things that speak of your love. For friends and family, for the gifts of your creation, and for all the places I have witnessed something of heaven.
(we call to mind those things for which we are grateful this week)

Amen

Living and loving Lord, have mercy on me. Pardon and deliver me from all my sins, strengthen and renew me for your service, that I might live and work to your praise and glory, and the coming of your Kingdom on earth.

Amen

Christ tells us that we are saved not condemned by God. God is love; we are forgiven, and forgiven to the full.
Amen.

Today's Reading from the Acts of the Apostles - Acts 2:1-21

When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. And suddenly from heaven there came a sound like the rush of a violent wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them, and a tongue rested on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability. Now there were devout Jews from every nation under heaven living in Jerusalem. And at this sound the crowd gathered and was bewildered, because each one heard them speaking in the native language of each. Amazed and astonished, they asked, 'Are not all these who are speaking Galileans? And how is it that we hear, each of us, in our own native language? Parthians, Medes, Elamites, and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabs—in our own languages we hear them speaking about God's deeds of power.' All were amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, 'What does this mean?' But others sneered and said, 'They are filled with new wine.'

But Peter, standing with the eleven, raised his voice and addressed them: 'Men of Judea and all who live in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and listen to what I say. Indeed, these are not drunk, as you suppose, for it is only nine o'clock in the morning. No, this is what was spoken through the prophet Joel:

"In the last days it will be, God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams. Even upon my slaves, both men and women, in those days I will pour out my Spirit; and they shall prophesy. And I will show portents in the heaven above and signs on the earth below, blood, and fire, and smoky mist. The sun shall be turned to darkness and the moon to blood, before the coming of the Lord's great and glorious day. Then everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved."

Today's Gospel Reading - John 20:19-23

When it was evening on that day, the first day of the week, and the doors of the house where the disciples had met were locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, 'Peace be with you.' After he said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. Jesus said to them again, 'Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you.' When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, 'Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained.'

Time to Reflect

Both our Pentecost reading from Acts and our Gospel are stories from the life of the early Church.

The reading from John reminds us that this was a time of fear and uncertainty for the disciples, who had to lock their doors in fright. In the midst of this, Christ appears to them and gives them the gift of the Holy Spirit, offering them His peace. In our own time of being shut away, and of living in fear and uncertainty, we are invited to know that Christ appears in the midst of us as well, saying “peace be with you.”

Our Acts reading is full of celebration and excitement and perhaps those are alien emotions for us at this time. Pentecost is considered to be the birth of the Church. It might feel like a cruel celebration when we can't be in our church buildings. But at its core, the reading reminds us that God's Kingdom is radically inclusive; those from all nations are able to hear the Good News, and all who call on the name of Lord will be saved. Let us remind ourselves that the Church is alive and blossoming in our hearts, even when we can't meet; the message of Pentecost is still as true as it ever was. Our lives may look different to their normal pattern but we are still part of God's people, welcomed into God's love.

God's peace and Good News are still with us. Wherever we are, we are included. Take a time to sit quietly and receive God's gifts.

A time of prayer

On all those who are sick, in body, mind and spirit,
O Living God have mercy.

On those who are lonely or afraid, those who suffer from anxiety or whose souls are dis comforted,
O Living God have mercy.

On all those whose lives are dedicated to service; our NHS staff, the hospitality industry, our farmers and many others,
O Living God have mercy.

On those who are never able to attend their place of worship, who suffer persecution and oppression and live in deprivation,
O Living God have mercy.

On those who fear they are unworthy and unwelcome in church. Who do not feel included in your Kingdom,
O Living God have mercy.

On those who do not know your peace, for whatever reason,
O Living God have mercy.

Time to add our own prayers of the heart, either spoken or unspoken.

Everlasting God, whose very nature is love that has no end, hear our prayers. Help us to never make you in our own image but remain in awe of your mystery, the God who was, who is and who will always be. In the name of Christ, who shows us how to love, amen.

The Lord's Prayer
Our Father

Hymn: Listen to *the Taizé chant*

“Within our darkest night”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J8BmvxqJH0g>

or sing a verse of a hymn that comes to mind

A prayer of blessing

Holy God, guard me and guide me and hide me in your heart. Bless me and all those made in your image in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, now and forever. Amen.

Original Materials by Jessica Dalton