



Sunday 13th December 2020 – Advent 3

Dear friends,

If you have the Internet, you will find a video to accompany this sheet on YouTube from Sunday morning – search for Isle of Man Methodist Church and you will find it on our YouTube channel.

Don't forget also that Judith Ley is broadcasting "At Your Service" on Manx Radio FM at 09:30 every Sunday which includes prayers, readings, hymns, and teaching.

Our prayers are with you all,

Isle of Man Methodist Staff Team.

Welcome

Call to Worship

Jesus came to be the light of the world.
 We come now to give him honour and praise –
 and to worship God the creator, our –
 'Great Father of glory, pure Father of light.' **Amen.**

Hymn (StF 55): Immortal, invisible, God only wise
Sing/ Read /pray / the words below

1 Immortal, invisible, God only wise,
 in light inaccessible hid from our eyes,
 most blessed, most glorious, the Ancient of Days,
 almighty, victorious, thy great name we praise.

2 Unresting, unshaking, and silent as light,
 nor wanting, nor wasting, thou rulest in might --
 thy justice like mountains high soaring above
 thy clouds which are fountains of goodness and love.

3 To all life thou givest, to both great and small;
 in all life thou livest, the true life of all;
 we blossom and flourish as leaves on the tree,
 and wither and perish; but naught changeth thee.

4 Great Father of glory, pure Father of light,
 thine angels adore thee, all veiling their sight;
 all praise we would render: O help us to see
 'tis only the splendour of light hideth thee.

5 Immortal, invisible, God only wise,
 in light inaccessible hid from our eyes,
 most blessed, most glorious, the Ancient of Days,
 almighty, victorious, thy great name we praise.

Walter Chalmers Smith (1824-1908)

Prayer of Approach

God, who made heaven and earth,
 the sea, and all that is in them,
 you are our strength and our might.
 You made a covenant with your people
 and raised up witnesses to your mighty deeds.
 Despite our wilful disobedience,
 you have not left us alone,
 but have sent your Son –
 to deliver us from sin and death.
 When the time was right,
 John appeared in the desert,
 bearing witness to one mightier than himself,
 the true Light that was coming into the world,
 Jesus Christ our Lord.
 We give you thanks and praise
 for Christ's living and dying and rising,
 for the good news that he brings,
 and for the hope that you give us in him.

Sustain us by your Spirit
 that we too may witness to Christ's glory,
 for he is alive and reigns with you,
 in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
 one God, for ever and ever.

Amen.

Readings: Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11 & John 1:6-8, 15-28

A time of reflection

As followers of Christ we are all called to testify to the light. This week we look at John the Baptist whose identity was found in God's plans and purposes for him. As he found his identity in God's mission, so he found who he truly was.

Notice in the gospel passage how John is repeatedly asked to explain who he is. Only after the fourth question does he offer an answer, and even here his response is cryptic: 'I am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness.' This reluctance to answer suggests that John is aware that he is the signpost to someone greater. He knows that the excitement his presence has caused is nothing compared to the man who will follow him, and he seeks to point towards Jesus rather than focus on himself. This creates a sense of searching and expectation. The priests and the Levites are searching for answers about John, but John responds by creating an expectation, he looks forward with hope.

Perhaps, then, we see that John the Baptist was a light that shone as best it could - but he only found his identity and fulfilment by pointing to the light that was the light of Christ. And, likewise, we find our fulfilment and identity by doing the same - to be pointers to Christ – and in this way reveal Jesus to those around us. This, I'm sure is how we truly 'find ourselves' as the people of God.

Frances Young describes the Christian faith as a piece of music that must be performed in order to come to life. Just as an orchestra transforms sheet music into

something compelling to those who hear, so the Christian faith is something that draws people to it as it is performed. It becomes attractive by the way we reflect and reveal Christ in our practical service and witness to others.

So, may we take up the challenge to be shining lights showing the way to Jesus – the Light of the world. Then we will discover for ourselves just exactly who we are and what part we have to play in God’s ongoing story.

Rev Bryan Yardy

Hymn (StF 59): Lord, the light of your love is shining

Sing/ Read /pray / the words below

1 Lord, the light of your love is shining,
in the midst of the darkness, shining:
Jesus, Light of the world, shine upon us;
set us free by the truth you now bring us -
shine on me, shine on me.

*Shine, Jesus, shine,
fill this land with the Father's glory;
blaze, Spirit, blaze,
set our hearts on fire.
Flow, river, flow,
flood the nations with grace and mercy;
send forth your word,
Lord, and let there be light!*

2 Lord, I come to your awesome presence,
from the shadows into your radiance;
by your blood I may enter your brightness:
search me, try me, consume all my darkness -
shine on me, shine on me.

3 As we gaze on your kingly brightness
so our faces display your likeness,
ever changing from glory to glory:
mirrored here, may our lives tell your story -
shine on me, shine on me.

Graham Kendrick (b. 1950)

Prayers of Intercession

Let's pray

Eternal light shine in our hearts,
that our days may be bright with your presence.
May we be aware
of the great things that you have done for us
and rejoice in your salvation.

We remember all who walk in darkness
and do not know the love of God -
those who have never heard the Good News.
We pray that the whole Church may reach out
in mission, in service and in love.

*Eternal light,
shine in our hearts.*

Remember our world where people are oppressed;
where there is hunger and poverty.
We ask you to strengthen all who work for peace and to
relieve the poor.

At this time we pray especially for . . .
May we do all that we can to help.

*Eternal light,
shine in our hearts.*

We give you thanks for our homes and our loved ones,
for the freedom and the peace that is ours.
May we be sensitive to the needs of those around us
and be of help when we can.

*Eternal light,
shine in our hearts.*

God give strength and courage to all who are ill,
to those involved in accidents or acts of violence.
We remember those who have lost their freedom or
their homes.

At this time we pray especially for . . .

We give thanks for all who work in hospitals
and for our own doctors.

*Eternal light,
shine in our hearts.*

We rejoice that you have freed us
from the slavery of sin and death
and brought us to the glorious liberty
of the children of God.
We rejoice in the gift of eternal life,
and pray for friends and loved ones departed.

Silence

Merciful Father,
accept these prayers
for the sake of your Son,
our Saviour Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father, who art in heaven,
Hallowed be thy Name.
Thy Kingdom come.
Thy will be done
on earth, as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
As we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation,
But deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
The power, and the glory,
For ever and ever. **Amen.**

A sending out prayer

Follow Jesus in all you do.
Take his light into the dark places of the world
and show people what is good and true.
Go with God.

Amen.

