



Birstall and Rothley Methodist Churches



A Service for January 17th, 2021

This service has been prepared for use at home.



Call to worship

We have come together into the presence of our Lord.
So, let us quieten our hearts and minds,
put aside our concerns and distractions.
Let us open ourselves to listen for God's voice,
for the word God has for his people.

Hymn

StF 481

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.*

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

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 ...

words: Stuart Townend (b.1963)

Prayers

Creator God, how awesome you are!
Our lives were known to you before we came into being.
Marvellous Lord,
Everything we do, think and say – you know about.
Such infinite wonder!
Eternal, loving Lord,
Ever helping us to see and be more like you.
How awesome you are, glorious Lord.
Everywhere we go your hand is with us,
Always guiding and
Revealing your blessings – as we praise, listen and act.

Amen.

Lord, we come before you to say sorry.
Sorry for all the times we've let you, ourselves and others down.
Sometimes, Lord, we're so busy talking and doing that we fail to hear you.
We miss the still small voice saying, 'Stop. Listen.'
Lord, we're sorry for being too busy to hear you.
You speak in so many different ways, Lord,
one being through other people –
- but very often we take no notice and continue in our own way.
Help us to tune in to your voice.
Lord, as you use others to speak to us, so you use us to draw people to you.
But speaking does not always require words.
People see our lives, our attitudes and character.

Lord, we're sorry for the times we've let you down in these areas:
when we pressurise others to conform to our ideas,
or fail to listen and give others the space to draw closer to you.
Lord, as we spend these few moments in personal reflection,
we ask you to speak to us.

Show us anything for which we need to say sorry – and change our ways.
Lord, we lift our confessions to you, in your precious name.

Amen.

Father God, we thank you that we don't have to earn your forgiveness.
It is not based on how worthy we are.
We are forgiven through Christ Jesus.
It is by grace that our sins are forgiven.

Amen.

Our Father, who art in heaven

Readings: Psalm 139: 1-6, 13-18,
O Lord, you have searched me and known me.
You know when I sit down and when I rise up;
you discern my thoughts from far away.
You search out my path and my lying down,
and are acquainted with all my ways.
Even before a word is on my tongue,
O Lord, you know it completely.
You hem me in, behind and before,

and lay your hand upon me.
Such knowledge is too wonderful for me;
it is so high that I cannot attain it.
For it was you who formed my inward parts;
you knit me together in my mother's womb.
I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made.
Wonderful are your works;
that I know very well.
My frame was not hidden from you,
when I was being made in secret,
intricately woven in the depths of the earth.
Your eyes beheld my unformed substance.
In your book were written
all the days that were formed for me,
when none of them as yet existed.
How weighty to me are your thoughts, O God!
How vast is the sum of them!
I try to count them — they are more than the sand;
I come to the end — I am still with you.

John 1: 43- 51

The next day Jesus decided to go to Galilee. He found Philip and said to him, "Follow me."

Now Philip was from Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter. Philip found Nathanael and said to him, "We have found him about whom Moses in the law and also the prophets wrote, Jesus son of Joseph from Nazareth."

Nathanael said to him, "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?"

Philip said to him, "Come and see."

When Jesus saw Nathanael coming toward him, he said of him, "Here is truly an Israelite in whom there is no deceit!"

Nathanael asked him, "Where did you get to know me?"

Jesus answered, "I saw you under the fig tree before Philip called you."

Nathanael replied, "Rabbi, you are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!"

Jesus answered, "Do you believe because I told you that I saw you under the fig tree? You will see greater things than these."

And he said to him, "Very truly, I tell you, you will see heaven opened and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man."

Hymn StF 467

I need thee every hour,
most gracious Lord;
no tender voice like Thine
can peace afford:

*I need Thee, O I need Thee
Every hour I need Thee
O bless me now, my Savior
I come to Thee*

I need thee every hour;
stay thou nearby;
temptations lose their power
when thou art nigh:

*I need Thee, O I need Thee
Every hour I need Thee
O bless me now, my Saviour
I come to Thee*

I need thee every hour,
in joy or pain;
come quickly and abide,
or life is vain

I need thee ...

