

Worship at Home - Sunday 4 December 2022

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. Before you begin you will need a candle/night light (& some way of lighting it!)

Opening Prayer

Jesus, Light of the World,
as I light this candle, I join with all those
across the Connexion who are shining as lights
in worship this morning. Spirit of the living
God, fall afresh on each of us. AMEN

Hymn: StF185 Sing we the king who is coming

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

[Sing we the King who is coming to reign \(StF 185\) \(methodist.org.uk\)](https://www.methodist.org.uk/stf185)

Sing we the King who is coming to reign;
glory to Jesus, the Lamb that was slain!
Life and salvation his empire shall bring,
joy to the nations when Jesus is King:

Come let us sing:praise to our King,
Jesus our King, Jesus our King:
this is our song, who to Jesus belong:
glory to Jesus, to Jesus our King.

All shall be well in his kingdom of peace;
freedom shall flourish and wisdom increase;
justice and truth from his sceptre shall spring;
wrong shall be ended when Jesus is King:

Souls shall be saved from the burden of sin;
doubt shall not darken his witness within;
hell has no terrors, and death has no sting;
love is victorious when Jesus is King:

Kingdom of Christ, for your coming we pray;
hasten, O Father, the dawn of the day
when this new song your creation shall sing;
Satan is vanquished and Jesus is King:

Charles Silvester Horne (1865-1914)

Let us pray together

Eternal and ever loving God,
You love the world so much
that you sent your son Jesus
to take flesh and live our life.
We praise you.

Jesus our light,
you love people like us so much
that you call us friends.
We praise you.

Spirit of God,
your love inspires our love,
draws us to Christ and deepens our faith.
We praise you.

Triune God,
who comes, in Advent as always,
Cleanse us from all iniquity
and strengthen us in our discipleship
that we may welcome you in Christ,
as you will welcome us
when he comes again in glory. Amen

Today's Reading from the Old Testament

Isaiah 11:1-10

Today's Gospel Reading: Matthew 3:1-12

Time to Reflect

Our first reading is often used in carol services, heard referring to the young Jesus. But the references to judgement in vs 3 & 4 do not sit comfortably with any sentimental view of "gentle Jesus meek and mild". Neither do the harsh words of John the Baptist in Matthew's account of his ministry. How do you understand being judged by God? Does it fill you with joy or fear or something else?

If you are able to do so safely, try holding your hand above your candle, then move it slowly closer to the flame (but don't burn yourself!). Notice how the sensation changes from gentle warmth to heat that would become painful. Bear this in mind as you reflect on John's words "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near."

His words are echoed exactly by Jesus as he starts his ministry (Matt 4:17). The translation of "come near" is tricky, with hints of "just about arrived". This is the kingdom (or reign) of God that Jesus taught so much about. It is a place of grace and welcome for the least and the lost, but is also one of stern judgement for the arrogant and self-righteous. What issues in today's news do you think would face stern judgement by the Kingdom's standards?

The vision in Isaiah is of a world redeemed and transformed by the earth being full of the knowledge of God (v9). What part might God be calling you to play in sharing that "knowledge of God"? How might you respond this week?

Take a time to sit quietly

A time of prayer

(based on MWB Advent communion intercessions)

In joyful expectation of his coming to reign we pray to our Lord, saying,
Come, Lord Jesus.

Come to your world as King of the nations.
We pray for the places where war robs the weak and feeds the bully....
We hold in our prayers leaders of our nation and all nations that wisdom and good council may be their guide, especially we remember.....
Before you rulers will stand in silence.
Come, Lord Jesus.

Come to your Church as Lord and Judge.
We pray for our own Methodist Church, giving thanks for the way we are connected across the country and the globe.
We give thanks for our District Chair, our Superintendent, and our own Minister, asking that you fill them with your Spirit. And for our

own congregation, may we do justly, love mercy and walk humbly with you, our God.
Help us to live in the light of your coming and give us a longing to do your will.

Come, Lord Jesus.

Come to your people
as Saviour and bearer of pain.

We pray for those we know who are bereaved, who face their own imminent death and all those who love and care for them.

Enfold us all in your love and mercy,
wipe away the tears of failure, fear and distress,
and set us free to serve you forever.

Come, Lord Jesus.

Come to us from heaven
with power and great glory,
and lift us up to meet you,
where with all your saints and angels,
we will live with you forever.

Come, Lord Jesus. Amen.

Silence

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father

Hymn: Listen to StF175 "Light of the World"
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6CKCThJB5w0> or sing a verse of a hymn that comes to mind

Light of the world,
you stepped down into darkness,
opened my eyes, let me see
beauty that made this heart adore you,
hope of a life spent with you.

So here I am to worship,
here I am to bow down,
here I am to say that you're my God,
and you're altogether lovely,
altogether worthy,
altogether wonderful to me.

King of all days
oh so highly exalted,
glorious in heaven above.
Humbly you came
to the earth you created,
all for love's sake became poor.

So here I am to worship ...

And I'll never know how much it cost
to see my sin upon that cross.
And I'll never know how much it cost
to see my sin upon that cross.

So here I am to worship ...

Tim Hughes

A prayer of blessing

May the God who comes to us in Jesus,
Bless protect and guide us and all we pray for
This day and always. Amen

Original Materials by Phil Challis

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We are grateful to all the Ministers and Local Preachers from around the Connexion who have contributed to Worship at Home. This resource is administrated by Ministries: Vocations and Worship in the Connexional Team and will end at the end of 2022.

For more worship resources see

[The Bible \(methodist.org.uk\)](http://methodist.org.uk)

[Singing the Faith Plus \(methodist.org.uk\)](http://methodist.org.uk)

Isaiah 11:1-10

11:1 A shoot shall come out from the stump of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots.
2 The spirit of the LORD shall rest on him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD.
3 His delight shall be in the fear of the LORD. He shall not judge by what his eyes see, or decide by what his ears hear;
4 but with righteousness he shall judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth; he shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips he shall kill the wicked.
5 Righteousness shall be the belt around his waist, and faithfulness the belt around his loins.
6 The wolf shall live with the lamb, the leopard shall lie down with the kid, the calf and the lion and the fatling together, and a little child shall lead them.
7 The cow and the bear shall graze, their young shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox.
8 The nursing child shall play over the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put its hand on the adder's den.
9 They will not hurt or destroy on all my holy mountain; for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea.
10 On that day the root of Jesse shall stand as a signal to the peoples; the nations shall inquire of him, and his dwelling shall be glorious.

1 IN THOSE days John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness of Judea, proclaiming, 2 "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near." 3 This is the one of whom the prophet Isaiah spoke when he said, "The voice of one crying out in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.'" 4 Now John wore clothing of camel's hair with a leather belt around his waist, and his food was locusts and wild honey. 5 Then the people of Jerusalem and all Judea were going out to him, and all the region along the Jordan, 6 and they were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. 7 But when he saw many Pharisees and Sadducees coming for baptism, he said to them, "You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? 8 Bear fruit worthy of repentance. 9 Do not presume to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our ancestor'; for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham. 10 Even now the ax is lying at the root of the trees; every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. 11 "I baptize you with water for repentance, but one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to carry his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. 12 His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor and will gather his wheat into the granary; but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire."