

Church at Home Sept 20th 2020

Call to worship

Teach us your ways, O God
that we may walk in your truth.

O Lord, you are good and forgiving.

We will give you thanks, O Lord.
We will glorify your name for ever.

O Lord, you are good and forgiving.

Turn to us and be gracious.
Give your strength to those
who call upon your name.

O Lord, you are good and forgiving.

Introduction

At the beginning of September in our 4 square meeting I ran a session on the Methodist Connexional year. I spoke a little about our new President of Conference -Rev. Richard Teal, and Vice President-Carolyn Lawrence and their theme for the year. Words from John Wesley

“The best of all is, God is with us.”.

and the bible passage from Isaiah 43 verses 18-19.

*Do not remember the former things or consider the things of old,
I am about to do a new thing, now it springs forth.*

Do you not perceive it?

I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert.

Richard tells us “Our chosen Bible verses from Isaiah 43:18-19 reminds us that God wants to do new things amongst us and to bring life and growth, even in people and places that seem to be dry or tired.” The present pandemic has brought forward many new ways of being church.

At the Conference in 2018 they talked about the best way to follow Jesus and the Methodist Way of Life has been created. It is based on the Our Calling response from the 2000 conference, The Methodist Way of Life is a way of living. It is how we try to live our lives in response to God’s love, made known to us in Jesus.

It is printed out below for our email members and I have printed out cards for those of us in church. There are a series of questions on the back which I will attach to the service which both help us to focus and also challenge us. It is our intention to look at this in more detail in our 4 square meetings in the New Year, everyone is welcome to join us. We are meeting on zoom at the moment.

Today’s service is based on the first statement under the heading **Worship**-With God’s help

We will pray daily

But we will also cover the second and third commitment under Worship and some of the other headings too..

“The best of all is, God is with us”

A Methodist Way of Life

The calling of the Methodist Church is to respond to the gospel of God's love in Christ and to live out its discipleship in worship and mission.

As far as we are able, with God's help:

Worship

- .We will pray daily.
- .We will worship with others regularly.
- .We will look and listen for God in Scripture, and the world.

Learning and Caring

- .We will care for ourselves and those around us.
- .We will learn more about our faith.
- .We will practise hospitality and generosity.

Service

- .We will help people in our communities and beyond.
- .We will care for creation and all God's gifts.
- .We will challenge injustice.

Evangelism

- We will speak of the love of God.
- We will live in a way that draws others to Jesus.
- We will share our faith with others.

May we be a blessing within and beyond God's Church, for the transformation of the world.

So let us join in the second commitment and worship together by singing/humming or just listening to: One of the things I found hard about coming into church was not being able to sing but I am appreciating the music, that is being used in our services and I pay more attention to the words. So let us join together in

Hymn StF 20 Be still for the presence of the Lord.

Prayers- let us Pray

Lord, teach us to pray as you prayed.

Teach us to pray early in the morning and during the watches of the night.

Teach us to pray in times of elation and in times of deepest anguish.

Teach us to pray in desert places and in holy places.

Teach us to pray patiently and persistently.

Teach us to pray humbly and graciously.

Teach us to pray with a childlike spirit, in love and trust.

Teach us to pray 'Let your will be done', with courage and faith.

Lord, teach us to pray.

For your name's sake.

Amen.

Teach us your ways, O God

that we may walk in your truth.

O Lord, you are good and forgiving.

We will give you thanks, O Lord.

We will glorify your name for ever.

O Lord, you are good and forgiving.

Turn to us and be gracious.

Give your strength to those

who call upon your name.

O Lord, you are good and forgiving. Amen

A prayer of confession

Gracious and holy God, as we look to Jesus, the way, the truth and the life, we acknowledge that we have so frequently failed to live like him.

Daily we learn of your way, but choose our own way instead.

Daily we learn of your truth, but think we know everything.

Daily we learn of your life, but carry on as if this life were all there is.

Jesus, teach us your way, that we might choose to follow you each day.

Jesus, teach us your truth, that we might learn more about you each day.

Jesus, teach us more about your life, that we might live the life you give to us, more fully each day.

Stephen prayed, 'Lord, do not hold this sin against them.'

Jesus: way, truth and life, forgive us our sins.

Help us to follow your example, and so show others the face of God in Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

The Lord's prayer sung by Philippians choir

Psalm said responsively. StF 822 Psalm 100

Reading Luke 11 verses 1-13.[Read or listen to the meditation]

We are going to listen to a Take Time meditation in Church. If you are able to follow the link Taketime.org.uk meditation no. 90. Teach us to pray.

Address.”

