



The **Methodist Church**
Bury St Edmunds Circuit.

WORSHIP SHEET FOR 24TH MAY 2020
ALDRSGATE SUNDAY AND WESLEY DAY

Welcome to worship

Today we remember how John Wesley was changed from relying on his own efforts of working hard at doing good works, to being able to gladly respond to the free, forgiving and enabling grace of God. Grace is God's approach to us: faith is our response to God. When Wesley realised that he could trust in Christ alone for salvation there began, spreading out through those around him, a transformation in society, as the energy used to 'do good' was released to 'love others'. Charles Wesley was to become the great hymn writer and so as we celebrate today we will sing some of his hymns.

Call to Worship

"We love because God first loved us" (1 John 4.19). We are called to be generous in our love and care, because God is generous towards us. Our generosity is our response to the love of God.

Hymn StF 345 O for a thousand tongues to sing

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4O9kw3cILpg>

Charles wrote 18 verses for this hymn – we start at verse 7 of the original!

- 1 O for a thousand tongues to sing
my great Redeemer's praise,
the glories of my God and King,
the triumphs of his grace!
- 2 Jesus — the name that charms our fears,
that bids our sorrows cease ;
'tis music in the sinner's ears,
'tis life, and health, and peace.
- 3 See all your sins on Jesus laid :
the Lamb of God was slain ;
his soul was once an offering made
that all may heaven gain.
- 4 He breaks the power of cancelled sin,
he sets the prisoner free ;
his blood can make the foulest clean,
his blood availed for me.
- 5 He speaks ; and, listening to his voice,
new life the dead receive ;

the mournful, broken hearts rejoice ;
the humble poor believe.

- 6 Hear him, ye deaf; his praise ye dumb,
your loosened tongues employ;
ye blind, behold your Saviour come;
and leap, ye lame, for joy!
- 7 My gracious Master and my God,
assist me to proclaim,
to spread through all the earth abroad
the honours of your name.

Charles Wesley (1707–1788)

Prayer of Praise

Great God

We rejoice that you are a great-hearted
generous God:

- generous in love
- generous in giving
- generous without measure

and generous towards each one of us ...

whether it is in the extravagant beauty of
creation;

whether it is the offering of Jesus (his
life, his love, what he said, what he did,
who he spent his time with and the life
that was given up on the Cross)

whether it is in the gift of the Holy Spirit.

We praise you that your love knows no bounds,
and reaches out to each of us, this day and
every day.

We respond to your love and seek to love and
worship you through our words, our actions and
service.

In Jesus' name we pray. **Amen.**

Prayer of Confession

How we grumble, generous God, when the
difficulties of today, like clouds in summer,
obscure the constant light of your love. How we
grumble, patient God, when all that is to be,
takes longer than we thought, and the journey
seems so long. How we grumble, loving God,
when love is hard to bear, to give and to
receive. Free us from our grumbles, generous,
patient, loving God, and let our hearts be filled
with praise. For you feed us in the desert place,
and journey with us on our way. Forgive us
such a lack of vision, and heal our inner sight,
that we may catch a glimpse of hope that lifts
our hearts to love. Amen.

SILENCE – for private prayers of confession

By your love, shown in Christ, we know that we
are forgiven, guide us that we may follow you
more closely. AMEN

Collect for Wesley Day

Almighty God,
you raised up your servants, John and Charles Wesley,
to proclaim anew the gift of redemption
and the life of holiness.
Pour our your Spirit,
and revive your work among us;
that inspired by the same faith,
and upheld by the same grace in word and sacrament,
we and all your children may be made one
in the unity of your Church on earth,
even as in heaven we are made one in you;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

The Conversion

24th May, 'Wesley Day', is the day which Methodists mark John Wesley's life-changing experience at a meeting in Aldersgate Street, London.

Before May 1738, no-one would have said that John and Charles Wesley were anything but devout Christian men. So what changed so much for them?

