

# The Methodist Church

Nottingham North East Circuit - Sunday 25<sup>th</sup> October 2020

## ALL YOU NEED IS LOVE

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

### Opening prayer based on 1 Corinthians 13

#### Let's begin by singing together

How deep the Father's love for us,  
How vast beyond all measure,  
That He should give His only Son  
To make a wretch His treasure.  
How great the pain of searing loss –  
The Father turns His face away,  
As wounds which mar the Chosen One  
Bring many sons to glory.

Behold the man upon a cross,  
My sin upon His shoulders;  
Ashamed, I hear my mocking voice  
Call out among the scoffers.  
It was my sin that held Him there  
Until it was accomplished;  
His dying breath has brought me life –  
I know that it is finished.

I will not boast in anything,  
No gifts, no power, no wisdom;  
But I will boast in Jesus Christ,  
His death and resurrection.  
Why should I gain from His reward?  
I cannot give an answer;  
But this I know with all my heart –  
His wounds have paid my ransom.

Stuart Townend Copyright © 1995 Thankyou Music

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=DOXnzYPMhWY](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DOXnzYPMhWY)

#### Loving God,

Because love is patient...

**Help me not to be quick to judge, quick to be offended, quick to anger, quick to criticize. Grant me the gift to step back, to think, to reflect on how my actions might harm others**

Because love is kind...

**Help me to hold my tongue when provoked. Allow my words to be gentle and my actions considerate. Remind me that it is the little things that go so far. A smile, a please, a thank you even a sorry.**

Because love does not envy or boast, and it is not proud...

**Help me to not to be proud and boastful. Instil in me a sense of humility and gratitude for all that I have rather than for what I something want. Grant me the grace to see the good in others**

Because love is not rude or self-seeking...

**Help me to remember that the world, your world does not revolve around me. Allow me to serve rather than wait to be served, to put others before myself, to put interdependence before independence**

Because love is not easily angered and keeps no record of wrongs...

**Help me to forgive others as you have forgiven me. All me to let go of grudges and ill feeling towards others. Enable me to be the one who makes the first move in rebuilding damaged relationships.**

Because love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth...

**Help me to defend the defenceless, help the helpless and give voice to the voiceless. Use me make a difference.**

Because love always protects and always trusts...  
**Help me to offer a safe space for those in need, a safe harbour for those battered by the storms of life, a shelter in moments of trouble. When the world seems cold and hard, allow me to offer warmth and comfort.**

Finally, because love always perseveres...  
**Grant me the peace to know that you will always be with me, guiding me, supporting me, loving me. Amen.**

**This morning's reading: Matthew 22: 34-40**

<sup>34</sup> When the Pharisees heard that he had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered together, <sup>35</sup> and one of them, a lawyer, asked him a question to test him. <sup>36</sup> "Teacher, which commandment in the law is the greatest?" <sup>37</sup> 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.' <sup>38</sup> This is the greatest and first commandment. <sup>39</sup> And a second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbour as yourself.' <sup>40</sup> On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets."

**Let's sing yet another new song to the familiar tune 'God is love let heaven adore him'**

Christ, your words of love confound us,  
even as we give you praise,  
for the lessons that you teach us  
seem so far from this world's ways.  
How can we love those who hate us?  
How can we love enemies?  
What of people who abuse us?  
How can we love even these?

Make us mindful: love is action,  
not a feeling that uplifts.  
In each daily situation,  
love's the greatest of all gifts.  
It's the wiser, stronger person

who will break the chain of hate.  
Love can usher in redemption;  
love can make a people great.

Faced with those who seek to hurt us,  
make us confident and free:  
you don't call us to be helpless  
but to stand with dignity.  
Lord, when others are demanding,  
may we know they matter more  
than our money or possessions.  
May we share, not keeping score.

If we love just those who love us,  
where's the giving? Where's the grace?  
Even sinners try to do this;  
they have friends that they embrace.  
May we do, Lord, unto others  
as we'd have them also do.  
You have shown us: Love is action.  
May we love, and make things new.

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### **Today's message**

One of the most famous passages in the bible, recognised by those of faith and no faith is 1 Corinthians 13. Go on I'm going to give you a few minutes to find it and read it. I'll wait for you.

Now imagine you had the gift of the gab, and I realise that some of you might need to use a little less imagination than others...lol. But imagine if you had not just kissed the blarney stone but had actually swallowed it. Imagine if people in a congregation hung onto every word the person leading worship said ...well as Martin Luther King once said 'I have a dream!'

Imagine if you spoke with the tongue of an angel

If you had to think of a great speech.... what or perhaps someone who was a great speaker who would come to mind? Just over 100 years since women received the vote you might have heard some of the speeches by Emmeline Pankhurst....including her cry of 'freedom or death'. Those of a certain age might think of Churchill for sure. In May 1940, anticipating the Battle of Britain: "I have nothing to offer but

blood, toil, tears and sweat”; and three months later, honouring the RAF pilots: “Never in the field of human conflict was so much owed by so many to so few.”

It might be Martin Luther King. And you’re spoiled for choice. His “I have a dream” speech (August 1963), the climax of the great March on Washington. Or the “I’ve got to go back to the valley” speech, on receiving the Noble Peace Prize in Oslo (December 1964). Or perhaps his last great speech – “I’ve been to the mountaintop” – the night before he was shot and killed (Memphis, Tennessee, April 1968).

