Wrenbury & Nantwich Mission Area **Methodist** Churches

**Sunday 5 July 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**

Jesus, I come to you to celebrate your love and to receive your word.

You taught that we must worship God in spirit. I long to worship with your people, but I know you are with me, in these difficult times. Amen.

**Hymn: Love divine, all loves excelling**

 **(StF No 503)**

Sing/ read/ pray/ proclaim the words:

Love divine, all loves excelling,

joy of heaven to earth come down,

fix in us thy humble dwelling,

all thy faithful mercies crown.

Jesu, thou art all compassion,

pure, unbounded love thou art;

visit us with thy salvation,

enter every trembling heart.

Come, almighty to deliver,

let us all thy life receive;

suddenly return, and never,

never more thy temples leave.

Thee we would be always blessing,

serve thee as thy hosts above**,**

pray, and praise thee, without ceasing,

glory in thy perfect love.

Finish then thy new creation,

pure and spotless let us be;

let us see thy great salvation,

perfectly restored in thee:

changed from glory into glory,

till in heaven we take our place,

till we cast our crowns before thee,

lost in wonder, love, and praise!

*Charles Wesley (1707-1788)*

**Let us pray together:**

Lord God, I am in wonder at the world you have created and the life you have given me. I thank you for that gift of life and the joy of sharing my

life with others.

I have not always lived my life as you would wish. Yet, even as I confess this to you, I know your forgiveness by the suffering and death of your Son, Jesus Christ, my Saviour.

**Matthew 11: 16-19, 25-30**

‘But to what will I compare this generation? It is like children sitting in the market-places and calling to one another:17 “We played the flute for you, and you did not dance;   we wailed, and you did not mourn.” 18For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, “He has a demon”; 19the Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, “Look, a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax-collectors and sinners!” Yet wisdom is vindicated by her deeds.’

At that time Jesus said, ‘I thank\* you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and the intelligent and have revealed them to infants; 26yes, Father, for such was your gracious will.\* 27All things have been handed over to me by my Father; and no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.

‘Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. 29Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. 30For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.’

**Time to Reflect**

Jesus says that he is offering a new way to God. Like the old way, it aims for salvation, but He offers us strength and comfort on our path to God. He calls us to accept the need for forgiveness, and the salvation He offers to us. Then we can receive the Spirit to follow God’s way with the knowledge of His Love.

Jesus says people criticise him for not conforming to their expectations. Those who fear his message point to how he lives his life, as

they had done regarding John the Baptist.

If, through our calling, we receive or fear such

criticism, we must rise above it. Seeing others we should look to what their words and actions mean for us, rather than judging their outward appearance.

It is reported that when Sydney Carter wrote the well-known hymn “Lord of the Dance” he expected the Church to dislike it because it was different. Happily it was accepted, perhaps not as quickly as it deserved, and is now a familiar celebration of Jesus’ life.

Jesus speaks of the word of God being hidden from the wise, of those who allow wisdom or knowledge to hide the love of God, and who see the detail of the Law as overriding God’s calling that we should love God and our neighbour.

In the tale of the ‘Good Samaritan’ it was a priest and a Levite (someone who would assist the priest in the Temple), who would know the Law, who walked by.

In writing to the Romans, Paul speaks of the conflict between following the Law and accepting the call of Jesus. This does not mean that we can disregard the Law. Indeed often the Law shows us how to love our neighbour, but the love God shows us is not following a set of rules but a supreme act of love through suffering. Our call to respond should also be through Love.

All this is through God’s love for us, shown in the grace we are offered when he sent His Son to die for our forgiveness and salvation.

**Take a time to sit quietly**

**A time of prayer**

I thank you, Lord, for the gift of your Son: for His life, His sufferings and death, and for His Resurrection and Ascension, for the witness, salvation and hope He gives.

I thank you for the gift of your Holy Spirit to those who have come to you, and especially for the gift of that Spirit in your Church.

I rejoice in the work and witness of your Church and pray that it may continue to strive to fulfil your work and proclaim your Love.

