

Sunday 22nd November 2020

This short act of worship has been prepared for you to use whilst we are unable to use Methodist Church premises. If you are well enough why not spend a few moments with God, knowing that other people are sharing this act of worship with you.

Opening Prayer

Loving God we come before you today to worship you. Wherever we may be may we know your presence with us. Amen.

Hymn: StF 264 Make way, make way for the King of Kings

Sing/ Read /pray /proclaim the words or listen to it here

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aICQ7fb0hEA>

Make way, make way, for Christ the King
in splendour arrives;
fling wide the gates and welcome him
into your lives.

Make way (Make way), make way (make way),
for the King of kings (for the King of kings);
make way (make way), make way (make way),
and let his Kingdom in.

He comes the broken hearts to heal,
the prisoners to free;
the deaf shall hear, the lame shall dance,
the blind shall see.

And those who mourn with heavy hearts,
who weep and sigh,
with laughter, joy and royal crown
he'll beautify.

We call you now to worship him
as Lord of all,
to have no gods before him,
their thrones must fall!

Graham Kendrick (b. 1950)

Let us pray together

Loving God we come before you in adoration and praise for all that you have done for us. At this difficult time it can sometimes feel that we are alone and that you are not with us. But you have promised you will always be there and will never abandon us and for that we praise you.

We are truly sorry for the times that we have let you down. When we have failed to help those we ought to help, when we have passed by on the other side instead of helping people who need our help. Forgive us Lord and help us to share your love with others.

We give you thanks for all your gifts to us. Help us to share them with others that they too may come to know you more and more, that they will learn who you are and the impact that you can have on their lives.

We ask these and all our prayers in the name of Jesus. Amen.

Today's Reading from the Old Testament:
Psalm 100

Today's Gospel Reading: Matthew 25:31-46

Time to Reflect

Next week Advent begins. It's only 5 weeks till Christmas. The time when we celebrate the coming of that tiny baby into the world, the coming of Jesus, the King of Kings. During this time of Advent let us reflect on who Jesus is for us. We call him King but he certainly

wasn't the king that the Jewish people at the time were expecting him to be. He is our King. He is the Light of the World and we are called to share with others who he is, the Light of the World and the King of Kings.

Our reading talks about helping those in need. By helping those in need we are sharing the love and good news of Jesus with other people. By doing this we are enabling others to come to know him for themselves. In the midst of the pandemic it can be difficult to know how we can help others at the moment. Verse 40 of our reading says this "And the king will answer them, "Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me." Perhaps at the moment we can help others by donating food, or clothes or just simply phoning someone up for a chat. All these ways of helping others enable us to do what he asked us to do and to share the love and good news of Jesus which is needed more than ever at the moment.

There are people out there on our streets who have missed out on the opportunity of finding the King of Kings, of finding out for themselves what the real meaning of Christmas is. To them Christmas is just another holiday. They have never known what it is all about, they have never known the difference that this tiny baby will have on their lives if they only take the opportunity to look for him. We know the difference that he has made and it's up to us to give people that opportunity to find him for themselves. Let us take the opportunity to share with others who this King of Kings is and what difference he can make in their lives.

Take a time to sit quietly

A time of prayer

Loving God we come before you now to pray for our world. The world which you created, in which there is so much trouble. Help us to mend your broken world that all may live in peace. We pray for world leaders as they seek to do the best they possibly can in leading us through the pandemic. Give them guidance

and wisdom in all their decision-making as they seek to bring the virus under control.

We pray for the church across the world as it seeks to serve and to share the good news amidst the pandemic. Give strength and peace to our church leaders as they seek to guide us throughout this difficult time. May they find rest and renewal in you when they need it. We pray for our own churches and for the day in which we can all safely meet together for worship once more.

We pray for all those who are in need of our prayers at this time, those in hospital and those who care for them, those struggling with mental health problems, those who feel alone with no one to whom they can turn. We pray for those on the frontline who are working to overcome the virus. May they know your peace, strength and love. We bring before you our concerns for people we know who are in need of our prayers at this time.

We commend to you those who have died, knowing that you welcome them home with open arms. We place them into your care knowing that we will be reunited with them one day. Comfort those who mourn their loss and may they know your presence with them at this difficult time.

We pray for ourselves. You alone know what we need right now. Give us what we need to face the days ahead as we continue to wrestle with this pandemic which affects us all in some way or another. We ask these and all our prayers in Jesus' name. Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father

Hymn: Listen to StF 693 Beauty for Brokenness

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=08utbDFP9AE>

Beauty for brokenness,
hope for despair,
Lord, in your suffering world
this is our prayer.

Bread for the children,
justice, joy, peace,
sunrise to sunset,
your kingdom increase!

Shelter for fragile lives,
cures for their ills,
work for all people,
trade for their skills;
land for the dispossessed,
rights for the weak,
voices to plead the cause
of those who can't speak.

God of the poor,
friend of the weak,
give us compassion we pray:
melt our cold hearts,
let tears fall like rain;
come, change our love
from a spark to a flame.

Refuge from cruel wars,
havens from fear,
cities for sanctuary,
freedoms to share.
Peace to the killing-fields,
scorched earth to green,
Christ for the bitterness,
his cross for the pain.

Rest for the ravaged earth,
oceans and streams
plundered and poisoned --
our future, our dreams.
Lord, end our madness,
carelessness, greed;
make us content with
the things that we need.

Refrain

Lighten our darkness,
breathe on this flame
until your justice burns
brightly again;
until the nations
learn of your ways,
seek your salvation
and bring you their praise.

Refrain

Graham Kendrick (b. 1950)

A prayer of blessing

Lord,

As Christmas draws nearer may we share your
love with others. Help us to show them who
you are that they may discover you for
themselves. Amen.

Original Materials by Rebekah Fairhurst, Bolton Methodist Mission
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Psalm 100

A Psalm of thanksgiving.

¹ Make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the earth.

² Worship the Lord with gladness;
come into his presence with singing.

³ Know that the Lord is God.

It is he that made us, and we are his;
we are his people, and the sheep of his
pasture.

⁴ Enter his gates with thanksgiving,
and his courts with praise.
Give thanks to him, bless his name.

⁵ For the Lord is good;
his steadfast love endures for ever,
and his faithfulness to all generations.

Matthew 25:31-46

'When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and
all the angels with him, then he will sit on the
throne of his glory. 32All the nations will be
gathered before him, and he will separate
people one from another as a shepherd
separates the sheep from the goats, 33and he
will put the sheep at his right hand and the
goats at the left. 34Then the king will say to
those at his right hand, "Come, you that are
blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom
prepared for you from the foundation of the
world; 35for I was hungry and you gave me
food, I was thirsty and you gave me
something to drink, I was a stranger and you
welcomed me, 36I was naked and you gave

me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me.”

37Then the righteous will answer him, “Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food, or thirsty and gave you something to drink? 38And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you, or naked and gave you clothing? 39And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?”

40And the king will answer them, “Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.” 41Then he will say to those at his left hand, “You that are accursed, depart from me into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels; 42for I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, 43I was a stranger and you did not welcome me, naked and you did not give me clothing, sick and in prison and you did not visit me.” 44Then they also will answer, “Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not take care of you?”

45Then he will answer them, “Truly I tell you, just as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me.” 46And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.’