

Welshpool & Bro Hafren Methodist Circuit

Home Worship Sheet for Sunday 19th March 2023

This short act of worship has been prepared and written for
you by Derek Painter

Call to Worship

It is not ourselves that we proclaim;
we proclaim Christ Jesus as Lord
and ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake.

Michael Townsend

Hymn StF 88 Praise to the Lord, the Almighty,

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

- 1 Praise to the Lord, the Almighty, the King of creation!
O my soul, praise him, for he is thy health and salvation!
All ye who hear, brothers and sisters, draw near,
praise him in glad adoration.
- 2 Praise to the Lord, who doth prosper thy work and defend thee;
surely his goodness and mercy here daily attend thee:
ponder anew what the Almighty can do,
who with his love doth befriend thee.
- 3 Praise to the Lord, who doth nourish thy life and restore thee,
fitting thee well for the tasks that are ever before thee,
then to thy need he like a mother doth speed,
spreading the wings of grace o'er thee.
- 4 Praise to the Lord, who, when darkness of sin is abounding,
who, when the godless do triumph, all virtue confounding,
sheddeth his light, chaseth the horrors of night,
saints with his mercy surrounding.
- 5 Praise to the Lord! O let all that is in me adore him!
All that hath life and breath, come now with praises before him!
Let the amen sound from his people again:
gladly for aye we adore him.

Joachim Neander (1650–1680)

Prayer of Adoration

Eternal God, we praise you,
for you are the source of light and life.

Your word made the whole of creation,
in all its beauty and splendour,
bringing order out of chaos,
Light out of darkness.

We praise you that the evidence of your creative activity
is all around us still.

We praise you, Father,
for your supreme revelation of yourself
in our Lord Jesus Christ,
and for the clear vision of your love
That we see in him.

Inspire us now with the life and light he came to bring,
that our praises may be worthy of him
and resound to his honour and glory;
for his sake.

Amen.

Prayer of Confession

Father, you know us better than we know ourselves,
and in the light of your glory
all the darkness of our sin is revealed.

In your presence we confess
our failure to respond fully to your command to love
our reluctance to follow you,
our desire to please ourselves rather than to serve you.

We confess
that we have only feebly responded to that clear revelation,
given to us in Jesus,
and that we have allowed the light of his glory
to be obscured by our own apathy and indifference.

Father, you know us better than we know ourselves;
but we know that we are sinners.
Grant us an awareness of sins forgiven
On your abundant grace;
Through Jesus Christ our Lord

Amen.

Neil Dixon

The set psalm in the Lectionary for today is Psalm 23, which we will sing using the Stuart Townend version

Hymn StF 481 The Lord's my shepherd, I'll not want

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 lie in pastures green,
he leads me by the still, still waters,
his goodness restores my soul.**
*And I will trust in you alone,
and I will trust in you alone,
for your endless mercy follows me,
your goodness will lead me home.*

- 2 **He guides my ways in righteousness,
and he anoints my head with oil;
and my cup — it overflows with joy,
I feast on his pure delights.**
*And I will trust in you alone,
and I will trust in you alone,
for your endless mercy follows me,
your goodness will lead me home.*

- 3 **And though I walk the darkest path —
I will not fear the evil one,
for you are with me, and your rod and staff
are the comfort I need to know.**

*And I will trust in you alone,
and I will trust in you alone,
for your endless mercy follows me,
your goodness will lead me home.*

Stuart Townend (b. 1963)

Epistle Reading Ephesians 5: 8-14

For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light (for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness and truth) and find out what pleases the Lord. Have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness, but rather expose them. It is shameful even to mention what the disobedient do in secret. But everything exposed by the light becomes visible – and everything that is illuminated becomes a light. This is why it is said:

‘Wake up, sleeper, rise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you.’

Hymn StF 483 We are marching in the light of 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 We are marching in the light of God,
 we are marching in the light of God.
 We are marching in the light of God,
 we are marching in the light of God.
 We are marching, oh,
 we are marching in the light of God,
 we are marching, oh,
 we are marching in the light of God.

2 We are living in the love of God,
 we are living in the love of God.
 We are living in the love of God,
 we are living in the love of God.
 We are living, oh,
 we are living in the love of God,
 we are living, oh,
 we are living in the love of God.

