



Birstall and Rothley Methodist Churches



A Service for February 7th, 2021

This service has been prepared for use at home.

If you are able to join us online at 10:30am on Sunday,



Call to Worship (based on Psalm 147)

Have you not known?

***Our God is the everlasting God,
creator of the ends of the earth.***

Have you not heard?

God does not faint or grow weary.

Have you not known?

***Those who wait for God will renew their strength,
they shall mount up with wings like eagles.***

We come to hear.

***We come to know.
Thanks be to God.***

Opening Prayer

Gracious and all loving God,
you call to us across deep waters and dark places.

Yours is the light which guides us
and the voice which we follow.

We pray that you would reveal yourself to us as we worship you.

May those without hope be encouraged;

those who are sad, cheered;

those who are seeking, find you;

and may all things be according to your will.

In the name of your beloved Son we pray.

Amen.

Hymn

StF 112

O Lord, our Lord, throughout the earth
how glorious is your name,
and glorious too where unseen heavens
your majesty proclaim.

On infant lips and children's song
a strong defence you raise
to counter enemy and threat,
and foil the rebel's ways.

When I look up and see the stars
which your own fingers made,
and wonder at the moon and stars,
each perfectly displayed;
then I must ask, 'Why do you care?
Why love humanity?
And why keep every mortal name
fixed in your memory?'

Yet such as us you made
and meant just less than gods to be;
with honour and with glory, Lord,
you crowned humanity.
And then dominion you bestowed
for all made by your hand,
all sheep and cattle, birds and fish
that move through sea and land.

O Lord, our Lord
throughout the earth
how glorious is your name!

words: John L. Bell (b.1949)

Prayer of Confession

Creator God, our Maker, Redeemer and Sustainer, as we gather together,
we thank you that you are here with us.

As we reflect on your power and majesty, your greatness and your wisdom,
we are only too aware of our own faults and failings.
We know that we have forgotten you in the busyness of our lives,
but you never forget us.

And so we come before you, asking for your forgiveness,
that you would restore and renew us,
and help us to become the people you call us to be -
- people of faith, people of prayer, your children of light.

In silence, we make our personal confession to God.

Here is good news for all who put their trust in Christ.
Jesus says, "Your sins are forgiven"
Thanks be to God.

Amen.

Collect for Today

God our Father,
whose Word has come among us:
may the light of faith, kindled in our hearts, shine in our words and deeds;
through him who is Christ the Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Amen.

Reading: Mark, 1: 29-39

As soon as they left the synagogue, they went with James and John to the home of Simon and Andrew. Simon's mother-in-law was in bed with a fever, and they immediately told Jesus about her. So he went to her, took her hand and helped her up. The fever left her and she began to wait on them.

That evening after sunset the people brought to Jesus all the sick and demon-possessed. The whole town gathered at the door, and Jesus healed many who had various diseases. He also drove out many demons, but he would not let the demons speak because they knew who he was.

Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed. Simon and his companions went to look for him, and when they found him, they exclaimed: "Everyone is looking for you!"

Jesus replied, "Let us go somewhere else - to the nearby villages - so I can preach there also. That is why I have come."

So he travelled throughout Galilee, preaching in their synagogues and driving out demons.

Reflection

In this season of Epiphany, these four short scenes tell us how the ministry of Jesus was revealed — what he came to do and to be to the world. He has come to heal, to teach, and to show us how important it is to remain connected to God through prayer. God is revealed in the private and the public parts of our lives, if we search for him.

Central to this reading is the passage where Jesus goes out early in the morning to pray. After the busyness of the previous evening, Jesus seeks a quiet place to hear God's voice. When we pray in quietness, whether in private or in public, very often it is in the stilling of our hearts and minds and bodies that God will be revealed to us.

John Wesley had a busy life, but as you would expect, he knew the value of prayer:- *"I have so much to do that I spend several hours in prayer before I am able to do it"*

This season of Epiphany challenges us to lift up our eyes and gaze without fear into the darkness, to find the light. God made the darkness, as he made the light. It is in the darkness that light shines most brightly. And so it is in this dark time, this bleak time, that this passage from Mark's Gospel speaks to us today, reminding us of the importance of prayer, and that Jesus, the Light of the World, brings hope and restoration into a dark and troubled world.

Intercessions

God of wisdom, we pray for the church of Christ throughout the world, that it may bring light and hope to the darkness of these challenging times.

Your kingdom come;

your will be done.

God of wisdom, we pray for all in authority, that the decisions they make may be for the common good.

Your kingdom come;

your will be done

God of wisdom, we pray for all who are finding life difficult at the moment, financially, emotionally, physically. Heal and restore the broken, love and comfort the grieving.

Your kingdom come;

your will be done.

And now we pray for ourselves, and those dear to us.....

Merciful Father, accept these prayers for the sake of your Son,
our Saviour, Jesus Christ.

Amen

Hymn

StF 518

Father, hear the prayer we offer
not for ease that prayer shall be,
but for strength that we may ever
live our lives courageously.

Not for ever in green pastures
do we ask our way to be;
but the steep and rugged
pathway may we tread rejoicingly.

Not for ever by still waters
would we idly rest and stay;
but would strike the living fountains
from the rocks along our way.

Be our strength in hours of weakness,
in our wanderings be our guide;
through endeavour, failure, danger,
Father, be there at our side.

Blessing