



The Methodist Church

Bury St Edmunds Circuit.

WORSHIP SHEET FOR 9TH AUGUST 2020

Welcome to worship

Be still, you may like to light a candle, as we remember the people of our circuit.

Call to Worship

As we gather, God welcomes all the dreamers, as well as the doubters:

**here, the worriers and wanderers
can call on God by name.**

Here, in this time, we can remember all the ways God has graced us:

**here, in these moments, we are reminded
that God is with us, always!**

Here are gathered those daring enough to step out of comfort into the unknown:

**here, in this faith space, we will find the
courage to cry out, 'God, save us!' in every
situation.**

Hymn Summer suns are glowing

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eK0ToFWDr8M>

Summer suns are glowing
over land and sea,
happy light is flowing,
bountiful and free.
Everything rejoices
in the mellow rays,
all earth's thousand voices
swell the psalm of praise.

God's free mercy streameth
over all the world,
and his banner gleameth,
everywhere unfurled.
Broad and deep and glorious
as the heaven above,
shines in might victorious
his eternal love.

Lord, upon our blindness
thy pure radiance pour;
for thy loving-kindness
make us love thee more.
And when clouds are drifting
dark across our sky,
then, the veil uplifting,
Father, be thou nigh.

We will never doubt thee,
though thou veil thy light:
life is dark without thee;
death with thee is bright.

Light of Light! shine o'er us
on our pilgrim way,
go thou still before us
to the endless day.

William W. How

Prayer of Praise

From hillside to lakeside
Jesus meets the needs of his friends.
Always surprising them and us
with his words and actions.
Always responding to our needs,
always there for us.
We gather to give thanks and praise
to the one who loves and cares for us.
We offer ourselves and this time
and invite Jesus to surprise us once more.

We come here to meet Jesus,
the one who is full of love.
We come to hear his word,
the word that is full of surprises.
We come to grow in faith,
**the faith that is strengthened
and renewed every day**

Prayer of Confession

Loving God
It seems so easy to get into the boat and set
sail on our journey. But when the winds of
change begin to blow, we want to turn around
and head back to the past's safe harbour.
When sin's waves crash over the side, we try to
wrap ourselves in the cloak of pride thinking we
will not get wet.
When Jesus calls to us to get out and follow in
faith, we look around, hoping he is not speaking
to us.
Swamped by our fears, and sinking in doubt,
we long for someone to help us – so save us,
Holy One, save us! Stretch out your hand, so
we might be lifted from our despair to hope,
from our worries to trust, from our foolishness
to faithful living. Then, we will dare to follow
Jesus Christ, our Lord and Saviour, even if it
means getting out of the sheltered lives we
have built for ourselves.

SILENCE – for private prayers of confession

In confessing that Christ is Lord, we let go of
the past, and turn to God's future. We step out
of our fears, and walk into the light and life
offered by our God.
In trusting Christ's resurrection, we trust all of
God's promises, and know that we are forgiven.
Thanks be to God. **Amen**

Old Testament Reading

Genesis 37 : 1 – 4 and 12 – 28

Jacob lived in the land where his father had stayed, the land of Canaan.

² This is the account of Jacob's family line.

Joseph, a young man of seventeen, was tending the flocks with his brothers, the sons of Bilhah and the sons of Zilpah, his father's wives, and he brought their father a bad report about them.

³ Now Israel loved Joseph more than any of his other sons, because he had been born to him in his old age; and he made an ornate^[a] robe for him. ⁴ When his brothers saw that their father loved him more than any of them, they hated him and could not speak a kind word to him.

Joseph sold by his brothers

¹² Now his brothers had gone to graze their father's flocks near Shechem, ¹³ and Israel said to Joseph, 'As you know, your brothers are grazing the flocks near Shechem. Come, I am going to send you to them.'

'Very well,' he replied.

¹⁴ So he said to him, 'Go and see if all is well with your brothers and with the flocks, and bring word back to me.' Then he sent him off from the Valley of Hebron.

When Joseph arrived at Shechem, ¹⁵ a man found him wandering around in the fields and asked him, 'What are you looking for?'

¹⁶ He replied, 'I'm looking for my brothers. Can you tell me where they are grazing their flocks?'

¹⁷ 'They have moved on from here,' the man answered. 'I heard them say, "Let's go to Dothan."'

So Joseph went after his brothers and found them near Dothan. ¹⁸ But they saw him in the distance, and before he reached them, they plotted to kill him.

