



Birstall and Rothley Methodist Churches



A Service for February 21st, 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

Behold, the servants of the Lord,
We wait, your guiding eye to feel
to hear and keep your every word,
to prove and do your perfect will;
joyful from our own works to cease,
glad to fulfil all righteousness.

we say The Lord's Prayer together

StF 18

1

Be still and know that I am God.

Be still and know that I am God.

Be still and know that I am God.

2

I am the Lord who saves and heals.

I am the Lord who saves and heals.

I am the Lord who saves and heals.

3

In you, O Lord, I put my trust.

In you, O Lord, I put my trust.

In you, O Lord, I put my trust.

Anonymous

Based on Psalm 46:10-11

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Words: ©

Prayers of Adoration

Dear Lord, Lord of Life, only you have the power to create and destroy. You have promised: 'When I bring clouds over the earth and the bow is seen in the clouds, I will remember my covenant that is between me and you and every living creature of all flesh; and the waters shall never again become a flood to destroy all flesh.'

Faithful God, we adore You. You, Holy Father, set your children apart and have granted us this promise which is your gift to us and all that has breath. You are always protecting your own.

Amen

Confession

Dear Lord we are weak and we forget that not only will you protect and save us but you will cover us and use us in your service so that those who wait for you will not be put to shame. The Psalmist says, 'let them be ashamed who are wantonly treacherous.'

Lead us in your truth, and teach us, for you are the God of our salvation; without you we are incomplete !

Forgive us when we forget to be mindful of your mercy, and of your steadfast love, have mercy on us when we forget that you have been for us from time of old.

Amen

Thanksgiving

We thank you Lord for not remembering the sins of our youth, or our transgressions; we thank you, Lord, for the good news that we are saved through the Blood of Jesus.

We thank you Lord that we are able to enter a period of remembrance of the temptations of our Lord Jesus, temptations which came to him even as he had just been baptised and pronounced the Son of God and entered into the wilderness.

We thank you for carrying us through our various types of wildernesses knowing and believing in your Promise.

We thank you Lord for your word which brings us ever closer to you.

We thank you Lord for allowing us to cast all our anxieties on you because you have showed us you care for us.

Your word reminds us that God gave us a spirit not to fear but of power and Love and self-control. We thank You for the ongoing power of the Spirit in our lives, to make us like Jesus.

Amen

Hymn

StF 238

Lead us, heavenly Father, lead us
q'er the world's tempestuous sea;
guard us, guide us, keep us, feed us,
for we have no help but thee;
yet possessing every blessing
if our God our Father be.

Saviour, breathe forgiveness o'er us;
all our weakness thou dost know;
thou didst tread this earth before us,
thou didst feel its keenest woe;
tempted, taunted, yet undaunted,
through the desert thou didst go.

Spirit of our God, descending,
fill our hearts with heavenly joy,
love with every passion blending,
pleasure that can never cloy;
thus provided, pardoned, guided,
nothing can our peace destroy.

words: James Edmeston (1791-1867)

Readings: 1 Peter 3: 18-22

For Christ also suffered for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, in order to bring you to God. He was put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit, in which also he went and made a proclamation to the spirits in prison, who in former times did not obey, when God waited patiently in the days of Noah, during the building of the ark, in which a few, that is, eight persons, were saved through water. And baptism, which this prefigured, now saves you — not as a removal of dirt from the body, but as an appeal to God for a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, with angels, authorities, and powers made subject to him.

Mark 1: 9-15

In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. And just as he was coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens torn apart and the Spirit descending like a dove on him. And a voice came from heaven, “You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased.”

And the Spirit immediately drove him out into the wilderness. He was in the wilderness forty days, tempted by Satan; and he was with the wild beasts; and the angels waited on him.

Now after John was arrested, Jesus came to Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God, and saying, “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news.”

Reflection - *Understanding who we are*

In these few verses, Mark sets out clearly his understanding of who Jesus is. Jesus is revealed as the Beloved Son, the delight of the Father and visibly graced by the Spirit. Jesus rises from the water and we see clearly how He stands within the fellowship of divine love, the mystery at the heart of God’s being which we call the Holy Trinity. Jesus is a cherished child, worthy of love before he has performed any miracles or shared any teachings.

Jesus is also one with needy humanity, standing in solidarity among those come for the cleansing waters of John’s Baptism, a cleansing which, as the Letter of Peter reminds us, is more than a thorough wash, and sharing their vulnerability when exposed in the wilderness.

