

The Methodist Church

Bury St Edmunds Circuit.

Worship Sheet for 28th February 2021
Second Sunday in Lent

Welcome to worship

We still ourselves ready for worship, to focus on God and his loving presence with us.

Call to Worship:

We use week two of our Lent liturgy.



Opening sentences

Through the psalmist, God says,
'Be still, and know that I am God!'
Let us come into God's presence and still our hearts.
Let us come together to listen to God.
Let us be still, and know that God is indeed God.

Hymn: 272 From Heaven You Came

[From Heaven You Came \(Servant King\) - Graham Kendrick \[with lyrics for congregations\] - YouTube](#)

From heaven you came helpless babe
Entered our world, your glory veiled
Not to be served but to serve
And give Your life that we might live

*This is our God, The Servant King
He calls us now to follow Him
To bring our lives as a daily offering
Of worship to The Servant King*

There in the garden of tears
My heavy load he chose to bear
His heart with sorrow was torn
'Yet not My will but Yours,' He said

Come see His hands and His feet
The scars that speak of sacrifice
Hands that flung stars into space
To cruel nails surrendered

So let us learn how to serve
And in our lives enthrone Him
Each other's needs to prefer
For it is Christ we're serving

(Graham Kendrick
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Prayer of Praise

All-powerful God of past, present and future,
keeper of promises:

How we love you.

Son of Man, the way, the truth and the life,
loving despite rejection:

How we love you.

Holy Spirit, living Power within,
helping, guiding, testing and transforming:

How we love you.

Father, Son and Holy Spirit,
your unique relationship – open to us:

How we love you. Amen.

Prayer of Confession and Assurance of forgiveness

Loving God, it feels so tempting to walk away from the tough choices, to see our own individual needs as most important. Like Peter, our focus is on what suits us best. Yet you desire more for us, you long for something deeper from us. The way of the cross denying ourselves; giving up that which makes us feel safe on our own and protected from others, is what brings life. You turn our worlds upside down and invite us to choose differently; in losing our lives we gain them. Loving God help us lean on you when the tough choices come, so that our lives may reflect the way of the cross. **Amen**

Assurance of Pardon

Our Lord Jesus Christ listens to our prayers and forgives us our sins. Amen.

Hymn: 116 Sing for God's glory that colours creation

[Sing for God's Glory - YouTube](#)

Sing for God's glory that colours
the dawn of creation,
racing across the sky, trailing
bright clouds of elation;
sun of delight succeeds the velvet of night,
warming the earth's exultation.

Sing for God's power that shatters
the chains that would bind us,
searing the darkness of fear and despair
that could blind us,
touching our shame with love that will not lay blame,
reaching out gently to find us.

Sing for God's justice disturbing
each easy illusion,
tearing down tyrants and putting
our pride to confusion;
lifeblood of right, resisting evil and slight,
offering freedom's transfusion.

Sing for God's saints who have travelled
faith's journey before us,
who in our weariness give us their hope
to restore us;
in them we see the new creation to be,
spirit of love made flesh for us.

(Kathy Galloway)

Bible Reading: The Compassion of God – a Word for our Time.

“In that day”, declares the Lord, “you will call me ‘my husband’, you will no longer call me ‘my master’. I will betroth you to me for ever. I will betroth you in righteousness and justice, in love and compassion. I will betroth you in faithfulness, and you will acknowledge the Lord”.

Praise the Lord, O my soul; all my inmost being, praise His holy Name. Praise the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits – Who forgives your sins and heals all your diseases, Who redeems your life from the pit and crowns you with compassion and love. As a father has compassion on his children, so the Lord has compassion on those who fear Him.

Once more Jesus went out beside the sea. All the crowd came to Him, and He taught them. As he went along, He saw Levi, son of Alphaeus, sitting at the toll booth. “Come along with Me!”, He said. And Levi got up and followed Him. That’s how Jesus came to be having dinner with lots of tax collectors and sinners. There they were, plenty of them, sitting with Jesus and his disciples – more than a few of them had become His followers. When the legal experts and Pharisees saw Him keeping this kind of company, they said to His disciples, “Why does He eat with the

riffraff?” When Jesus overheard this, He said to them, “It’s sick people who need the doctor, not healthy ones. I came to call the bad people, not the good ones”.

Your very lives are a letter that anyone can read by just looking at you. Christ Himself wrote it – not with ink, but with God’s living Spirit.

(The reading is taken from Hosea 2. v 16,19 &20, Psalm 103 v 1-4,13, Mark 2 v 13-17 and 2 Corinthians v 3.)

Reflection: By Jenny Benfield

Fings ain’t always what they seem!

Most of you already know Tigger, but if you don’t, then when I introduce you to him, you will be expecting to see a stripy tiger. However, when he appears you’ll discover he’s an African lion. ‘Fings ain’t always what they seem’. Nor are people always what they seem on the outside.

Hosea married a wife – and she certainly wasn’t what she seemed on the outside. God knew that, and he prepared Hosea for the worst, but turned it to good in the end. Jesus called Levi or Matthew, as we more commonly know him, who was viewed very badly by the Jewish people, because he worked for the occupying power, the Romans. Jesus, however, looked much deeper and saw the man Matthew could become, given half a chance.

So, what was it that changed both Hosea’s wife, and Matthew? The word is ‘compassion’, and we have seen it coming through in every part of today’s Bible reading. The Psalmist reminds us that ‘The Lord is like a father to His children, tender and compassionate to those who fear Him’. The prophet Hosea continues the theme with God’s promise of a fresh new beginning, not just a temporary rewriting of a tired old covenant – ‘I will make you my wife forever, showing you....unfailing love and compassion. I will be faithful to you and make you Mine’.

