

Sunday 14 March 2021

This short act of worship has been prepared for you to use whilst we are unable to use Methodist Church premises. We invite you to spend a few moments with God, knowing that other people are sharing this act of worship with you.

Opening Prayer

‘Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good. His faithful love endures forever. [Psalm 107:1] Holy God, though we do not worship together in one building we worship together in one spirit and with one heart. Through our worship reveal to us your will we pray. Amen.

Hymn: [Praise to the Lord](#) (Singing the Faith 88)

Let us pray together:

Holy God,
we praise you for the faithfulness of your people down the ages.
We worship and adore you as creator of this wonderful earth, and of us made in your image.
We praise you that you are a Giving God. For our family and friends, God we thank you.
For the signs of Spring all around us, God we thank you.
For the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, God we thank you.
Forgiving God, we bring you our confessions now.
We are sorry God for the times when we have failed you and ourselves.
(in a moment of quiet offer your confession to God)
We know God you are quick to forgive.
As Jesus said to many he met, ‘Your sins are forgiven’, it is on this promise that we too rely. We pray
in Jesus’ name,
Amen.

Today’s Reading from the Old Testament: [Numbers 21:4-9](#)

Today’s Gospel Reading: [John 3:14-21](#)

Time to Reflect

I wonder how many times through this pandemic you have been unhappy with things and complained out loud or inwardly to yourself? Perhaps you haven’t agreed with Government decisions, perhaps you have been angry at the people who seemed to mindlessly flout the rules put in place to keep us all safe, perhaps you’ve complained when you were unable to attend church, or if you were, you were unable to sing; there are many reasons of late why we are likely to have moaned. And this is how it was with the Israelites as they travelled slowly towards the promised land. They took their frustration out not only on their leader Moses, but also on God. They had forgotten the miracles God had performed for them, their faith was waning, and they refused to obey God’s law (see Psalm 78). We see too that when the Israelites complained things only got worse. They improved at once though when the people recognised that they had sinned against God through their attitude and actions. When the bronze snake was hung on a pole the Israelites didn’t anticipate the fuller meaning that Jesus would bring to this experience. In the Gospel reading Jesus

explains that just as the Israelites of old were healed of the sickness caused by the snake bites by turning their gaze towards the snake on the pole, we today can be healed from the sin that pervades our lives by turning our gaze towards Jesus' death on the cross. You see it was not the bronze snake that healed the Israelites, it was their renewed belief in God's healing power, in God's compassion for them, in God's love for those created in God's image and called beloved. Today, God's healing power, compassion and love exists for each one of us too; it is there for the taking but like the Israelites we too need to recognise the times we stray away from the path of light that guides us and turn back wholeheartedly towards God. Amen.

Take some time to sit quietly in reflection.

A time of prayer

Gracious God,
We thank you for the blessings in our lives,
We pray now for those struggling at this time:
We pray for our world in these difficult times,
that your peace will reach across borders and into the lives of all your people.

We pray for our Christian brothers and sisters living in lands where they risk their liberty and lives to follow you, be their courage and strong foundation.

We pray for leaders and others in positions of authority and power, that they will be guided by you.

We pray for your churches who await your direction, may your will be done.

We pray for all people suffering with ill health at this time, for those awaiting treatment or test results, for those recovering from operations or illness, for those suffering with mental health problems, may you heal them.

We pray for all who have suffered the loss of loved ones, may you be their source of strength to face another day.

We pray for ourselves, may we be people of peace and justice, bringing hope to those we interact with.

Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer, Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father

Hymn: ['Turn your eyes upon Jesus'](#)

or sing a verse of a hymn that comes to mind

A prayer of blessing

God of grace and restoration be the strength in our lives as we go about our days, now and forever more, Amen.