



Birstall and Rothley Methodist Churches



A Service for January 31st 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 (Psalm 111- StF 826)

- 1 Alleluia. I will give thanks to the Lord with my whole heart,
in the company of the faithful and in the congregation.
- 2 The works of the Lord are great,
sought out by all who delight in them.
- 3 **His work is full of majesty and honour
and his righteousness endures for ever.**
- 4 He appointed a memorial for his marvellous deeds;
the Lord is gracious and full of compassion.
- 5 **He gave food to those who feared him;
he is ever mindful of his covenant.**
- 6 He showed his people the power of his works
in giving them the heritage of the nations.
- 7 **The works of his hands are truth and justice;
all his commandments are sure.**
- 8 They stand fast for ever and ever;
they are done in truth and equity.
- 9 **He sent redemption to his people;
he commanded his covenant for ever;
holy and awesome is his name.**
- 10 The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom;
a good understanding have those who live by it;
his praise endures for ever.

*Glory, glory, glory in the highest,
Glory, glory, glory in the highest,
Peace to all on earth.*

Lord God heavenly King, Almighty God and Father;
We worship you, we give you thanks,
we praise you for your glory.

O Lord Jesus Christ, Son of the Father,
Lord God, Lamb of God,
You take away the sin of the world.

Have mercy on us, have mercy on us
For you are seated at the right hand of the Father,
receive our prayer.

You alone are the One, You alone are the Lord,
You alone are the most high Jesus Christ ,
With the Holy Spirit

*In the glory, glory, glory of the Father,
Glory, glory, glory of the Father,
Glory of his name!*

Words: Liturgical text adapted from ICEL

Prayers of Praise and Confession

God of all grace,

We come to worship you and acknowledge that you are God of both the universe and of our own lives. In you is all authority and for that we praise you. You created us, you redeemed us, and you sustained us. For that we adore you.

You are Father and Mother to each one of us and call us your children. For that we bring our adoration and our grateful thanks.

In Jesus you came to live for us showing the world what the authority of God really means. You chose to die for us because of your great love and we marvel that you rose again from the dead. You are seated at the right hand of the Father- receive our praise.

In the Holy Spirit you make us more like Christ and help our lives to become more and more conformed to how you would want us to be. You sustain our lives. We ask that you help us to live lives worthy of our calling as disciples of Christ.

Yet we know we do not always live holy lives. do not live our lives for others and are often too interested in ourselves. In the silence we remember those things we have done or said that we would rather forget and ask that God forgives us.

Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners- therefore live in peace knowing that yours sins are forgiven.

Thanks be to God.
Amen

Reading: Mark 1:21-28

They went to Capernaum; and when the sabbath came, he entered the synagogue and taught. They were astounded at his teaching, for he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes. Just then there was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit, and he cried out, 'What have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are, the Holy One of God.' But Jesus rebuked him, saying, 'Be silent, and come out of him!' And the unclean spirit, throwing him into convulsions and crying with a loud voice, came out of him. They were all amazed, and they kept on asking one another, 'What is this? A new teaching—with authority! He commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey him.' At once his fame began to spread throughout the surrounding region of Galilee.

Poem:

What are you doing here?
--came the scream of those who knew
--knew
----of this teacher
-----in fear
Why have you come
--at this time
-----and in this place
--to
the ones who know not who you are
or could care less?
Jesus. You are wasting your time
--on these souls who come here only to play
-----at religion
-----life
play
--as if they think they know what they are doing
play
--as if they think they care
with that look of astonishment on their faces
--they pay you honor
but we know
--we know
-----who
-----is in charge here
-----who
-----calls the shots
-----and controls the lives
-----and allows them to play at their games
-----that they think is life
it all works so well
this game
----life
-----religion

to cry: 'Behold the Lamb!'

Happy if with my latest breath
I might but gasp his name;
preach him to all, and cry in death:
'Behold, behold the Lamb!'