Then Jesus comes along, and almost everywhere we look in the Gospels, we find His compassion changing situations and changing people. And His compassion is threefold – it comes with love, with authority and with faithfulness. Matthew was a person in need. He probably didn’t want to be working for the Romans, but what would we do if we had a family to feed, and the offer of a job came up? Jesus responds to his need with **loving compassion**, by inviting him to ‘come along with Him’. And Jesus’ **compassion has the ring**

of authority about it. Matthew knew He really meant it and that gave him the confidence to just get up and go with Him. Matthew, as we know, is so delighted with his new found life of discipleship that he invites all his friends to meet Jesus for a meal. They would be considered the 'riff raff' in the society of the day, but that doesn't bother Jesus. His **faithful compassion** is shown in the way He sticks by Matthew and goes along to the party, no matter what people think.

Compassion is much needed in our world today, the deeply caring kind, like Jesus'. Are we able to see the person underneath, and respond to their need? Are we interested enough in others to speak with a quiet confidence, which encourages them to think we really mean what we say? 'How are you'? 'How can I help'? It's worth trying to think how it would sound if Jesus asked those questions. And finally, will we stick by people in their need, as far as we are able? I've been challenged by the way in which the Drop In Centre has not abandoned its guests in these times. It has found other ways of supporting them in their continuing need.

In this period of Lent lockdown, we have the opportunity to contemplate how we have been touched by the compassion of God. This prompts us to think about how to pass that compassion on to others, so that our lives are like a letter which Jesus Himself is writing – not with ink – but with God's living Spirit of loving, confident and faithful compassion.

Amen.

Hymn: 693 beauty for Brokenness

[259 Beauty for Brokenness - God of the Poor - YouTube](#)

Beauty for brokenness
Hope for despair
Lord, in the suffering
This is our prayer
Bread for the children
Justice, joy, peace
Sunrise to sunset
Your kingdom increase!

Shelter for fragile lives
Cures for their ills
Work for the craftsman
Trade for their skills
Land for the dispossessed
Rights for the weak
Voices to plead the cause
Of those who can't speak

*God of the poor
Friend of the weak
Give us compassion we pray
Melt our cold hearts
Let tears fall like rain
Come, change our love
From a spark to a flame*

Refuge from cruel wars
Havens from fear
Cities for sanctuary
Freedoms to share
Peace to the killing-fields
Scorched earth to green
Christ for the bitterness
His cross for the pain

Rest for the ravaged earth
Oceans and streams
Plundered and poisoned
Our future, our dreams
Lord, end our madness
Carelessness, greed
Make us content with
The things that we need

Lighten our darkness
Breathe on this flame
Until your justice
Burns brightly again
Until the nations
Learn of your ways
Seek your salvation
And bring you their praise

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Prayers of Intercession

We pray for followers of Jesus Christ;
for those who are imprisoned for their faith,
for those who serve as missionaries,
for teachers of the faith, for all church leaders lay
or ordained.

Silence

Merciful Lord Hear our Prayer

We pray for those who deny themselves to serve
others; for those who work in hospitals and
prisons, for those who are carers,
for those who serve their communities as
volunteers, thinking of those who steward the
vaccine centres to keep each person vaccinated
safe.

Silence

Merciful Lord
Hear our Prayer

We pray for those who carry the weight of a cross; for the homeless and unemployed, for those who are ill whether that is covid related or though other ailments, for the bereaved especially the recently bereaved coming to terms with their loss and entering their new normal, for those who struggle with mental health, especially as lockdown has brought with it its own problems for so many.

Silence

Merciful Lord
Hear our Prayer

We pray for ourselves, as we follow Christ; for strength to overcome our struggles and failures, for our fears and worries, for those we love, and those who love us
We ask this and all our prayers in Jesus name, Amen.

We say together **Our Father...**

Blessing of our Gifts

As we lay before you our gifts, we ask that you bless all we offer, money, time, commitment, prayer and fellowship. May your Kingdom Come. Amen.

Hymn: 662 Have you heard God's voice

[Have You Heard God's Voice \(StF 662\) - YouTube](#)

1. Have you heard God's voice; has your heart been stirred?
Are you still prepared to follow?
Have you made a choice to remain and serve, though the way be rough and narrow?

*Will you walk the path that will cost you much
And embrace the pain and sorrow?
Will you trust in One who entrusts to you
the disciples of tomorrow?*

2. Will you use your voice; will you not sit down when the multitudes are silent?
Will you make a choice to stand your ground when the crowds are turning violent?

Refrain

3. In your city streets will you be God's heart?
Will you listen to the voiceless?
Will you stop and eat, and when friendships start, will you share your faith with the faithless?

Refrain

4. Will you watch the news with the eyes of faith
And believe it could be different?
Will you share your views using words of grace?
Will you leave a thoughtful imprint?

*We will walk the path that will cost us much
And embrace the pain and sorrow.
We will trust in One who entrusts to us the
disciples of tomorrow.
(Jacqueline G Jones)*

A prayer of dismissal

Everything I am Lord, and everything I do.

Help me to be always more like you.

Teach me to be yours, Lord, show me when I'm wrong.

Help me to be always more like you.

You accepted all, Lord, help everyone to find the way.

Help me to be always more like you.

Amen. Go in peace to love and serve the Lord. **Amen.**

THE 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 ever more. Amen.

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