

**Winchester, Eastleigh, and Romsey Circuit
Worship at home sheet 1.8.2021**

Opening prayer

Gracious God,
as we prepare to worship you
help us to pray to you in faith, to sing your praises
with gratitude, and to listen to your word with
eagerness, through Christ our Lord

Amen

Listen, read, pray, or sing along

<https://youtu.be/YOBpyglIt8U>

- 1 O worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness,
bow down before him, his glory proclaim ;
with gold of obedience and incense of lowliness,
kneel and adore him : the Lord is his name.
- 2 Low at his feet lay your burden of carefulness,
high on his heart he will bear it for you,
comfort your sorrows, and answer your
prayerfulness,
showing the pathway your feet should pursue.
- 3 Fear not to enter his courts in the slenderness
of the poor wealth you would count as your own,
truth in its beauty, and love in its tenderness,
these are the offerings to bring to his throne.
- 4 These, though we bring them in trembling and
fearfulness,
he will accept for the name that is dear ;
mornings of joy give for evenings of tearfulness,
trust for our trembling, and hope for our fear.
- 5 O worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness,
bow down before him, his glory proclaim ;
with gold of obedience and incense of lowliness,
kneel and adore him : the Lord is his name.

John Samuel Bewley Monsell (1811–1875)

Reproduced from *Singing the Faith* Electronic Words Edition, number 34

Adoration

Praise be to you O God,
The maker of the universe,
by whose wisdom we are created and sustained.

Praise be to you, O God,
The father of our Lord Jesus Christ,
by whose love we are redeemed and forgiven.

Praise be to you, O God,
The source of all holiness,
**By whose Spirit we are made whole
and brought to perfection.**

**Praise be to you, O God,
Source of all being, Eternal Word and Holy Spirit,
as it was in the beginning, is now,
and shall be forever. Amen.**

Confession

Loving God,

**We have sinned against you
in what we have thought, said, and done.
We have not loved you with our whole heart;
we have not loved our neighbours as ourselves.
We are truly sorry
and turn from what is wrong.
Forgive us for the sake of your Son,
Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

Silence

Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.
This is his gracious word:
'Your sins are forgiven'.
Amen. Thanks be to God.

Read Ephesians 4 v 1-16

Read John 6 v 24-35

Reflection

Two issues that often arise in the life of the Church are our understanding of ministry and leadership and the elusive character of Christian unity. In the letter to the church in Ephesus the writer skilfully weaves together these two themes in terms of Christian vocation and the oneness of the body of Christ.

The opening appeal is framed in terms of Christian vocation: '*Lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called*'. For those who might be inclined to think that 'calling' is only relevant to those who are ordained, this statement may come as a

surprise. It shouldn't come as a surprise to British Methodists, however, because we have committed ourselves to understanding **Our Calling** as being to respond to the gospel of God's love in Christ and to live out our discipleship in worship and mission. The **Methodist Way of Life** outlines how we seek to lead a life worthy of this calling under the four headings of **Worship, Learning and Caring, Service** and **Evangelism**.

In verse 7 the author returns to the topic of vocation, here referring to the specific gifts given to each follower of Jesus. *'Each of us was given grace according to the measure of Christ's gift'*. The following verses which refer to Christ as the one who ascends, giving gifts to his people uses a quotation from Psalm 68^{v18} to support the point. In verse 11 it becomes clear that these gifts are linked to vocation where they are interpreted as specific roles: apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers. A first reading of this list might confirm the idea that only those who serve as ordained ministers or other church leaders such as lay pastors, Local Preachers and Worship Leaders have a calling, and that the gifts of the Church are confined to these individuals. This is unhelpful and can result in a restricted understanding of leadership and vocation. Verse 12 counters this by asserting that these gifts are to be used to 'equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ.

The topic of unity is again mentioned in verse 13 as a goal of the ministry of the Church and as a sign of Christian maturity. Those who are joined and held together by the ministry of the whole people of God grow into 'the unity of the faith'. They 'grow up in every way' (v 15). Disunity signals the spiritual immaturity of those who constitute the Church. This makes for difficult reading for us as contemporary Christians in the light of two thousand years of Christian disunity. The adoption by the Methodist Conference of 2021 of all resolutions contained in the 'God in Love Unites Us' report on human sexuality is a strong indication that we are as a Church committed to making every possible effort at maintaining unity whilst recognising that we do not and cannot all think alike.

The passage from John's gospel which follows on from the feeding of the five thousand reminds us that the fourth Gospel narrative can often be taken at two levels. 'Bread' takes on a symbolic meaning here with Jesus declaring in verse 35 *'I am the bread of life'*. The miracle, as well as giving a powerful message about the importance of sharing resources and about God's overwhelming generosity, is also a sign which points to the identity of Jesus. Without bread we will starve. Without Jesus in our lives, we will continue to hunger. As John 10 v 10 records, *'I came that they may have life and have it abundantly'*. That verse always reminds me of the Christian Aid slogan *'We believe in life before death'*. As followers of Jesus each one of us is called to offer what gifts we have to ensure that God's mission on earth might be fulfilled.