The Methodist Way of life reminds us, “with Gods Help” as The President and Vice Presidents theme does also in those words of John Wesley

“The best of all is, God is with us.”

We are encouraged to prayer everyday. Conference declared this year of 2020 to be a Year of Prayer in order to give a church wide response to evangelism, church growth, church at the margins, and pioneering and church planting. So we are all called to join with fellow Methodists and invited to ask the Holy Spirit to help us in this quest. We can all join a Weekly Online Prayer Meeting on Tuesdays at 12.45pm by booking in on the Methodist website.

The disciples asked Jesus to teach them to pray and this is something which we can find difficult’ Where to start, what to say, not to make it almost like a shopping list.

Perhaps you might find using a hymn like STF 522 [Read this hymn.] There are many other hymns you could use, perhaps you have a particular favourite.

Each year there is a Methodist Prayer handbook produced and also a District prayer handbook which gives a variety of prayers and also allows you to see some of the work in our world, country and the District- we sent out the digital version of the District handbook to you all recently. The Methodist church Website is a good source of information about how to pray as well as prayers for events, and a daily prayer if you want some resources.

You may have a particular place which you find to be a sacred space, it may be imaginary or somewhere you can go to pray. It may be outside, on a walk or it may be in the car on the way to work, the beginning of the day, or the end of the day. What is important is finding the time. The Take time meditations which we have just used are another possibility. A time to be with our Lord remember *“The best of all, is God is with us.”*

It seems a long while ago now but in 2005 we were invited by the youth of the church to be part of a 24/7 prayer initiative and for 14 months we

organised a variety of events, around the circuit. We have used times like Thy Kingdom Come (between Ascension and Pentecost] and prayer events with prayer stations, some of those ideas can be brought into your own prayer life. Using Labyrinths as a means of directing your prayers is another possibility, a contemplative and reflective means of prayer

Pete Greig who co-hosted this years online Spring Harvest has written a best selling book called “how to pray”, He suggests that we need to follow four aspects in our prayers- Pause, Rejoice, Ask and Yield. I am reading it at the moment but he highlights the many different types of prayer and suggests some resources

Our prayer life is a journey, a journey which ebbs and flows according to our life, a pilgrimage. I would like to read a poem, this poem reflects on how easy it can be to offer to pray for someone and yet how hard it can be to pray

Poem: I'll pray for you

'I'll pray for you.' That's what I said
as the stranger poured out her heartfelt dread at things
which would add to a burden of care, already much more than one person should
bear.

'I'll pray for you.' Such an easy retort,
and, I confess, one made without thought of the cost
that I find I am learning to pay, as I've turned to the Lord and said,

'Teach me to pray.'

I thought it was easy: just want and believe.
A slot-machine process: you ask; you receive.
But wanting what God wants – his perfect will – that is the thing I find hard to fulfil.

I know God wants peace, truth and love in his world;
his kingdom in my heart, and your heart, unfurled;
no evil or sin – I'm sure that is so;
but how do I learn to just 'Be still and know'?

I open myself to be led by the Lord; repent of my sins – for his mercy's assured;
I learn all I can of his love and his ways; and pray with thanksgiving, devotion and
praise.

No, prayer is not easy, it needs grit and grace.
It means wrestling like Jacob with God face-to-face.
It needs Abraham's persistence; the patience of Job;
and a love like the Saviour's for all on this globe.

'I'll pray for you.' That's what I say now I'm beginning to know how to pray.
And whilst I'm not sure what God's answer will be
I find more and more that a part of it's me!

Jesus taught the disciples what we now call the Lord's Prayer, in those three
verses from Luke- a prayer which we all know by heart but do we think about
what we are saying- here is a reflection written on the Lord's Prayer

**A personal reflection on the Lord's Prayer. While it may be an easy text for many
of us to recite, is it really an easy model of prayer to follow?**

This 'Lord's Prayer', as we call it, can make prayer seem quite easy.
It can be all too easy to read it or recite it
without really thinking about the meaning behind the words,
even while part of my mind is thinking about other things -
next week's menus,
an argument with a neighbour, feeling that my views or abilities have been
overlooked...

But if I stop and think about what I'm reciting, they become tough words.

'Father.'

What is the image I have of God?
Does it explain why sometimes I'm reluctant to pray?

'May your holy name be honoured.'

How I enjoy it when my name is honoured too!

'May your Kingdom come.'

I confess that I'm more concerned with my own little world,
wanting everything to go my way.

'Give us day by day the food we need.'

So why do I hoard supplies and throw away what I don't need?

'Forgive us our sins, for we forgive everyone who does us wrong.'

Can I really claim that's true of me?

