Wrenbury & Nantwich Mission Area **Methodist** Churches

**Sunday 24 May 2020**

**This short act of worship has been prepared for us to use as we are not able to gather for worship. We can remain connected in fellowship by following this simple act of worship around the time you would normally be gathered for worship in your chapel/church**

**Opening Prayer**

*Sing to God, sing praises to his name; lift up a song to him who rides upon the clouds—his name is the Lord—be exultant before him. (Psalm 68)*

As I come before you, God, help me to praise your name. Focus my mind on your presence with me and remind me that I am joined together with people around the world worshipping at home. May your name be glorified in our worship. Amen.

**Hymn: StF 345 And Can it Be**

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| 1. And can it be that I should gainAn int’rest in the Saviour’s blood?Died He for me, who caused His pain—For me, who Him to death pursued?Amazing love! How can it beThat Thou, my God, shouldst die for me?Amazing love! How can it beThat Thou, my God, shouldst die for me?2. ’Tis myst’ry all: th’ Immortal dies:Who can explore His strange design?In vain the firstborn seraph triesTo sound the depths of love divine.’Tis mercy all! Let earth adore,Let angel minds inquire no more.Tis mercy all ! Let earth adore,Let angel minds enquire 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!’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.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. |

Bold I approach th’ eternal throne,
And claim the crown, through Christ my own.

**Let us pray together**

Everyday God,

We praise you that you are with us in every part of our lives and you never stop loving us.

We praise you for the world you created and the beautiful things we see around us.

We praise you that you came to earth in Jesus to show us in person how much you care about us and the world we live in. As we remember your ascension we thank you that you did not leave us alone but sent your Spirit so that we can always know you are with us.

You invite us to join in your work of loving people and the planet, and we pray that you show us how we can share in your mission of love. In Jesus name we pray, Amen.

**A Collect for Aldersgate Sunday**

God of overwhelming grace,

you ignited the spark of your grace in John and Charles Wesley and a passion for holiness, justice and sharing your great love with others.

Warm our hearts that we may trust in you.

Renew our conviction and inspire us to embrace new opportunities even in difficulty.

Pour out your spirit on your people that we may be united in your love and ready to share hope with the world through Jesus who is one with you. Amen

**Today’s Reading from the New Testament**: Acts 1: 6-14

**The Ascension of Jesus**

So when they had come together, they asked him, ‘Lord, is this the time when you will restore the kingdom to Israel?’  He replied, ‘It is not for you to know the times or periods that the Father has set by his own authority. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.’ When he had said this, as they were watching, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight. While he was going and they were gazing up towards heaven, suddenly two men in white robes stood by them. They said, ‘Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking up towards heaven? This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven.’

Then they returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, a sabbath day’s journey away. When they had entered the city, they went to the room upstairs where they were staying, Peter, and John, and James, and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James son of Alphaeus, and Simon the Zealot, and Judas son of James. All these were constantly devoting themselves to prayer, together with certain women, including Mary the mother of Jesus, as well as his brothers.

**Today’s Gospel Reading:** John 17: 1-11

After Jesus had spoken these words, he looked up to heaven and said, ‘Father, the hour has come; glorify your Son so that the Son may glorify you, since you have given him authority over all people, to give eternal life to all whom you have given him. And this is eternal life, that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent. I glorified you on earth by finishing the work that you gave me to do. So now, Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had in your presence before the world existed.

‘I have made your name known to those whom you gave me from the world. They were yours, and you gave them to me, and they have kept your word. Now they know that everything you have given me is from you; for the words that you gave to me I have given to them, and they have received them and know in truth that I came from you; and they have believed that you sent me. I am asking on their behalf; I am not asking on behalf of the world, but on behalf of those whom you gave me, because they are yours. All mine are yours, and yours are mine; and I have been glorified in them. And now I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them in your name that you have given me, so that they may be one, as we are one.

**Time to Reflect**

*“Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking up towards heaven?”*

They hadn’t really had a chance to think about it. Surely it’s the most human thing in the world to keep watching the space where someone was, to need to see to be able to believe and start to understand, to need some time to adjust to a huge change in the features of your everyday life?

There has started to be talk in the media about a “new normal”. Many of us had already started to experience the creeping realisation that things will not quickly or immediately go back to exactly how they were. Our lives are going to look different for a significant period of time, or for some of us forever if we too have lost people who made up the fabric of our lives.

Jesus’ disciples have a promise, of the Holy Spirit to help them, but they don’t know when. Like us they must adjust as best they can to the new circumstances of their lives.

I wonder what they understood of the ascension they had witnessed and the prayers they may have heard Jesus utter like the one we read in today’s Gospel.

In this Jesus asks that he be glorified, not for himself but for his followers. As Jesus ascends he brings all his human experience with him so that it is known within God. Remember that how ever you are feeling today God is with you.

Jesus asks that God will protect his followers so that they might be united, one as Jesus and the Father are one.

What might we learn about unity and fellowship from our experience of isolation? How might we draw closer to God and to other people as we emerge into a new normal?

Take a time to sit quietly

**A time of prayer**

God our protector,

We come before you in prayer for your world, your children and ourselves.