Words: Charles Wesley (1707-1788)

Collect

God of heaven and earth, whose power is made fully known in your pardoning mercy: ever fill us with your grace, that, entering more fully into your promises, we may come to share in the good things of heaven; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

Methodist Worship Book

Reflection

Today's readings invite us to look at what authority means. Jesus is said to have taught with authority and we are invited to see that Jesus exercises authority that in this story "even the evil spirits obey". There are various understandings of what these evil spirits were. Were they literal evil spirits, are they symbolic? We are going to leave that question for another day and another discussion. What is important for us this morning is what that story conveys. For the story conveys a deep truth for us today about Jesus' authority.

Firstly, the people were amazed and astounded at his teaching. I wonder what impact the teaching had on their lives. I wonder what impact the word proclaimed has on yours and my life? How do we know that authority in our own lives and live under it choosing to obey the will of Christ whatever it may cost? Are we continually amazed by Jesus' presence in our own lives?

The evil spirits asked "What have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us?" There are evil systems at work in the world. We see racism, sexism and homophobia run rampant in society. We see oppression of others and crime. If Jesus will one day make all things new then Jesus does indeed come to destroy that so we can understand why they may ask "have you come to destroy us?". I wonder how we as Christians can be part of that dismantling. How we can continue the ministry of Christ's reconciliation and healing here on earth, here and now? As Christians we cannot sit idly by we are called to act.

In our lives we have a choice. We can choose to accept Christ's authority or not to. Do we choose to ask what he wants to do with us or be amazed at his teaching and authority? Let us choose wisely and follow Christ more nearly day by day for it is the most liberating and wonderful thing we can do.

Prayers of Thanksgiving, Intercession & Lord's Prayer

We thank you, Lord,
that you are the source of all wisdom and ultimate authority.

Thank you that we can always test
what we hear in the world today against your word.
Thank you that in you, life's foundations are firm.
When we fail to look to you,
we find ourselves on shaky ground and prone to making mistakes.
But thank you that when we do make mistakes,
you can help us correct them.
Thank you that when we walk closely with you,
our lives have an integrity and meaning
that can help bring ourselves and others into closer relationship with you.
Thanks be to you, our God.

Amen.

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Let us pray...

Living God, Lord of all,

We bring to you our needs and concerns which we are facing in these challenging times...

We pray for our leaders who have to care for our lives and livelihoods who have put into place rigorous guidelines to stop this dreadful pandemic spreading even further. Unpleasant as it is, we need to remain strong to see this through and with your help we will!

We pray for all health workers, carers and everyone who are providing vital goods and services we all depend on. We especially pray for the roll out of the vaccine from the medical teams throughout the country and in our community, may they swiftly deliver firstly to those in most need and then to everyone else.

We pray for the Church, especially those who have chosen to serve, sharing their faith by breaking barriers, overcoming prejudices to bring your people together in love and understanding.

We pray for our Churches in Rothley and Birstall... reach out to everyone - we as ordinary Christians share with others the difference you have made to our lives. Help us to respond to all you give as we faithfully proclaim your good news. We pray for family and friends who are facing difficult times with the current restrictions, pressures of health, struggling with illness and worrying about the future.

We pause for a few moments to bring those personally known to us who need our prayers...

Reach out to them bring words of love, comfort and healing.

Living God, Lord of all,

Draw near to us granting knowledge of your presence, with your healing touch and assurance of your continued love...Come Lord Jesus flow into our lives so that the Light of Christ is breaking into our darkness.

We bring all our prayers to you in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen

Our Father, who art in heaven

Hymn

StF 342

All hail the power of Jesu's name!
Let angels prostrate fall;
bring forth the royal diadem,
and crown him Lord of all.

You seed of Israel's chosen race,
you ransomed of the fall,
hail him who saves you by his grace,
and crown him Lord of all.

Hail him, the heir of David's line
whom David Lord did call,
the God incarnate, Man divine,
and crown him Lord of all.

Let every kindred, every tribe
on this terrestrial ball,
to him all majesty ascribe,
and crown him Lord of all.

O that with yonder sacred throng
we at his feet may fall,
join in the everlasting song,
and crown him Lord of all!

Words: Edward Perronet (1746-1792) adapted by John Rippon (1751-1836)

Blessing

May we go now knowing the authority of Jesus in our lives. May we go knowing that Jesus is with us every step of the way. May we go knowing that Jesus loves us completely. And

may the blessing of God who is our Mother and our Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit go with us this day and every day. Amen