

# 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.*

## **Call to worship**

Our God offers us hospitality, and God's welcome is generous.  
God is here among us, meeting with us in our worship and in our fellowship.  
God longs to meet our needs as we come with hands open  
and arms outstretched.

Welcoming God, we come to you with open hearts and with open hands.  
We come with our faith and hope, and with our doubts and fears.  
Send your Holy Spirit to work among us, filling us and changing us  
to become more like Jesus. Amen.

## **Hymn StF322 How sweet the name of Jesus sounds**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JXyHMMMy4YyY>

## **Prayers**

Eternal God, source of all life, today we choose to follow you.  
Be present in all we think, say and do.

Powerful redeemer, speak to our hearts.  
Holy God, we draw close to you. Loving God, giver of life;  
Lord Jesus, friend and Saviour; Holy Spirit, living water – we worship and  
adore you.

We come today, not having or expecting all the answers but knowing that you  
are the way.

## **Prayer of Thanksgiving**

Thank you, Lord, for your unfailing love.  
Thank you that even with all our doubts and fears

and worries about the journey ahead, you are there by our side.

Where else can we turn? To whom shall we go?

Thank you that you are our rock and our salvation, our strength and our high tower.

Thank you that as we choose to go on this journey with you, as we make decisions and plans, you are there, gently leading and guiding, always present.

Praise you, Lord, for your constant love and faithfulness.

### **Prayer of forgiveness**

When we turn away from you, O God, and go our own way:  
forgive us, and turn us back to you.

When the way ahead is not clear, when everything feels too much  
and we turn our backs on you:

forgive us, and turn us back to you.

When we make wrong decisions and our actions hurt others:

forgive us, and turn us back to you.

When we want to give up because it's too hard:

forgive us, and turn us back to you.

When we cannot see beyond ourselves and act selfishly:

forgive us, and turn us back to you.

When we do not put you and others first:

forgive us, and turn us back to you.

Turn us back to you, O God. **Amen.**

### **Assurance of forgiveness**

Despite going our own way and not following you,  
despite our doubts and fears of your presence,  
you are there gently leading us,  
reaching out your arms of healing and forgiveness.

Thank you, eternal God.

Amen.

**Let us join together in the prayer our Lord taught us Our Father....**

**OT reading- Joshua 24 dramatic reading [Joshua read by Chris with congregation response]**

Joshua: Do we have members of all the tribes here? Yes? Elders and heads of each tribe? Good. Now, judges, are you all here? Splendid. And the officers and accountants? Let us present ourselves before God.

(Joshua stands silent for a moment, eyes closed, waiting on God)

Joshua: Let us worship the Lord God. Let us be honest with ourselves and with God, truthful and faithful in our pledge to serve God. In recent times, we have chosen not to follow the gods of our ancestors, either in this land or far-off Egypt. We have pledged ourselves to serve the Lord. Today you must make a choice again. There will be no judgement on those who choose to follow another path. You can follow the gods of your ancestors, if you so wish. But I have made my choice. As for me and my household, we will serve the Lord. What will you choose?

***Congregation respond***

**1: We will not forsake the Lord.**

**2: We will not serve other gods.**

**3: God brought us out from slavery in Egypt.**

**4: The Lord did great signs in the desert.**

**5: God protected us on our journey.**

**6: God gave us this land.**

**7: The Lord is our God.**

**8: We too will serve the Lord.**

**Psalm 34 15-22 said responsively StF 809**

## **Hymn StF 272 From heaven he came, helpless babe**

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R-IxT-2\\_jRg](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R-IxT-2_jRg)

### **Ephesians 6: v 10-20**

### **Gospel: John 6: 56-69 Reflective reading [read by Chris]**

#### **John 6.56-69**

A reflective presentation of the Gospel reading. It is the imagined reflections of a disciple who was present as Jesus spoke. You need just one person to deliver this who, whether reading the words or from memory, can sound convincing as someone telling their story.

Disciple: Last night, I dreamt I was back near Capernaum. It was the moment when I finally began to understand who he was, what he is; the time when some of us decided that this Jesus really is the one, the Holy One of Israel.

It had been a long few days. Days of watching bread fill thousands, and not running out – that was just miraculous. Days of seeing Jesus come to us in the night across the surface of the Sea of Galilee; of listening to him talking, and arguing. And days of me being completely unable to understand – what was he talking about?

He'd been talking to the Jews about the manna with which our heavenly Father fed our ancestors. He said he was 'the bread of life'. And I was just wondering – wondering what he was talking about.

He'd also spoken of his relationship with the Father, of being 'the Son of Man'. He'd challenged the Jews. He'd changed the questions – turned them round. He'd fed us and taught us...and scared us. Yes, scared us a bit...and changed us.

He knew who would believe as soon as he met them. What was it about those people? Was it their heart that he could see? Or could he read their minds? But some said they could not follow and left us. Others said they could but left later – until there was just a handful us left: the women and the central 12.

