

Worship at Home - Sunday 24th October 2021

This short act of worship has been prepared for you to use at home. We invite you to spend a few moments with God, knowing that other people across the Methodist Connexion are sharing this act of worship with you.

Opening Prayer

Leader: Dear God, through autumn's beauty

All: Shine your light into all our lives

Leader: In autumn's unpredictable weather

All: Speak to all of us of your steadfastness

Leader: In autumn's melancholy

All: Bless all of us with your kindness

Leader: As autumn darkens we anticipate the Advent hope which will at length arrive

All: May we all hear your call to make way for Jesus

Hymn: StF 139 'Today I awake'. Listen to it here - <https://youtu.be/2uAGtJi00KE>

1. Today I awake and God is before me. At night, as I dreamt, he summoned the day; for God never sleeps but patterns the morning with slithers of gold or glory in grey.	2. Today I arise and Christ is beside me. He walked through the dark to scatter new light. Yes, Christ is alive, and beckons his people to hope and to heal, resist, and invite.	3. Today I affirm the Spirit within me at worship and work, in struggle and rest. The Spirit inspires all life which is changing from fearing to faith, from broken to blest.	4. Today I enjoy the Trinity round me, above and beneath, before and behind; the Maker, the Son, the Spirit together -- they called me to life and call me their friend.
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John L. Bell (b. 1949) and Graham Maule (b. 1958)

Prayer

Let us pray together to our generous God who abides with us, inhabits this broken world with us and loves us beyond measure.

Leader: When we struggle to love ourselves,

All: Lord, you love us completely

Leader: When we struggle to believe in ourselves,

All: Lord, you believe in us completely

Leader: When we struggle to forgive ourselves,

All: Lord, you forgive us completely

Leader: In this time of worship,

All: May we dare to trust your dreams for our lives because you hold us in your embrace. Amen

Old Testament Reading: ISAIAH 43 1-3a

New Testament Reading: COLOSSIANS 3 15-17

Time to Reflect

October

Dark mornings have arrived and where I walk, early each morning, meeting familiar people has become more important. Some are known by name – like Russell and Jean, John and Duncan, Stuart and Richard and Marjorie. Some are known only by their dogs – Bailey and Barney and Jack. Some are simply familiar

faces of walkers and joggers, horse riders and cyclists. All are welcome in the darker mornings. Skies can be spectacular –spectacularly grey, full of rain present and future; or with streaks of bright orange and red promising wind for later. Days grow shorter, as trees begin to welcome autumn with shades reminiscent of crabapple jelly and cranberry sauce, caramel and cinder toffee, chocolate limes and sherbet lemons. But when the sun shines, beech trees stand out from the crowd in their bronzy brilliance. Birds are back after their sleepy summer – blackbirds and robins, sparrows and collared doves. There are only hints of summer now, but life in human, canine and feathered form is present to be celebrated.

I wrote this reflection – brought together here as prose instead of poetry – when suffering from depression. Autumn is a kind of in between time in church, when it's easy to feel low, on the edge, in the shadows. But Jesus embraces all of us, calling us by our name and encouraging us to call one another by our names; to welcome one another and be glad of one another; to smile and be thankful for the company of his people. We aren't perfect – we are who and what we are – but Jesus has given the Spirit to bind us together in every season, of the church and of our lives, to dance and sing and be silent in thankfulness – together.

Take a time to sit quietly

We come now to prayers of intercession.

Loving God, your kingdom is a kingdom of justice and mercy. We pray for the leaders of the nations, for change where power is exploited; for strength of will and vision where there is real effort to be generous and fair. Today, we pray especially for all countries with inadequate supplies of vaccines

Your kingdom come. **Your will be done.**

Loving God, your kingdom is a kingdom of hope and joy. We pray for those near and far who are not well in body, mind or spirit - who are feeling sad, anxious, ill, forgotten, who feel on the edge of things; who are homeless or whose land is ravaged by fighting or disaster who are poor, hungry and in despair.

Your kingdom come. **Your will be done.**

Loving God, your kingdom is one of love and unity. We pray for your church, here and across the world, that we might be signs of your loving presence adding to a momentum of your inclusive, enfolding grace

Your kingdom come. **Your will be done.**

Loving God, your kingdom is one of light and life. We pray that we might, with deep thankfulness, dwell in the light and life of Jesus Christ, come to bring fullness of life to all.

Your kingdom come. **Your will be done. Amen.**

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father

Hymn: StF 468 'I was on your mind'

1. I was on your mind long before you formed the earth. By your grace you gave me life; I was on your mind.	2. Take me by the hand, lead me down your paths of truth. Mark my ways with peace and love; I am on your mind.	3. You know all my thoughts and ways, show me more of yours. All I am is all I have, in this gift of life.
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Mick Dalton

A prayer of blessing

Jesus calls us by name,
invites us each one into a future
filled with light, love and fulness of life.
May his blessing rest on us all. Amen.

Original Materials by Rev Jean Hudson
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