I need thee every hour,
teach me thy will;
and thy rich promises
in me fulfill:

I need thee ...

words: Annie Sherwood Hawks (1835-1918)

Reflection

Many people, me included, don't think very highly of themselves; but today's psalm is included in the Bible to remind us - me, you - that we are precious.

God created each one of us as a special, one-off creation, and everything that God has made is wonderful!

You are not a mistake.

God made you the way he wanted you.

So hold your head high -

- and allow God to help you to be the person you were intended to be!

God created you, knows you intimately, and loves everything about you.

God knows our disappointments, our discouragements and our heartaches.

God knows the things that tempt us, and the things that we do wrong - and still loves us, and offers his hand to lift us and help us.

There is no reason to shrink from God's touch, or to try to evade God's sight.

No two people are the same, and in today's gospel reading, we see how Jesus called two very different men. As you would expect, their responses were quite different!

When Philip responded to Jesus' call, he immediately thought of his friend Nathaniel, who had been studying the Scriptures (that's what you went under a fig tree to do). Nathaniel had been reading about the One who was to come - so Philip invited Nathaniel to meet him.

Nathaniel was sceptical - but he's from Nazareth, and everyone knows what people from Nazareth are like!

When he got over his scepticism, Nathaniel had a surprise.

Could you get over your scepticism?

We have our pre-conceived ideas about what others will think, and what they want, and how they would react to an invitation to find the One that they are searching for.

We have our pre-conceived ideas about whether God might use us to issue such an invitation - surely not me!

Can we set aside those ideas? Ideas about our own worth; ideas about what others might do or say?

Can we look beyond surface appearances, and simply show people (ourselves included) how much God loves us all?

Prayers of Intercession

Loving God, we do not belong to ourselves, but to you:
You call us by name; you say to us 'Follow me'

You call to us in the world.

You speak to us through the voices of your prophets.

We pray for those who question our complacency
by speaking out against injustice and oppression.

You speak to us through the voices of those with whom we work, play and live.

We pray for those whose conversations
challenge us to show your love in our everyday lives.

You speak to us through the voices of the needy, the unwanted, the dispossessed.

We pray for those affected by covid,
for the lonely and for those who have lost their jobs,
who cry to us for help.

Loving God
show us what to do.

Lord, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

You call to us in the world.

You say to us 'Follow me'
through a lifetime of loving and giving.

To those who are neglected, needy, misunderstood,
you say, "follow me into the dark places of sin and suffering."

we pray for those who need our support,
those who are ill, sorrowful or afraid.

You say to us 'Follow me into the kingdom of light, joy and peace'.

We pray for those who need to hear message of hope to be found in Christ.

Loving God, we do not belong to ourselves but to you.
Show us what we should do.

Lord, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

In the name of Jesus Christ,
Our Leader, Teacher and Saviour.

Amen.

Hymn

StF 465

Guide me, O thou great Jehovah,
pilgrim through this barren land;
I am weak, but you are mighty;
hold me with your powerful hand.
Bread of heaven, bread of heaven,
feed me now and evermore,
feed me now and evermore.

Open thou the crystal fountain,
whence the healing stream shall flow.
Let the fiery, cloudy pillar
lead me all my journey through:
strong Deliverer, strong Deliverer;
ever be my strength and shield,
ever be my strength and shield.

When I tread the verge of Jordan,
bid my anxious fears subside;
death of death, and hell's destruction,
land me safe on Canaan's side.
Songs of praises, songs of praises
I will ever give to thee,
I will ever give to thee.

*words: William Williams (1717-91)
trans. Peter Williams (1727-96)*

Benediction

Growing God, we have known your presence.

We have lived in your love.

Show us your glory.

Reveal your glory in us.

We will carry your glory from here.

We will show it to all your children.

Amen.