Both John and Charles Wesley had been travelling and returned to England deeply dissatisfied with their spiritual state. Still heavily influenced by the Moravians they met with in London, the Wesley's joined in a 'Religious Society', and in May 1738 both underwent a profound spiritual experience. John famously described this in his Journal for 24 May 1738

"In the evening I went very unwillingly to a society in Aldersgate Street, where one was reading Luther's preface to the Epistle to the Romans. About a quarter before nine, while he was describing the change which God works in the heart through faith in Christ, I felt my heart strangely warmed. I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone for salvation, and an assurance was given me that he had taken away my sins, even mine and saved me from the law of sin and death."

Flowing from the complete assurance that John and Charles Wesley felt in God's love and forgiveness, their faith was lived out in lives that went on to influence millions. Charles went on to write over 6,000 hymns, while John used his organising genius to turn a spontaneous movement into structured body

which became the origin of today's world-wide Methodist Church.

Hymn StF 608 All praise to our redeeming Lord
<https://www.bing.com/videos/search?q=all+praise+to+our+redeeming+lord&&view=detail&mid=2B1E9DA3706508E4B1ED2B1E9DA3706508E4B1ED&&FORM=VRDGAR&ru=%2Fvideos%2Fsearch%3Fq%3Dall%2520praise%2520to%2520our%2520redeeming%2520lord%26qs%3DMM%26form%3DQBVR%26sp%3D1%26pq%3Dall%2520praise%2520to%2520our%26sc%3D8-17%26cvid%3D387CD2612FD04501813EC8066E55D138>

- 1 All praise to our redeeming Lord,
who joins us by his grace,
and bids us, each to each restored,
together seek his face.
- 2 He bids us build each other up ;
and, gathered into one,
to our high calling's glorious hope
we hand in hand go on.
- 3 The gift which he on one bestows,
we all delight to prove ;
the grace through every vessel flows,
in purest streams of love.
- 4 E'en now we think and speak the same,
and cordially agree ;
concentred all, through Jesu's name,
in perfect harmony.
- 5 We all partake the joy of one,
the common peace we feel,
a peace to sensual minds unknown,
a joy unspeakable.
- 6 And if our fellowship below
in Jesus be so sweet,
what heights of rapture shall we know
when round his throne we meet !

Charles Wesley (1707–1788)

Gospel Reading

Matthew 5 : 1 – 12 NIV

Introduction to the Sermon on the Mount

Now when Jesus saw the crowds, he went up on a mountainside and sat down. His disciples came to him,² and he began to teach them.

The Beatitudes

He said:

- 3 'Blessed are the poor in spirit,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
- 4 Blessed are those who mourn,
for they will be comforted.
- 5 Blessed are the meek,
for they will inherit the earth.
- 6 Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness,
for they will be filled.
- 7 Blessed are the merciful,
for they will be shown mercy.

- ⁸ Blessed are the pure in heart,
for they will see God.
- ⁹ Blessed are the peacemakers,
for they will be called children of God.
- ¹⁰ Blessed are those who are persecuted because
of righteousness,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
- ¹¹ 'Blessed are you when people insult you,
persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil
against you because of me. ¹² Rejoice and be glad,
because great is your reward in heaven, for in the
same way they persecuted the prophets who
were before you.

Hymn StF 503 Love divine
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8PzuTpV08gc>

- 1 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.
- 2 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.
- 3 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)

Reflection

We have just sung one of Charles Wesley's most famous hymns and it comes from a section of hymns that Charles wrote entitled "Those that seek and those that have Redemption in the Blood of Jesus Christ" Works iv.219. Today's Gospel reading comes from The Sermon on The Mount where we hear an authoritative teacher who bears God's imprimatur. This Sermon is a description of those whom God cares for and how life is to be lived in the coming kingdom. It is a statement

of God's good news. That is what the Wesleys spent their life undertaking, showing the generosity of God. John Wesley's vision was for his societies to reflect the social holiness; to be open to each other's needs, spirituality and practically. Something I am sure we have all witnessed in these last few months. God's generous blessing becomes the foundation for a lifestyle through which we can confidently seek to express that blessing to others. Jesus recognised the disciples and the great crowds who have come from many parts as blessed. This is not a belated recognition of the dead, but a joyful recognition of the living people of God. All these people are Jesus' folk. These are the people today who have enlivened the history of the Church with their quiet witness, the people whose lives are unheralded and whose names are unknown, but Jesus knows their names. God's generous blessing is what Jesus taught, it is what the Wesley's lived out and it is there for us.