¹⁹ 'Here comes that dreamer!' they said to each other. ²⁰ 'Come now, let's kill him and throw him into one of these cisterns and say that a ferocious animal devoured him. Then we'll see what comes of his dreams.'

²¹ When Reuben heard this, he tried to rescue him from their hands. 'Let's not take his life,' he said. ²² 'Don't shed any blood. Throw him into this cistern here in the wilderness, but don't lay a hand on him.' Reuben said this to rescue him from them and take him back to his father.

²³ So when Joseph came to his brothers, they stripped him of his robe – the ornate robe he was wearing – ²⁴ and they took him and threw him into the cistern. The cistern was empty; there was no water in it.

²⁵ As they sat down to eat their meal, they looked up and saw a caravan of Ishmaelites coming from Gilead. Their camels were loaded with spices, balm and myrrh, and they were on their way to take them down to Egypt.

²⁶ Judah said to his brothers, 'What will we gain if we kill our brother and cover up his blood? ²⁷ Come, let's sell him to the Ishmaelites and not lay our hands on him; after all, he is our brother, our own flesh and blood.' His brothers agreed.

²⁸ So when the Midianite merchants came by, his brothers pulled Joseph up out of the cistern and sold him for twenty shekels^[b] of silver to the Ishmaelites, who took him to Egypt.

Hymn

StF 495 Dear Lord and Father

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WqOnjmr9Ah0>

- 1 Dear Lord and Father of mankind
forgive our foolish ways ;
reclothe us in our rightful mind ;
in purer lives thy service find,
in deeper reverence, praise.
- 2 In simple trust like theirs who heard
beside the Syrian sea
the gracious calling of the Lord,
let us, like them, without a word
rise up and follow thee.
- 3 O sabbath rest by Galilee !
O calm of hills above,
where Jesus knelt to share with thee
the silence of eternity,
interpreted by love !
- 4 With that deep hush subduing all
our words and works that drown
the tender whisper of thy call,
as noiseless let thy blessing fall
as fell thy manna down.
- 5 Drop thy still dews of quietness,
till all our strivings cease ;
take from our souls the strain and stress,
and let our ordered lives confess
the beauty of thy peace.
- 6 Breathe through the heats of our desire
thy coolness and thy balm ;
let sense be dumb, let flesh retire ;
speak through the earthquake, wind,
and fire,
O still small voice of calm !

John Greenleaf Whittier (1807–1892)

New Testament Reading

Matthew 14 : 22 – 33

Jesus walks on the water

²² Immediately Jesus made the disciples get into the boat and go on ahead of him to the other side, while he dismissed the crowd. ²³ After he had dismissed them, he went up on a mountainside by himself to pray. Later that night, he was there alone, ²⁴ and the boat was already a considerable distance from land, buffeted by the waves because the wind was against it.

²⁵ Shortly before dawn Jesus went out to them, walking on the lake. ²⁶ When the disciples saw him walking on the lake, they were terrified. 'It's a ghost,' they said, and cried out in fear.

²⁷ But Jesus immediately said to them: 'Take courage! It is I. Don't be afraid.'

²⁸ 'Lord, if it's you,' Peter replied, 'tell me to come to you on the water.'

²⁹ 'Come,' he said.

Then Peter got down out of the boat, walked on the water and came towards Jesus. ³⁰ But when he saw the wind, he was afraid and, beginning to sink, cried out, 'Lord, save me!'

³¹ Immediately Jesus reached out his hand and caught him. 'You of little faith,' he said, 'why did you doubt?'

³² And when they climbed into the boat, the wind died down. ³³ Then those who were in the boat worshipped him, saying, 'Truly you are the Son of God.'

Reflection

Today we read two more very familiar stories. First we turn to our New Testament reading which follows on from the bread and fishes last week. So imagine yourself there. Having lived through the most eventful of days Jesus sends you off in a boat. Very early next morning the boat is being buffeted by the rising storm, the timbers groan, the waves crash over the sides, fear is in your stomach. Now you see a distant figure looming through the storm, walking on the surface of the lake. You recognise him and jump out of the boat and walk across to him, but suddenly you lose focus on who is in front of you and instead you see the chaos of the world all around you and you begin to sink. Jesus' hand reaches out to you and leads you back to the safety of the boat. God saves! Even when our faith falters our God does not falter. We live in that chaotic world today. Are we able to keep our focus on God or is our priority the world in which we live?

Both of our readings remind us of a saving God who is there in all situations. In our Old Testament reading, the beginning of the cycle of Joseph stories, it does not mention God, however we see the faithfulness and providence of God. This is a God who would ensure that this young favourite son, who was despised by his siblings, would be saved. Things would have turned out very differently if it had not been for the watchful eye of the one who called Israel into being.

