

Sunday 2nd May 2021

Priory Methodist Church, Bedford

10.30am

Morning Worship led by Rev. Andrew Hollins

Welcome & Short piece of introductory music

Call to Worship

Introduction to A Methodist Way of Life ~ Week One focus = Worship

The calling of the Methodist Church is to respond to the gospel of God's love in Christ and to live out its discipleship in worship and mission – *Worship : Learning & Caring : Service : Evangelism*.

Singing the Faith 24 ~ Come, now is the time to worship,

Come, now is the time to worship.

Come, now is the time to give your heart.

Come, just as you are to worship.

Come, just as you are before your God, come.

One day every tongue will confess you are God,
one day every knee will bow.

Still, the greatest treasure remains

for those who gladly choose you now.

Brian Doerksen (b. 1965). © 1998 Vineyard Songs UK. Reproduced under CCL Licence 6663.

Prayer

Gospel Reading ~ The Gospel of John, chapter 15, verses 1-11 read by Ria Thomas

(New Revised Standard Version of the Bible)

(Jesus said) 'I am the true vine, and my Father is the vine-grower. He removes every branch in me that bears no fruit. Every branch that bears fruit he prunes to make it bear more fruit. You have already been cleansed by the word that I have spoken to you. Abide in me as I abide in you. Just as the branch cannot bear fruit by itself unless it abides in the vine, neither can you unless you abide in me. I am the vine, you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing. Whoever does not abide in me is thrown away like a branch and withers; such branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned. If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask for whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit and become my disciples. As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you; abide in my love. If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love. I have said these things to you so that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be complete.

Reflection on A Methodist Way of Life ~ Worship commitments

As far as we are able, with God's help: We will pray daily. We will worship with others regularly.

We will look and listen for God in the Scriptures, and the world.

Bible Reading ~ The Acts of the Apostles, chapter 8, verses 26-35 read by Liz Heap

(New Revised Standard Version of the Bible)

Then an angel of the Lord said to Philip, 'Get up and go towards the south to the road that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza.' (This is a wilderness road.) So he got up and went. Now there was an Ethiopian eunuch, a court official of the Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, in charge of her entire treasury. He had come to Jerusalem to worship and was returning home; seated in his chariot, he was reading the prophet Isaiah. Then the Spirit said to Philip, 'Go over to this chariot and join it.' So Philip ran up to it and heard him reading the prophet Isaiah. He asked, 'Do you understand what you are reading?' He replied, 'How can I, unless someone guides me?' And he invited Philip to get in and sit beside him. Now the passage of the scripture that he was reading was this:

'Like a sheep he was led to the slaughter,

and like a lamb silent before its shearer, so he does not open his mouth.

In his humiliation justice was denied him.

Who can describe his generation? For his life is taken away from the earth.'

The eunuch asked Philip, 'About whom, may I ask you, does the prophet say this, about himself or about someone else?' Then Philip began to speak, and starting with this scripture, he proclaimed to him the good news about Jesus.

Reflection on A Methodist Way of Life ~ *A Methodist Way of Life* encourages us to grow together. Make time to discuss these questions regularly with others:

- What is the pattern of your prayer life?
- How easy or hard do you find it to pray?
- What has spoken to you recently in worship or in the Bible?
- When, lately, have you felt close to God or distant from God?

Singing the Faith 524 ~ Listening God, you hear us when we cannot speak, (*Tune ~ Noel Nouvelet*)

1. Listening God, you hear us when we cannot speak,
when despair and turmoil leave us faint and weak.
In love you call us back to you again
and your grace reminds us how you feel our pain.
2. Searching God, you find us when we go astray,
as self-centred living takes us from your way.
In love you seek us, show us what we've lost,
and your tears remind us what forgiveness cost.
3. Suffering God, you lift us from our deepest grief,
when emotion blinds us to our own belief.
In love you touch us with your nail-torn hand
and your wounds remind us why you understand.
4. Risen God, you show us love too strong for death,
evil deeds defeated by your living breath.
In love you teach us never to despair,
your new life reminds us, hope is always there.

Author Marjorie Dobson (b. 1940). © 2004 Stainer & Bell Ltd. Reproduced under CCL Licence 6663.

Praying Together

The Lord's Prayer

Singing the Faith 158 – Lord, you sometimes speak in wonders, (*Singing to the tune Stuttgart, StF 169i, means omitting the final line of each verse as it is printed in the Singing the Faith hymnbook*).

1. Lord, you sometimes speak in wonders,
unmistakeable and clear,
mighty signs that show your presence,
overcoming doubt and fear.
2. Lord, you sometimes speak in whispers,
still and small and scarcely heard;
only those who want to listen
catch the all-important word.
3. Lord, you sometimes speak in silence,
through our loud and noisy day;
we can know and trust you better
when we quietly wait and pray.
4. Lord, you often speak in Scripture,
words that summon from the page,
shown and taught us by your Spirit
with fresh light for every age.
5. Lord, you always speak in Jesus,
always new yet still the same:
teach us now more of our Saviour,
make our lives display his Name.

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Closing Prayer / Blessing and/or **The Grace**

Short piece of concluding music