We pray for the world that you have made. We thank you for the renewal of creation springing up as human activity has been restricted. We pray that we will learn to value these gifts and to live more gently in the future.

We pray for the leaders of nations making impossible decisions on our behalf. We pray that they will speak and act with integrity and protect those who are most vulnerable.

We pray for our church communities. We bring you our sadness at not being able to meet together and we thank you for the people finding it easier to explore faith at this time. We pray that we will find new ways to reach out to the world.

We pray for the people we miss. Our friends and families and those we long to see face to face. We pray for safety and protection for our loved ones.

We pray for those who have lost someone they love and haven’t been able to say goodbye. We pray that they will know the comfort of your loving presence and that you will show us how to reach out in love and friendship.

We pray for ourselves in these difficult days shared by so many people but also lived in isolation. Help us to know your protecting love and to live in the power of your Spirit.

In Jesus’ name we pray. Amen

**The Lord’s Prayer**

Our Father ……

**Hymn:**  **Hail the day that sees him rise**

Hymns and Psalms 197

Sing, read or pray the words:

Hail the day that sees him rise, Alleluia!

ravished from our wistful eyes! Alleluia!

Christ, awhile to mortals given, Alleluia!

re-ascends his native heaven: Alleluia!

There the glorious triumph waits: Alleluia!

lift your heads, eternal gates: Alleluia!

wide unfold the radiant scene: Alleluia!

take the King of Glory in! Alleluia!

Him though highest heaven receives, Alleluia!

still he loves the earth he leaves; Alleluia!

though returning to his throne, Alleluia!

still he calls the world his own: Alleluia!

See! He lifts his hands above; Alleluia!

see! He shows the prints of love; Alleluia!

hark! His gracious lips bestow Alleluia!

blessings on his Church below: Alleluia!

Master, parted from our sight, Alleluia!

high above the azure height, Alleluia!

grant our hearts to you may rise, Alleluia!

following you beyond the skies: Alleluia!

 *Charles Wesley (1707-1788)*

**A prayer of blessing**

Holy God,

be with me as I leave this time of worship.

May I know your presence in my everyday and live your message of love and hope.

Amen

 Original Materials by Alison Seren

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**Church Family News and Prayer**

The funeral of John Davies will take place on Thursday 28th. Please continue to pray for Rita and all his family, and for all who grieve for others of our church communities who have recently passed away, or watch over a loved one nearing the end of this life.

The level of care and communication among our churches and neighbourhoods has been outstanding. Please do not let it deteriorate as time goes by: some people have adjusted well to the different circumstances and even welcome them, while others find isolation increasingly oppressive and depressing.

Sharon Sims King’s sister Lynn is now very poorly. Please pray for her and her parents, Keith and Pat.

Uphold in prayer all the staff and officers of our Circuit, District and Connexion. Their work continues as they discern alternative ways of fulfilling it.

Pray for the continuing, and increasing, work of Action for Children, Methodist Homes for the Aged and All We Can; also for Christian Aid and all agencies who are striving to bring essential resources, justice and safety to the millions of people who are barely existing. The Covid 19 virus has entered refugee camps and slums around the world, where clean water and the opportunity to isolate do not exist.

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**To ponder** …

Strong people don’t put others down, they lift them up.

When you see something beautiful in someone, tell them. It may take a second to say, but for them it could last a lifetime.

**A woman was in a desperate hurry to fetch some medication for a very sick child, and reached the pharmacy minutes before it was due to close. As she left the shop a great sense of relief set in … until she realised she had locked herself out of the car. She had no idea what to do, and as a sense of panic crept over her she burst into tears but prayed for a miracle.**

**Almost immediately she realised someone was approaching, and by the glow of the street lamps she could make out a big man: unshaven, with a pale and scarred face, staring eyes, spiky hair, and in scruffy clothes.**

**“Got a problem Missus?” he asked.**

**Unsure whether to scream, run or do both, she found she was frozen with fear, so blurted out her story.**

**“Don’t worry”, he said, “I’ll soon have that door open.” He pulled out a piece of wire, bent it carefully, and quickly manipulated it past the rubber seal. With a clunk the door release popped up and the door opened.**

**Oh thank you”, cried the woman with relief.**

**“You’re a very good man.”**

**“Not really”, said the stranger. I’m just out of prison.**

**“What were you in for?” she asked nervously.**

**“Stealing cars.”**

**She knelt down.**

**“What are you doing?” asked the stranger.**

**“I’m praying.”**

**“Why?” he asked.**

**“I prayed for help and the Good Lord heard me and even sent a professional to do the job.”**

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I found a £20 note in the supermarket car park. I thought, “What would Jesus do?” So I turned it into wine.

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**Measured Beat**

Time passes, time passes,

Slow and quick by turns.

Yet science and our clocks all say

It passes with a measured beat.

But yet, but yet I’m sure

Time has a different meaning

For each and every one:

We measure time by different rules

In each different land.

Who has not travelled and found

Life at a different pace,

Or with a different meaning,

Clocks with a different face?