Both of these stories talk to us of the inexplicable wonder of God's redeeming love. Conversely, they also talk to us about our faith and our calling. Dietrich Bonhoeffer's classic analysis of Peter's response says "Peter had to leave the ship and risk his life on the sea, in order to learn his own weakness and the almighty power of his Lord. If Peter had not taken the risk, he would not have learned the meaning of faith.... the road to faith passes through obedience to the call of Jesus."

This is not a story of the sceptic who habitually doubts, but the story of the faithful follower who begins to lose his nerve when he discovers the odds stacked up against him, but who from Jesus finds a steadying, delivering hand.

We may find life difficult, maybe we think life is stacked up against us, but that steadying hand is there for us to reach out and hold; Jesus' hand. Remember even when we are surrounded by scary or distressing things that we are beloved of a God who has been faithful to God's people

Draw close with faith, hear him calling your name and know the saving love of a God who is with us in all situations. God saves!

Hymn Wonderful merciful saviour
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z8T0br5JfAA>

Wonderful, merciful Saviour
Precious Redeemer and Friend
Who would have thought that a Lamb
Could rescue the souls of men
Oh you rescue the souls of men

Counsellor, Comforter, Keeper
Spirit we long to embrace
You offer hope when our hearts have
Hopelessly lost the way
Oh, we hopelessly lost the way

*You are the One that we praise
You are the One we adore
You give the healing and grace
Our hearts always hunger for
Oh, our hearts always hunger for*

Almighty, infinite Father
Faithfully loving Your own
Here in our weakness You find us
Falling before Your throne
Oh, we're falling before Your throne
Chorus:

Dawn Rodgers and Eric Wyse

Prayers

Loving God, it is you who comes when we cry out in storm-tossed moments. Reach out to your Church when sight of the strong wind brings fear.

Give thanks to the Lord
Call upon his name.

Loving God, it is you who sends your disciples to cross the lake. Be with all who travel by land, sea and air, for holidays, business and missions of mercy especially in these days of the pandemic.

Give thanks to the Lord
Call upon his name.

Loving God, it is you who went up the mountain to pray alone. Come to us in the still moments to refresh, revive and reignite the fire of living, especially in those moments when we are struggling with what life means and when doubt overcomes us. Increase in us thanksgiving for your saving mercy.

Give thanks to the Lord
Call upon his name.

Loving God, it is you who reaches out to us when we cry 'Lord save me'. Catch all who are falling in their frailty. Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved. We lift to you all who are struggling at this time

Give thanks to the Lord
Call upon his name.

Loving God, it is you who appears in the early morning on the water and later in the garden. Bring all who have died to delight in the sound of your voice. With the whole host of heaven we worship your holy name.

Give thanks to the Lord
Call upon his name.

We bring our prayers in Jesus' name. **Amen**

We say together the Lord's Prayer

Blessing of our Gifts

Generous God,
We give with joy into your Kingdom today
May you bless the offering of our lives and our money.
Come O Lord and work through these gifts
extend your love through us we pray. Amen

Hymn StF 503 Love Divine

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sw5ZCZeS32M>

- 1 Love divine, all loves excelling,
joy of heaven to earth come down,
fix in us thy humble dwelling,
all thy faithful mercies crown.
Jesu, thou art all compassion,
pure, unbounded love thou art;
visit us with thy salvation,
enter every trembling heart.
- 2 Come, almighty to deliver,
let us all thy life receive ;
suddenly return, and never,
never more thy temples leave.
Thee we would be always blessing,
serve thee as thy hosts above,
pray, and praise thee, without ceasing,
glory in thy perfect love.
- 3 Finish then thy new creation,
pure and spotless let us be ;
let us see thy great salvation,
perfectly restored in thee :
changed from glory into glory,
till in heaven we take our place,
till we cast our crowns before thee,
lost in wonder, love, and praise !

Charles Wesley (1707–1788)

A prayer of dismissal

Witnesses to something amazing,
something unbelievable.

Jesus walked on water.

Witnesses to something frightening,
someone's failure.

Peter fell in.

But Jesus reaches out to help his friend,
and the waters calmed.

We go now to find ways of doing the same.
Reach out and give someone
a hand up this week.

Grace We say together

**May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,
the love of God
and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit
be with us all forever more. Amen**

Some prayers from

Intercession by Ian Black

Starters for Sunday – Church of Scotland resource