

The Methodist Church

Bury St Edmunds Circuit.

Worship Sheet for Sunday 12th SEPTEMBER 2021

Welcome to Worship

Today in many places of worship people gather to pray to God, be it in thanksgiving, petition or praise. Others, due to the present situation, prefer to worship from home in order to keep themselves safe. No matter where we are let us be still as we bring ourselves before our heavenly Father, who cares for us. We can light a candle which reminds us that the warmth and light of God is always there for us.

CALL to WORSHIP

Come to worship,
to be comforted and disturbed,
challenged from our complacency,
but also offered forgiveness
and the hope of eternal life.
Come to Jesus, prophet, priest and king.

HYMN: Praise to the holiest in the height. StF 334
<https://youtu.be/pjPhcD75E34>

1 Praise to the Holiest in the height,
and in the depth be praise:
in all his words most wonderful,
most sure in all his ways.

2 O loving wisdom of our God!
When all was sin and shame,
a second Adam to the fight
and to the rescue came.

3 O wisest love! that flesh and blood,
which did in Adam fail,
should strive afresh against the foe,
should strive and should prevail;

4 And that a higher gift than grace
should flesh and blood refine,
God's presence and his very self,
and essence all-divine.

5 O generous love! that he, who smote
in Man for man the foe,
the double agony in Man
for man should undergo;

6 And in the garden secretly,
and on the cross on high,
should teach his brethren, and inspire
to suffer and to die.

7 Praise to the Holiest in the height,
and in the depth be praise:
in all his words most wonderful,
most sure in all his ways.
(John Henry Newman)

A prayer of adoration

Most merciful and gracious God,
we offer you our heartfelt love and
praise
because your Son, Jesus Christ,
was willing to risk everything for the whole world.
Even for us.
We come to worship you,
earnestly seeking your will for us –
however risky that might be, you are worth it.
Amen.



A prayer of confession

'Who is Jesus?'
For the times we have been asked this question, and have
struggled to give an answer:
Forgive us, Lord, and give us your words to speak.

For the times we have been ashamed to acknowledge you:
Forgive us, Lord, and grant us courage.

For the times we considered only human concerns, and not
God's:
Forgive us, Lord, and widen our horizons.

For the times we saw opportunities to take risks for God
but looked the other way through fear or indecision:
**Forgive us, Lord, and build up our confidence in you, make
us ready to do your will. Amen**

Assurance of forgiveness

We have a relationship with God through Jesus Christ.
The same Jesus who took up his cross and died for our sins.
The same Jesus who looks on us now with love and
intercedes on our behalf.
Open our hearts to receive your forgiveness and blessing,
Lord.
Amen.

A prayer of praise and thanksgiving

Lord God, we praise you that your ways are not our ways.
We praise you for the gift of your wonderful Son.
Praise Him! Praise Him! Jesus, our blessed redeemer!

He took risks for us, greater than we can ever comprehend.
He took on the troubles and heartaches of the world, and
died on
the cross.
Praise Him...

He rose again and gave us new life in him. Life in all its
fullness. Life forever.
Praise Him...
Amen.

Reading: James 3.1-12

Taming the tongue

3 Not many of you should become teachers, my fellow believers, because you know that we who teach will be judged more strictly. ²We all stumble in many ways. Anyone who is never at fault in what they say is perfect, able to keep their whole body in check.

³When we put bits into the mouths of horses to make them obey us, we can turn the whole animal. ⁴Or take ships as an example. Although they are so large and are driven by strong winds, they are steered by a very small rudder wherever the pilot wants to go. ⁵Likewise, the tongue is a small part of the body, but it makes great boasts. Consider what a great forest is set on fire by a small spark. ⁶The tongue also is a fire, a world of evil among the parts of the body. It corrupts the whole body, sets the whole course of one's life on fire, and is itself set on fire by hell.

⁷All kinds of animals, birds, reptiles and sea creatures are being tamed and have been tamed by mankind, ⁸but no human being can tame the tongue. It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison.

⁹With the tongue we praise our Lord and Father, and with it we curse human beings, who have been made in God's likeness. ¹⁰Out of the same mouth come praise and cursing. My brothers and sisters, this should not be. ¹¹Can both fresh water and salt water flow from the same spring? ¹²My brothers and sisters, can a fig-tree bear olives, or a grapevine bear figs? Neither can a salt spring produce fresh water.

HYMN: Be still my soul.

https://youtu.be/Q18GAt3_tkc

1 Be still, my soul! The Lord is on thy side;
bear patiently the weight of grief or pain:
leave to thy God to order and provide,
in every change He faithful will remain.
Be still, my soul! thy best, thy heav'nly Friend
through thorny ways leads to a joyful end.

