



Birstall & Rothley Methodist Churches



October 11th, 2020

This act of worship has been prepared for use both at home and in the church.

The Zoom Link for the service on Sunday at 10:30am is



Call to Worship

Come, all you who are loved by God,
Come, and be fed with the food that He gives freely;
Come, and quench your thirst from the Waters of Life;
Come, and let your spirits be filled again
with the goodness of your Creator.

***Lord God, Giver of all good things,
we hear Your invitation,
we see Your gifts of life and grace.
We have come, we have tasted and we know...
God, You are good.
Amen.***

Hymn StF 65

Sing of the Lord's goodness, Father of all wisdom,
come to him and bless his name.
Mercy he has shown us,
his love is for ever,
faithful to the end of days.

*Come then all you nations,
sing of your Lord's goodness,
melodies of praise and thanks to God.
Ring out the Lord's glory,
praise him with your music,
worship him and bless his name.*

Power he has wielded, honour is his garment,
risen from the snares of death.
His word he has spoken,
one bread he has broken,
new life he now gives to all.

*Come then all you nations,
sing of your Lord's goodness,
melodies of praise and thanks to God.
Ring out the Lord's glory,
praise him with your music,
worship him and bless his name.*

Courage in our darkness, comfort in our sorrow,
Spirit of our God most high;
solace for the weary, pardon for the sinner,
splendour of the living God.

Come then all you nations

Praise him with your singing, praise him with the trumpet,
praise God with the lute and harp;
praise him with the cymbals, praise him with your dancing,
praise God till the end of days.

Come then all you nations.....

words: Ernest Sands (b.1949)

Prayer

Holy God, you are our shepherd,
and we shall want for nothing that truly matters.

In green pastures you give us rest
and beside deep, still waters you lead us.
You promise to be with us always,
offering freedom from the frictions of hatred, anxiety, fear and pain.

You give us living water to satisfy our thirst for peace.
We praise you -
- and wonder if this is for all people.
You refresh and restore our souls
and guide us in right paths for the sake of your name.

When we are cast down
we have been shown ways to bring a new creation to life in our world.
Your desire is for all of life and for each life to know your love.
Your desire is filled with hope, and grows out of love.
Help our unbelief.

Even though we walk in the dark valley,
we will fear no danger, for you, God, are at our side,
with rod and staff to give us courage.
Each life, every nation, has its share of valleys.
Some seem to have more than is right.
You are a constant companion in the darkness.

When violence, pain and loss are heavy
you comfort.
When we are aching, lost and discouraged,
you seek us out.
When we go astray,
your compassionate judgment draws us back.

Receive our gratitude.

You spread the table before us in the sight of our enemies
and richly bathe our heads with oil.
Our cups overflow.

O holy one, you are our host as well as our shepherd.
You invite us to the banquet,
the banquet of life.
All parts of the world are invited -
enemies and friends,
the alienated and powerful,
those close at hand and those far off.
You offer the abundance and lavishness of bread broken and shared,
and the cup of refreshment that leads to new life.

We praise and thank you for your abundant spirit.
Goodness and love unfailing,
these will follow us all the days of our lives,
and we shall dwell in the home of our God
for all eternity.

Amen.

Gospel Reading: Matthew 22:1-14

Once more Jesus spoke to them in parables, saying: "The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who gave a wedding banquet for his son. He sent his slaves to call those who had been invited to the wedding banquet, but they would not come.

Again he sent other slaves, saying, 'Tell those who have been invited: Look, I have prepared my dinner, my oxen and my fat calves have been slaughtered, and everything is ready; come to the wedding banquet.'

But they made light of it and went away, one to his farm, another to his business, while the rest seized his slaves, mistreated them, and killed them.

The king was enraged. He sent his troops, destroyed those murderers, and burned their city. Then he said to his slaves, 'The wedding is ready, but those invited were not worthy. Go therefore into the main streets, and invite everyone you find to the wedding banquet.'

Those slaves went out into the streets and gathered all whom they found, both good and bad; so 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 a wedding robe, and he said to him, 'Friend, how did you get in here without a wedding robe?' And he was speechless.

Then the king said to the attendants, 'Bind him hand and foot, and throw him into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'

For many are called, but few are chosen."

Reflection

This is not an easy parable to reflect on, but it gives us quite a lot to think about.

When the King called his invited guests to come, they were too busy to respond. They weren't doing anything sinful, or wicked - they just felt that they couldn't leave their work, or their businesses.

Do we ever find that we are too busy to give time to God?

Those invited were entirely free to choose whether or not to attend the banquet. But they found that if they ignored the King, and treated him as if he was unimportant (even irrelevant), they could not expect a place in his Kingdom.

I wonder if that guest without a wedding robe was one of those who had refused the initial invitation, but who later on thought that he would drop in and say hello on his way home. If so, he discovered that whilst the King was generous, his invitation could not be treated so casually.

It seems that this man was still in his working clothes, and hadn't taken the time to put on anything better. Clothes are often used as a symbol for our attitude, so whilst it's true that the guests who had been invited later had not had time to change, they were clothed in joy and gratitude. What was this man thinking, as he treated the King's banquet with such casual disrespect, expecting to be able to drop in for a quick drink on his way home?

Do we always appreciate God's generosity?

Or do we take it for granted, assuming that we will always be forgiven and made welcome?

It seems that the only criterion for being welcome at the banquet was a willingness to put down what was otherwise important, and celebrate the King's hospitality and generosity.