Perhaps it might be a speech from a play or film Richard Burton playing Hamlet or Swansea’s own bard Dylan Thomas inimitably reading his own poetry. It could be JFK announcing he was a Berliner, which funnily enough can be understood by local to Berlin as referring to a particular type of sausage eaten in the city! Maybe it’s Margaret Thatcher a woman who was ‘not for turning’ or Barack Obama inspiring a momentous change in American politics

It could be words from a younger generation Malala or Greta for example or from something topical, one of the innumerable women standing up to be heard as part of the ‘Me 2 or times up movements or someone who has spoken with passion about the Black Lives Matter movement or about the danger to our environment.

**What an amazing thing to be able to speak in the tongue of angels.....but**

Imagine if you had the gift of prophecy

Predict like Michael Carney, former head of the bank of England economic fortunes, seek out investments opportunities like Warren Buffett, forecast weather patterns like Tomasz Shaffenacker, even predict the rise in infection rates from Covid 19

**What an amazing thing to be able to prophesy...but**

Imagine someone who could fathom all knowledge and is renowned for their intellectual brilliance. Perhaps it was someone from school, college, university, a teacher who made their subject catch fire. Maybe it was a thinker whose ideas have revolutionised their fields.

A Plato, a Darwin, a Freud, a Copernicus, a Galileo, a Isaac Newton, a Marie Curie, a Jane Goodall, a Rosalind Franklin, an Albert Einstein, an Alan Turing, a Stephen Hawking, a Robert Winston, a Brain Cox.

Who knows maybe it was a theologian an Augustine, a Karl Barth, a Rowan Williams, a Tom Wright. Think of a thinker who has sounded the depths of what there is to know, and then returned to share their discoveries with us. People you would rightly give the title Genius.

**What an amazing thing to be able to fathom all knowledge...but**

Think of the great philanthropists of our age, people who really are indifferent to money, money, money, people who give it away without any hidden agenda. Think of Bill and Melissa gates giving away vast sums of their fortune to help those less fortunate. Or it may not be about material things at all. Think of people who give up their careers for those less fortunate than themselves, like Albert Schweitzer, already a famous musician and theologian, who gave it all up to practice medicine in Africa.

Think of Bob Geldof orchestrating the Live Aid and Live 8 Concerts Esther Rantzen starting Child line. Or it may just be people who are dedicated to the work that they do, working all the hours God gives them – and then some – in hospitals or the social services, some awarded, most unrecognised – except by those they serve.

**What an amazing thing to be able to give away all your possessions, your time, your talents, your gifts, your money.... but**

Finally think of someone who has laid down their lives for other. These are the martyrs who speak truth to power, which are tortured but won’t recant, who are executed or assassinated, and die with courage and dignity and forgiveness for their murderers. Dietrich Bonhoeffer hanged by the

Nazis, Archbishop Oscar Romero gunned down in his own cathedral by government thugs, The unknown Chinese man standing in front of the tanks in Tiananmen square, White helmet workers in Syria. Maybe the many NHS workers who had died trying to ensure that others do not. **What an amazing thing to sacrifice your life for a stranger...but**

Greatness can be found in a person's oratory powers, in their ability to sense a moment in time and at the same time look to the future, in their intellect, in self-giving, in the ultimate sacrifice.

**Imagine just for a moment that you possessed all of those qualities...but**

**But you did not have love!**

At the end of your days I don't think it's going to matter whether you can unravel the real meaning of all Jesus' parables, explain the complex interactions of the three members of the trinity, describe exactly how bread and wine is turned into the body and blood of Jesus, put a tick next to every piece of dogma your denomination has produced, show you have abided by every rule, regulation and ritual and give evidence that know the contents of CPD back to front, cover to cover, inside out. Or at least I hope it won't matter.

What I think we might be asked when we stand before Jesus is one single question, split into three parts.

How much have you loved God?  
How much have you loved other?  
And last but not least how much have you loved yourself?

Because maybe John Lennon and Paul McCartney were right when they once sang,

**"All you need is love"**

- Pray for those you love
- Pray for those you struggle to love
- Pray for a situation that you know where love could make a difference
- Pray for areas of the world where love is lacking
- Pray for how your church can show the love of God in your local community

Lets join together to say the words of The Lord's Prayer....Our Father

**Let's conclude this worship by singing**

Love Divine, all loves excelling,  
Joy of heaven, to earth come down,  
Fix in us thy humble dwelling,  
All thy faithful mercies crown.  
Jesus, thou art all compassion,  
Pure unbounded love thou art;  
Visit us with thy salvation,  
Enter every trembling heart

Come, almighty to deliver,  
Let us all thy grace receive;  
Suddenly return, and never,  
Never more thy temples leave.  
Thee we would be always blessing,  
Serve thee as thy hosts above,  
Pray, and praise thee, without ceasing,  
Glory in thy perfect love.

Finish then thy new creation  
Pure and spotless let us be;  
Let us see thy great salvation,  
Perfectly restored in thee,  
Changed from glory into glory,  
Till in heaven we take our place,  
Till we cast our crowns before thee,  
Lost in wonder, love, and praise!

**A blessing...**

Go to love as you are loved by God. Go to forgive as you are forgiven by God. Go to bring Joy as you bring joy to God. Amen

**Prayers of Intercessions**

