

**Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> September 2020**

This short act of worship has been prepared for you to use whilst we are unable to use Methodist Church premises. If you are well enough why not spend a few moments with God, knowing that other people are sharing this act of worship with you.

### **Opening Prayer**

Living God, we thank you for the gift of being able to speak directly to you through prayer. In the midst of this pandemic, when life feels more and more like an uphill battle, we pray for perseverance and that we would not grow weary of doing good. When the world tells us we are not good enough, you make us more than enough. When we don't feel strong enough, you provide the strength we need. Though we may stumble, you have promised not to let us fall. With Jesus as our ultimate example, we ask for endurance and refreshment so that we may continue to press on and do your work. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

Written by Sydney McMichael Administrator Ministries: Vocations and Worship

### **Hymn: 654**

Sing/ Read /pray /proclaim the words or [listen to it here](#)

- 1 The love of God comes close  
where stands an open door  
to let the stranger in,  
to mingle rich and poor.  
The love of God is here to stay,  
embracing those who walk his way.**
- 2 The peace of God comes close  
to those caught in the storm,  
foregoing lives of ease  
to ease the lives forlorn.  
The peace of God is here to stay,  
embracing those who walk his way.**
- 3 The joy of God comes close  
where faith encounters fears,  
where heights and depths of life  
are found through smiles and tears.  
The joy of God is here to stay,  
embracing those who walk his way.**

**4 The grace of God comes close  
to those whose grace is spent,  
when hearts are tired or sore  
and hope is bruised and bent.  
The grace of God is here to stay,  
embracing those who walk his way.**

**5 The Son of God comes close  
where people praise his name,  
where bread and wine are blest  
and shared as when he came.  
The Son of God is here to stay,  
embracing those who walk his way.**

John L. Bell (b. 1949) and Graham Maule (b. 1958)  
Words: From Enemy of Apathy (c) 1988, WGRG, Iona Community, Glasgow G2 3DH Scotland.  
<www.wrg.co.uk>

Let us pray together

Loving and generous God, on this the first Sunday of a new Connexional year we are aware that so many people are still unable to gather in a church or chapel to worship you. We know you hear our prayers from wherever we are, but for many our desire is to gather together for mutual support and to praise your name.

Hear the prayers of our hearts as we long for a better world.

Hear the prayers of our minds as we try to find new ways to worship you.

Hear the prayer of our souls as we long to draw closer to you.

On this day, we thank you once again for the gift of your Son, Jesus Christ. How he modelled a way for us to live, and how he showed us that there is nothing in earth or heaven that can separate us from your love.

Forgive us Lord in the times when we doubt you. Give us strength when we feel weak. Hold us close, until the day finally comes when we might all gather as one to praise your name. Amen.

**Today's Gospel Reading:** Matthew 18: 15-20

### **Time to Reflect**

At the beginning of the COVID19 pandemic – when as a ministries team we began producing these worship at home sheets, I thought they might be needed for a few weeks. Now, 5 months in, I realise how naïve I was!

I want to thank all those people who volunteered to draft one of these acts of worship. An offering made, each week, by leaders of worship both lay and ordained, from across the connexion in good faith and often written under pressure.

To begin people were grateful for the acts of worship. Then, quite quickly, a few people began to write in to offer us advice or to blatantly tell us what we were doing wrong! Can, I wonder, the worship of God be wrong? Of course, liturgically we can all do things that might not suit everyone, but if your heart and my heart are in the right place, surely God will accept what we offer. My general response was they are offered in good faith, by a brother or sister in Christ – adapt them as you will.

In the trauma of dealing with the pandemic we have moved the phase when we declared, “we are all in this together” to a more destructive phase. A time of disillusionment, where nothing anyone does seems to be quite good enough for anyone else.

Jesus (our God on earth) knew people all too well. The emotional roller coasters we travel in life. Which is why, I suggest, he recommended that if you have a problem with someone you should go to him or her directly, before dragging in the wider community (which today would include the online communities many of us belong to).

We all make mistakes. (For the mistakes we've made on these sheets I apologise). We will all need at some point to point a mistake out to

another person, or to apologise for something we have done wrong. Let us do this graciously with love and care for another. As we move into this new Connexional year, let us all commit to reviewing not what might we do to please humankind but what we might do to the glory of God.

I pray may all our mistakes be made in good faith, and may our reprimands be smothered in the love of God. Amen

Take a time to sit quietly

### **A time of prayer**

Loving God we hold before you today:  
Those who began their period as a Probationary Minister today. Those ministers who have moved home this summer. Those preachers, who have not led worship for many months. For churches who are struggling to know when to re-open.

We pray for those we love:  
For those who mourn...  
For those who have been ill...  
For frontline workers.  
For those struggling to find work.  
For those who have started or who are about to start school.

We pray for your world:  
For those parts of the world devastated by COVID19.  
For refuges and those living in fear.

We pray for ourselves – in a moment of quiet hold before God what is on your heart today. Binding all our prayers together we say:

### **The Lord's Prayer**

#### ***Hymn: Listen to***

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k7bT4qfeZRY>

### **A prayer of blessing**

May the Grace of the Lord, Jesus Christ, the love of God our Father and the Fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all, for evermore, Amen

## Matthew 18: 15-20

'If another member of the church sins against you, go and point out the fault when the two of you are alone. If the member listens to you, you have regained that one. But if you are not listened to, take one or two others along with you, so that every word may be confirmed by the evidence of two or three witnesses. If the member refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if the offender refuses to listen even to the church, let such a one be to you as a Gentile and a tax-collector. Truly I tell you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven. Again, truly I tell you, if two of you agree on earth about anything you ask, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven. For where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them.