



The Methodist Church

Bury St Edmunds Circuit.

Worship Sheet for 17th January 2021

Welcome to worship

We still ourselves ready for worship, to focus on God and his loving presence with us.

Call to Worship:

From the rising of the sun to its setting.

May the name of the Lord be praised.

Hymn: StF 449 Lord of creation to you be all praise

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z3jh7sEFHvo>

1 Lord of creation, to you be all praise!

Most mighty your working, most wondrous your ways!

Your glory and might are beyond us to tell, and yet in the heart of the humble you dwell.

2 Lord of all power, I give you my will,

in joyful obedience your tasks to fulfill.

Your bondage is freedom, your service is song, and, held in your keeping, my weakness is strong.

3 Lord of all wisdom, I give you my mind;

Rich truth that surpasses my knowledge to find.

What eye has not seen and what ear has not heard is taught by your Spirit and shines from your Word.

4 Lord of all bounty, I give you my heart;

I praise and adore you for all you impart:

your love to inspire me, your counsel to guide, your presence to shield me, whatever betide.

5 Lord of all being, I give you my all,

for if I disown you, I stumble and fall;

but led in your service your word to obey,

I walk in your freedom to the end of the day.

Jack Winslow 1882-1974

Prayer of Praise

The majesty of God
Cannot be measured
By human instruments,
Cannot be constrained
Within human boundaries,
Cannot be contained
Within human vessels,
Cannot be explained
By human thought,

Cannot be dismissed
By argument or reason.
The majesty of God
Is beyond human comprehension.
Yet can be known,
And touched,
Understood ,
And received,
In the simple act
Of worship. **Amen**

Prayer of Confession and Assurance of forgiveness

Father God,
you are the one who leads us
from darkness into light,
from captivity into freedom,
from anxiety into peace,
from despair into joy.
Yet we long to break free,
choosing independence,
convinced of our own wisdom,
forgetting your love and grace.
Forgive us,
draw close to us,
embrace us once again
in your loving arms,
and enable us to follow you
in worship and grateful service
each day of our lives
Amen

**Bring to my sinfulness
the cleansing waters of your forgiveness,
that having washed,
I might know refreshment and release. Amen.**

Psalm 139: 1-6 and 13-18

O Lord, you have searched me and known me.
You know when I sit down and when I rise up;
you discern my thoughts from far away.
You search out my path and my lying down,
and are acquainted with all my ways.
Even before a word is on my tongue,
O Lord, you know it completely.
You hem me in, behind and before,
and lay your hand upon me.
Such knowledge is too wonderful for me;
it is so high that I cannot attain it.

For it was you who formed my inward parts;
you knit me together in my mother's womb.
I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made.
Wonderful are your works;

that I know very well.

My frame was not hidden from you,
when I was being made in secret,
intricately woven in the depths of the earth.
Your eyes beheld my unformed substance.
In your book were written
all the days that were formed for me,
when none of them as yet existed.
How weighty to me are your thoughts, O God!
How vast is the sum of them!
I try to count them—they are more than the sand;
I come to the end—I am still with you.

Hymn: StF 728 O Lord you search me and you know me

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mEGc3_D19Vo

O', God, you search me, and you know me
All my thoughts lie open to your gaze
When I walk or lie down, you are before me
'Ever the maker and keeper of my days.

You know my resting and my rising
You discern my purpose from afar
And with love everlasting, you besiege me
In ev'ry moment of life or death, you are.

Before a word is on my tongue, Lord
You have known its meaning through and through
You are with me beyond my understanding
God of my present, my past and future, too.

Although your Spirit is upon me
Still I search for shelter from your light
There is nowhere on Earth I can escape you
Even the darkness is radiant in your sight.

For you created me and shaped me
Gave me life within my mother's womb
For the wonder of who I am, I praise you
Safe in your hands, all creation is made new.

Bernadette Farrell 1957-

Bible reading: John 1: 43-51

The next day Jesus decided to go to Galilee. He found Philip and said to him, 'Follow me.' Now Philip was from Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter. Philip found Nathanael and said to him, 'We have found him about whom Moses in the law and also the prophets wrote, Jesus son of Joseph from Nazareth.' Nathanael said to him, 'Can anything good come out of Nazareth?' Philip said to him, 'Come and see.' When Jesus saw Nathanael coming towards him, he said of

him, 'Here is truly an Israelite in whom there is no deceit!' Nathanael asked him, 'Where did you come to know me?' Jesus answered, 'I saw you under the fig tree before Philip called you.' Nathanael replied, 'Rabbi, you are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!' Jesus answered, 'Do you believe because I told you that I saw you under the fig tree? You will see greater things than these.' And he said to him, 'Very truly, I tell you, you will see heaven opened and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man.'

Reflection

Come and see!

In today's passage, Jesus is calling disciples. He has already enlisted two of John's followers and they have begun to encourage others to meet with Jesus too. Philip may well have heard of the new rabbi from Andrew and Peter before he responds to the call 'follow me' and he in turn finds Nathanael and tells him, with some excitement that they have found the one promised by the prophets. Nathanael's response is at first far from enthusiastic, but Philip encourages him to 'come and see'.

Seeing in John's Gospel is an important concept and it is about far more than simply looking and observing. The verb that John uses in Greek means 'to perceive' or 'to understand'. It is active rather than passive.

