

Welshpool & Bro Hafren Methodist Circuit

Home Worship Sheet – 11th October

This short act of worship has been prepared and written for you by Rev Marian Jones.

Today, as we gather for worship, we are aware of those of you who, as yet, are not able to join the gathered community. You are the people of God where you are, and we join together to worship. Today's service reflects as closely as is possible, the service that will be held in Welshpool Methodist Church.

Call to worship:

**May the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ
enlighten the eyes of our mind,
so that we can see what hope
his call holds for us.**

(based on Ephesians 1:17,18)

Hymn: Christ, whose glory fills the skies

To listen to the hymn in a new tab: press Shift and Ctrl together and click [here](#).- Close the tab after the hymn.

- 1 Christ, whose glory fills the skies,
Christ, the true, the only Light,
Sun of Righteousness, arise,
triumph o'er the shades of night;
Day-spring from on high, be near;
Day-star, in my heart appear.**
- 2 Dark and cheerless is the morn
unaccompanied by thee;
joyless is the day's return,
till thy mercy's beams I see,
till they inward light impart,
glad my eyes, and warm my heart.**

3 Visit then this soul of mine;
pierce the gloom of sin and grief;
fill me, radiancy divine;
scatter all my unbelief;
more and more thyself display,
shining to the perfect day.

Charles Wesley (1707–1788)

Reproduced from Singing the Faith Electronic Words Edition, number 134

Opening Prayer:

Lord our God,
eternal and ever-loving,
wholly to be trusted:
you give life to all,
giving hope to those who call on you.
Set our hearts and minds at peace,
that we may bring our prayers to you
with confidence and joy;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Prayer of Confession:

In the silence and before God, let us call to mind our sins.

You were sent with good news for the poor
and healing for the contrite:
Lord, have mercy. **Lord have mercy.**

You carried back to the fold
the sheep that had strayed:
Christ, have mercy. **Christ have mercy.**

You are always interceding for us
at the right hand of the Father:
Lord, have mercy. **Lord have mercy.**

Declaration of God's forgiveness:

Loving Father, source of our life,
you know our weakness
and have promised your forgiveness when we turn back to you.
May we reach out with joy to grasp your hand
and walk more readily in your ways,
following Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Prayer for today:

Lord, in your goodness,
open our eyes to your light,
and so fill our hearts with your glory
that we may always acknowledge Jesus as Saviour,
and hold fast to his word in sincerity and truth.
We make our prayer
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

A reading from the Gospel according to St Matthew, Chapter 22: 1 - 14

To listen to this reading, by David Suchet from BibleGateway in a new tab press Shift and Ctrl together and click [here](#). Close the tab after the reading.

Jesus spoke to them again in parables, saying: 'The kingdom of heaven is like a king who prepared a wedding banquet for his son. He sent his servants to those who had been invited to the banquet to tell them to come, but they refused to come.

Then he sent some more servants and said, "Tell those who have been invited that I have prepared my dinner: my oxen and fattened cattle have been slaughtered, and everything is ready. Come to the wedding banquet."

But they paid no attention and went off – one to his field, another to his business. The rest seized his servants, ill-treated them and killed them. The king was enraged. He sent his army and destroyed those murderers and burned their city.

Then he said to his servants, “The wedding banquet is ready, but those I invited did not deserve to come. So go to the street corners and invite to the banquet anyone you find.” So the servants went out into the streets and gathered all the people they could find, the bad as well as the good, and the wedding hall was filled with guests.

But when the king came in to see the guests, he noticed a man there who was not wearing wedding clothes. He asked, “How did you get in here without wedding clothes, friend?” The man was speechless.

Then the king told the attendants, “Tie him hand and foot, and throw him outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”

‘For many are invited, but few are chosen.’

New International Version

Reflection

Today is the first day of Prisons Week and, in prison, there were young men who would quote me because there were words I repeated again and again in the hope that, somehow, they would sink in! Among those words were: ‘Actions have consequences!’ If I needed scriptural backing for that statement then today’s gospel reading is it.

Jesus had infuriated the religious authorities by his subversive gesture of cleansing the Temple and overturning the tables of the moneychangers. Now he’s locked in an argument with them as they demand to know his authority. And, of course, his authority is of God. Matthew records a series of stories that Jesus uses to respond to them: first the story of the two sons, then the parable of the workers in the vineyard and, now, the parable of the wedding feast. The problem is that it doesn’t say what I want it to but it is a reminder that actions have consequences!

A couple of months ago, the Secretary of the Methodist Conference wrote an article in the Methodist Recorder about ‘Inclusivity’, picking up themes from this year’s ‘online Methodist Conference’. Those responding on the letters page have tried to argue that the church doesn’t need to be inclusive because scripture suggests that there are

exclusions. They've got it wrong! The church has to be inclusive because God is inclusive . . . yet we still have the freedom to exclude ourselves. Those invited to the wedding feast chose not to accept the invitation. A real challenge to the religious authorities because they were God's chosen people. How could they go to the son's wedding feast when they didn't recognise the son? They had a chance to change their minds when the slaves went to tell them that the meal was ready but some had what they believed were more important things to do and others decided to kill the messengers in the same way that some prophets, including John the Baptist, had been abused and killed.

So the invitation went to the riff-raff, the nobodies, the 'outsiders', and they arrived at the reception. It was a 'Come as you are' event. Inclusive, the invitation was to all. All who will may come. Yet the freedom to choose remained. The trouble was and is, it's 'come as you are' not 'you're alright as you are'! Be open to the transforming power of God's love – remember the Andrew Lloyd Webber song: 'Love changes everything'?

