

PRAYERS: A Prayer of Confession

Holy God, forgive me when I have kept silent instead of adding my voice in worship. For times when I have withheld the praise due to you. You have given me all I need and more besides: you have loved me and saved me through your son Jesus Christ, yet I have claimed credit for myself and have not always come before you in thanksgiving.

Lord, I want to give myself to you whole-heartedly in worship: accept my repentance and teach me how to worship you passionately – to give my very best for you. **Amen**

And now because of the promise you have given us through Jesus' life, death and resurrection, we thankfully accept your forgiveness, and turn again to you, the only and life-giving God, worthy of all our praise. **Amen**

Prayers of Intercession

As you continue to worship God in prayer and praise hold before God those known to you who particularly need God's love today.

Our Father, who art in heaven... Amen

We can also show our love to God through our financial giving. Please continue to make your offering to God and for the continuing work of the Church / Circuit.

Bless these gifts and those who give them that all may give glory to you and make your name known day by day. **Amen**

Closing Hymn: StF 699 **God of justice, Saviour to all.**

Blessing:

God of all love and light,
open our hearts to welcome the living light of your Son,
so that your light may reflect back to you in our praises.
Spirit of wisdom, hope and joy,
dwell in our souls and inspire us to give voice to our worship
with passion and joy, this day and every day.
In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen

Worship at Home 18 July 2021 Darlington District

Methodist Way of Life: 3 – Worship

If you have your Methodist Way of Life commitment card this week we are focusing on the sections headed 'Worship'

CALL TO WORSHIP: 1 Chronicles 16: 29

Ascribe to the LORD the glory due his name;
bring an offering, and come before him.
Worship the LORD in holy splendour^a

OPENING HYMN:

**H&P 507 Praise the Lord of heaven, praise him in the height
StF 331 King of kings, majesty**

Pause to offer prayers of praise and thanksgiving to God in your own words.

The calling of the Methodist Church is to respond to the gospel of God's love in Christ and to live out its discipleship in worship and mission.

In our worship this month we have already observed how our learning of God's love manifests itself in caring and in serving others. When we truly acknowledge God's infinite love our response is to share that love with our neighbour, to stand out against injustice, to care for creation, to live generously reflecting the grace of God. Already the interconnectedness of these practical action areas is beginning to shine through, and the link is God's love.

Today we are invited to look through the lens of worship. In worship we can begin to reflect God's love back to God. It is the opportunity not to take that love for granted, but to give thanks and pray. To demonstrate our awe and gratitude before the God who made us.

^a **New Revised Standard Version Bible:** Anglicised Edition, copyright © 1989, 1995 United States of America. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

REFLECTION :

Our Calling says of worship: 'The Church exists to increase awareness of God's presence and to celebrate God's Love.' In worship we seek that awe-filled awareness of God. Worship is both corporate and individual. We worship in community and we devote time to growing in our personal relationship with God, in response to His love for us. So the Methodist Way of Life commitments encourage us to

- pray daily,
- worship with others regularly, and
- look and listen for God in scripture and the world.

Let's pause to look briefly at each of these.

Pray Daily

The Catholic Priest Dom John Chapman reflected the teachings of the early church Fathers, when he wrote in his spiritual letters 'Pray as you can, not as you can't.'. Reflecting on Chapman's teaching Trevor Miller says that by far the most important thing for us, if we want to pray, is to seriously undertake to become the kind of people who can pray, who have room in their lives for a God to whom they can pray; then "pray as you can, not as you can't." What freedom that short phrase gives us to commune with God instinctively and naturally! In time prayer becomes a way of life – something we do intuitively (like breathing) not something we make time for.

Prayer is never about "shoulds" and "oughts" but about a desire to be in God's loving presence and to allow Him to guide our prayers through the Holy Spirit which is at work in us. And that surely gives us a sense of peace and cause to say: **Amen: Thanks be to God.**

READING: [Psalm 92: 1-5, 12-15](#)

Worship with others regularly

Psalm 92 is the only Psalm that specifically says 'A Song. For the Sabbath day.' It speaks very much about the importance of gathering for worship in the house of the Lord. It reminds us that it's

God who has planted us in a worshipping community where we can flourish and bear fruit for the Kingdom.

Worshipping with others regularly is the place where we intentionally come together to celebrate God's love revealed in Jesus Christ. This year we have learned to do this without leaving our homes as thousands of Christians have done before us when circumstances prevent meeting in person. We can worship at the same time as others, we can use the same liturgy or service (like this one). We have a wonderful shared resource in the Methodist Church Prayer Handbook, and we have shared reflections through the Great 50 Days.

Worshipping with others regularly doesn't rely on having to be physically present with them. Our funeral service in the Methodist church talks about the great company of the faithful, whom Christ has brought through death to behold God's face in glory, who join with us in worship, prayer and service. If the Communion of saints are with us in worship and prayer, how much more are we present to each other by the power of the Holy Spirit who joins us together in unity. That surely gives us cause to say again. **Amen: Thanks be to God.**

Look and listen for God in scripture and the world

As Christians, if we want to grow in God's grace, we need to spend personal time reading or listening to the Bible. We can't simply rely on hearing it read to us on a Sunday, we need to find a regular rhythm of reading and reflecting on the bible. There are a wide variety of tools available to help us with this.

The final part of the last clause of 'worship' reminds us that there is no sacred/secular split. We can connect with God in the world especially if we are intent on looking for God. It may be in city architecture or in the wonder of creation. It may be in the generosity of others or in the pain of a situation. As we pause to notice signs of God in the bustle of our lives we can meet God unexpectedly. We rejoice that we can worship God in any place and in many forms. Again, we have cause to say: **Amen: Thanks be to God.**

The reflection was adapted from a service prepared by Rev Juliet Wriglesworth.

