



## Sunday, October 25<sup>th</sup> 2020

This short act of worship has been prepared for you to use. If you are well enough why not spend a few moments with God, knowing that other people are sharing this act of worship with you.

### Call to worship

Wherever we worship, whether alone or with others; whether in church, at home or elsewhere; whether we are full of joy or overwhelmed by fear and despair; we are thankful that we worship together as a community of Christ. Amen.

### Hymn "Let love be real, in giving and receiving"

Listen to it here:

<https://youtu.be/SkBAxZw5NxU>

or read the words

Let love be real, in giving and receiving, without the need to manage and to own; a haven free from posing and pretending, where every weakness may be safely known. Give me your hand, along the desert pathway, give me your love wherever we may go.

As God loves us, so let us love each other: with no demands, just open hands and space to grow.

Let love be real, not grasping or confining, that strange embrace that holds yet sets us free; that helps us face the risk of truly living,

and makes us brave to be what we might be. Give me your strength when all my words are weakness; give me your love in spite of all you know.

Let love be real, with no manipulation, no secret wish to harness or control; let us accept each other's incompleteness, and share the joy of learning to be whole. Give me your hope through dreams and disappointments; give me your trust when all my failings show.

*Michael Forster (b. 1946)*

### Prayers of adoration, thanks and confession

We pray together

Holy God, creator of all things and source of all holiness, we praise you for all that you provide for us materially and spiritually; we give thanks for the gift of your Son, Jesus Christ, who showed to us that perfect example of human love; we praise you for your Holy Spirit, who empowers us to share that love with others. We give thanks for our local Christian communities and the worldwide church to which we belong; may we praise you with one voice. God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit; accept our praise and adoration. Amen.

We confess our sins to God.

*Silence*

We confess that we have not loved you with heart, soul and mind. We have failed to love our neighbours as ourselves. Help us to become the loving people you want us to be. Amen.

Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners. This is his gracious word: "Your sins are forgiven." Amen. Thanks be to God.

**Today's Gospel Reading** Matthew 22:34-40

### **Time to Reflect**

Many questions have been on our minds throughout the Covid-19 crisis. Would fewer lives have been lost if lockdown measures were introduced sooner? Were care homes, facilities, dealt with properly? Could more lives have been saved if...? All of these are difficult to answer. In the gospel reading, Jesus is asked a loaded question by a lawyer.

"Teacher, which commandment in the law is the greatest?" *Matt. 22:36*

This question is dynamite. Jesus is being asked to make a judgement on which of God's commandments, written in the laws of Moses, is greatest. This is like asking a politician which law of the land is the most important. Imagine the field day the tabloid press would have!

I dare say that the lawyer was very pleased with his question, certain he had Jesus trapped. There was no answer he could give that would not land him in deep trouble.

How wrong could he be? Rather than picking out two of the laws, Jesus expertly sums up the whole of God's law: love God and neighbour. This answer silences the lawyer and the Pharisees, as there is nothing for them to argue with.

We may argue over points of doctrine and practice within Methodism and across denominations. It would be so much better if our primary motivation was always to simply love God and neighbour. The church and the world would certainly be better places and, as Charles Wesley writes, 'the joy of heaven' would 'to earth come down'.

Forget the difficult questions, focus instead on Christ's simple answer – love! Love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind; and love your neighbour as yourself. Amen.

Take a time to sit quietly

### **Prayers of intercession**

Loving God, as we mediate on Christ's commandment to love, we pray for the church throughout the world; for justice and peace between and within nations; for political leaders and all in authority; for the communities in which we live; for people who suffer in any way; and for all those on our minds today.

*Silence*

May the presence of your love be felt in every situation. We give thanks for those who have died, especially those who have lived in the love of Christ. May we be united with them in your eternal kingdom. Amen.

### **The Lord's Prayer**

Our Father...

## Hymn "In Christ Alone"

Listen to it here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rjiiF83q7G0>

or read the words

In Christ alone my hope is found He is my light, my strength, my song This Cornerstone, this solid ground Firm through the fiercest drought and storm What heights of love, what depths of peace When fears are stilled, when strivings cease My Comforter, my All in All Here in the love of Christ I stand

In Christ alone, who took on flesh Fullness of God in helpless Babe This gift of love and righteousness Scorned by the ones He came to save 'Til on that cross as Jesus died The wrath of God was satisfied For every sin on Him was laid Here in the death of Christ I live

There in the ground His body lay Light of the world by darkness slain Then bursting forth in glorious Day Up from the grave He rose again And as He stands in victory Sin's curse has lost its grip on me For I am His and He is mine Bought with the precious blood of Christ

No guilt in life, no fear in death This is the power of Christ in me From life's first cry to final breath Jesus commands my destiny No power of hell, no scheme of man Can ever pluck me from His hand 'Til He returns or calls me home Here in the power of Christ I stand

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### A prayer of blessing

May everything we do be guided by the law of Christ's love; and now may the blessing of God: the Father, the Son and

the Holy Spirit, be with us this day and forevermore. Amen.

Based on Liturgy by Tom Ferguson  
Adaptation Rev. Pablo Róvere  
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**(559) 584 4075** Epistle Reading

### Matthew 22:34-40

When the Pharisees heard that he had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered together, and one of them, a lawyer, asked him a question to test him. 'Teacher, which commandment in the law is the greatest?' He said to him, "'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.'" This is the greatest and first commandment. And a second is like it: "You shall love your neighbour as yourself." On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.'