 Sharon Sims King (1962-2020)

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**More ‘bloopers’ from church bulletins.**

**Irving Benson and Jessie Carter were married** [on October 24](https://outlook.office.com/mail/drafts/id/AAMkADgxMWQ5OTM5LWU3YTgtNGQ2ZS04NDRkLWNiYzM2ZWE5ZGRjYQBGAAAAAAAM7hMOEWrrSq9OM25aDqRTBwA6%2BucpuU1ARILhmCRRBmraAAAAjbU0AABhDXP4Xz%2BbQKPmLFLgMaNeAAYC1TiZAAA%3D) **in the church. So ends a friendship that began in their school days.**

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**At the evening service tonight, the sermon topic will be 'What Is Hell?' Come early and listen to our choir practise.**

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**Eight new choir robes are currently needed due to the addition of several new members and to the deterioration of some older ones.**
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**Scouts are saving aluminium cans, bottles and other items to be recycled. Proceeds will be used to cripple children.**

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**The church will host an evening of fine dining, super entertainment and gracious hostility.**

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**Potluck Supper Sunday at 5:00 pm - prayer and medication to follow.**

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**The ladies of the Church have cast off clothing of every kind They may be seen in the basement** [on Friday afternoon](https://outlook.office.com/mail/drafts/id/AAMkADgxMWQ5OTM5LWU3YTgtNGQ2ZS04NDRkLWNiYzM2ZWE5ZGRjYQBGAAAAAAAM7hMOEWrrSq9OM25aDqRTBwA6%2BucpuU1ARILhmCRRBmraAAAAjbU0AABhDXP4Xz%2BbQKPmLFLgMaNeAAYC1TiZAAA%3D)**.**

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**This evening at 7 pm there will be hymn singing in the park across from the Church. Bring a blanket and come prepared to sin.**

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**Ladies’ Bible Study will be held** [Thursday morning at 10 am](https://outlook.office.com/mail/drafts/id/AAMkADgxMWQ5OTM5LWU3YTgtNGQ2ZS04NDRkLWNiYzM2ZWE5ZGRjYQBGAAAAAAAM7hMOEWrrSq9OM25aDqRTBwA6%2BucpuU1ARILhmCRRBmraAAAAjbU0AABhDXP4Xz%2BbQKPmLFLgMaNeAAYC1TiZAAA%3D)**. All ladies are invited to lunch in the Fellowship Hall after the B. S. is done.**

**------------**  **The pastor would appreciate it if the ladies of the Congregation would lend him their electric girdles for the Pancake** [Breakfast](https://outlook.office.com/mail/drafts/id/AAMkADgxMWQ5OTM5LWU3YTgtNGQ2ZS04NDRkLWNiYzM2ZWE5ZGRjYQBGAAAAAAAM7hMOEWrrSq9OM25aDqRTBwA6%2BucpuU1ARILhmCRRBmraAAAAjbU0AABhDXP4Xz%2BbQKPmLFLgMaNeAAYC1TiZAAA%3D) **next Sunday.**

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**Low Self Esteem Support Group will meet** [Thursday at 7](https://outlook.office.com/mail/drafts/id/AAMkADgxMWQ5OTM5LWU3YTgtNGQ2ZS04NDRkLWNiYzM2ZWE5ZGRjYQBGAAAAAAAM7hMOEWrrSq9OM25aDqRTBwA6%2BucpuU1ARILhmCRRBmraAAAAjbU0AABhDXP4Xz%2BbQKPmLFLgMaNeAAYC1TiZAAA%3D) **pm. Please use the back door.**

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**The eighth-graders will be presenting Shakespeare's Hamlet in the Church basement** [Friday at 7](https://outlook.office.com/mail/drafts/id/AAMkADgxMWQ5OTM5LWU3YTgtNGQ2ZS04NDRkLWNiYzM2ZWE5ZGRjYQBGAAAAAAAM7hMOEWrrSq9OM25aDqRTBwA6%2BucpuU1ARILhmCRRBmraAAAAjbU0AABhDXP4Xz%2BbQKPmLFLgMaNeAAYC1TiZAAA%3D) **pm. The congregation is invited to attend this tragedy.**

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**Weight Watchers will meet** [at 7](https://outlook.office.com/mail/drafts/id/AAMkADgxMWQ5OTM5LWU3YTgtNGQ2ZS04NDRkLWNiYzM2ZWE5ZGRjYQBGAAAAAAAM7hMOEWrrSq9OM25aDqRTBwA6%2BucpuU1ARILhmCRRBmraAAAAjbU0AABhDXP4Xz%2BbQKPmLFLgMaNeAAYC1TiZAAA%3D) **pm at the First Presbyterian Church.** **Please use large double door at the side entrance.**

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We do proof-read these newsletters and try to eliminate errors, although we know a few slip through. Usually it doesn’t matter, but even one letter when you are in a hurry can make your life very difficult :

A man emailed his wife a romantic message while he was away on a business trip and missed out a letter "e".

That mistake has caused him to seek police protection to enter his own house.

He wrote, "Hi darling, I'm enjoying and experiencing the best time of my life & I wish you were her.”