

St Paul's Methodist Church, Crawley

Worship at Home

**A service to follow in your own place and at your own time
when you are unable to attend church in person**

22nd May 2022

Theme: *Worship; what is it and why do we do it?*

by Deacon Jenny Parnell



Call to worship

Into your presence we come,
God of Grace and Peace,
who was, and is and ever shall be
the eternal One.

Hymn StF 287 When I survey the wondrous cross

1. When I survey the wondrous cross
On which the Prince of glory died,
My richest gain I count but loss,
And pour contempt on all my pride.
2. Forbid it, Lord, that I should boast,
Save in the death of Christ my God!
All the vain things that charm me most,
I sacrifice them to His blood.
3. See from His head, His hands, His feet,
Sorrow and love flow mingled down!
Did e'er such love and sorrow meet,
Or thorns compose so rich a crown?
4. Were the whole realm of nature mine,
That were a present far too small;
Love so amazing, so divine,
Demands my soul, my life, my all.

Isaac Watts 1674-1748

Let us join in prayer

Blessed are you, our God
In your love you create things out of nothing
Through your eternal Word we glorify and adore you.

Blessed are you, our God
In your love you redeemed the world
Through our Lord Jesus Christ we glorify and adore you

Blessed are you, our God
In your love you empower your people
Through the gift of the Holy Spirit we glorify and adore you

Eternal God, source of all life, fount of all wisdom,
You are our God; the all-wise the all-compassionate.
To you we lift up our hearts and worship you, one God for ever and ever.

Loving God we confess that we need your forgiveness, and we
confess our sins.

God takes his place at the centre of our lives, full of forgiveness and
grace, full of understanding and the source of our hope. We are forgiven.
Thanks be to God. Amen

Our reading is Psalm 8

*O LORD, our Sovereign, how majestic is your name in all the earth!
You have set your glory above the heavens.*

*Out of the mouths of babes and infants you have founded a bulwark
because of your foes, to silence the enemy and the avenger.*

*When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and
the stars that you have established; what are human beings that you are
mindful of them; mortals that you care for them?*

*Yet you have made them a little lower than God,
and crowned them with glory and honour.
You have given them dominion over the works of your hands;
you have put all things under their feet,
all sheep and oxen, and also the beasts of the field, the birds of the air,
and the fish of the sea, whatever passes along the paths of the seas.
O LORD, our Sovereign, how majestic is your name in all the earth!*

Jenny's message

Today I thought we'd look at worship; what is it and why do we do it.
Whenever I hear the word worship I am transported back to my
childhood. Every worship led by our minister was started with the words
'welcome to worship ' which he shouted out and made us giggle.
But what is worship ? The way we worship has had to change recently
and we've had to find new and creative ways to sing our praises to God.
New can sometimes be uncomfortable. There's an article that was
written about a new style of worship music and I share it with you here.

*'There are several reasons why we are objecting to it. Number one it
is too new. Number two, it is often worldly, even blasphemous. The new
Christian music is not as pleasant as the more established style and
because there are so many new songs you can't learn them all. It puts too
much emphasis on instrumental work rather than Godly lyrics. This new
style of music creates disturbances making people act indecently and
disorderly. The preceding generation got along without it. It is a money-*

making scam and some of these money-making upstarts are lewd and loose!'

I wonder if you've guessed who the article was written about. It wasn't contemporary Christian music at all it was actually written about the great hymn writer Isaac Watts who wrote our opening hymn!

Change can be difficult and uncomfortable. How can we find new ways to express our worship? I love questioning things and I looked up the word 'express'. It comes from the fourteenth century and to express means to form under pressure. We are under pressure at the moment, aren't we. How can we form an image of God whilst under pressure? And point others to God whilst our Churches and communities are under pressure.

Colossians 3:12-17 says:

As God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience. Bear with one another and, if anyone has a complaint against another, forgive each other; just as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony.

And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in the one body. And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; teach and admonish one another in all wisdom; and with gratitude in your hearts sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to God. And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

This Scripture reading speaks of singing our psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to God. We may not be able to do that together at the moment except via a computer screen, but we can still worship and praise God. Worship is not so much about attending an act of worship, although of course this too is a good thing but rather worship is being clothed in Christ Jesus. As we are clothed in Christ we enter into a relationship with God and so begin living our lives **as** an act of worship.

Worship is giving God adoration, reverence, and praise and as we do this being strengthened and enabled to grow closer to God and to live for him more effectively. Now that is something to be thankful for. It may sound complicated, but it begins with us looking to spend time with God. We can do this by reading the Bible, praying, and talking about our faith with others. As we create the time and space to do this, we and others will begin to see changes in our lives.

I share this story with you. It's taken from the book '*Soul Keeping*' by John Ortberg:

"There once was a town high in the Alps that straddled the banks of a beautiful stream.... the water was clear like crystal. Children laughed and played beside it and you could see the rocks and the rainbow trout that swarmed at the bottom of the stream. High in the hills, far beyond anyone's sight, lived an old man who served as *Keeper of the Springs*. He had been hired so long ago that no one could remember a time when he wasn't there. He would travel from one spring to another in the hills, removing branches or fallen leaves or debris that might pollute the water. But his work was unseen.

"One year the town council decided they had better things to do with their money. They had roads to repair and taxes to collect. Giving money to an unseen stream-cleaner was a luxury they could no longer afford. So, the old man left his post. High in the mountains, the springs went untended; twigs and branches and worse muddied the waters. Mud and silt compacted the creek bed; farm waste turned parts of the stream into stagnant bogs.

"For a time, no one in the village noticed. But after a while, the water was not the same, it no longer had the crisp scent which drew children to play by it. Some people in the town began to grow ill. Everyone noticed the loss of sparkling beauty which used to flow between the banks of the streams that fed the town. The life of the village depended on the stream, and the life of the stream depended on the keeper. The city council reconvened, and the old man was rehired. After some time, the springs were cleaned, the stream was pure, children played again on its banks, illness was replaced by health, and the village came back to life. The life of a village depended on the health of the stream. The stream is your soul. And you are the keeper."

Let's make time to worship God and to grow closer to God in body, mind, and soul. Amen

Let us pray for the needs of others

Let us pray for the world, spend some time bring the needs of the world before God:

Lord hear us

Lord graciously hear us.

Let us pray for those who have power and influence and for all who govern the nations, and for... and for...

Lord hear us

Lord graciously hear us.

Let us pray for the powerless, for all victims of famine and war, and for all those who strive for justice and peace, for ... and for...

Lord hear us

Lord graciously hear us.

Lord we pray for the afflicted and sorrowful and for all who need our prayers, for ... and for...

Lord hear us

Lord graciously hear us.

Eternal God, through the self-offering of your Son you have filled our lives with your presence. Help us in our sufferings and trials and strengthen us in our weakness. Through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father, who art in heaven,

hallowed be thy name;

thy kingdom come; thy will be done;

on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread.

And forgive us our trespasses,

as we forgive those who trespass against us.

And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory,

for ever and ever.

Amen

(Prayers are adapted from The Methodist Worship Book 1999)

The Blessing

May the grace of God uphold you,

the peace of God surround you,

the love of God flow from you

and the strength of God protect

and bring you safely through this day.

Amen`