'And do not bring us to hard testing.'

I admit that I long for a quiet life, at peace with everyone.

Compassionate God, teach me to pray:

not just with Jesus' words

but also with Christlike attitudes and behaviour.

Teach me not just to say the Lord's Prayer

but to *live it*.

I have added a resources page to the end of this service along with the questions from the Methodist Way of life. We must remember

For the "*The best of all, is God is with us.*"

And finally prayer for God to break through in the life of our churches:

God of love, God for all,

your purposes are more beautiful than we can possibly imagine.

Fill us with your Holy Spirit. Help us to pray

Help us let go of all that holds us back.

Open our lives and our churches to new seasons of humility and faith, of change and growth.

Shake us up with the Good News of Jesus and show us the way.

Amen.

As we go into our prayers on intercession we consider Hymn 519

Hymn StF 519 Father I place into your hands

Prayers of Intercession.

When we forget that all we have belongs not to us, but is yours to give... **Teach us to share.**

When we measure our success by the riches we enjoy... **Teach us to share.**

When we fail to see that the wealth we enjoy is bought at the expense of others... **Teach us to share.**

When the choice is ours to shop cheaply, or fairly...**Show us how to care.**

When we claim the right to possess, while others go without...**Show us how to care.**

When we flaunt our wealth in the face of those who struggle...**Show us how to care.**

When individuals and companies shirk their responsibilities...**Help us to speak out.**

When wars are fought over ownership of land and the resources that lie within...**Help us to speak out.**

When people are forced from their homeland for want of a better life...**Help us to speak out.**

For the sake of all your people, we pray.

“The best of all, is God is with us.” Amen.

Hymn StF 531 What a friend we have in Jesus [Anne Williamson favourite hymn]

Blessing The Lord bless you and keep you [Rutter -Westminster Abbey choir]

Grace- Let us join together-- The grace of our.....

Music. To end the service

This weeks service was produced by Chris Watkins- Local pastor at East Leake-Reflection, prayers, some ideas and poem are from Roots on the Web and the Methodist Church website.

Prayer resources /ideas

Prayer plaits- Cut three equal lengths of wool (approx 9 inches or 22 centimetres) in the colours of your choice. One colour represents yourself, one represents God and one represents other people. Knot them together at one end.

As you reflect on your relationship with God and with others plait the wool. Knot the end when you finish and, as you do so, say a prayer commending yourself and those you have thought about, to God's love.

Hope 20.20 prayers in our magazine. Hope praying at 8pm on 20th month for 2020

Thankfulness tree- a Twig placed in a plant pot, onto which you can tie pieces of paper. On the paper you have written things which you are Thankful for.

Labyrinth see websites <http://www.lostinwonder.org.uk/>

<http://www.labyrinth.org.uk/>

Prayers for during the Corona virus pandemic on Methodist Church web site

Praying through our senses Hear Taize chants or worship songs as you meditate. Hold stones or glass beads to symbolise a hard problem; place it near a cross.

Repeat hymns as prayers (without music), spoken or silent.

Scented tea lights placed in front of a newspaper (to pray for those in the news), an empty photo frame (to pray for individual people) and a photo of your church (to pray for concerns).

Drink fruit juices which have been re-labelled joy, peace, love or patience, and as you drink ask God for that gift of the Spirit. Ideas from Methodist website From Joyce Cundall, Ormskirk

Prayers for Forgiveness

Invite people to write on one side of a piece of paper some things for which they are conscious of needing forgiveness. Ask them to write on the other side some things that have been done to them that they need to forgive. The pieces of paper should be folded up, collected and placed at the foot of the cross. Offer a prayer for all the situations that have been written about.

Book by Pete Greig How to pray --A simple guide for normal people.

Using the Methodist Art Collection as a point of reflection

A Methodist Way of Life A Methodist Way of Life encourages us to grow together. Make time to discuss these questions regularly with others.

Worship

What is the pattern of your prayer life?

How easy or hard do you find it to pray?

What has spoken to you recently in worship or in the Bible?

When, lately, have you felt close to God or distant from God?

Learning and Caring

How have you practised generosity since we last met?

How have you shown hospitality to others recently?

How are you caring for yourself?

How and what are you learning now?

Service

How are you seeking to serve others in your communities and beyond?

What has helped or hindered you in your service of others?

How are you caring for God's creation?

How are you using God's gifts (including your financial resources)?

What issues of injustice are you currently concerned about?

What are you doing in response?

Evangelism

When was the last time you were able to talk about God?

What opportunities to share your faith have there been since we last met?

How have you responded to opportunities to share your faith?

Is there anyone you might invite to consider Christian faith?

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