



# The Methodist Church

Nottingham North East Circuit - Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> November 2020

This short act of worship, based on the service which would have been held at Church today, has been prepared for you by Rev John Wiseman, to use at home. 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.

I have included some links to allow you to access versions of the hymns / songs / music via YouTube

## Let's begin by singing a hymn whose sentiment perhaps describes how we would like the world to be. STF 255

The kingdom of God is justice and joy;  
for Jesus restores  
what sin would destroy.  
God's power and glory  
in Jesus we know  
and here and hereafter  
the kingdom shall grow.

The kingdom of God  
is mercy and grace;  
the captives are freed,  
the sinners find place,  
the outcast are welcomed  
God's banquet to share;  
and hope is awakened  
in place of despair.

The kingdom of God  
is challenge and choice:  
believe the good news,  
repent and rejoice!  
His love for us sinners  
brought Christ to his cross:  
our crisis of judgement  
for gain or for loss.

God's kingdom is come,  
the gift and the goal;  
in Jesus begun,  
in heaven made whole.  
The heirs of the kingdom  
shall answer his call  
and all things cry 'Glory!'  
to God all in all.

## Opening prayer: based on Isaiah 2:2-4

Come, let us go up to the mountain of God, to the house of the God of Jacob; That God may teach us his ways, and that we may walk in his paths. For the law shall go out from Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. God shall judge between the nations, and shall mediate for many peoples. They shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more. O people of Jacob, come: let us walk in the light of the Lord.

## Bible reading: Matthew 5:5-12 Blessed are...

5 When Jesus<sup>[a]</sup> saw the crowds, he went up the mountain; and after he sat down, his disciples came to him. <sup>2</sup> Then he began to speak, and taught them, saying:

<sup>3</sup> "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. <sup>4</sup> "Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted. <sup>5</sup> "Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth. <sup>6</sup> "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.

<sup>7</sup> "Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy. <sup>8</sup> "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God. <sup>9</sup> "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God. <sup>10</sup> "Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

<sup>11</sup> "Blessed are you when people revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely<sup>[b]</sup> on my account. <sup>12</sup> Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for in the same way

they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

### Let's sing again. STF 707

Make me a channel of your peace.  
Where there is hatred let me bring your love.  
Where there is injury, Your pardon, Lord;  
And where there's doubt, true faith in You.

Oh, Master grant that I may never seek  
So much to be consoled as to console  
To be understood as to understand;  
To be loved as to love with all my soul.

Make me a channel of your peace  
Where there's despair in life, let me bring hope  
Where there is darkness, only light  
And where there's sadness, ever joy.

Oh, Master grant that I may never seek  
So much to be consoled as to console  
To be understood as to understand;  
To be loved as to love with all my soul.

Make me a channel of your peace  
It is in pardoning that we are pardoned  
In giving to all men that we receive  
And in dying that we're born to eternal life.

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=ihhvm6eLWZI](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ihhvm6eLWZI)

### Today's Message

Today I am quietly convinced that once this act of worship is over you'll be able to ring up all your family and friends that you have just heard the greatest sermon ever preached. And by that I don't mean this one, but rather a snippet from the Sermon on the Mount as found in Matthew's Gospel, a section we know as the beatitudes that contains a line that is perhaps most relevant for today, when we remember the effects of war

**"Blessed are the peacemakers because they shall be called Children of God"**

And with it being such a familiar passage it's easy to skip over that line, just nod our head in agreement. And forget what it is that Jesus doesn't actually say

Jesus doesn't actually say that those who will be blessed and called children of God are...

**Peace breakers...** These are those people who go out of their way to break down relationships; to cause trouble and division. They're the deliberately confrontational people - they have to confront, disagree with everything. But their motivation is self; they are manipulative/self-seeking.

**Peace fakers...** These are the ones who prefer 'false peace' over truth. Peace-fakers see 'peace' as simply the absence of any kind of argument, tension or discord. They will go to any lengths to avoid any kind of conflict / confrontation / unrest. In doing so they settle for a counterfeit peace a fake peace that is based on avoiding the real issues. As Martin Luther King said "True peace is not merely the absence of tension, but the presence of justice and a unity that binds us together"

**Peaceful...** Jesus doesn't commend people for the type of personality they have. He doesn't even credit those who are **Peacekeepers...**

The people that Jesus commends are those who actively make peace...because peace is not something that happens by chance, or occurs via a passive process. Peace must be made. And those who are peace makers always take the initiative. They are up and doing. Peace is a goal, it's an aim, it's something we strive for. Its work! And it's often hard work!

In the language that the New Testament was written, which was Greek, there are four different words to describe love and yet in the English language we use a single word to describe a multitude of emotions. So what about the word peace...well again perhaps English isn't the best language to think about the concept.

In Hebrew the equivalent word for peace is the word shalom. Often used as a greeting word or a departing word in much the same way we would utter "hello" or "goodbye," But its meaning is so much more

It is a broad term related to health, prosperity, harmony, and wholeness. It means perfect welfare, serenity, fulfilment, freedom from trouble, and liberation from anything which hinders contentment. When a Jew said "Shalom" they were wishing on another the full presence, peace, and prosperity of all the blessedness of God. The famous benediction of Numbers 6:24-26 brings out this idea very clearly: "The LORD bless you and

protect you; the LORD make His face shine on you, and be gracious to you; the LORD look with favour on you and give you peace” (Num. 6:24-25).