And so Nathanael comes and on speaking with Jesus he realises that he has already been 'seen'. Jesus reveals to Nathanael that he knows something of him and understands his character and his concerns. Nathanael is so moved by Jesus' understanding of him that he gives him his true title – a real shift from the sceptical "can anything good come from Nazareth?" and Jesus, perhaps a little amused goes on to tell him that he will see much greater things than this.

The point of revelation and understanding for Nathanael comes when he realises that he is known, understood and loved by God in Jesus, that he has been searched and known beneath the fig tree and that who he is has been recognised and affirmed. Jesus has accepted him for who he is and his response is revealed in the love and faith of his statement "Rabbi, you are the Son of God and the King of Israel".

Like Nathanael, God searches and knows each one of us, just as the words of psalm 139 remind us. He has known us and walked with us each step of our lives, he knows our fears and our doubts as well as our strengths and our skills and he calls us, just as he called those first disciples to follow him.

Psalm 139 is a psalm that inspires awe as well as offering comfort. God is there to shape and form us, his hand is on us throughout our lives, but there is nowhere we can go to hide from God. We cannot hide our sinful thoughts and actions in a secret corner, God sees all, but God is also loving and forgiving. He does not hold grudges, he simply asks us to change, to leave the negative behind and to focus on the wonders that we will see as we follow him.

So, in the midst of the mess and uncertainty of January 2021, as we look around and say to ourselves "Can anything good come out of this year?" let's hear Jesus' call to follow him and look for glimpses of that entrance to heaven. They may come through generosity and self-giving love such as that shown by healthcare workers, they may be revealed in the beauty and wonder of creation or we might find them in prayers offered and answered in Jesus name, however with God's love enfolding us, we can step out in faith and like Nathanael 'come and see' where God is at work at this time. Amen.



Hymn: StF 673 Will you come and follow me
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eAYM8pWCwWk>

Will you come and follow me
if I but call your name?
Will you go where you don't know
and never be the same?
Will you let my love be shown,
will you let my name be known,
will you let my life be grown
in you and you in me?

Will you leave your self behind
if I but call your name?

Will you care for cruel and kind
and never be the same?
Will you risk the hostile stare
should your life attract or scare,
will you let me answer prayer
in you and you in me?

Will you let the blinded see
if I but call your name?
Will you set the prisoners free
and never be the same?
Will you kiss the leper clean
and do such as this unseen,
and admit to what I mean
in you and you in me?

Will you love the 'you' you hide
if I but call your name?
Will you quell the fear inside
and never be the same?
Will you use the faith you've found
to reshape the world around
through my sight and touch and sound
in you and you in me?

Lord, your summons echoes true
when you but call my name.
Let me turn and follow you
and never be the same.
In your company I'll go
where your love and footsteps show.
Thus I'll move and live and grow
in you and you in me.

John L Bell 1949- and Graham Maule 1958-

Prayers of Intercession

In all our travelling
May your footsteps guide us

In our journeying to work and returning
May your footsteps guide us

Within our homes and families
May your footsteps guide us

In our leisure time
May your footsteps guide us

In difficult situations and conflict
May your footsteps guide us

As we stumble on the way
May your footsteps guide us

In the travelling of our faith
May your footsteps guide us

As we place our trust in you
May your footsteps guide us

In all our travelling. Lord,
may it be your footsteps
in which we place our feet

Lord we pray for those for whom the way seems
difficult and dangerous at this time; those who are
anxious or fearful, those suffering in body, mind or
spirit and those walking the lonely road of grief. May
you walk with each one and bring healing and peace.

We pray for those who have little time to rest on their
journeys at this time; the keyworkers and health
workers, harassed parents, anxious students and
those with difficult decisions to take. May you walk
with them and give them protection and strength.

We pray for ourselves and for all who are seeking to
walk with you at this time; for those seeking faith and
those rejoicing in finding it, for those seeking signs of
hope and those who bring hope to others. May you
call us to you and reach out your hand to lead us on.
May you open our hearts to share your love and hope
with others.

We ask these and all our prayers in the power of the
Spirit and in the name of Jesus Christ our Saviour.
Amen.

We say together **Our Father...**

Blessing of our Gifts

Lord you give us all things and call us to come and
follow you, bless all that we have to offer; our money,
our time and our talents, that through what we give
others may come and see and know your love. In
Jesus name. **Amen.**

Hymn: StF 563 O Jesus I have promised

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=svgHDdzP5xY>

1 O Jesus, I have promised
To serve thee to the end;
Be thou forever near me,
My Master and my friend;
I shall not fear the battle
If thou art by my side,

Nor wander from the pathway
If thou wilt be my guide.

2 O let me feel thee near me!
The world is ever near:
I see the sights that dazzle,
The tempting sounds I hear.
My foes are ever near me,
Around me and within;
But, Jesus, draw thou nearer,
And shield my soul from sin.

3 O let me hear thee speaking
In accents clear and still,
Above the storms of passion,
The murmurs of self-will.
O speak to reassure me,
To hasten or control;
O speak, and make me listen,
Thou guardian of my soul.

4 O Jesus, thou hast promised
To all who follow thee
That where thou art in glory
There shall thy servant be.
And, Jesus, I have promised
To serve thee to the end;
O give me grace to follow,
My Master and my friend.

John Bode 1816 -1874

A prayer of dismissal

God's love surround you, God's Spirit guide you,
God's whisper cheer you, God's peace calm you,
God's shield protect you, God's wisdom arm you,
wherever God may lead you. 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.**

Some prayers taken from www.faithandworship.com ©John Birch
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Image: Nathaniel under the fig tree by Mark Calzet
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