And, at the end of those few days, he watched more turn and walk away. He turned to us, he turned to me and said, 'Do you also wish to go away?' And I looked at him. And I saw the pain etched in his face – I think it was for what he knew was coming. But I also saw the joy of companionship alive in his eyes.

And Simon Peter said, for all of us, ‘Lord, to whom would we go? You have the words of eternal life. We have come to believe and know that you are the Holy One of God.’

### **Address**

For the past few weeks we have been looking in our gospel readings at the sixth Chapter of the gospel of Saint John, a first hand account from a person who was there, part of these events as they unfolded. We have heard about the feeding of the five thousand, Jesus walking on water, Jesus explanation of himself as the Bread to life to the end of the chapter, our reading today.

Jesus encouraging his followers, developing their knowledge and understanding of his message while growing their commitment and awareness of their faith in God.

Building up a cohesive band of faithful followers, some fell by the wayside, finding it difficult to commit to the teachings of Jesus.

A friend found this piece while looking for something else, unrelated, it fell out of a file,

### **What God hath promised**

God hath not promised skies always blue,  
Flower strewn pathways, all our life through  
God hath not promised sun without rain,

Joy without sorrow, peace without pain.

God hath not promised we shall not know  
toil and temptation, trouble and woe,

He hath not told us, we shall not bear, many a burden, many a care

But God hath promised

Strength for the day, rest for the labourer, light for the way.

Grace for the trials, help from above,

Unfailing sympathy, undying love

Where do we learn about faith today- not just in our churches, through services, bible study, our Tuesday chats, Four Square but in the community, with the people we meet, the work we undertake.

We make lots of choices every day- what to wear, what to eat, how to spend our time etc some decisions are difficult, even life changing, others mundane but still

necessary. We have and make the choice, what guides those choices is our knowledge, our understanding and trust and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. Our faith comes from what we believe, Jesus the son of God- Father, Son and Holy Spirit. We are encouraged by the Father, guided by the Son and sustained by the Holy Spirit to live our lives according to his teaching.

We are called as Methodists to make a commitment every year in our Covenant service by affirming our faith. For us at East Leake this will be in the New Year but for some churches like Mountsorrel they will have their Covenant service at the beginning of the Connexional year in September.

Here is a short Prayer of commitment

Generous God, you always love us, always want the best for us, always inspire us to grow. You offer us life in all its fullness, and give us the freedom to choose how we respond to you.

We offer our lives back to you, and pray that you accept our love in return. Amen.

For a moment think about the choices you make every day.

Now think about the week to come, what choices will you need to make?

Try to be more aware of the everyday choices you make and the impact they have on God's world. Make a note of them as they arise, if that helps. Can you find – and make – choices that will make the world a better place and witness to God's kingdom values (e.g. by what you say, do, buy)?

**You may like to try this walking prayer**

Go outside to somewhere you can safely walk barefoot. Take a moment to feel the ground beneath your feet. Take a step and, as you do so, think of one reason you follow Jesus. Continue, pausing between each step as you make this walking prayer.

One of the choices you may have this week, may be to share your faith

We will have an opportunity to learn more about sharing our faith, carrying on the Methodist way of Life-

Angela is organising with the Rev. Martin Swan a series of sessions in October and November about sharing our faith - so look out for the details.

**Hymn StF 736 In heavenly love abiding**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sT0r9DaGbmQ>

## **Prayers of intercession**

O God, who answers prayer,  
we hear the words of Paul the apostle.  
He exhorts us to pray  
on all occasions  
and with all kinds of prayers and requests.  
We pray for communities that have seen tragedy.  
For vulnerable people who struggle to face what life  
throws at them.  
May they be built up in your love and strength.  
Lord, we pray in your Spirit.

We pray for people who suffer for their faith.  
For ministers and evangelists who seek to spread your word.  
For us all as we share the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.  
May they, and may we, be built up in your love and strength.  
Lord, we pray in your Spirit.

We pray for people who feel bound by chains of unemployment and poverty,  
chains of disability or illness, chains of sorrow.  
Lord, we pray in your Spirit.

We pray for ourselves when we feel vulnerable.  
May they, and may we, be built up in your love and strength.

Lord, we bring to you the times we find it hard  
to be a Christian –  
when the going gets tough, the tough get going and stay with Jesus.  
We bring the times when bad things happen in the world  
and our faith doesn't seem to make a difference –  
when the going gets tough, the tough get going and stay with Jesus.

Lord, help us to be like Peter and know you as the Holy One of God.  
Lord, we pray in your Spirit.  
Amen.

## **Hymn StF 345 And can it be that I should gain.**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TCDdm8usKrU>

### **Blessing and grace**

Lord Jesus Christ, to whom shall we go?  
You have the words of eternal life,  
and we have come to believe and know  
that you are the Holy One of God.  
Go with us into your world.  
Amen.

Final music: We want to see Jesus lifted high.

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

This service was prepared by Chris Watkins -  
Local Lay Pastor at East Leake Methodist Church.

Prayers and Dramatic readings from Roots on the Web.