

An act of worship for Year A in the 24th Sunday in Ordinary Time, 13th September 2020
The **Methodist** Churches of Apperknowle, Coal Aston, St Paul's Dronfield and Woodseats

GATHERING

Today is the Church Anniversary for the building of St Paul's Methodist Church. It is also the time as the church in Apperknowle and Coal Aston when we offer ourselves again to God through the Covenant service. We come as we are, where we are, to worship God. As it says in 1 Peter 2:4-5,

“Come to the Lord Jesus, the “stone” that lives. The people of the world did not want this stone, but he was the stone God chose, and he was precious. You also are like living stones, so let yourselves be used to build a spiritual temple—to be holy priests who offer spiritual sacrifices to God. He will accept those sacrifices through Jesus Christ.”

Let us offer these words as a prayer:

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1 The Church of Christ, in every age
beset by change but Spirit-led,
must claim and test its heritage
and keep on rising from the dead. | 4 For he alone, whose blood was shed,
can cure the fever in our blood,
and teach us how to share our bread
and feed the starving multitude. |
| 2 Across the world, across the street,
the victims of injustice cry
for shelter and for bread to eat,
and never live until they die. | 5 We have no mission but to serve
in full obedience to our Lord :
to care for all, without reserve,
and spread his liberating Word |
| 3 Then let the servant Church arise,
a caring Church that longs to be
a partner in Christ's sacrifice,
and clothed in Christ's humanity. | |

Fred Pratt Green (1903–2000)
Reproduced from *Singing the Faith* Electronic Words
Edition, number 415
Words: © 1971, Stainer & Bell Ltd.

SONG

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1 Come,
now is the time to worship.
Come,
now is the time to give your heart.
Come,
just as you are to worship.
Come,
just as you are before your God,
come. | 2 One day every tongue
will confess you are God,
one day every knee will bow.
Still, the greatest treasure remains
for those who gladly choose you now. |
|--|---|

Brian Doerksen (b.1965)

Reproduced from *Singing the Faith* Electronic Words Edition, number 24
Words and Music: © 1998 Vineyard Songs UK. Administered by Song Solutions CopyCare.

READING

Genesis 28:10-19

Jacob left Beersheba and set out for Haran. When he came to a place, he spent the night there because the sun had set. He found a stone and laid his head on it to go to sleep. Jacob dreamed that there was a ladder resting on the earth and reaching up into heaven, and he saw angels of God going up and coming down the ladder. Then Jacob saw the LORD standing above the ladder, and he said, "I am the LORD, the God of Abraham your grandfather, and the God of Isaac. I will give you and your descendants the land on which you are now sleeping. Your descendants will be as many as the dust of the earth. They will spread west and east, north and south, and all the families of the earth will be blessed through you and your descendants. I am with you and will protect you everywhere you go and will bring you back to this land. I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you."

Then Jacob woke from his sleep and said, "Surely the LORD is in this place, but I did not know it." He was afraid and said, "This place frightens me! It is surely the house of God and the gate of heaven."

Jacob rose early in the morning and took the stone he had slept on and set it up on its end. Then he poured olive oil on the top of it. At first, the name of that city was Luz, but Jacob named it Bethel.

REFLECTION

Some of us will feel that church buildings are holy ground, especially as we have not been able to meet together in them to worship God. As some churches begin to explore returning safely to worship in a building, the story of Jacob reminds us that, “the earth is the Lord’s and everything in it” (Psalm 24:1).

- Where has been holy ground for you – perhaps nature, or a specific place in your home where you pray?
- Where and in whom have you encountered God?

May we always be open to encountering God, wherever we are and whatever we’re going through.

PRAYER

God of love, we are sorry if we forget that everywhere and everyone is holy ground because all things and all people are gifts from you. Help us to be open to your presence at all times, in all places and all people, especially those who we see as different to us. Amen.

READING

1 Peter 2:4-5; 9-10

Come to the Lord Jesus, the “stone” that lives. The people of the world did not want this stone, but he was the stone God chose, and he was precious. You also are like living stones, so let yourselves be used to build a spiritual temple—to be holy priests who offer spiritual sacrifices to God. He will accept those sacrifices through Jesus Christ... You are a chosen people, royal priests, a holy nation, a people for God’s own possession. You were chosen to tell about the wonderful acts of God, who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. At one time you were not a people, but now you are God’s people. In the past you had never received mercy, but now you have received God’s mercy.”

REFLECTION

Peter reminds us that we are the church, living stones, not the building. No matter what we think about ourselves or what others think about us, God calls us to be the body of Christ, the church – in our families, community, school and workplaces – through how we live. In what ways are, or could, you be Christ to others?

