

A Circuit Day of Prayer. March 27th 2021.

There will be a series of video inputs along with these written notes.

You can access these through our You Tube site by searching “Methodist.org.im YouTube”.

If you don’t have access to the internet please use this paper resource to assist your prayers.

“God of love, God for all, your purposes are more beautiful than we can possibly imagine”.

(10:15 – 11:15)

As we begin this prayer day together, although apart, you may like to look out of the window and reflect on the beauty of God’s creation. Rain or shine God’s world is a beautiful place.

Ecclesiastes 3:11. “God has made everything beautiful in its time. God has also set eternity in the human heart; yet no one can fathom what God has done from beginning to end”.

We reflect on the truth that all this is done out of the depths of God’s love for humanity and, as we begin our journey through Holy Week, we recognise that Jesus paid the ultimate price for us out of the depths of his love.

John 3:16 – 17. “For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him”.

In response to God’s love we should be open to all:

1 John 4:10 – 11 “This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another”.

Let us build a house where hands will reach
beyond the wood and stone
to heal and strengthen, serve and teach,
and live the Word they’ve known.
Here the outcast and the stranger
bear the image of God’s face ;
let us bring an end to fear and danger :

*All are welcome,
all are welcome,
all are welcome in this place.*

Marty Haugen (b. 1950)

“Fill us with your Holy Spirit”. (11:15 – 12:15)

This part of the Prayer Day gives the opportunity to reflect on the Holy Spirit and, in a time of prayer, invite God’s Spirit to fill our lives and churches. To help our reflection though, it may be worth noticing how the Bible speaks of the Holy Spirit in different ways. Right from the beginning God’s Spirit was at work in creation - and continues to work in our lives and the world today. But when speaking about God’s Spirit the Bible uses various contrasting images: a powerful wind or flame, a gentle breeze or the breath of life, an advocate, a counsellor or helper, tongues of fire and a gentle dove. Moreover, the Bible also speaks of the Holy Spirit as a Person. This is important because it means that the Holy Spirit is One with whom we can have a relationship.

If the Christian faith is primarily about a relationship with God, then perhaps one helpful way of thinking about the Trinity is: God the Father as Creator – God above us; Jesus is the Redeemer – God beside us; and the Holy Spirit is our Enabler – God within us. We may be aware of God as Creator in the things we see in the world around us; we may be aware of Jesus the Redeemer, for we read his story in the Gospels; but if we are to have a living experience of God today it will be God the Holy Spirit whom we encounter. Jesus promised that the Holy Spirit would fill the lives of every disciple (John 14:16-17), enabling us to see the truth (John 16:12-15) and empower us to share God’s love with others (Acts 1:8). And this is a pointer to another aspect of the Holy Spirit – to make us more like Jesus. In Galatians 5:22-23 Paul gives a list of Christlike qualities he calls the ‘fruit of the Spirit.’ Love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control are the results of the Holy Spirit’s indwelling and shaping. This transformation of our lives, and churches, is not brought about by trying harder but by giving ourselves to God – so that his Spirit can fill us.

Come Holy Spirit!

“Help us let go of all that holds us back.” (12:15 – 1:15)

Find 3 squares of toilet roll and a pen.

On one square write “PAST”. On another write “PRESENT”. On the third write “FUTURE”

Spend a moment in prayer, asking the Holy Spirit to prompt you and guide your thoughts.

- Ask yourself: “Is there anything in my past which is stopping me from moving forward?” (e.g. guilt / past mistakes / past hurt etc).
- Ask yourself: “What in my present is stopping me from moving forward?” (e.g. lack of confidence / holding a grudge / wrong priorities etc).
- Ask yourself: “What about the future is stopping me from moving forward?” (e.g. fear of uncertainty / fear of failure / dislike of change etc.)
- Write your thoughts on the relevant piece of paper.

As you ask God to help you let go anything which is hindering you in your journey onwards with Him, take the pieces of paper and flush them away! Watch the water swirling around the bowl and pray: “Lord, cleanse me with Your life-giving water. Flush away all that stains my life, and give me fresh confidence to move forward - with You, and for You - in the name of Christ. Amen”

“Open our lives and our churches to new seasons of humility and faith, of change and growth.”

(1:15 – 2:15)

I encourage you to prayerfully reflect on each of these new seasons, using the following Bible verses.

Humility

Matthew 11:28-30

“Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”

- What might your life and church look like with a new season of Christlike gentleness and humility?

Faith

Matthew 6.24-30

“Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air; they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? And can any of you by worrying add a single hour to your span of life? And why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they neither toil nor spin, yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not clothed like one of these. But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you—you of little faith?”

- Are there areas of life that you have little faith?

Change

Matthew 18.1-5

At that time the disciples came to Jesus and asked, “Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?” He called a child, whom he put among them, and said, “Truly I tell you, unless you change and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. Whoever becomes humble like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. Whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me.

- What effect would a change like this have on your life, and your church’s life?

Growth

1 Corinthians 3. 1-7

What then is Apollos? What is Paul? Servants through whom you came to believe, as the Lord assigned to each. I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth. So neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth.

- God gives growth. How can you prepare for it and welcome it?

“Shake us up with the Good News of Jesus and show us the way”. (2:15 – 3:15)

‘This is what the Lord Almighty says: “In a little while I will once more shake the heavens and the earth, the sea and the dry land. I will shake all nations, and what is desired by all nations will come, and I will fill this house with glory,” (Haggai 2:6-7)

Haggai was concerned with the rebuilding of the temple, the House of God. He challenged the people and roused them from their lethargy.

Let us pray that when we emerge from this time of lockdown, the worship in our churches will be vibrant, dynamic and inspirational, that our congregations will shine with the glory of God, and even where we are today, that we may be stirred by the presence of the Holy Spirit within us.

The Lord replied, “My Presence will go with you, and I will give you rest.” Then Moses said to him, “If your Presence does not go with us, do not send us up from here. (Exodus 33: 14 - 15)

Moses was willing to go and lead the people, Do we have the same intense love for the Lord Jesus and as deep a desire to maintain fellowship with Him?

Let us pray that we may know God's presence and guidance as we open ourselves to being shaken up today.

After they prayed, the place where they were meeting was shaken. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly. (Acts 4:31)

It is amazing what can happen when we pray!

Let us ask the Holy Spirit, even if it feels a little scary, to shake us up, to fill us and give us boldness to speak God's word.

"Which of these three, do you think, was a neighbour to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?" He said, "The one who showed him mercy." Jesus said to him, "Go and do likewise." Luke 10:36-37

The man wanted to know who his neighbour was - maybe to know who was in and who was out, maybe to get an idea of how far he was supposed to take this. Jesus encouraged him to love without limits.

Let us pray that all in our churches will witness to the way of Christ, who does not draw lines to keep people in or out but invites all to cross the lines between us so often that the lines disappear.