

# Welshpool & Bro Hafren Methodist Circuit

Home Worship Sheet, 25<sup>th</sup> July

This short act of worship has been prepared and written for you by Canon Julia Francis.

## Opening sentence.

Graft in our hearts the love of thy name.  
Nourish us with all goodness

Welcome to this act of worship.

I ask for a blessing upon your home; the place where you sit to receive this offering of praise;

Visit this place, O Lord, we pray and drive far from it the snares of the enemy. May your holy angels dwell with us and guard us in peace and may your blessing be always upon us.

## Hymn: O Thou who camest from above.

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

- 1 O thou who camest from above  
the pure celestial fire to impart,  
kindle a flame of sacred love  
on the mean altar of my heart!
- 2 There let it for thy glory burn  
with inextinguishable blaze,  
and trembling to its source return,  
in humble prayer and fervent praise.
- 3 Jesus, confirm my heart's desire  
to work, and speak, and think for thee;  
still let me guard the holy fire,  
and still stir up thy gift in me —
- 4 Ready for all thy perfect will,  
my acts of faith and love repeat,  
till death thy endless mercies seal,  
and make the sacrifice complete.

Charles Wesley (1707–1788)

**We praise thee, O God, and we acknowledge thee to be the Lord**

**All the earth doth worship thee, the Father everlasting**

**to thee all angels cry aloud, the heavens and all the powers therein**

**to thee cherubin and Seraphin continually do cry**

**Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of Sabaoth.**

**Heaven and earth are full of the majesty of thy glory**

**First reading is from Letter to the Ephesians, Chapter 3. verses 14 to 21**

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

**For this reason I kneel before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name. I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the Lord's holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.**

**Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.**

**O be joyful in the lord all you lands.**

**serve the Lord with gladness .**

**Hear the words of the Holy Gospel according to Saint John, Chapter 6 verses 1 to 21**

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

**Some time after this, Jesus crossed to the far shore of the Sea of Galilee (that is, the Sea of Tiberias), and a great crowd of people followed him because they saw the signs he had performed by healing the sick. Then Jesus went up on a mountainside and sat down with his**

disciples. The Jewish Passover Festival was near.

When Jesus looked up and saw a great crowd coming toward him, he said to Philip, "Where shall we buy bread for these people to eat?" He asked this only to test him, for he already had in mind what he was going to do.

Philip answered him, "It would take more than half a year's wages[a] to buy enough bread for each one to have a bite!"

Another of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, spoke up, "Here is a boy with five small barley loaves and two small fish, but how far will they go among so many?"

Jesus said, "Have the people sit down." There was plenty of grass in that place, and they sat down (about five thousand men were there). Jesus then took the loaves, gave thanks, and distributed to those who were seated as much as they wanted. He did the same with the fish.

When they had all had enough to eat, he said to his disciples, "Gather the pieces that are left over. Let nothing be wasted." So they gathered them and filled twelve baskets with the pieces of the five barley loaves left over by those who had eaten.

After the people saw the sign Jesus performed, they began to say, "Surely this is the Prophet who is to come into the world." Jesus, knowing that they intended to come and make him king by force, withdrew again to a mountain by himself.

When evening came, his disciples went down to the lake, where they got into a boat and set off across the lake for Capernaum. By now it was dark, and Jesus had not yet joined them. A strong wind was blowing and the waters grew rough. When they had rowed about three or four miles, they saw Jesus approaching the boat, walking on the water; and they were frightened. But he said to them, "It is I; don't be afraid." Then they were willing to take him into the boat, and immediately the boat reached the shore where they were heading.

We say together this prayer of thanksgiving for the scriptures:

**Almighty God, we thank you for the gift of your Holy word**

**May it be a lantern to our feet, a light to our paths**

**And a strength to our lives. Take us and use us,  
to love and serve all people  
Through the power of the Holy Spirit and in the name of your son.  
Our saviour, Jesus Christ, Amen**

**Reflection:**

I guess if you ask people in the street to give you a date of a saint's festival there are just a few saints days known by the majority. After the patron saints of our countries I would imagine many people would know St. Mary's, or possibly St. Michael and some may know that St. Nicholas is in early December. But I think there are few people around who can't tell you that St. Valentine's Day is February 14th and last week there was much discussion about that other commonly spoken of summer saint, St. Swithin. Looking skyward as they whispered his name on bated breath.

