



13th September 2020

The **Methodist Church**

South Warwickshire Circuit

Registered charity no. 1154830

Superintendent Minister: Rev Dr Iain Ballard

"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." Genesis 1:1

Many churches, across the denominations, now include Creationtide in their church calendar. The season runs from 1 September through to 4 October and is dedicated to God as creator and sustainer of all life. Below is a prayer from Churches Together in Britain and Ireland (CTBI) which you might like to offer in your private devotions if, like me, you have found a deepening sense of connection to God's creation and a greater sense of stewardship of it, in recent months. CTBI is encouraging churches and individual Christians to become more aware of the theological and scientific basis of creation care, to pray and to commit to action in the year that runs up to the UN Climate Change Conference (COP26) in November 2021. They call us to work for change and challenge our government to take much bolder action on climate change.

Creator God, this earth is miraculous and beautiful. Forgive our confusion and inaction as we confront the challenges of climate change. In the light of your truth, seen so clearly in the life and teaching of Jesus, help us to re-examine ourselves and our lifestyle choices and see clearly the implications of how we live on all that sustains life on this earth. May we follow your lead in caring for every aspect of this precious world, which you made, and love. We pray for world leaders to find new, just and radical agreements that will protect our fragile world for future generations. Throughout history you have moved people to do amazing things for the sake of their neighbours. Inspire us now to work together, as your people, to change priorities in the way we live, so that we build a fair and safe world for all your creation; a world where your will is done as it is in heaven. Amen.

Adapted from Churches Together in Britain and Ireland - <http://www.ctbi.org.uk/409/>

Reminder: Dial – a – Prayer, Methodist Church

Listen to a prayer: 0808 281 2514

Listen to news: 0808 281 2478

Sunday Worship and Daily Prayers

There are plenty of opportunities to join in worship if you have the internet. We are encouraging everyone to link up with the live stream worship being offered by the Birmingham District via FaceBook on Sunday mornings at: <https://www.facebook.com/Birminghammethodistdistrict/live>

Change of YouTube account:

Please note, the Circuit now has its own YouTube account. Please access the YouTube video by clicking the following link or typing it into your browser:

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLzyDSCOYMtQvpCroUvvxjE93MqkTWQomY>

Do consider subscribing to the channel if you watch regularly.

In addition, we will be offering services online on the Circuit's own FaceBook page or via the Website:

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/SW.Methodist/>

Website: www.methodist-swc.org.uk

A full text of this service is available at this FaceBook link and on the website, and is being sent by post to all those people who do not use the Internet so they can join in too. These worship opportunities will be available and sent to you every Sunday. We will be offering worship in a similar way each Sunday as the health crisis continues.

TV & radio opportunities for worship:

Radio 4, Sunday Worship, Sunday 8:10am,
Radio 4 Long Wave, Daily Service, 9.45am Mon-Fri,
Radio 3, Choral Evensong, Sunday 3pm.

BBC 1, Sunday Worship, Sunday 10.45am,
BBC 1, Songs of Praise, Sunday 1:15pm
(The times of the TV services can alter, please check the times)

Daily prayers at 10am are led by members of the circuit via zoom <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/328494818> Please contact Michael Sharman on 07412 401988 if you'd like help getting in.

Pastoral Support

A reminder that if you are in pastoral need of any kind please contact your own Minister direct by email or phone. We may also be able to arrange practical help with shopping and so on. Our details are below.

If in any doubt, please contact Rev Dr Iain Ballard and he will link you up with help locally to you.

Rev Dr Iain Ballard	07368 875790	iain.ballard@methodist.org.uk
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Keep safe. Keep caring. Keep praying. With every blessing to you and yours.
The Ministers and Stewards of the South Warwickshire Methodist Circuit of Churches

Worship for 24th Sunday in Ordinary Time (complete text. A video version is also online)
Keep safe. Keep caring. Keep praying.

Welcome to worship with the South Warwickshire Methodist Circuit this morning. Wherever you are watching, you are most welcome.
Thank you to everyone who has contributed to our service: Kat Pearson for choosing the hymns; Graham Howe & Jeongsook Kim for the readings; Iain Ballard for the Sermon and to Ann Howe and Anne Oliver (that's me!) for the prayers. Kate Tennyson and Tim Pearson have done the technical work putting this all together, thank you.
If you would like to take part, then please get in touch with the Circuit Office on swc.katetennyson@gmail.com

THE PREPARATION

Call to worship

Come to the God who knows us,
To the God who created our being,
To the God who knows our frailty,
To the God who loves and cherishes us beyond measure.
Come as you are and worship God.
Amen.

Hymn: Cornerstone – Hillsong

**My hope is built on nothing less
Than Jesus' blood and righteousness
I dare not trust the sweetest frame
But wholly trust in Jesus' name**

**My hope is built on nothing less
Than Jesus' blood and righteousness
I dare not trust the sweetest frame
But wholly trust in Jesus' name**

**Christ alone; cornerstone
Weak made strong in the Saviour's love**

**Through the storm, He is Lord
Lord of all**

**When Darkness seems to hide His face
I rest on His unchanging grace
In every high and stormy gale
My anchor holds within the veil
My anchor holds within the veil**

**Christ alone; cornerstone
Weak made strong in the Saviour's love
Through the storm, He is Lord
Lord of all
He is Lord
Lord of all**

**Christ alone; cornerstone
Weak made strong in the Saviour's love
Through the storm, He is Lord
Lord of all**

**Christ alone; cornerstone
Weak made strong in the Saviour's love
Through the storm, He is Lord
Lord of all**

**When He shall come with trumpet sound
Oh, may I then in Him be found
Dressed in His righteousness alone
Faultless stand before the throne**

Prayer of approach

O God, you are at the heart of creation.
Your word brings life into being;
your peace gives living its fulfilment;
your Spirit unites us into your Son.
We draw near, seeking your love in our hearts;
your wisdom in our minds; your power in our lives.
Receive us with grace, in the name of your Son.
Amen.