*Take a moment to think quietly about God's grace and generosity,
and your response to it.*

Prayer of Confession

God of grace, you invite us to a banquet, and we don't even respond.

You set us a place at the table, but we find excuses not to come.

You lovingly prepare for our arrival, yet we ignore your efforts.

Forgive us, God.

God of creation, you give us a world capable of abundance,
but we act as if it is a world of scarcity.

You give us the resources and the intelligence to provide for all,
yet we lack the will and the vision to feed all of your children.

Forgive us, God.

God of love, you call us to be the body of Christ in the world,

but we hoard the blessings of communion for ourselves.

Instead of loving our neighbours, we are consumed by the love of self.

Instead of loving you, we bow before idols of our own making.

Forgive us, God.

God of hope, we avert our eyes when we see hunger and need;
we close our ears to the cries of the poor and the oppressed;
we refuse to let our minds be opened to the realities of our world;
we refuse to let our hearts overflow with love and compassion.

Forgive us, God.

God of mercy, as you once again call us to your table,
help us to respond in faith.

Forgive our failures and help us to learn from them.
Change our hearts and minds as we hear your good news proclaimed.
Help us to taste and see the goodness you have prepared for us,
and for the world.

Amen.

***IF YOU ARE SHARING THIS SERVICE ONLINE OR IN THE CHURCH,
PLEASE GO TO PAGE 7***

AT HOME, PLEASE CONTINUE ON THIS PAGE

Sing or Read:

Be present at our table, Lord;
be here and everywhere adored;
thy creatures bless, and grant that we
may feast in paradise with thee.

*The portion of Love Feast cake (or biscuit) is eaten in silence,
and the glass of water (or cup of tea) is drunk.*

*Offer your own prayers of praise and thanksgiving to God,
and pray for those in need.*

End with the Lord's Prayer

Hymn StF 676

Christ, from whom all blessings flow,
perfecting the saints below,
hear us, who thy nature share,
who Thy mystic body are.

Join us, in one spirit join,
let us still receive of thine;
still for more on thee we call,
thou who fillest all in all.

Closer knit to thee, our Head,
nourished, Lord, by thee, and fed,
let us daily growth receive,
more in Jesus Christ receive.

Never from thy service move,
needful to each other prove,
use the grace on each bestowed,
tempered by the art of God.

Love, like death, hath all destroyed,
rendered all distinctions void;
names, and sects, and parties fall:
thou, O Christ, art all in all.

words: Charles Wesley (1707-1788)

Blessing

The blessing of the Father, the Son and the Sacred Spirit:
the One and the Three, be with you this day.

May God give you to drink of his cup;
may the sun be bright upon you;
may the night call down peace;
and when you come to his household
may the door be open wide for you to go in to your joy.

Amen.

Invitation to Communion

In the midst of our daily routine;
in times of turmoil and confusion,
God calls us.

***With everything else going on, who has time for a feast?
We're busy, we'll eat later.***

In the midst of our anxiety, our worry;
in the midst of bill-paying and appointments,
God invites us.

***We'll just grab a bite,
a sandwich between errands,
while driving, checking email,
or working on today's tasks.***

The feast is spread!

***We are invited.
We are welcome.
We are worthy.
We are here.***

The Prayer of Thanksgiving

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

We offer you praise, dear God, and hearts lifted high,
for in the communion of your love
Christ comes close to us and we come close to Christ.

Therefore with the whole realm of nature around us,
with all the saints before us,
with brothers and sisters, beside us,
we praise you.

And with all who are separate from us now,
who yet in this mystery are close to us,
we join in the song of your unending greatness:

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

Blessed is our brother Jesus,
who walks with us the road of our world's suffering,
and who is known to us in the breaking of bread.

On the night of his arrest, Jesus took bread, and having blessed it,
he broke the bread and gave it to his disciples, saying,
"This is my body, given to you."

In the same way he took wine, and having given thanks for it,
he poured it out and gave the cup to his disciples, saying,
“This cup is the new relationship with God, sealed with my blood.
Take this and share it.
I shall drink wine with you next in the coming Kingdom of God.”

Generous God, breathe your Spirit upon us, and upon this bread and wine.
May they become for us your body, vibrant with your life,
healing, renewing, and make us whole.

And as the bread and wine, which we now eat and drink, become part of us,
may we become part of you, bone of your bone, flesh of your flesh,
loving and caring in the world.

Amen.

He whose table was open to all
is present in this bread.

He whose word welcomed friend and stranger
offers friendship through this cup.

Thanks be to God.

Amen.

The bread and wine are shared

Prayer

**Living God,
in this sacrament we have shared in your eternal kingdom.
May we who taste this mystery
forever serve you in faith, hope, and love.
We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ the Lord.
Amen.**

Hymn StF 596

Now let us from this table rise
renewed in body, mind and soul;
with Christ we die and rise again,
his selfless love has made us whole.

With minds alert, upheld by grace,
to spread the Word in speech and deed,
we follow in the steps of Christ,
at one with all in hope and need.

To fill each human house with love,
it is the sacrament of care;
the work that Christ began to do
we humble pledge ourselves to share.

Then grant us courage, Father-God,
to choose again the pilgrim way
and help us to accept with joy
the challenge of tomorrow's day.

words: Fred Kaan (1929-2009)

Blessing

The blessing of the Father, the Son and the Sacred Spirit:
the One and the Three, be with you this day.

May God give you to drink of his cup;

may the sun be bright upon you;

may the night call down peace;

and when you come to his household

may the door be open wide for you to go in to your joy.

Amen.