



Sunday 10 January 2021 10:30 am

Rev'd Tony and Mrs Cathy Morling

This short act of worship has been prepared for you to use whilst we are unable to use Methodist Church premises. We invite you to spend a few moments with God, knowing that other people are sharing this act of worship with you.

Opening Prayer

We gather before you creator God,
To bring you our praise and worship,
And to experience your love for us.
Be with us, unite us with our family of
faith
Refresh us body, mind and soul
And open our hearts to your word.
Amen.

Hymn: 161 Speak O Lord,

Sing/ Read /pray /proclaim the words or
listen to it here:

<https://youtu.be/ubRIJi8xkds>

Speak, O Lord, as we come to you
to receive the food of your holy word.
Take your truth, plant it deep in us;
shape and fashion us in your likeness,
that the light of Christ might be seen today
in our acts of love and our deeds of faith.
Speak, O Lord, and fulfil in us
all your purposes, for your glory.

Teach us, Lord, full obedience,
holy reverence, true humility.
Test our thoughts and our attitudes
in the radiance of your purity.
Cause our faith to rise, cause our eyes to see
your majestic love and authority.
Words of power that can never fail;
let their truth prevail over unbelief.

Speak, O Lord, and renew our minds;
help us grasp the heights of your plans for us.

Truths unchanged from the dawn of time
that will echo down through eternity.
And by grace we'll stand on your promises,
and by faith we'll walk as you walk with us.
Speak, O Lord, till your Church is built
and the earth is filled with your glory.

Keith Getty (b. 1974) and Stuart Townend (b. 1963)



Let us pray together

Gracious God, whose life was made
known in the weakness of a child, your
son, who, when the time was right, went
out to the Jordan to be baptized by John,
grant us such humility of mind and heart,
that with an obedient spirit we may wait
upon you in adoration and thanksgiving.
All honour and praise be given to you,
our God.

Loving God, we have come to learn the
truths of Christ, to seek courage to follow
in the ways of Christ, and in the spirit of
Christ to meditate on the purpose of life.
Grant us grace to be open to Christ's
leading, and to use our minds and
imagination, our experience and
relationships in the service of Christ's
kingdom.

Today's Gospel Reading:

Mark 1:4-11 (NRSV)

The preaching of John the Baptist and the Baptism of Jesus

⁴ John the baptizer appeared in the wilderness, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. ⁵ And people from the whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem were going out to him, and were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. ⁶ Now John was clothed with camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. ⁷ He proclaimed, "The one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to stoop down and untie the thong of his sandals. ⁸ I have baptized you with water; but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit."



⁹ In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. ¹⁰ And just as he was coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens torn apart and the Spirit descending like a dove on him. ¹¹ And a voice came from heaven, "You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased."

Time to Reflect

I'd like to invite you to take a few moments to think about your Baptism and what it expresses of God's relationship with you.

Maybe you were baptised as an adult and can remember the time and place, or perhaps you like me were baptised as an infant and have to rely of other people's memories. Either way, Baptism is a powerful expression of God's unconditional love that takes us all the way back to Jesus, when he steps into Israel's greatest river, and discovers the heaven-sent gift of the Spirit that brings life to our world. Some of Jesus' last words to his disciples were to, "*Go, then, to all peoples everywhere and make them my disciples: baptise them in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.*" And for 2,000 years that is what Christians have done. In chapels, churches, cathedrals; one generation to another; they have dipped, dunked and poured water to express the quality of life that faith in Christ brings.

Water is life. Life without water cannot exist. So what better symbol of Baptism could there be? With water's ability to cleanse, its power to transform and reshape, and our total inability to live without it, we learn much about the Spirit of God.

Through Baptism in Christ we have been washed clean and offered a source of ongoing renewal.

Through Baptism in Christ we have received the Holy Spirit, God's presence in our lives, helping us to change and

reshape ourselves into the people we are called to be.

Through Baptism in Christ we have been given life, true life, eternal life.

God is with us, flowing through us and out from us into our world: the source of life for all, a force which can never be completely cut off, and a blessing that will never leave us.

There may be times when we don't notice God's presence, when we feel he is distant or has abandoned us, like a tap giving nothing. Don't be fooled, God is always with us, waiting for us to discover him, to turn to him, to rely on him. He is waiting to wash through us and make us truly alive.



I was baptised at Galaad Methodist Chapel, Millbrook and there are even some folk who like to remind me that they were present at that service! I was three months old and the name of J. Lucas was Cradle Roll Secretary who signed the certificate. In that moment I was symbolically welcomed into the life of Christ as water was poured onto my head three times, *"In the name of the Father, Son & Holy Spirit."*

As I reflect upon my Baptism, I am deeply grateful for that sacrament of unconditional grace that began a journey of continuing, divine generosity. Baptism offers *life and life in all its fullness** to me, to you and to all. All are included. And if you have never been baptised, then it is never too late. The oldest person I have seen baptised was in her late 80's!

So let me invite you this coming week to think about Baptism and the layers of meaning that lie within its symbolism and its powerful sacrament.

And then give thanks to the Father who whispers to you as he did to Jesus: you are known, you are loved, and I delight in you.

*John 10:10

Take a time to sit quietly

A time of prayer

Please pause to consider each situation

Father God, we come to you with open hearts and minds to pray for our world,

For all who are working to help others.

For all who are unwell in body, mind or soul.

For all who fear the effects of Covid-19

For all who struggle to fill their daily needs and fear for their future.

For all who feel alone or isolated.

For Church, family, friends and neighbours.

For ourselves, right here and now, all we are and think and feel.

Father we place our world into your hands, in all things and all places may your will be done
Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father

Hymn: 233 When Jesus came

When Jesus came to Jordan
To be baptized by John,
He did not come for pardon,
But as his Father's Son.
He came to share repentance
With all who mourn their sins,
To speak the vital sentence
With which good news begins.

He came to share temptation,
Our utmost woe and loss,
For us and our salvation
To die upon the cross.
So when the Dove descended
On him, the Son of Man,
The hidden years had ended,
The age of grace began.

Come, Holy Spirit, aid us
To keep the vows we make,
This very day invade us,
And every bondage break.
Come, give our lives direction,
The gift we covet most:
To share the resurrection
That leads to Pentecost.

A prayer of blessing

Loving God, be with us this day and always, flow in us and through us, cleanse, renew and reshape us. Reminding us always that no matter what, you remain with us. Amen.



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