



The Methodist Church

Welshpool & Bro Hafren Methodist Circuit

Home Worship Sheet - Sunday 29th March 2020

This short act of worship has been prepared for you to use if you are unable to attend church. (Based on a service produced by the Methodist Church)

Call to Worship

**As long as Christ could suffer, he did suffer and he sorrowed for us.
And now that he is risen and can suffer no more, he suffers with us.**

Mother Julian of Norwich

**Beyond the darkness, there is light.
Beyond the griefs and pains of the moment
is the promise of food and freedom for all.**

**Beyond our current distress is the dream of a tapestry
through which is woven the rainbow colours of
truth, freedom, kindness, care, respect, peace and love.**

**And in the centre of this tapestry is the Son of God who became
human to uphold the Kingdom of justice and righteousness.**

Hymn: To God be the glory (Singing the Faith 94)

To listen to this hymn right click [here](#) and open in a new tab. Go to the new tab to make it play and then close the tab after the hymn.

**1 To God be the glory, great things he has done!
So loved he the world that he gave us his Son,
who yielded his life in atonement for sin,
and opened the life-gate that all may go in:**

**Praise the Lord! Praise the Lord!
Let the earth hear his voice!
Praise the Lord! Praise the Lord!
Let the people rejoice!
O come to the Father, through Jesus the Son;
and give him the glory — great things he has done!**

**2 O perfect redemption, the purchase of blood,
to every believer the promise of God!
The vilest offender who truly believes,
that moment from Jesus a pardon receives:**

**3 Great things he has taught us, great things he has done,
and great our rejoicing through Jesus the Son;
but purer, and higher, and greater will be
our wonder, our rapture, when Jesus we see:**

Frances Jane van Alstyne, (Fanny Crosby: 1820–1915)

Note: Fanny Crosby was born 24th March 1820

Reproduced from *Singing the Faith* Electronic Words Edition, number 94

Let us pray together,

Gracious God,

We thank you for the astonishing love you have showed in your Son Jesus Christ, enabling us to share our humanity to you, through him.

We praise you that he became flesh and blood like us,
experiencing the same temptations we face,
torn by the same fears,
suffering the same pain
and tasting the same joys and sorrows.

We praise you for the assurance this brings –
the knowledge that you understand the worries, concerns,
doubts and problems that confront us each day –
and at the present time, all the uncertainty we face.

Forgive us Lord when fear and uncertainty can make us think of ourselves first and it becomes so easy to forget that you expect us to share the good things you provide with our neighbours, whose needs may be greater than our own.

Forgive us Lord.

We praise you and thank you for all you have done and continue to do so. We offer you these our prayers in the name of your Son, our Saviour, Jesus Christ.

AMEN

Today's Reading from the Old Testament: Ezekiel 37: 1-14

To listen to this reading, by David Suchet from BibleGateway, right click [here](#) and open in a new tab. Go to the new tab to make it play and then close the tab after the reading.

The hand of the Lord was on me, and he brought me out by the Spirit of the Lord and set me in the middle of a valley; it was full of bones. He led me to and fro among them, and I saw a great many bones on the floor of the valley, bones that were very dry. He asked me, 'Son of man, can these bones live?'

I said, 'Sovereign Lord, you alone know.'

Then he said to me, 'Prophecy to these bones and say to them, "Dry bones, hear the word of the Lord! This is what the Sovereign Lord says to these bones: I will make breath enter you, and you will come to life. I will attach tendons to you and make flesh come upon you and cover you with skin; I will put breath in you, and you will come to life. Then you will know that I am the Lord."' "

So I prophesied as I was commanded. And as I was prophesying, there was a noise, a rattling sound, and the bones came together, bone to bone. I looked, and tendons and flesh appeared on them and skin covered them, but there was no breath in them.

Then he said to me, 'Prophecy to the breath; prophecy, son of man, and say to it, "This is what the Sovereign Lord says: come, breath, from the four winds and breathe into these slain, that they may live.'" So I prophesied as he commanded me, and breath entered them; they came to life and stood up on their feet – a vast army.

Then he said to me: 'Son of man, these bones are the people of Israel. They say, "Our bones are dried up and our hope is gone; we are cut off."

Therefore prophecy and say to them: "This is what the Sovereign Lord says: my people, I am going to open your graves and bring you up from them; I will bring you back to the land of Israel.

Then you, my people, will know that I am the Lord, when I open your graves and bring you up from them. I will put my Spirit in you and you will live, and I will settle you in your own land. Then you will know that I the Lord have spoken, and I have done it, declares the Lord.' "

Today's Gospel Reading: John 11:21-44

To listen to this reading, by David Suchet from BibleGateway, right click [here](#) and open in a new tab. Go to the new tab to make it play and then close the tab after the reading.

'Lord,' Martha said to Jesus, 'if you had been here, my brother would not have died. But I know that even now God will give you whatever you ask.' Jesus said to her, 'Your brother will rise again.'

Martha answered, 'I know he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day.' Jesus said to her, 'I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die; and whoever lives by believing in me will never die. Do you believe this?' 'Yes, Lord,' she replied, 'I believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, who is to come into the world.'

After she had said this, she went back and called her sister Mary aside. 'The Teacher is here,' she said, 'and is asking for you.' When Mary heard this, she got up quickly and went to him. Now Jesus had not yet entered the village, but was still at the place where Martha had met him. When the Jews who had been with Mary in the house, comforting her, noticed how quickly she got up and went out, they followed her, supposing she was going to the tomb to mourn there.

When Mary reached the place where Jesus was and saw him, she fell at his feet and said, 'Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.'

When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who had come along with her also weeping, he was deeply moved in spirit and troubled. 'Where have you laid him?' he asked.

'Come and see, Lord,' they replied.

Jesus wept.

Then the Jews said, 'See how he loved him!' But some of them said, 'Could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man have kept this man from dying?'

Jesus, once more deeply moved, came to the tomb. It was a cave with a stone laid across the entrance. 'Take away the stone,' he said. 'But, Lord,' said Martha, the sister of the dead man, 'by this time there is a bad odour, for he has been there four days.' Then Jesus said, 'Did I not tell you that if you believe, you will see the glory of God?'

So they took away the stone. Then Jesus looked up and said, 'Father, I thank you that you have heard me. I knew that you always hear me, but I

said this for the benefit of the people standing here, that they may believe that you sent me.'

When he had said this, Jesus called in a loud voice, 'Lazarus, come out!' The dead man came out, his hands and feet wrapped with strips of linen, and a cloth round his face.

Jesus said to them, 'Take off the grave clothes and let him go.'

Time to Reflect – Written by John Harbron

"To God be the glory great things he has done" are inspirational words, but when the dark side of life closes in on us, whether personal or international, doubts can set in.

Last Tuesday was the bicentenary of the birth of Fanny Crosby who wrote those words. Within weeks of her birth she was blind. A doctor had prescribed using a hot poultice to cure inflammation of her eyes, wrongly it turned out. So for the remainder of her life, 94 years, she spent in the dark. But she found Jesus Christ who put a light into her life. She wrote 8000 hymns and poems including "Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine."

For many of us, the story of the dry bones will take us back to our childhood. The pictures it paints are very striking, and particularly when you can put a song with it – "Dem bones, dem bones, dem dry bones."

But I don't think we really understood what it was all about.

The people of Israel and Judah had been taken to Babylon in an imposed exile. Those who remained behind witnessed the destruction of the Temple. Ezekiel was the prophet of God charged to encourage those in Babylon that God would save them from this dark period in their lives. Someday they will return and the Temple will be rebuilt.

Their existence is like the dry bones but God will breath his life into them and the people of Israel and Judah will blossom. Their prayers will be answered. God has given them the Hope that all will be well.

It may not be the same but it will be good.

For Martha and Mary, their brother is seriously ill. They know who will heal him – their very good friend Jesus. So they send him a message and expect to see the blue flashing lights and siren sounding as Jesus hurries to the rescue. But nothing comes, nobody, not even one of his disciples.

Lazarus dies, when he could have been so easily healed if only Jesus had come. So they have no alternative but to bury Lazarus in their tomb.

They are in dark times when so easily they could have been bright.