I pray for the needs of the world, thinking especially at this time of those affected by the Coronavirus, but remembering too all who suffer, including those whose plight seemingly goes unnoticed. Be with all those suffering in any way. Especially be with…………… (people known to me).

Be with those whose lives impact others: leaders in government, or the workplace, health care workers, teachers, emergency workers and all those on whom people depend. Grant them the wisdom and the strength to know and to follow your way.

Lord, I commend all men, women and children to your unfailing love through Jesus Christ, our Lord and Saviour.

 Amen

**The Lord’s Prayer**

Our Father ……

**Hymn:**  **“Lord of the Dance” (StF 247)**

I danced in the morning

when the world was begun,

and I danced in the moon

and the stars and the sun;

and I came down from heaven

and I danced on the earth,

at Bethlehem

I had my birth.

*Dance, then, wherever you may be,*

*I am the Lord of the Dance.' said he,*

*'and I'll lead you all wherever you may be,*

*and I'll lead you all in the Dance,' said he.*

I danced for the Scribe

and the Pharisee,

but they would not dance

and they would not follow me;

I danced for the fishermen,

for James and John;

they came with me

and the Dance went on.

I danced on the Sabbath

and I cured the lame:

the holy people

said it was a shame.

They whipped and they stripped

and they hung me on high,

and they left me there

on a Cross to die.

I danced on a Friday

when the sky turned black;

it's hard to dance

with the devil on your back.

They buried my body

and they thought I'd gone;

but I am the Dance

and I still go on.

They cut me down

and I leapt up high;

I am the life

that'll never, never die;

I'll live in you

if you'll live in me;

I am the Lord

of the Dance, said he.

*Sydney Carter (1915-2004)*

**A prayer of blessing**

May the blessing of God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit rest and remain with each of us sharing His worship today and always.

Original Materials by Ralph Frankland

Hymns reproduced under CCLi 1144191

**Family News**

Congratulations to Rev Stuart Rhodes who is celebrating 60 years since his ordination.

We thank God for his long and full life and ministry and pray God will continue to bless and sustain Stuart & Veronica as they continue to shield.

We give thanks that a number of our friends across the area have returned home from hospital this past week. We continue to pray for their recovery.

We pray also for those at home living with mental and physical illness, that they will be restored to health and well being.

We are sad to report that George Lawrence (a member at Aston) passed away on Tuesday. Please pray for his family, friends and all who grieve.

**Lord in your mercy, HEAR OUR PRAYER**\*

**Church Web site.**

Eddie George has been busy developing a new church website, which we need to populate. Please take a look and give us feedback or suggestions/material to include.

**www.nantwichmethodist.co.uk**

“The Bible has far more to say about how to live during the journey than about the ultimate destination.”

**Think before you speak!**

A young minister was sent to a church in the country which was near the sea. He was very pleased to note that one of the stewards kept a couple of horses, as he was keen on riding. One day on being invited to ride a horse he turned up complete in riding gear. The steward impressed on him that he had only three commands to learn.

To start say ***REJOICE,*** to go faster ***PRAISE THE LORD,*** and to stop ***HALLELUJAH****.*The minister was pleased as they were all words he was used to using.

He said ***REJOICE***  and off he went. He then decided to go faster and pronounced ***PRAISE THE LORD,*** and was enjoying the experience when he suddenly noticed that he was only a few feet from the edge of a cliff. Quickly he said ***HALLELUJAH*** and came to a stop.

Very relieved he threw his hands in the air and shouted***Praise the LORD!***

*Submitted by Doris Tucker*

**X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X**

**The Ten Commandments for reducing stress**

1) Thou shalt NOT be perfect, nor even try to be.

2) Thou shalt NOT try to be all things to all people.

3) Thou shalt leave things undone that ought to be done.

4) Thou shalt not spread thyself too thinly.

5) Thou shalt learn to say NO.

6) Thou shalt schedule time off for thyself and thy supportive network.