Love changes everything:

How you live and how you die.

Love changes everyone.

Live or perish in its flame.

Love will never, never let you be the same.

So actions do have consequences and God's love is transforming . . . if we allow it. Paul knew about that as his life was turned around. So he could write to the Colossians: 'Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body'. They're the clothes offered for us to change into so that we can feel at home and take our place at the wedding feast.

Later, in the Communion service in church, as people have done for centuries, we will be thanking God for giving us a foretaste of the heavenly banquet prepared for all people – an inclusive invitation and a universal hope.

Prayers of Intercession:

Loving God, hear us
as we pray for the Church, the world and for ourselves.

May our lives be filled with your compassion;
give us a spirit of forgiveness
and generosity of heart,
Lord, we pray.

As we pray for your church,
may we rejoice in the gifts of others.
For all who are searching,
for all who are certain,
for those who remain firm in their faith
in the face of persecution,
Lord, we pray.

For those who cannot believe,
and who give their lives in the service of others,
Lord, we pray.

For those who have known and for those who continue to live with
the ravages of war and hatred,
for those in authority who have power to change lives,
Lord, we pray.

For those in lockdown in prison,
for those who feel imprisoned in their homes,
and for those who have supported us in these strange times,
for victims of crime, violence and injustice,
Lord, we pray.

For the sick and for those who live in constant pain,
for carers and comforters,
for all who are in a place which is strange to them,
Lord, we pray.

In silence, we pray for ourselves and for those close to us;

Silence

As we give thanks for your promise of resurrection life,
we remember those who have died,
those whose lives have influenced ours
and whose memory we treasure.

God of love, accept our prayers
offered in the power of your Spirit
and the name of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen

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.

The Peace:

We are the Body of Christ.

In the one Spirit
we were all baptized into one body.
Let us therefore keep the unity of the Spirit
in the bond of peace.

In the silence, we call to mind those in need of God's peace.

Prayer of Thanksgiving:

**We bless you, strong and faithful God.
All your works echo the silent music of your praise.
In the beginning your Word summoned light:
night withdrew, and creation dawned.
As ages passed unseen,
waters appeared on the face of the earth and life appeared.
When the times at last had ripened
and the earth grown full in abundance
you created in your image man and woman,
the crown of all creation.
You gave us breath and speech,
that all the living might find a voice to sing your praise.
So now, with all the powers of heaven and earth,
we repeat the ageless hymn of your glory:**

**Holy, holy, holy Lord,
God of power and might,
heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest.
Blessèd is he who comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest.**

**All holy God,
how wonderful the work of your hands!
You restored the beauty of your image
when sin had scarred the world.
As a mother tenderly gathers her children
you embraced a people as your own
and filled them with a longing for a peace that would last**

and for a justice that would never fail.

Through countless generations
your people hungered for the bread of freedom.

From them you raised up Jesus, the living bread,
in whom ancient hungers are satisfied.

He healed the sick, though he himself would suffer:
he offered life to sinners, though death would hunt him down.

But, with a love stronger than death,
he opened wide his arms and surrendered his spirit.

Holy God, we praise you

that on the night in which he was betrayed

Jesus came to the table with those he loved, he took bread and gave
you thanks,

broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying,

'Take, eat. This is my body, given for you.

Do this in remembrance of me.'

When supper was ended, he took a cup of wine and gave thanks to
you, God of all creation:

he passed the cup among his disciples and said:

Take this, all of you, and drink from it:

This is the cup of my blood,

the blood of the new and everlasting covenant.

It will be shed for you and for all so that sins may be forgiven.

Do this in memory of me.

Let us proclaim the mystery of faith:

Christ has died.

Christ is risen.

Christ will come again.

Father, we give thanks for Jesus, your Son,
as we celebrate his offering of himself for us.
Death could not hold him, for you raised him up
and exalted him as Lord of creation.

May his coming in glory find us ever-watchful in prayer,
strong in love, and faithful to his ways.

We offer him our prayer -

Lord Jesus Christ, since I cannot now receive You in bread and wine,
I humbly pray that You would come spiritually to my soul.

Silence may be kept

Come, Lord Jesus, come and cleanse me,
heal me, strengthen me
and unite me to Yourself,
now and for evermore.

Amen

Hymn: The Lord's my Shepherd

To listen to the hymn in a new tab: press Shift and Ctrl together and click [here](#). Close the tab after the hymn.

- 1 The Lord's my Shepherd, I'll not want;
 he makes me down to lie
 in pastures green; he leadeth me
 the quiet waters by.
 He leadeth me, he leadeth me,
 the quiet waters by.

- 2 My soul he doth restore again,
 and me to walk doth make
 within the paths of blessèdness,
 e'en for his own name's sake.
 within the paths of blessèdness,
 e'en for his own name's sake.

3 Yea, though I pass through shadowed vale,
yet will I fear no ill;
for thou art with me, and thy rod
and staff me comfort still.

Thy rod and staff me comfort still,
me comfort still.

4 My table thou hast furnishèd
in presence of my foes;
my head with oil thou dost anoint,
and my cup overflows.
my head thou dost with oil anoint,
and my cup overflows.

5 Goodness and mercy all my days
will surely follow me,
and in my father's heart always
my dwelling-place shall be.
and in thy heart forevermore
my dwelling-place shall be.

Psalm 23
The Scottish Psalter, 1929

The blessing of God,
the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit,
remain with us always.

Amen.

Let us go in peace in the power of the Spirit
to live and work to God's praise and glory.

Thanks be to God.

Amen.