As Messiah, the anointed representative of God’s faithful people, Jesus ‘rewinds’ their story of Exodus and freedom, moving from the water of the Jordan back into the wilderness for a 40 day echo of their forty long years of wandering. Perhaps he ‘goes back’ even further, living, like Adam in Eden, in the company of the wild beasts.

Using the simplest words, Mark presents a profound summary of who Jesus is. And Mark offers a glimpse into Jesus’s own subjective experience, in the pivotal moment of Baptism, Jesus sees the heavens torn open, this is a flash of revelation, a moment when divine reality is seen and known.

Many unhappy and misguided understandings of Lent come from a mistaken understanding of who we are, how God sees us. In the drama of this story, we find not only a revelation of identity of Jesus, but who we are in Him: unconditionally beloved children in whom God delights, weak and needy human beings whose vulnerability Jesus has faced, shared and redeemed, people of God caught up in God's enduring plan of rescue and redemption.

Hymn

StF 369

Baptise us with your Spirit,
majestic, humble Christ,
to overcome temptation;
assailed, but not enticed.
Baptise us with your Spirit,
that in each other's eyes
we may discern your purpose,
and cast away disguise.

Baptise us with your Spirit
to careful, patient, thought,
and habit-forming virtues
aspired to, copied, taught,
till clothed with new creation,
self-critical, reformed,
we demonstrate the gospel,
to you alone conformed.

Baptise us with your Spirit
in unrestricted ways
that move us, mind and body,
to laugh and shout your praise.
Send us to clear the rubble
of each defensive wall,
inviting to your table
our neighbours, one and all.

Words: Brian Wren (b.1936)

Giving and dedication prayer

We have little to give as individuals but collectively our contributions make a big difference in the running of our churches, our outreach work and through that, our work as evangelists.

Lord, bless our giving, we dedicate our offering and ourselves to you!

Amen

Intercessions

Let us pray in agreement. When we are in harmony and agreement with those around you, we step into a deeper, more personal fellowship with God; for we are reminded that if two agree on earth it will be done for them by our Father in Heaven.

Prompt: We collectively ask you to hear us and grant us our requests.

Response: ***Our Lord and God we agree.
Let these prayers ascend to you in Heaven.***

Let us Pray for wisdom:

Endow leaders in our Churches, Government and other places of responsibility with Wisdom gained by and through following your word and trusting in your Promise.

Let us pray for protection:

Protect us all from all the things that Satan and his followers may throw at us, and from ourselves when we are weak or backsliding. Grant us Noahs in our day, give us the Arks of protection we and your Creation need.

Let us pray for love:

Let us appreciate the Love you have given us and may we learn to love each other as ourselves. Let the love be manifest in our daily lives may it shine through our eyes, our words, our deeds. Let it be said of us, as of our Lord that our "personal appearance was changed into a glorified form, and His clothing became dazzling white".

Let us pray for relationships:

May we build strong relationships inside and outside our homes. May these relationships extend across borders, bring Nations together to deal with the gifts and challenges of life,

Let us pray for breakthroughs:

Our Lord give us cures for diseases, give us access to water, give us the ability to win new souls, and Lord also give us our daily bread. Lord we know you can take five fish and five loaves and feed thousands, and the waste from that is even more than what was shared. Lord we know your Anointing on David the shepherd, the Blessing of Elijah on Elisha, the Promise you fulfilled with Abraham. We bring our prayers in confidence to you.

Amen

Hymn StF 610

Best of all is God is with us,
God will hold and never fail.
Keep that truth when storms are raging,
God remains though faith is frail.

Best of all is God is with us,
life goes on and needs are met,
God is strongest in our weakness.
Love renews, will not forget.

Best of all is God is with us,
hearts are challenged, strangely warmed,
faith is deepened, courage strengthened,
grace received and hope reformed.

Best of all is God is with us,
in our joy and through our pain,
till that final acclamation:
'life is Christ, and death is gain'.

Best of all is God is with us
as we scale eternal heights,
love grows stronger, undiminished;
earth grows dim by heaven's lights.

Words: Andrew Pratt (b.1948)

Blessing

Blessing Merciful and Faithful Jesus, made like us in every way,
flesh and blood, hungry, empty, tempted, able to sympathize,
come to help us in time of need.

Hold onto us in our struggles and temptations.

In the midst of all that overloads and threatens to overwhelm us,
catch us, draw us to your side

and give us your grace,

that we may reach our hands to others in their need.

Amen