

Church at home

East Leake Methodist Church 2021

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.

Welcome

Call to Worship

Lord of all, of Church and Kingdom,
In an age of change and doubt,
Keep us faithful to the gospel,
Help us work your purpose out.
Here, in this day's dedication,
All we have to give; receive:
We, who cannot live without you,
We adore you! We believe!

Hymn **There's a Spirit in the Air (398)**

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

Prayer

Loving God,
Open our eyes to the beauty of your holiness;
Open our ears to the message of your word;
Open our minds to the challenge of your truth;
Open our hearts to the power of your love.
Open our lives to the coming of your Spirit,
That we may truly worship you,
Now and forever.

God of beauty and power, wonder and light,
We worship you for being who you are:
More beautiful than the sunlight you made;
Stronger than the power that formed the universe;
Brighter than the light which banishes night;
More wonderful than butterfly wings, snowflake's fall, or rising dew.
We worship you in adoration and praise.

Lord God,

We bring to you our sins
For your forgiveness,
Our temptations for your strength
Our sickness for your healing
And our loved ones for your protection;
Through Jesus Christ our Lord.

God our Father,
we offer thanks and praise for all you have done,
all you are doing and all you will for us,
for the Church and for the world.
You have brought us into being.
You are moulding us into your likeness,
and you lead us forward into the light of your presence.
By the power of the Holy Spirit,
living and working in us,
lead us to reflect your glory in the world,
for the sake of Christ, your Son and our Saviour. **Amen**

Here we are, Father and God, your church meeting together.
Yet we cannot meet without the crowded years pressing in on us.
We remember many other times when we have offered praise and prayer.
We give thanks that,
within your sustaining power,
the urgency of praise has never left us.

We recall that long before our time,
your people joined in fellowship to sing and pray,
receive bread and wine,
share faith and love.
We give thanks that we stand within the succession of faith.
Boldly we affirm that ours are not the final voices of praise.
Already you are stirring the hearts of younger people;
already children are reaching out to you in wondering love.
We give thanks that they meet you now,
and will in the future where you already live.

Here we are, Father and God, your church meeting together.
What has been, what is, and what is yet to be,
unite in the eternal presence of Christ among his people.

God of all ages, you have travelled with your people through the years.
You have shared moments of joy and times of despair.
Be with us now as we, like those faithful believers who have gone before us and those who will come after us, join to praise your name. Amen

Reading: **Acts 2: 42-47** **Chris Watkins**

Hymn **Community of Christ (681) StF**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zRYgHl2vIaw>

Reflection

We begin today by focusing on a document from the Methodist Connexion asking “What is A Methodist Way of Life?”

Taken from the Methodist webpage:

“A 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.

Like the early Christians in Acts 2: 42-47 we seek to express what it means to follow Jesus in regular, practical actions of worship, learning and caring, service and evangelism.

In this sense, A Methodist Way of Life is both new and old. It is new, in that Methodists first discussed such a way at the 2018 Conference, although it is based on Our Calling, agreed in 2000. That, in turn, was built on what Methodists have always done, since the days of John Wesley, in trying to follow Jesus and live out the Christian faith – just as those first followers in Acts did.

The commitments of the Methodist Way of Life remind us of, and provide a compass for, Christian living.”

The Methodist Way of Life commitment card reminds of “Our Calling” that as far as we are able, the Methodist church will respond to the gospel of God’s love in Christ and to live out its discipleship in worship and mission.

As I think most of you know I arrived in Loughborough in 2005 as a Probationary Minister (still wet behind the ears!). I began my Diaconal appointment wondering what God and the Circuit had in store for me. When I look at way the “Methodist Way of Life” encourages, I can’t help but think of the comparisons with the calling of a Deacon to the Methodist Church and the way of life we are called too.

As a religious order, we recognise the unconditional love of God as known in Jesus Christ. Out of this springs our calling to the sacrificial servant ministry of Christ and to be a dispersed community living by a rule of life.

At first, I was daunted by the concept of a rule of life and what would that mean! Most of you know I am not the best when it comes to silence and discipline, in fact during training at Queen’s College the other students would laugh and say that God had called me to a religious order because I needed more discipline.

Now, in my 16th year in ministry, I could not imagine living any other way. There is no element of compulsion to the rule of life, but there is a hope that I will follow it freely and adapt it to my personal needs and circumstances. It has become the framework for the enrichment of my own life, the life of the Order and the people of God amongst whom I live.

The way I think about the rule of life now, is that it is a gift given to me to help me live my life in regular contact with God, welcoming each new day as an amazing opportunity to love and serve God and those I meet along the way.

Being a Chaplain and a faith leader ministering in a secular University and a multi-faith chaplaincy I face many challenges.

I am tasked with supporting and nurturing Christians to be the best Christian they can be. I am tasked to do the same for Muslim; Hindu; Sikh and my brothers and sisters of all world faiths.

I am also tasked to listen and if possible, answer questions asked by those who are seeking, who are trying to make sense of the world we are part of when they see hatred and division all around – where then do I meet and serve God in the sometimes-mundane everyday moments?

I meet and serve God in the ordinary – students and staff milling around campus going about their day.

I meet and serve God in the extraordinary – students and staff, seeking out a chaplain when they need support, care or a listening ear.

I meet and serve God in the wonder – of what it means to listen to the stories of those I meet: faith stories; stories of lives changing as they begin a new journey at Loughborough.

I meet and serve God in the beauty of creation – we have a wonderful campus with flowers and trees and people from every corner of the earth.

Where do you meet and serve God? In church, certainly; in times of quiet prayer and reflection – then too; but God is present throughout our lives, involved in every aspect of every day.

Just as the Rule of Life has become my way of living, it is interwoven with the Methodist Way of Life. I personally think, this way of life is not just for Deacons or Methodists or those first followers in Acts. We have been given a job description for the way of life for all, who are trying to follow Jesus and live out the Christian faith.

Amen

Hymn **Let Us Build a House Where Love Can Dwell (409)**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gKJgcv8SdnQ>

Prayers of Intercession

Loving God, your Kingdom is a kingdom of justice and mercy.

We pray for the leaders of the nations,

that they might rule fairly and with compassion,

respecting the rights and needs of all people and promoting peace.

Your Kingdom come. **Your will be done.**

Loving God, your Kingdom is a Kingdom of hope and joy.

We pray for those in sorrow or need.

We remember the bereaved, the anxious and the ill, the destitute, the hungry and the homeless.

Your Kingdom come. **Your will be done.**

Loving God, your Kingdom is a kingdom of love and unity.

We pray for your church here in East Leake and the church throughout the world, asking that we might be true agents of, and witnesses to, your saving love.

Your Kingdom come. **Your will be done.**

Loving God, your Kingdom is a kingdom of light and life. We pray for ourselves, that you will continue to guide us safely on our journey through life so that we might come to be with you in your eternal kingdom.

Your Kingdom come. **Your will be done.**

Through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen

Lord's Prayer

As our Saviour taught his disciples, we pray:

Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy Name,
thy kingdom come,
thy will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
As we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation;
But deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
The power and the glory,
for ever and ever. Amen.

Hymn

The Church's One Foundation (690)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9rIS166ppoE>

Blessing

Hear the call of the kingdom

To be children of light

With the mercy of heaven,

The humility of Christ;

Walking justly before him,

Loving all that is right,

That the life of Christ may shine through us.

May the blessing of God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit,

Be with you and remain with you

And those you love, and those you struggle with

Today and always. Amen