3 We are moving in the power of God,
we are moving in the power of God.
We are moving in the power of God,
we are moving in the power of God.
We are moving, oh,
we are moving in the power of God,
we are moving, oh,
we are moving in the power of God.

South African traditional

Gospel Reading

John 9: 1-41

As he went along, he saw a man blind from birth. His disciples asked him, 'Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?'

'Neither this man nor his parents sinned,' said Jesus, 'but this happened so that the works of God might be displayed in him. As long as it is day, we must do the works of him who sent me. Night is coming, when no one can work. While I am in the world, I am the light of the world.'

After saying this, he spat on the ground, made some mud with the saliva, and put it on the man's eyes. 'Go,' he told him, 'wash in the Pool of Siloam' (this word means 'Sent'). So the man went and washed, and came home seeing.

His neighbours and those who had formerly seen him begging asked, 'Isn't this the same man who used to sit and beg?' Some claimed that he was.

Others said, 'No, he only looks like him.'

But he himself insisted, 'I am the man.'

'How then were your eyes opened?' they asked.

He replied, 'The man they call Jesus made some mud and put it on my eyes. He told me to go to Siloam and wash. So I went and washed, and then I could see.'

'Where is this man?' they asked him.

'I don't know,' he said.

The Pharisees investigate the healing

They brought to the Pharisees the man who had been blind. Now the day on which Jesus had made the mud and opened the man's eyes was a Sabbath. Therefore the Pharisees also asked him how he had received his sight. 'He put mud on my eyes,' the man replied, 'and I washed, and now I see.'

Some of the Pharisees said, 'This man is not from God, for he does not keep the Sabbath.'

But others asked, 'How can a sinner perform such signs?' So they were divided.

Then they turned again to the blind man, 'What have you to say about him? It was your eyes he opened.'

The man replied, 'He is a prophet.'

They still did not believe that he had been blind and had received his sight until they sent for the man's parents. 'Is this your son?' they asked. 'Is this the one you say was born blind? How is it that now he can see?'

'We know he is our son,' the parents answered, 'and we know he was born blind. But how he can see now, or who opened his eyes, we don't know. Ask him. He is of age; he will speak for himself.' His parents said this because they were afraid of the Jewish leaders, who already had decided that anyone who acknowledged that Jesus was the Messiah would be put out of the synagogue. That was why his parents said, 'He is of age; ask him.'

A second time they summoned the man who had been blind. 'Give glory to God by telling the truth,' they said. 'We know this man is a sinner.'

He replied, 'Whether he is a sinner or not, I don't know. One thing I do know. I was blind but now I see!'

Then they asked him, 'What did he do to you? How did he open your eyes?'

He answered, 'I have told you already and you did not listen. Why do you want to hear it again? Do you want to become his disciples too?'

Then they hurled insults at him and said, 'You are this fellow's disciple! We are disciples of Moses! We know that God spoke to Moses, but as for this fellow, we don't even know where he comes from.'

The man answered, 'Now that is remarkable! You don't know where he comes from, yet he opened my eyes. We know that God does not listen to sinners. He listens to the godly person who does his will. Nobody has ever heard of opening the eyes of a man born blind. If this man were not from God, he could do nothing.'

To this they replied, 'You were steeped in sin at birth; how dare you lecture us!' And they threw him out.

Spiritual blindness

Jesus heard that they had thrown him out, and when he found him, he said, 'Do you believe in the Son of Man?'

'Who is he, sir?' the man asked. 'Tell me so that I may believe in him.'

Jesus said, 'You have now seen him; in fact, he is the one speaking with you.'

Then the man said, 'Lord, I believe,' and he worshipped him.

Jesus said, 'For judgment I have come into this world, so that the blind will see and those who see will become blind.'

Some Pharisees who were with him heard him say this and asked, 'What? Are we blind too?'

Jesus said, 'If you were blind, you would not be guilty of sin; but now that you claim you can see, your guilt remains.'

Reflection

I suppose I must be growing older – time is getting faster. It seems to me that we have only just finished celebrating Christmas and here we are in Lent and preparing for Easter! But it is not just the passage of time but regularity with how things seem to occur “earlier” – just think: Advent, Christmas, Epiphany, Lent, Easter, Pentecost, Harvest Festival . . . and that's another year gone. Here we go again, another year!

I wonder, though, how much any of these festivals have affected you?

