

# 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 & Introduction

### Call to worship

Lift your eyes to gaze on God.  
Hear God's Word and receive God's peace.  
With all that you have been, all that you are,  
and all that you hope to be,  
offer yourself now to God in worship and praise.

Hymn StF 148 We have a gospel to proclaim

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I5wWRYq57EM>

Let us pray together

Everlasting God, creator of heaven and earth,  
your love causes our hearts to soar.  
You know the number of stars in the universe  
– just as you know the number of hairs on our head.  
Mighty God: We love you.

You call each star by name  
– just as you call us each by name.  
Mighty God: We love you.

You supply the earth with rain to make the grass grow;  
and provide food for the animals and birds  
– just as you provide all we need to sustain us.  
Mighty God: We love you.

You care about the details, seeing every tiny part of the bigger picture  
– just as you care about the tiniest detail in our lives;  
for you know the person you created each of us to be.  
Mighty God: We love you.  
Amen.

## Today's Readings

Epistle

### **1 Corinthians 9:16-23 Contemporary English Version (CEV)**

The Rights of an Apostle

16 I don't have any reason to brag about preaching the good news. Preaching is something God told me to do, and if I don't do it, I am doomed. 17 If I preach because I want to, I will be paid. But even if I don't want to, it is still something God has sent me to do. 18 What pay am I given? It is the chance to preach the good news free of charge and not to use the privileges that are mine because I am a preacher.

19 I am not anyone's slave. But I have become a slave to everyone, so that I can win as many people as possible. 20 When I am with the Jews, I live like a Jew to win Jews. They are ruled by the Law of Moses, and I am not. But I live by the Law to win them. 21 And when I am with people who are not ruled by the Law, I forget about the Law to win them. Of course, I never really forget about the law of God. In fact, I am ruled by the law of Christ. 22 When I am with people whose faith is weak, I live as they do to win them. I do everything I can to win everyone I possibly can. 23 I do all this for the good news, because I want to share in its blessings.

Gospel reading

Mark 1:29-39 Contemporary English Version (CEV)

Jesus Heals Many People

29 As soon as Jesus left the meeting place with James and John, they went home with Simon and Andrew. 30 When they got there, Jesus was told that Simon's mother-in-law was sick in bed with fever. 31 Jesus went to her. He took hold of her hand and helped her up. The fever left her, and she served them a meal.

32 That evening after sunset, all who were sick or had demons in them were brought to Jesus. 33 In fact, the whole town gathered around the door of the house. 34 Jesus healed all kinds of terrible diseases and forced out a lot of demons. But the demons knew who he was, and he did not let them speak.

*Jesus Prays in a Solitary Place*

35 Very early the next morning, Jesus got up and went to a place where he could be alone and pray. 36 Simon and the others started looking for him. 37 And when they found him, they said, “Everyone is looking for you!”

38 Jesus replied, “We must go to the nearby towns, so that I can tell the good news to those people. This is why I have come.” 39 Then Jesus went to Jewish meeting places everywhere in Galilee, where he preached and forced out demons.

### **A prayer of confession**

People. People. Everywhere! Day in. Day out.  
Seeking you, Lord. Hunting you. Following you.  
Hungry for your presence. Wanting your attention.  
Yet not once did you complain.

We're sorry, Lord, that the weight of life's demands causes us to stumble,  
to lose our temper and at times to buckle under the pressure.  
Help us to be more like you, Lord.

We're sorry for not getting our priorities right.  
Help us to know, as you did,  
the importance of spending time with and drawing refreshment from the  
Father.  
We're sorry for allowing other people and things to take over and squeeze out  
our time with you.  
Help us to draw daily on your refreshing strength in order to cope with  
whatever our day holds.  
Lord, hear our prayer.  
Amen.

### **Sermon**

#### **Taking on life...**

Monday 1<sup>st</sup> February was a nice day, cold but the sun was shining. I was working in my workshop my hands becoming colder. Debra had made us a hot drink mine in one of those bamboo reusable Eco-Friendly Coffee mugs. Cupping the mug in my hands quickly made them warm again as the coffee warmed my body. A process of warming and healing cold hands and body. As I sat on the garden bench, I began to consider this morning readings relating to healing, prayer, and sharing the good news speak to me of where we are at this present time living with a worldwide

pandemic and what the future may hold not only for the church but for those who are suffering as a consequence of Government restrictions. Where are we finding today's good news?