Listen, read, pray, or sing along

https://youtu.be/yVy_9uVJLbk

- 1 Jesus the Lord said : 'I am the Bread,
the Bread of Life for the world am I.
The Bread of Life for the world am I,
the Bread of Life for the world am I.'
Jesus the Lord said : 'I am the Bread,
the Bread of Life for the world am I.'
- 2 Jesus the Lord said : 'I am the Vine,
the true and fruitful Vine am I.
The true and fruitful Vine am I,
the true and fruitful Vine am I.'
Jesus the Lord said : 'I am the Vine,
the true and fruitful Vine am I.'
- 3 Jesus the Lord said : 'I am the Way,
the true and living Way am I.
The true and living Way am I,
the true and living Way am I.'
Jesus the Lord said : 'I am the Way,
the true and living Way am I.'

4 Jesus the Lord said : 'I am the Light,
the one true Light of the world am I.
The one true Light of the world am I,
the one true Light of the world am I.'
Jesus the Lord said : 'I am the Light,
the one true Light of the world am I.'

5 Jesus the Lord said : 'I am the Life,
the Resurrection and the Life am I.
The Resurrection and the Life am I,
the Resurrection and the Life am I.'
Jesus the Lord said : 'I am the Life,
the Resurrection and the Life am I.'

Anonymous, Urdu

vv. 1, 3-5 translated by Carl Dermott Monahan (1906–1957)

v. 2 translated by Compilers of *Rejoice and Sing*, 1991

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Intercessions

Gracious God,
we pray for the world you created, and for all people
- for countries caught up in war or violent conflict,
- for regions of the world struggling with increased
cases of COVID-19,
- for those whose homes and lives are threatened by
natural disaster.

For these and all the other areas in our world where
there is need and despair,

Lord, hear our prayer.

We pray for our nation and for all its people:

- for the government
- for our judicial system
- for our cities, towns, and rural communities,
- for employers and employees, for young and old,

For all who seek to serve the common good

Lord, hear our prayer.

We pray for our local community

- for those who are unemployed,
- for those in prison,
- for those who are hungry,
- for those who are alone and afraid,

For all our neighbours, both known and unknown to
us,

Lord, hear our prayer.

We pray for the Church

- for those who are ill. or whose loved ones are ill,
- for those who are anxious about the future,
- for those struggling with their faith,
- for those who minister among us,

For all Your people in this place,

Lord, hear our prayer.

Pour out Your Spirit on us!

Fix our hearts and minds on what is true and
honourable and right.

Give us the joy and peace that comes from knowing
and doing Your will.

Keep us faithful to the call we have received in Christ
Jesus, our Lord, extending Your loving invitation to the
world around us.

In Jesus' name. **Amen.**

The Lord's Prayer

Offering and Prayer of Dedication

*If you give your weekly offering through an
envelope scheme or in cash, please set it aside,
and pray with those who give using Standing
orders.*

Gracious God, accept these gifts, and with them our
lives, to be used in mission and service through Jesus
Christ our Lord. Amen.

Listen, read, pray, or sing along

<https://youtu.be/w2Hpg8APyns>

- 1 All my hope on God is founded ;
he doth still my trust renew.
Me through change and chance he guideth,
only good and only true.
God unknown,
he alone
calls my heart to be his own.
- 2 Human pride and earthly glory,
sword and crown betray our trust ;
what with care and toil we fashion,
tower and temple, fall to dust.
But God's power,
hour by hour,
is my temple and my tower.

- 3 God's great goodness aye endureth,
deep his wisdom passing thought ;
splendour, light, and life attend him,
beauty springeth out of naught.
Evermore
from his store
new-born worlds rise and adore.
- 4 Daily doth the almighty giver
bounteous gifts on us bestow ;
his desire our soul delighteth,
pleasure leads us where we go.
Love doth stand
at his hand ;
joy doth wait on his command.
- 5 Still from earth to God eternal
sacrifice of praise be done,
high above all praises praising
for the gift of Christ his Son.
Christ doth call
one and all
ye who follow shall not fall.

Robert Bridges (1844–1930) (*alt.*)
based on Joachim Neander (1650–1680)

Reproduced from *Singing the Faith* Electronic Words Edition, number 455 .

Closing prayer

The blessing of God,
the Creator, Redeemer and Sustainer,
be among you and remain with you always.

Amen.

* * * * *

Service prepared by The Revd Ruth Fry

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commentary based on the NRSV-Year B, Brueggemann,
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