For some, I am sure, there has been a deepening of faith or even a conversion experience. For others, enjoyable and confirming faith. Yet for some the festivals have become just routine, something that happens with little impact on their lives. I suppose as time goes on, and like birthdays when we are young, they begin with a “newness” or

“freshness” and we look forward to them with anticipation but as we get older they lose their aura.

In our reading from John’s Gospel today the theme is very much of being blind and Christ curing the blind. But Christ also addresses those who are spiritually blind – the Pharisees. Presumably, the Pharisees believed that their faith was secure and well-founded but Christ is telling them they need to change. They need to “open their eyes”.

It reminds me of when I have visitors from away telling me how lucky I am to live in such a beautiful part of the world. I do not necessarily see it in that way; it is home and I take it for granted - its views and its beauty. It is only when I am reminded of its beauty I tend to reflect on it.

I suppose the Christian Festivals can be seen in that light, not just telling the story of Jesus’ life and his mission in coming to earth but also helping us reflect on our Spiritual journey and in the awe of Christ’s message to us.

Again, as we get older, we find more of a need to go to the optician to help with our sight. We often need glasses, changes to glasses or even cataract removal. Perhaps the festivals may be thought of in that way, they are aids to our seeing Christ’s message more clearly.

We are now halfway through Lent. Has it made an impact on you? Has it changed you in any way? Or, is it another festival, along with the many, many other festivals over numerous years which have just passed you by?

Have you been to an optician lately?

Hymn Just as I am, without one plea

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

1 Just as I am, without one plea,
 but that thy blood was shed for me,
 and that thou bidd’st me come to thee,
 O Lamb of God, I come!

- 2 Just as I am, though tossed about
with many a conflict, many a doubt;
fightings within, and fears without,
O Lamb of God, I come!
- 3 Just as I am, poor, wretched, blind;
sight, riches, healing of the mind;
yea, all I need, in thee to find,
O Lamb of God, I come!
- 4 Just as I am, thou wilt receive,
wilt welcome, pardon, cleanse, relieve;
because thy promise I believe,
O Lamb of God, I come!
- 5 Just as I am, thy love unknown
has broken every barrier down;
now, to be thine, yes, thine alone,
O Lamb of God, I come!
- 6 Just as I am, of that free love
the breadth, length, depth and height to prove,
here for a season, then above,
O Lamb of God, I come!

Charlotte Elliott (1789–1871)

Prayers of Intercession

Let us now pray to the Father of light
that we may truly become the salt and the light of the world.

Let us say:

Lord, let your light shine in us.

That there may be more love on earth, Lord,
we ask you to dispose people to be more understanding
and friendlier to one another
and to share more readily with those in need, so we pray:

Lord, let your light shine in us.

That there may be greater justice on earth,
dispose governments and public officials
to make room in their priorities and budgets

for the socially deprived and those out of jobs, we pray:

Lord, let your light shine in us.

That there may be more peace on earth,
dispose all nations to put an end to words of hatred
and threats of revenge, we pray:

Lord, let your light shine in us.

That there may be more joy on earth,
dispose all those who follow your Son
to show sympathy and affection to one another,
to be faithful in our friendships
and concerned about our communities, we pray:

Lord, let your light shine in us.

That there may be more faith on earth,
dispose all your sons and daughters
to live as children of light before you
and in the sight of people, we pray

Lord, let your light shine in us.

Lord God, we pray that your light may shine on all the earth.
However limited we are, let our words and actions
reflect the light of your love,
in the name of Jesus the Lord.

Amen.

Taken from 'Liturgy Alive'

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 Stf 487 You shall go out with joy

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

**You shall go out with joy and be led forth with peace,
and the mountains and the hills shall break forth before you.
There'll be shouts of joy and the trees of the field
shall clap, shall clap their hands,
and the trees of the field shall clap their hands,
and the trees of the field shall clap their hands,
and the trees of the field shall clap their hands,
and you'll go out with joy.**

Stuart Dauermann (b. 1944) and Steffi Geiser Rubin

Blessing

**May God,
 who comes to us
 in the things of this world,
 bless your eyes
 and be in your seeing.**

**May Christ,
 who looks upon you
 with deepest love,
 bless your eyes
 and widen your gaze.**

**May the Spirit,
 who perceives what is
 and what may yet be,
 bless your eyes
 and sharpen your vision.**

**May the Sacred Three
 bless your eyes
 and cause you to see.**

Amen .