In this morning's gospel reading Jesus shows us his priorities – he knows what he must do not only that but demonstrates this by healing and proclaiming the good news. However, Jesus takes timeout to get away from the crowds and be alone in prayer – Jesus knows what he must do to care for himself and stay true to his mission.

### **And know the work begins**

Five weeks into a third national lockdown due to the Covid-19 pandemic and its biting hard into our communities as so many people are suffering under the restrictions of “stay at home, stay local to exercise and don't meet with other people and don't travel unnecessarily.” Life is becoming tough for everyone with young and old alike experiencing loneliness, depression and anxiety. So, what can we do as part of the Methodist Church to help the situation in some way? Not only in our local communities but within our families and friendship groups.

The Methodist Way of Life calls us as a church 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 practice hospitality and generosity.

There are two further headings: SERVICE and EVANGELISUM.

Jesus was pro-active in His healing also he needed to be alone to pray then moved on to spread the good news to those people. At this moment in time and possibly for some time to come we are restricted to our local area therefore what might our own approach be?

Going back to our current situation how do we find ourselves being pro-active in helping those around us?

Two questions for personal consideration, possibly with notes taken so that thoughts can be expanded.

### **Taking on Life one cup at a time**

This short statement is embossed into the sleeve of my Eco-Friendly mug acting as a reminder that Like Jesus we cannot do everything at once and like him we also need to be able to step aside to contemplate a situation and have time for personal prayer.

We are all uniquely individuals therefore our approach to helping others is going to be different, sometimes we have to be that little bit inventive whilst staying within Government regulations.

To conclude I would like share with you a personal conversation I had with a man who I will call 'X' I had never met but knew of through his wife an ex-work colleague.

X had posted a couple of messages on social media, I responded:

Hi X, sending you a welfare message, how are you progressing today? reading your post with a first-hand view of Covid really does sound awful! Wish you all the best and hope you are on the road to recovery; eating is a good sign. Remain positive. G

In response X writes

Thanks Granville. Yes, it's still very uphill. Eating is a real problem. Seem to spend most of the days and evenings sleeping. Take care and thank you.

I really do feel I was guided to send this message to help the healing process in a small way, the more I think about this short conversation make me think that a seed of Jesus' love for us all may have been sown.

When having conversations, I have found tea, coffee and cake helps when Taking on Life one cup at a time. **Amen.**

#### **A time of prayer**

Loving God, we pray for the community and country of which we are a part.

For those who are exhausted with caring for others and long for a break.

For those who have had enough of restrictions, of not being able to meet with friends and family, and feel they cannot stand it any longer, and for those who are angry and frightened, who feel their only hope is just to try and hang on until things get better.

Lord in your mercy **hear our prayer**

Loving God, we pray for the leaders of the world, as they try and bring the pandemic under control.

Give them the wisdom and courage to respect every human life and seek freedom, justice and peace for all people.

Lord in your mercy **hear our prayer**

Loving God we pray for the church, unite us by your Spirit, and enable us to witness to the hope we have in you.

Lord in your mercy hear our **prayer**

Loving God, come to us now, as you have come to your people in every age. We thank you for all who have reflected the light of Christ. Help us to follow their example and bring us with them to live forever in your kingdom. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

### **The Lord's Prayer**

*Our Father .....*

### **Hymn StF 465 Guide me, O thou great Jehovah**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oq9vcQqI93U>

### **A sending out prayer**

Lord Jesus,  
go with us into the world this week.  
Help us to remain focused upon you  
and to make your priorities our priorities in  
all the places you are sending us.  
Amen.

### **A prayer of blessing**

May God, the giver of hope,  
fill us with all joy and peace because we trust in him,  
and the blessing of  
God Father, Son and Holy spirit be with us all. **Amen**

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