It is that kind of peace Jesus asks us to strive for, to be part of, and to give. Peace in our relationships. Peace with ourselves / with our past. Peace with God

Experiencing Shalom is not about alienation but acceptance. Not about chaos but order. Not about discord but harmony. Not about danger but safety. Not about anger but self-restraint. Not about fear but faith. Not about timidity but confidence. Not about anxiety but calm. Not about impulsive but self-discipline. Not about a sense of being alone but of being a community. Not about a being stranger but family. Not about sickness but health. Not about agitation but a settled spirit. Not about hostility but friendship. Not about bitterness but reconciliation. Not about separation but togetherness. Not about being broken but being repaired. Not immature but complete. Not damaged but whole. Not ruined but restored

The Nobel Peace Prize has been awarded 10 times to 133 Nobel Laureates between 1901 and 2020, 107 individuals and 28 organizations, with the latest being the World Food Programme for its efforts to combat hunger, for its contribution to bettering conditions for peace in conflict-affected areas and for acting as a driving force in efforts to prevent the use of hunger as a weapon of war and conflict”.

In the past decade the prize has been given

“for the efforts to end the use of sexual violence as a weapon of war and armed conflict”

for work to draw attention to the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of any use of nuclear weapons and for its ground-breaking efforts to achieve a treaty-based prohibition of such weapons”

“for efforts to bring to an end Columbia’s more than 50-year-long civil war”

“for the building of a democracy in Tunisia in the wake of the Jasmine Revolution of 2011”

“for the struggle against the suppression of children and young people and for the right of all children to education”

“for extensive efforts to eliminate chemical weapons”

“for over six decades contributing to the advancement of peace and reconciliation, democracy and human rights in Europe”

“for the non-violent struggle for the safety of women and for women’s rights to full participation in peace-building work”

“for the long and non-violent struggle for fundamental human rights in China”

As of 2020, this prize is worth **9,000,000 SEK**, or about £716,224 but the acclaim, stature and position that follow, together with the speaking fees and other engagements, increase that value enormously. To join that elite group is considered by many to be a very high honour.

As Christians, however, a far greater reward awaits each and every one of us for although our names may never appear before the Norwegian committee for consideration, we will find ourselves as part of a much higher role call when as peacemakers we will be blessed and called Children of God

Today...on Remembrance Sunday I wonder what we are remembering and celebrating? Remembering those who died, and I hope those who died on all sides and not just in the world wars but in all conflicts since. Remembering the end of hostilities, the end of war And remembering that peace is still being sought, still in need, still in short supply in so many places, still needs to be worked on, still needs to be pursued, still needs to be made. In this world, on this continent, in this country, in this city, in this community even within this church family

And as followers of Jesus we are called not to be peace breakers, peace fakers, peace keepers or even peaceful people. We are called to be peace makers receiving and passing on the peace that only Jesus gives. The peace that passes all understanding. **Amen**

**Let's sing once more STF 131**  
**This can be sung to either Scarlet Ribbons (see**  
**YouTube link) or the tune for Love divine, all loves**  
**excelling**

By a monument of marble,  
Or by a simple wooden cross,  
Here we gather to remember  
Sacrifice and tragic loss.  
Blood-red poppy petals flutter,  
Each a symbol for a life,  
Drifting in a crimson curtain,  
Shadow of our constant strife.

By a monument of marble  
Solemn silence now surrounds us  
As we stand in memory.  
Why should evil lead to conflict?  
This eternal mystery  
Troubles hearts and stirs the conscience,  
Urges us to think again;  
Face the curse of confrontation,  
Yet reduce this searing pain.

By a monument of marble  
For the sound of war still thunders  
Through our planet, on this day.  
Every hour new victims suffer,  
Even as we meet to pray.  
God, beyond our understanding,  
Peace seems far beyond our reach;  
Move us on to new solutions  
Through that active love You teach.

Words Marjorie Dobson Music @ Alfred Music Ltd

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=3Swzc4ZCQ48](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3Swzc4ZCQ48)

**Prayers of Intercessions**

Let us pray for the areas of God's world where  
peace is sorely needed

Let us pray for all the peacemakers of the world

Let us pray for Inter faith week (8<sup>th</sup> – 15<sup>th</sup>) and  
closer ties between those of different faiths

Let us pray for our local community

Let us pray for those we know who are currently  
not at peace

We join together to say the words of the Lord's  
prayer...Our Father.....

**Let us conclude this act of worship by singing STF**  
**696**

**For the healing of the nations,**  
Lord, we pray with one accord,  
for a just and equal sharing  
of the things that earth affords.  
To a life of love in action  
help us rise and pledge our word.

Lead us forward into freedom,  
from despair your world release,  
that, redeemed from war and hatred,  
all may come and go in peace.  
Show us how through care and goodness  
fear will die and hope increase.

All that kills abundant living,  
let it from the earth be banned:  
pride of status, race or schooling,  
dogmas that obscure your plan.  
In our common quest for justice  
may we hallow brief life's span.

You, Creator God, have written  
your great name on humankind;  
for our growing in your likeness  
bring the life of Christ to mind;  
that by our response and service  
earth its destiny may find.

Fred Kaan words @ Stainer & Bell 1968

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=scgCsefXtCw](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=scgCsefXtCw)

**A blessing...**

Go into this week, ready to offer the peace that  
God has given you, to all who are troubled in body,  
mind and spirit. Amen.