7) Thou shalt switch off and learn to do nothing regularly.

8) Thou shalt be boring, untidy, inelegant and unattractive at times.

9) Thou shalt not even feel guilty.

 10) Especially, thou shalt NOT be thine own worst enemy, but thine own best friend.

*Submitted by Madeline Johnson*

**X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X**

“Stand for what’s right, even if it means standing alone.”

“A moment of patience during a moment of anger saves hundreds of moments of regret.”

“Always go the extra mile: it’s never crowded!”

Jill ended her letter with a very familiar blessing, which we use at various special moments of church life.

How would you feel about being ‘blessed’ with

 this version?

**A Benediction**

“And now, may the Lord torment you.

May the Lord keep before

 you the faces of the hungry, the lonely, the rejected and the despised.

May the Lord afflict you with pain

 for the hurt, the wounded, the oppressed,

the abused, the victims of violence.

May God grace you with a burning thirst for justice and righteousness.

May the Lord give you courage

and strength and compassion

to make ours a better world,

to make your community a better community,

 to make your church a better church.

May you do your best to make it so;

and after you have done your best,

 may the Lord grant you peace.”

Opinions are divided.

 Some say that Jesus did not curse his followers or heap burdens on them, and he addressed social issues in the Beatitudes in a more gentle tone.

 Others welcome the challenge, because the obligation on God’s people to confront every kind of injustice runs right through the Old and New Testaments, and the Church needs shaking up!

 We are to “comfort the afflicted and afflict the comfortable.” It has been said that the ‘Great Commission’ at the very end of Matthew’s Gospel has become to many Christians the ‘Pretty Good Suggestion’ !! What will stir us up ?? (*Pat*)

A child was trying to write a prayer with plastic letters on a peg board. She started “Dear God, How do I …” but wasn’t happy and brushed all the letters away. She tried again: “I’m just…” but cleared the board again. Then, “I don’’t …” and “Can you…”. Finally, in frustration she tipped out the whole alphabet in a jumbled heap. God replied, “Dear child, I know, I love you, God.”

Each of us is sometimes that child. *“We do not know how we ought to pray; the Spirit himself pleads with God for us in groans that words cannot express.  And God, who sees into our hearts, knows what the thought of the Spirit is; because the Spirit pleads with God on behalf of his people and in accordance with his will*.”

**NANTWICH FOOD BANK**

The Manager has calculated that to meet demand through to the end of August, they will need: …

400 tins of fruit

750 tins of casserole / hot meats

350 tins of custard or rice pudding

460 cartons of long-life juice.

If you wish to support them and are able to shop, please focus on these items.

“Most people don’t really want the truth: they just want constant reassurance that what they believe is true.”

“Butterflies can’t see their wings, but the rest of the world can. You are beautiful, and while you may not see it, we can.”

x x x x x x x

**On the sillier side**…

Contrary to popular belief, swimming pools may open this weekend, but due to social distancing rules alternate lanes will have no water.

Did you see the programme about perfume? It was on Chanel 5.

One of Charles Dickens’s best known books, “A Tale of Two Cities”, was first published in instalments in two local newspapers: it was the Bicester Times, it was the Worcester Times. “Hard Times” followed.

I saw a Cockney fellow walking through a sheep dip. Must have been doing the Lamb Path Walk.

Archaeologists celebrated finding a human skeleton complete except for a lower leg. It was a real shin dig.

Please contact me urgently if you know a plastic surgeon who can correct a face lift. I’m all ears.

For computer users –

\* I keep hitting the ‘Escape’ key, but I’m still here!

\* My work might be a little slower now that the cat has eaten the mouse.

\* I’ve ordered a chicken and an egg from Amazon. I’ll let you know.

Pets’ Corner –

\* What creature is smarter than a talking parrot?

 *A spelling bee*.

\* Why couldn’t the pony sing?

 *She was a little hoarse.*

\* Where do sheep get their hair cut?

 *At the baa baa shop*.