2 Be still, my soul! Thy God doth undertake
to guide the future as he has the past.
Thy hope, Thy confidence, let nothing shake;
all now mysterious shall be bright at last.
Be still, my soul! the waves and winds still know
the voice that calmed their fury long ago.

3 Be still, my soul! the hour is hastening on
when we shall be forever with the Lord;
when disappointment, grief, and fear are gone,
sorrow forgot, love's pure joys restored,
Be still my soul! when change and tears are past,
all safe and blessed we shall meet at last.

Gospel: Mark 8: 27 – 38

Peter Confesses Jesus as the Christ

²⁷And Jesus went on with his disciples to the villages of Caesarea Philippi. And on the way he asked his disciples, "Who do people say that I am?" ²⁸And they told him, "John the Baptist; and others say, Elijah; and others, one of the prophets." ²⁹And he asked them, "But who do you say that I am?" Peter answered him, "You are the Christ."³⁰ And he strictly charged them to tell no one about him.

Jesus Foretells His Death and Resurrection

³¹And he began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and the chief priests and the scribes and be killed, and after three days rise again. ³²And he said this plainly. And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. ³³But turning and seeing his disciples, he rebuked Peter and said, "Get behind me, Satan! For you are not setting your mind on the things of God, but on the things of man."

³⁴And calling the crowd to him with his disciples, he said to them, "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. ³⁵For whoever would save his life^[a] will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake and the gospel's will save it. ³⁶For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world and forfeit his soul? ³⁷For what can a man give in return for his soul? ³⁸For whoever is ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him will the Son of Man also be ashamed when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels."

REFLECTION By The Rev'd Ruth Ridge

Do you like a good bit of gossip? Be honest, I rather expect you do! It is human nature, we all like to be the first to be in the know and we all like to be the first to share an interesting bit of news!

Some gossip is harmless and some sharing of news can be a very positive thing. However other information can be damaging or hurtful, especially if it is exaggerated or untrue. It is good to follow the old rule when sharing news – is it true, is it necessary and is it kind?

It sounds like there has been a fair amount of gossip going on in the Gospel passage today. Jesus begins by asking the disciples "Who do people say that I am?" Jesus has been teaching and healing. He has fed the 5000, driven out demons and given people back their sight and hearing. Even though Jesus has repeatedly told others NOT to say anything about him, clearly news and speculation are spreading. People are sharing the good news and asking questions – this new teacher is clearly from God, but who is he? As the news spreads curiosity grows and people come in their thousands to see Jesus for themselves. Rumours about Jesus start to circulate – is he a prophet or even Elijah or John the Baptist come back to life?

We are well aware today of how quickly a rumour can spread and gain



credence to become 'false news' – something that is untrue and yet widely reported and presented as a fact. False news can be dangerous and destructive, causing suspicion and hysteria, as well as being misleading and I think that Jesus in the Gospel passage today is calling his disciples together to challenge the rumours and put a stop to any false news.

Jesus listens to the disciples as they answer his question and then he turns the question upon them – "Who do YOU say that I am?" The disciples know Jesus better than anyone, they have sat at his feet and seen his miracles and they have heard all that he has taught about God. Now they have the opportunity to respond and it is Peter who becomes the spokesperson, saying "You are Messiah". This is the first time in Mark's Gospel that Jesus' identity is made explicit. It has been hinted at in some of the healings when the demons recognise Jesus' power, but no one has actually spoken the word 'Messiah' before. Messiah means God's chosen one and for the disciples Messiah is the one that God promises to send to deliver his people from evil and give them freedom and new life. Messiah is more than a prophet, more than a teacher; he is the one that God has chosen to free his people.

Having heard Peter's confession, Jesus then gives the disciples a stern warning – they must not share this news with others, in fact they are not to say anything to anyone. This may seem surprising to us, surely such good news needs to be proclaimed as loudly and joyfully as possible. Yet very quickly we see why Jesus needed to issue such a stern warning. As he teaches the disciples about what will happen to him, they are at first disbelieving, then horrified. They have not understood the full impact of what it means to be God's chosen one. For them Messiah means power and glory in worldly terms – kingship and authority, perhaps even military leadership, but Jesus teaches another kind of authority and another kind of kingdom, one of love, forgiveness and grace.

