

Church at home

East Leake Methodist Church 2020

Sit comfortably in a quiet place and prepare, start with a brief period of silence, turning your mind and spirit towards God. You may want to have a cross or candle in view as a focus.

Almighty all-loving God
we would bring you our praise;
we would offer you our worship;
we would open to You our hearts
we would tell of all you mean to us;
we would proclaim your name
in a way that does justice to your greatness.
Hear our prayer

Eternal and all-powerful God
we hunger to meet with you
to hear your voice
to know your will
to know more of you
to know you to learn more of you
and to offer you a commitment
that does justice to your love
Hear our prayer

Gracious and all-forgiving God.
Help Us then to acknowledge our faults,
to confess our sins,
to recognise our many weaknesses
to see all that is wrong in our lives
and to be a people who do justice to Your mercy
Hear our prayer.

Great and all-transforming God,
enable us to serve you more faithfully
love you more deeply
know you more fully
obey you more completely
and live in a way
that does justice to your renewing power
Hear our prayer.

Everlasting God
You know what we are.
And you know what we want to be
Hear our prayer,
receive our worship,
and so help us to become the people
you would have us be
to the glory of your name.
Amen.

StF 157 God has spoken
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mT4Ukyhy58g>

Readings

Genesis 49:29 - 50:13

Matthew 20:17-19

Prayer

Gracious God,
God, open our eyes. we thank you for the great gift of sight,
and for all there is
in this wonderful world of ours to see
We thank you that we can look around
and feast our eyes on so much that is good.
Fascinating

memorable
and beautiful
Gracious God, open our eyes.

We thank you that besides this
there are other kinds of sight
foresight
hindsight
insight -
each enabling us to see behind outer appearances
To a deeper reality within.
Gracious God, open our eyes.

Forgive us for so often failing too see beneath the surface
For overlooking the ways you are at work in our lives
for being blind to all you would reveal to us.
Gracious God, open our eyes.
And help us to see!
In the name of Christ we pray
Amen

Lords Prayer (whichever form/language you find most helpful)

StF 481 23rd Psalm (Stuart Townend)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-eIQQayhpak>

Address

During my initial nurse training as a psychiatric Nurse in the North East I spent the equivalent of 18 months on what is now known as an EMI ward (Elderly Mentally Infirm). There were 3 men there who had served in the trenches during WW1. They spend many hours talking together about

their experiences, one of them spoke of how 350 of them went "over the top" and only 25 came back. He spoke of the men left in No Mans Land, some he said shouted for their mothers, others shouted for God to come and help them. He said it was heart breaking, no-one dared go out to them for the German troops would fire their rifles and machine guns to dissuade them. Before the whistles blew and the men climbed out, the man said, he heard many reciting the 23rd Psalm.

The 23rd Psalm has given many an individual a feeling of help and support in hard and difficult moments, especially in battle. The Psalm itself speaks of many things that David saw as God's gifts to humanity. It speaks of rest - "he makes me lie in green pastures" I am certain many of us have childhood memories of lying in a grassy field on a hot summers day just chilling. Then also of refreshment - "beside still waters", again how many of us, as children, drank from pools of water that were crystal clear (probably wouldn't dare today!)

Once rested and refreshed then David speaks of restoration, "He restores my soul" - ready to face whatever lies ahead. Many is the time we overdo things in our lives, we need to rest, put up our feet and maybe even catch 40 winks. Churchill was reputedly said to take "power naps" during the day when he would then carry on reinvigorated.

Ready to carry on but not alone, there is an accompanying counsel " you lead me in paths of righteousness" said David. Literally leading in the most appropriate direction and in the correct manner. Many military commanders rely on intelligent scouts to work out the best way to advance against an enemy. The last thing he would want is to lead his troops into a death trap, God wants that also for us - to lead us to Life. God offers us support in the way forward - "You are with me" said David, an acknowledgement that God was with him every step of the journey. When we have someone accompanying us who knows the terrain, the safe paths to follow it reassures us. Soldiers who head into dangerous places also value the comfort of knowing there is greater help and support available. Relatives who served in the infantry spoke of feeling a little safer walking behind a tank when the enemy opened up with rifles and machine guns. David too felt more secure when he spoke of "your rod and

staff they comfort me" - signs/symbols as it were of the very power of God.

Early military leaders learned very quickly that "an army marches on its stomach". David realised that God did not leave his people wanting - "you prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies". There is nothing more demoralising than to see others have everything in front of you whilst you have little or none. Just recently I saw a film based on the Desert campaign in North Africa during WW2. A rather ragtag group of 9 men held out at an oasis against a battalion of German troops. The Germans had no idea the well was empty and the allied troops thought they'd be killed. In the end the 2 surviving soldiers received the surrender of the surviving German troops desperate for water. Ironically it was one of the final explosive charges that reopened the well!

There comes an acknowledgement that the power of leadership passes on by, in David's case, by God who "anoints my head with oil". We have something to look forward to now and in the hereafter when the promise is seen "Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me my whole life long and I shall dwell in the House of Lord for ever" - what a promise!

Prayers of intercession

Loving God,

There are times when we look at people's lives
and find it hard to believe things can ever
change for the better -
we see them racked by illness
weighed down by anxiety
tormented by depression.
Crippled by debt
broken by alcohol
destroyed by drugs,
scarred by bereavement
shattered through unemployment,
and we wonder what their prospects really are
What hope we can realistically' offer then

what help we can possibly give
Transforming God
may your light shine where there is darkness.

We pray for such people known to us now
family
friends
members of our fellowship,
colleagues at work
neighbours
acquaintances
as well as the countless people unknown to us
each struggling under their own particular burdens
Transforming God
may your light shine where there is darkness

We pray for our world-
for those many people who face suffering,
injustice,
hardship,
and death.
Transforming God
may your light shine where there is darkness

Reach out to all who are in despair, we pray.
all who long for change
but see only hopelessness stretching before them
Touch their lives
.and bring help, hope, healing and wholeness.
Transforming God
may your light shine where there is darkness.

Living God
it is hard sometimes to believe those around us,
still less the world around
can ever change for the better.

We see countries broken by war,
people consumed by hatred
thousands living in fear,
nations turned against nation
multitudes made homeless by disaster,
continents facing famine
.and again we wonder what the prospects really are
what hope anyone can offer
,what help can possibly be given
.Transforming God
,may your light shine where there is darkness.

Help us to see beneath the surface
recognising You are at work
and that things can change
Help us to see beyond appearances,
recognising you are a God able to transform
even the most hopeless of situations
Give to us and to all people the assurance
that there is no one and no situation
unable to be transformed by your power.
Transforming God,
**may your light shine where there is darkness,
through Jesus Christ, our Lord.**
Amen.

StF 270 Come and see
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y_8BZmWb2N8

May the world continue to surprise us.
Love continue to astonish us
life continue to captivate us
faith continue to sustain us
.and may God go with us always
now and for evermore.
Amen