On July 15th each year, apparently, apple growers continue to ask St Swithin to bless the apples. It is understood that to pick apples before this date in England is not good, they ripen much later than this naturally and are sweeter when picked.

There is too the saying that if it rains on St. Swithin's day, it will rain for 40 days, but if the sun shines we shall have 40 days of sunshine. If it rains the apples are fully christened, but nobody wants 6 weeks of rain from mid-July.

How this arose around St. Swithin is quite interesting. There is the observation that we get not exactly alternative dry and wet summers, but we do get plenty of both kinds of Summer and I rather think we get more wet ones. We are surrounded on all sides by water and in the North part of the Northern hemisphere, so we can expect it. The legend is more romantic. St Swithin, upon his death in 863 had asked to be buried where the folk could walk above him and the rain fall upon him outside the door of the Old Minster, Winchester. He was duly buried by the monks of the Benedictine order, but after 9 years his bones were transferred to a reliquary given by Saxon King Edgar to Aethelwulf Bishop of Winchester. It was felt to be against his wishes. (hence the rain legend grew up) Still later in 11<sup>th</sup> century the Normans built a new

Cathedral in Winchester where he had become venerated and made the patron saint. His bones were given a beautiful shrine by the high altar in 1450. A tunnel had lead under the reliquary for pilgrims to crawl beneath the saintly bones in prayer for healing. A new shrine was established in 1476 festooned with jewels and bright silver and gold items given by pilgrims to honour the saint. It would have looked amazing, but it was torn down in 1538 under the instructions of Henry VIII during the reformation and the Holy Hole closed up. Today the cathedral has a modern shrine, but no bones.

St Swithin himself had been made Bishop of Winchester in 853. A much valued Benedictine Monk under the reigns of Aethelwulf and Egbert. During his lifetime and following his death he was considered to be able to perform miracles. His feast day in July is the date of his death, as with almost all saints.

When I was regularly journeying to Hereford from our home in the South Shropshire Hills, to lead the worship of my Deaf Church congregation, I was so pleased to drive alongside the orchards which flank the B4110 road (Bishop's Castle to Hereford via Leintwardine) At apple blossom time it would be a mass of blooms and row after row of trees looking so amazing. Later in the year we would see the apples becoming ready to be made into the various products for which the Hereford Orchards are famous. They don't just go into supermarkets as eaters or cooked into pies. There is a thriving juice and cider industry around Hereford. Pears also make it into the presses.

Our congregation had a tour of one of Weston's Cider presses. Most people have heard of Strongbow Cider, made in Hereford with the woodpecker logo. The giant Woodpecker sculpture is to be seen outside Bulmer's head office in the city. Apples are a huge part of the economy there, and I wonder how they feel about a dry July 15th.

Another site to thrill comes later still. Though you see its beginnings all year. That is the huge round balls of Mistletoe hanging like lanterns in the orchards and often along the streets of Hereford too. Mistletoe can't grow out of the ground. It needs to be grafted onto the fruit trees it feeds from. Birds may help in this process, and commercial growers will graft them into orchards as a second crop. That would seem to be a good idea. Although, it began as a pagan symbol we Christians still like

to have it amongst our evergreen decoration at Christmas time. The idea that you should kiss under the mistletoe (and remove a berry each time) still persists. Which made it a must for office parties in years gone by. Covid 19 has rather hindered that and will continue to do so I would think, although I imagine the Mistletoe growers will still have plenty of buyers.

I began with the sentence from last week's collect prayer. Graft in our hearts the love of thy name.

