



The Methodist Church

Bury St Edmunds Circuit.

Worship Sheet for 10th January 2021

Welcome to worship

As we still ourselves ready for worship, to focus on God and his loving presence with us you may wish to light a candle. Christ is the light of the world.

Call to Worship: Psalm 29: 3-4

The voice of the Lord is over the waters; the God of glory thunders, the Lord over mighty waters. The voice of the Lord is powerful; the voice of the Lord is full of majesty. May the Lord give strength to his people. Amen.

Hymn: StF18: Be still and know that I am God

[Be still and know that I am God hymn \(lyrics and chords\) - YouTube](#)

Be still and know that I am God,
Be still and know that I am God,
Be still and know that I am God.

I am the Lord that health thee,
I am the Lord that health thee,
I am the Lord that health thee.

In you, O Lord I put my trust,
In you, O Lord I put my trust,
In you, O Lord I put my trust.

(Based on Psalm 46: 10-11)

Prayer of Praise

We worship you, O Lord our God, in the splendour of your holiness, in full knowledge of your grace and mercy, and in the presence of your people, our brothers and sisters in Christ. We come as we are to worship you. **Amen.**

Blessed are you, Lord our God, you have created the heavens and the earth.

Blessed are you, Jesus Christ, you came among us and were baptised of John.

Blessed are you, Holy life giving Spirit, you descend as the dove and you fill us with life.

Blessed are you, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. In you we live and move and have our being.

Amen.

Loving God, help us to do our best for you,
Help us to do our best in you,

Help us to do our best because of you. Anything less than our best would not make us worthy. You gave your best for us even your very best on the cross. **Amen.**

Prayer of Confession and Assurance of forgiveness

Remind us, Lord, as we struggle with the burdens of this life, that when you walked from the baptismal waters of the Jordan, you submitted to a life of divine service and sacrifice.

Blind would see, deaf would hear, lame would leap for joy, and for our sake and for those not yet born you suffered humiliation arms outstretched in love upon a cross.

All of this puts our worries, concerns and burdens into perspective, Lord. Forgive us, remind us and encircle us in those loving outstretched arms we pray.

Sometimes, Lord we forget your welcome, we forget your offer of unconditional love, and the price you paid for our freedom. Forgive us and set us free. **Amen.**

Our Lord Jesus Christ is gracious and just and forgives all those who ask in his name. Know then your sins are forgiven. Amen.

Hymn: StF 541 To the river I am going

[The River by Brian Doerksen - YouTube](#)

To the river I am going,
bringing sins I cannot bear;
come and cleanse me, come, forgive me;
Lord, I need to meet you there.

In these waters healing mercy
flows with freedom from despair.

I am going to that river;
Lord, I need to meet you there.

Precious Jesus, I am ready

To surrender every care.

Take my hand now, lead me closer;

Lord, I need to meet you there.

To the river....(repeat verses 1 and 2)

Come and join us in the river,
Come, find life beyond compare.
He is calling, he is waiting;
Jesus longs to meet you there.

Precious Jesus.....
(Brian Doerksen 1965)

Old Testament Bible Reading: Genesis 1: 1-5

1 In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth, ² the earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep, while a wind from God swept over the face of the waters. ³ Then God said, 'Let there be light'; and there was light. ⁴ And God saw that the light was good; and God separated the light from the darkness. ⁵ God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, the first day.

Gospel Bible reading: Mark 1: 4-11

John the baptizer appeared in the wilderness, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. ⁵ And people from the whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem were going out to him, and were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. ⁶ Now John was clothed with camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. ⁷ He proclaimed, 'The one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to stoop down and untie the thong of his sandals. ⁸ I have baptized you with water; but he will baptize you with ⁹ the Holy Spirit.'

The Baptism of Jesus

⁹ In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. ¹⁰ 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. ¹¹ And a voice came from heaven, 'You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased.'

Reflection

The 1st of March 2020 was the last time I took a service at Stowmarket Methodist Church before we went into the first lockdown. Little did I, or any of us, know that that would be the last service in our building until the 6th of September 2020. But the memory of that service in March is a lasting one. It was a joyous occasion and one I

felt very privileged to take. Why? It was a service of Baptism for our youngest granddaughter Lois. The church was packed with family and friends and we were able to meet together after for sandwiches and cake in the church hall. All of this quite normal then, but even more remarkable now.

The beginning of Mark's gospel doesn't introduce us to the infant Jesus being born in a manger in a dirty dark stable. It doesn't have the Nativity narrative that we come to expect. Instead, it begins with the proclamation of the John the Baptist and the Baptism of Jesus. We have moved forward some 30 or so years where we find the adult Jesus being Baptised by his cousin John. This isn't the only gospel that doesn't focus our attention on the childhood of Jesus. We only get one brief account of Jesus at age 12 in Luke's gospel. The gospel writers have in some way erased the childhood of Jesus, maybe they don't consider this important. But for us the childhood of our children and grandchildren is of most importance and we want to be absorbed into and find joy in it.

John felt that he wasn't worthy to Baptise Jesus. In fact he felt that even the lowest job of untying Jesus sandals was too good for him. But Jesus trusted in John and wanted John to be the one to Baptise him. My family trusted me to Baptise our grandchild which was a proud moment. I am sure that John, although daunted by the task ahead, felt proud to be chosen to be the one who Baptised Jesus.