Jesus sets forth a stark choice – are those who follow him seeking worldly power or are they prepared to deny themselves, take up a cross and follow him? This teaching is a deeply challenging one. It is not simply about giving up worldly goods, it is about being prepared to sacrifice everything for God; life, status and reputation. To carry a cross was to give up all status and die a death reserved for the lowest in society. Messiah, for Jesus, is not the worldly king, but the sacrificial lamb.

Where does that leave us today? How do we answer the question that Jesus asks the disciples – 'Who do YOU say that I am?' and how do we show that in our lives and words? When we gossip the gospel how do we share who Jesus is?

We can share the Gospel both in what we choose to say and by what we do not say. We can share in our words how important our faith is to us by sharing our testimony and by simply including God in our daily conversation, wishing people 'God bless' and offering to pray when people are in need. We can also choose when not to speak, choosing not to share malicious stories and choosing not to respond when someone attacks us. Most of all we can share what we know of God through our actions as we help others and live the Gospel in the choices we make daily.

So, when Jesus asks us 'Who do you say that I am?' What will our response be? Hopefully we will show, both by our words and our actions that Jesus is the Saviour of the world. Amen.

HYMN: O Jesus I have promised. StF 563
<https://youtu.be/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 Ernest Bode)

Prayers of intercession

God hears the prayers of the poor and humble. Confident in his infinite love for us all, let us pray:

For the world: may all Christians work for a society where each person's talents may contribute to the common good and where the human person is placed at the centre.

Lord in your mercy. **Hear our prayer.**

For all teachers, auxiliary staff and everyone working in schools: may they be led by the example of Christ the teacher, to grow in love, patience, forgiveness and understanding as they help young people grow.

Lord in your mercy. **Hear our prayer.**

For the start of this academic year in schools, colleges, nurseries and universities: may all students be supported and encouraged in their faith and education through this important time in their lives.

Lord in your mercy. **Hear our prayer.**

For all students: may they grow in their love and understanding of learning, and learn to nurture all the talents the Lord has given them to the best of their ability.

Lord in your mercy. **Hear our prayer.**

For all parents and family: may the Holy Spirit guide them as they continue in their important task of nurturing a love of Christ in their children.

Lord in your mercy. **Hear our prayer.**

For all those who do not have access to school across the world: may they know God's love in their lives, and may the Holy Spirit turn their sorrow into joy as they come to know Christ more closely.

Lord in your mercy. **Hear our prayer.**

The Lords Prayer, Our Father.....

Blessing of the Gifts.

Heavenly Father accept the gifts we offer you and bless them. May our time, our efforts and our money be fruitful in furthering your kingdom here on earth. Bless each cheerful giver with health, peace and the strength they need to do your work. We ask you this in name of Jesus your Son. **AMEN**

Hymn: **And can it be. StF 345**
<https://youtu.be/dC8HSEKtuio>

- 1 And can it be that I should gain
An int'rest in the Savior's blood?
Died He for me, who caused His pain?
For me, who Him to death pursued?
Amazing love! how can it be
That Thou, my God, should die for me?
- 2 'Tis mystery all! Th'Immortal dies!
Who can explore His strange design?
In vain the firstborn seraph tries
To sound the depths of love divine!
'Tis mercy all! let earth adore,
Let angel minds inquire no more.
- 3 He left His Father's throne above,
So free, so infinite His grace;
Emptied Himself of all but love,
And bled for Adam's helpless race;
'Tis mercy all, immense and free;
For, O my God, it found out me.
- 4 Long my imprisoned spirit lay
Fast bound in sin and nature's night;
Thine eye diffused a quick'ning ray,

I woke, the dungeon flamed with light;
My chains fell off, my heart was free;
I rose, went forth and followed Thee.

- 5 No condemnation now I dread;
Jesus, and all in Him is mine!
Alive in Him, my living Head,
And clothed in righteousness divine,
Bold I approach th'eternal throne,
And claim the crown, through Christ my own.

Charles Wesley (1707 – 1788)

Prayer of Dismissal:

Loving God,
we commit to following you this week
into corners of the community
we usually prefer to ignore.
Help us to pray and speak and act for change.
May your Holy Spirit guide us as we educate ourselves and others through the study of the Scriptures in order that you will be done.
We ask you this through Christ our Lord.

Amen

The Grace:

We say together the words of the grace:

**May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,
The love of God
And the fellowship of the Holy Spirit
Be with us all evermore. Amen**

Prayers were mainly taken from ROOTs on the Web



Go with God 24/7

Encourage everyone to put their faith into action

Encourage everyone to put their faith into action. Take a walk around the streets where you live – you could pick up litter as you walk – asking God to open your eyes to see the people and places as God does. Think about what you might do to grow the kingdom of God in that place.

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