Peter reminds us that God has shown us mercy through the life, ministry, dying and rising of Jesus. In what ways have you experienced God's grace and mercy? How might you show grace and mercy to others?

As a response to God, you may like to make a cairn of stones in your garden or outside the church building – each stone can represent a prayer. Who knows, perhaps other people will add a stone to the cairn as their prayer too?

As we respond to God's call we reflect on these words:

- | | | | |
|---|--|---|--|
| 1 | Come, let us use the grace divine,
and all, with one accord,
in a perpetual covenant join
ourselves to Christ the Lord : | 4 | We never will throw off his fear
who hears our solemn vow ;
and if thou art well pleased to hear,
come down, and meet us now. |
| 2 | Give up ourselves, through Jesu's power,
his name to glorify ;
and promise, in this sacred hour,
for God to live and die. | 5 | To each the covenant blood apply,
which takes our sins away ;
and register our names on high,
and keep us to that day. |
| 3 | The covenant we this moment make
be ever kept in mind :
we will no more our God forsake,
or cast his words behind | | |

Charles Wesley (1707–1788)
Reproduced from *Singing the Faith*
Electronic Words Edition, number 549

COVENANT

Peter reminds us of God's call to each of us to be part of the body of Christ. The Covenant prayer is a way for us to respond again, or for the first time, to that call. We respond because we are thankful for all that God has done for us and for the world through Jesus. We respond even when life is not all that we would want it to be.

God makes this covenant with us as we make this covenant with God – not just for ourselves but for each other, for past and future generations (Deuteronomy 29:10-15). We do not make this Covenant on our own because we are “surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses” (Hebrew 12:1) and, “best of all, God is with us” (John Wesley).

I am no longer my own but yours.
Put me to what you will,
rank me with whom you will;
put me to doing,
put me to suffering;
let me be employed for you,
or laid aside for you,
exalted for you,
or brought low for you;
let me be full,
let me be empty,
let me have all things,
let me have nothing:
I freely and wholeheartedly yield all things
to your pleasure and disposal.
And now, glorious and blessed God,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit,
you are mine and I am yours. So be it.
And the covenant now made on earth, let it be ratified in heaven.'

SONG

1 I will offer up my life
in spirit and truth
Pouring out the oil of love
as my worship to You
In surrender I must give my ev'ry part
Lord, receive the sacrifice of a broken heart

2 You deserve my ev'ry breath
For You've paid the great cost
Giving up Your life to death
Even death on a cross
You took all my shame away
There defeated my sin
Opened up the gates of heav'n
And have beckoned me in

*Jesus, what can I give, what can I bring
To so faithful a Friend to so loving a King
Saviour, what can be said, what can be sung
As a praise of Your name
for the things You have done
Oh, my words could not tell, not even in part
Of the debt of love that is owed
By this thankful heart*

Matt Redman

PRAYER

As we have made this Covenant with God not just for ourselves, let us prayer for the people and places of God's world. You may like to light a candle as you offer what is on your heart to God. Please also pray for:

- The new Derbyshire North East Circuit in our Sheffield Methodist District
- The reverend Lisa Quarmby and her family as Lisa settles in to co-superintendency and ministry in the Sheffield Circuit
- The Church of Christ in Darnall and Victoria Stafford Road as they continue to serve God with Lisa as their new Presbyter
- The church of St Paul's as we celebrate the anniversary of the building in a very different way
- The church at Apperknowle
- The church at Coal Aston
- The church at Woodseats
- All those affected by the new COVID-19 restrictions in England

Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who sin against us.
Save us from the time of trial
And deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours
now and for ever.
Amen.

SONG

1 Blessed be your name
in the land that is plentiful,
where your streams of abundance
flow,
blessèd be your name.
And blessèd be your name
when I'm found in the desert place,
though I walk through the wilderness,
blessèd be your name.
Every blessing you pour out
I'll turn back to praise.
And when the darkness closes in, Lord,
still I will say :

*Blessèd be the name of the Lord,
blessèd be your name.
Blessèd be the name of the Lord,
blessèd be your glorious name.*

2 Blessed be your name
when the sun's shining down on me,
when the world's 'all as it should be,'
blessèd be your name.
And blessèd be your name
on the road marked with suffering,
though there's pain in the offering,
blessèd be your name.
Every blessing you pour out
I'll turn back to praise.
And when the darkness closes in,
Lord,
still I will say :

You give and take away,
you give and take away.
My heart will choose to say,
'Lord, blessèd be your name.'

Matt Redman (b.1974) and Beth Redman
Reproduced from *Singing the Faith*
Electronic Words Edition, number 41
Words and Music: © 2002, Thankyou Music.
Administered by Kingswaysongs

SENDING

May we go in peace and in all times and in all places, bless the Lord and others. Amen.