Hymn StF 357 Jesus the name high over all
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZSeAYKG-8Ko>

- 1 Jesus — the name high over all,
in hell, or earth, or sky!
Angels revere, and nations fall,
and devils fear and fly.
- 2 Jesus — the name to sinners dear,
the name to sinners given !
It scatters all their guilty fear,
it turns their hell to heaven.
- 3 Jesus — the prisoner's fetters breaks,
and bruises Satan's head ;
power into strengthless souls it speaks,
and life into the dead.
- 4 O that the world might taste and see
the riches of his grace !
The arms of love that compass me
would all the earth embrace.
- 5 His only righteousness I show,
his saving grace proclaim ;
'tis all my business here below
to cry : 'Behold the Lamb !'
- 6 Happy if with my latest breath
I might but gasp his name ;
preach him to all, and cry in death :
'Behold, behold the Lamb !'

Charles Wesley (1707–1788)

Prayers

Loving God, in your Son Jesus Christ you share your life with our life.

In the time of uncertainty unite your Church throughout the world in the vitality that it may witness your truth

Lord work through us
and make us welcoming.

Loving God, your Son expanded the narrow vision of his disciples as we saw in your servants John and Charles Wesley. Enlarge the scope of our concern to embrace people of all nations and races. keep us watchful against all that would devour the weak and vulnerable.

Lord work through us
and make us welcoming.

Loving God, you give us grace to share your love with one another. Bless our families and friends, those closest to us and unknown strangers whom to know would enrich us

enfold all people within your loving arms.

Lord work through us
and make us welcoming.

Loving God, hear the cry of all who cast their anxiety on your loving care we remember those struggling at this time ... Restore and strengthen us in your service.

Lord work through us
and make us welcoming.

Loving God, your glory unites earth and heaven.

Gather to yourself those who have died Grant eternal life to all your children.

Lord work through us
and make us welcoming.

We say together the Lord's Prayer

Blessing of our Gifts

Generous God,
as we offer you these our gifts of money, asking that they may bear fruit for your kingdom, so we offer you the gift of our lives, asking that we may bear fruit for your kingdom of justice and peace, freedom and fulfilment.
Amen.

Hymn StF 345 And can it be

In this hymn Wesley contrasts light and darkness, life and death, slavery and freedom, and Christ's righteousness and our

unrighteousness, in order to express the mystery of God's grace extended to sinners who turn to Christ in faith. Charles wrote this hymn shortly following his own conversion. Its many scriptural references reflect his intimate knowledge of the Bible

<https://www.bing.com/videos/search?q=you+tubeand+can+it+be+that+i+should+gain&view=detail&mid=7832C381E69E1B8D50E87832C381E69E1B8D50E8&FORM=VDRVRV>

- 1 And can it be that I should gain an interest 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 be that thou, my God, shouldst die for me?
- 2 'Tis mystery all: the Immortal dies! Who can explore his strange design? In vain the first-born seraph tries to sound the depths of love divine. '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!
- 4 Long my imprisoned spirit lay fast bound in sin and nature's night; thine eye diffused a quickening ray — I woke, the dungeon flamed with light, 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 the eternal throne, and claim the crown, through Christ, my own.

Charles Wesley (1707–1788)

A prayer of dismissal

May the love of God go with you from this place.
May God's generosity dwell in your hearts, and be reflected in your strengths and your weaknesses, your talents and your faults, your money, your resources your very selves. And may that love transform you and the world around you. In Jesus' name. **Amen.**

Grace We say together
May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all forever more. Amen

Some prayers from www.methodist.org.uk/agenerouslife