Four days later Jesus finally arrives and asks to go to the tomb where the body of Lazarus is beginning the smell. He stands in the entrance and calls for Lazarus to come out. To the astonishment of all who are present, Lazarus appears at the entrance of the tomb – alive – breathing – though still wrapped in some of the grave clothes.

A spectacular miracle – dwarfing all those where Jesus healed people.

This was a particular dark time for Martha and Mary but the light Jesus brought was there for everyone to see and witness.

We find ourselves in a very dark place. A time of uncertainty and fear as we face a challenge worldwide which we struggle to come to terms with. “To God be the glory great things he has done” can seem to have a hollow ring to it. But the stories of Fanny Crosby, the dry bones and Martha & Mary puts the flesh back on those inspirational words. Their relationship with God and Jesus Christ.

We may be worshipping God with this service in ones and twos, but we are doing it together, we are being one with God. It is the light of Jesus shining in our hearts and in our lives which brings us together as one.

The whole of chapter 11 in John’s Gospel is worth reading. There are so many different things going on, it makes fascinating reading. Once you’ve read it, thought about it, prayed about it, why not share your thoughts, questions and inspiration with someone on the phone. In our times of isolation we’ve got more time to think about our world, God’s world and the light Jesus Christ brings to it.

I sign off with just one reflection. God always answers our prayers. It may not be the way we want or expect.

For the parents of Fanny Crosby, it must have been devastating for them to find their daughter becoming blind. Who would ever have thought dry bones could come to life? Martha and Mary wanted Jesus to come very quickly to answer their message, their prayers. But he didn’t!

But he did come, maybe a few days later, but he did come.

That is the assurance for us today. Christ is our light.

All we’ve got to do is ask “shine through the darkness” and he will.

A time of prayer

Lord, we pray for those whose lives are trapped by the darkness of fear; for those facing a time of uncertainty, a fear that comes from not knowing. For all those who are living through dark days and weeks of anxiety.

Lord in the darkness – may your light shine through.

Lord, we pray for those who are in the darkness of loneliness, for all those who are single in a society designed for the family, for those who are finding themselves in isolation, prisoners in their own home. Longing for someone to break into the silence of their loneliness.

We bring you Lord, all those who find themselves living in isolation but as a group, be it a family or friends. Tensions which may develop by being forced to live together.

Lord in the darkness – may your light shine through.

Lord, we pray for ourselves, that the light of Christ will find its way into the darkest corners of our lives, that we may walk, talk and live in the light of his love.

We bring to you Lord those whom we know are going through difficult and dark times in their lives

Lord in the darkness – may your light shine through. We bring you our prayers in the name of Christ, The Light of the World. AMEN

The Lord's Prayer

***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: Longing for light (Singing the Faith 706)

To listen to this hymn right click [here](#) and open in a new tab. Go to the new tab to make it play and then close the tab after the hymn.

**1 Longing for light, we wait in darkness.
Longing for truth, we turn to you.
Make us your own, your holy people,
light for the world to see.**

**Christ, be our light!
Shine in our hearts.
Shine through the darkness.
Christ, be our light!
Shine in your Church gathered today.**

**2 Longing for peace, our world is troubled.
Longing for hope, many despair.
Your word alone has power to save us.
Make us your living voice.**

**3 Longing for food, many are hungry.
Longing for water, many still thirst.
Make us your bread, broken for others,
shared until all are fed.**

**4 Longing for shelter, many are homeless.
Longing for warmth, many are cold.
Make us your building, sheltering others,
walls made of living stone.**

**5 Many the gifts, many the people,
many the hearts that yearn to belong.
Let us be servants to one another,
making your kingdom come.**

Bernadette Farrell (b. 1957)

A prayer of blessing

Lord, I have met with you, not by my deserving but by your grace alone.

Lord, I have met with you, not by my wisdom but through the power of your Spirit.

Lord, I have met with you, not because I had planned it but because you called me.

Lord, I have met with you, not for my sake but simply for your glory.

Lord, I have met with you, knowing that others are meeting with you.

Through you we are all meeting together sharing the peace, hope and wholeness that is found in your presence.

HALLELUIAH! AMEN