For us, 21st Century Christians Baptism marks the first step in our lives with Jesus here on earth. Parents and Godparents make promises for and on behalf of a child in infant Baptism. We make them ourselves when Baptised as an adult. Although nothing so remarkable as what happened with Jesus, happened to me at my Baptism or anyone I have Baptised, a tangible shift happens where we lay ourselves open to God's grace and blessing at Baptism. Jesus knew it was an important first step on his journey towards the cross. For us it is an important step on our journey of faith. It is important that Mark's

gospel begins with the Baptism of Jesus as we see at that very moment how close Jesus is to God. We are told the heavens are torn open and the Holy Spirit like a dove descends on him. An incredibly special moment in the life of Jesus. Also, for John, who by Baptising Jesus experienced this event that was both seen and heard. For the joy of faith to be fully alive in us, we are invited to receive the Holy Spirit into our hearts. This we do when we receive the sacrament of Holy Communion. On this day when we celebrate Jesus Baptism let us all rejoice in the gift of the Holy Spirit and receive the grace God sends with it. **Amen.**



(Photo used with kind permission of Lois: 1st March 2020)

Hymn: StF 394 Spirit of God unseen as the wind
[Spirit of God, Unseen as the Wind \[with lyrics for congregations\] - YouTube](#)

*Spirit of God, unseen as the wind,
 Gentle as is the dove,
 Teach us the truth and help us believe,
 Show us the Saviour's love.*

You spoke to us long, long ago,
 Gave us the written word;
 We read it still, needing its truth,
 Through it God's voice is heard.

Spirit of God.....

Without your help we fail our Lord,
 We cannot live his way;
 We need your power, we need your strength,
 Following Christ each day.

Spirit of God.....
 (Margaret V. Old 1932-2001)

Prayers of Intercession

Lord of Light
Make known your glory

Spirit of God, descending like a dove, anoint your Church with your life giving and affirming presence as we give thanks for all who are baptised. Give your Church power to show that we are members of the body of Christ, unite your Church in the waters of new birth by your Holy Spirit.

Lord of Light
Make known your glory

We pray for justice among the nations. We hold in our prayers anyone held captive or under tyranny. We pray for all who feel downtrodden or stressed either financial or emotionally. May all know your love, that they can cast their burdens upon you.

Lord of Light
May known your glory

We pray for and give thanks for all those concerned with our well being. We think especially of carers in residential care homes and those who work in the community. We pray for all hospital staff. For those on the front line and those who work behind the scenes to keep everything moving and are often overlooked. We pray for all key workers helping to keep the country going during the times we find ourselves living in.

Lord of Light
Make known your glory.

We pray for all those we love but see no more. we bring before you all your faithful servants who have died in the faith of Christ. We pray for the bereaved that they may find comfort. We pray for ourselves that we may lead faithful and godly lives in this world and come to share with all the saints in heaven.

Lord of light
Make known your glory.

We ask these and all our prayers through our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. Amen.

We say together:

**Our Father in heaven,
Hallowed be your Name,
Your kingdom come,
Your will be done,
On earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
As we forgive those who sin against us.
Save us from the time of trial
And deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours,
Now and for ever. Amen.**

Blessing of our Gifts

Heavenly Father, we ask that you send your blessing through the power of your Holy Spirit on these our gifts and on our lives led in your service. May we as your servants do as you ask day by day. **Amen.**

Hymn: StF 338 There is a redeemer

[There is a Redeemer \(with lyrics\) - YouTube](#)

There is a Redeemer,
Jesus, God's own Son,
Precious Lamb of God, Messiah,
Holy One.

*Thank you, O my Father,
For giving us your Son,
And leaving your Spirit
Till the work on earth is done.*

Jesus my Redeemer,
Name above all names,
Precious Lamb of God, Messiah,
O for sinners slain.

Refrain

When I stand in glory
I will see his face,
And there I'll serve my King for ever
In that holy place.

Refrain

(Melody Green 1946 – Keith Green 1953 – 1982)

Prayer of dismissal: we say together:

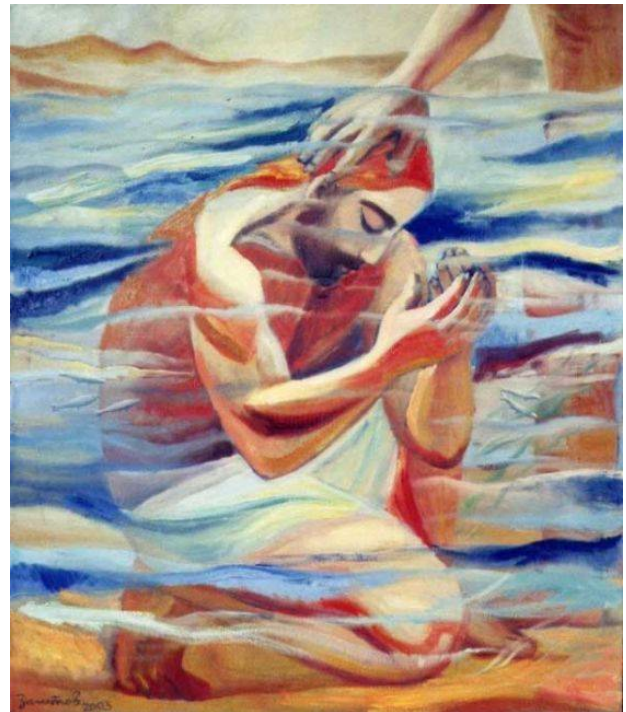
**The love of the Father enfold us,
The wisdom of the Son enlighten us,
The fire of the Spirit enflame us;
And the blessing of God, Three in One,
Be upon us and abide with us now and forever.
Amen.**

Go in peace to love and serve the world.
In the name of Christ. Amen.

THE 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 ever more. Amen.



The Baptism of Christ: Methodist Modern Art Collection.

Some prayers taken and adapted for use from: Ian Black-Intercessions, David Adam – Traces of Glory, John Birch – The Act of Prayer.

Photograph: By permission of Lois' family.
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