May we always look toward Christ who calls us to be fruitful. Who blesses us daily with all that we require for our strength to face all the tribulations of life. Like the Mistletoe, we cannot be strong alone. We need to be grafted onto the tree which bears the main fruit. The vine, from which we receive our lifeblood. Truly we bear fruit for healing and feeding a broken and undernourished world when we ourselves feed on Christ.

Amen.

### **Hymn: Fill thou my life O lord my God**

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

- 1      **Fill thou my life, O Lord my God,  
in every part with praise,  
that my whole being may proclaim  
thy being and thy ways.**
  
- 2      **Not for the lip of praise alone  
nor e'en the praising heart  
I ask, but for a life made up  
of praise in every part:**
  
- 3      **Praise in the common things of life,  
its goings out and in;  
praise in each duty and each deed,  
however small and mean.**

- 4      **Fill every part of me with praise;  
let all my being speak  
of thee and of thy love, O Lord,  
poor though I be and weak.**
- 5      **So shalt thou, gracious Lord, from me  
receive the glory due;  
and so shall I begin on earth  
the song for ever new.**
- 6      **So shall no part of day or night  
from sacredness be free;  
but all my life, in every step,  
be fellowship with thee.**

Horatius Bonar (1866)

### **Prayers of Intercession:**

**We pray for ourselves and our neighbours. For all congregations in the family of God's love.**

**We pray for all beloved and forgiven. Especially for those who do not yet know the love that awaits them**

**We pray for the willingness of our leaders and those who come into both ordained and lay ministry, local preachers and our worship leaders. May they receive the help of your spirit always to do your will and to enable us to be nourished by the worship they provide.**

**Lord in your mercy; [Hear our prayer](#)**

**We pray for our nation and the whole United Kingdom and the Commonwealth.**

**That our relationship amongst other nations and with one another may be guided by the faith we have nurtured in our hearts. May our leaders retain the respect of their office and uphold standards by which we can be proud to acknowledge. For you Lord are the example to us of Kingship and Authority. May those who hold office of authority in this and other lands learn from you the compassion, mercy and goodness they should practice.**

We bring to you the needs of a frightened, broken world. We pray for those in the greatest need and the most deeply hurt and injured by the injustices around them or by the inequality that persists.

Lord in your mercy; **Hear Our Prayer.**

We pray for all who are travelling. The Summer holidays have begun, families wish to be together. Roads are busy. May they be safe on their journeys and may we respect all that the Covid 19 regulations still require of us, so that as we meet with one another we do so with due care for one another, our loved ones and those with whom we may later be in contact.

Lord in your mercy; **Hear our prayer.**

Let us not forget what you have done for us. May we strive to show charity and kindness by our lives. Enable us to have a generosity of spirit. Bless us that we may help others to become aware of your love for them.

We pray for the visitors to our places of worship as they begin to be able to open their doors once again on a more regular basis. Especially where visitors flock to places of Pilgrimage such as Cathedrals, shrines and religious heritage sites. May they staff safe, and may they find a peace and compassion . May the past gifts of glory in those places today bring a message of goodness and love to a hungry and thirsty humanity.

Lord in your mercy; **Hear our prayer.**

**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: Bread of Heaven, on thee we feed**

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

- 1 Bread of heaven, on thee we feed,  
for thy flesh is meat indeed.  
Ever may our souls be fed  
with this true and living Bread,  
day by day with strength supplied  
through the life of Him who died.**
- 2 Vine of heaven, thy love supplies  
this blest cup of sacrifice.  
'Tis thy wounds our healing give;  
to thy cross we look and live.  
Thou our life! O let us be  
rooted, grafted, built on thee.**

Josiah Conder (1824)

### **Prayers in conclusion of our morning worship.**

**Here I stand at the door and knock, if anyone hears my vice and opens  
the door I will come in and sit down to supper with him, and he with me.**

(Revelation 3;20)

**Almighty God by whose grace we celebrate the feast days of your  
servants, especially Swithin, grant that the gentleness and  
commitment to the people in their care will be reflected in our work  
for you. May we seek to build up your church in unity and in love.**

**The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God,  
and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit,  
be with us all now and for evermore. Amen**