Prayer of adoration

Based on Psalm 8

O Lord, our sovereign,
how majestic is your name in all the earth!
Your glory reaches beyond the highest heavens,
O Lord, our sovereign,
how majestic is your name in all the earth!
By the youngest to the eldest your praise is
spoken forth,
O Lord, our sovereign,
how majestic is your name in all the earth!
In sky, on land, and in water your creativity is
seen,
O Lord, our sovereign,
how majestic is your name in all the earth!
Amen.

Prayer of confession

Lord Jesus, you send us into the world,
but we confess that our vision is narrow;
you give us clear commandments,
but we pretend not to understand them;
you promise to be with us always,
but we ignore your presence and follow our own
way.
Forgive us; give us fresh vision and restore us to
your way,
we pray.
Amen.

Declaration of forgiveness

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

Hymn: StF 167 – Colours of day dawn into the
mind

- 1. Colours of day dawn into the mind,
the sun has come up, the night is behind.
Go down in the city, into the street,
and let’s give the message to the people we
meet.**

***So light up the fire and let the flame burn,
open the door, let Jesus return.***

***Take seeds of his Spirit, let the fruit grow,
tell the people of Jesus, let his love show.***

- 2. Go through the park, on into the town;
the sun still shines on; it never goes down.
The light of the world is risen again;
the people of darkness are needing a friend.**

***So light up the fire and let the flame burn,
open the door, let Jesus return.***

***Take seeds of his Spirit, let the fruit grow,
tell the people of Jesus, let his love show.***

- 3. Open your eyes, look into the sky,
the darkness has come, the sun came to die.
The evening draws on, the sun disappears,
but Jesus is living, his Spirit is near.**

***So light up the fire and let the flame burn,
open the door, let Jesus return.***

***Take seeds of his Spirit, let the fruit grow,
tell the people of Jesus, let his love show.***

THE MINISTRY OF THE WORD

Psalm *Psalm 8*

(New Revised Standard Version)

¹O Lord, our Sovereign,
how majestic is your name in all the earth!

You have set your glory above the heavens.

² Out of the mouths of babes and infants
you have founded a bulwark because of your
foes,
to silence the enemy and the avenger.

³When I look at your heavens, the work of your
fingers,
the moon and the stars that you have
established;

⁴what are human beings that you are mindful of
them,
mortals that you care for them?

⁵Yet you have made them a little lower than God
and crowned them with glory and honour.

⁶You have given them dominion over the works
of your hands;

you have put all things under their feet,

⁷all sheep and oxen,

and also the beasts of the field,

⁸the birds of the air, and the fish of the sea,
whatever passes along the paths of the seas.

⁹O Lord, our Sovereign,

how majestic is your name in all the earth!

Gospel *Matthew 28:16-20*

(New Revised Standard Version)

The Commissioning of the Disciples

¹⁶Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the
mountain to which Jesus had directed them.

¹⁷When they saw him, they worshiped him; but
some doubted. ¹⁸And Jesus came and said to
them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has
been given to me. ¹⁹Go therefore and make
disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the
name of the Father and of the Son and of the
Holy Spirit, ²⁰and teaching them to obey
everything that I have commanded you. And
remember, I am with you always, to the end of
the age."

Sermon

September is a month of new beginnings:
children starting or restarting schools;
universities will, in some way, recommence
teaching; and in the Methodist church it is the
beginning of our new connexional year – Things
start again. And so it is a time of firsts – my first
meetings here; my first services here. And over
the last few days, I've been reflecting back on
firsts.

I remember my first days at high school, we had
a Vice Principal – Mr Edwards. He was an
interesting chap, who was about 6 ft tall, built as
a rugby playing forward and had a very thick,

Welsh accent. He was somebody to be feared
but the first time you met him would be in your
first few days at school as he ran the dinner
queue. As you queued up to enter the dining
hall, he would come down the queue, reminding
himself of the names of boys who'd been at the
school for some time and learning the names of
those of us as first years. And so in a school
much bigger than the primary school I'd
attended, I stood in that dinner queue thinking
how wonderful it was that somebody as
important as the Vice Principal was wanting to
know my name. Of course there was another
motive – later when I was misbehaving or
running or doing something I shouldn't – what
was shouted wasn't 'Oi! You!' but my name. The
authority he had came from knowing us and
from being able to stop us dead in our tracks. It
was an authority that began with care but made
sure that we acted in a way that didn't put
ourselves or others at risk.

And so I reflect on the closing words of
Matthew's Gospel – Jesus opens this short
discourse with the words 'All authority in heaven
and on earth has been given to me'. And I
wonder if we realise just what that means?
Jesus doesn't have *some* authority – many of us
through our work, our lives, through church,
through family and parenthood, or
grandparenthood, have authority, we have some
form of power over other people or over our
own lives. Yet Jesus is not claiming to have *some*
authority – he is saying he has been given *all*
authority. There is no body with more authority
than him – in heaven or on the earth. And I
wonder when we read the gospels, and we hear
Jesus's words, and through the Spirit when we
experience the presence of Christ in our own
lives, whether we are acknowledging that he has
all, all authority.

Because if we did acknowledge that Jesus had all
authority, then his words, his commandment, his
actions have huge implications for how we do

things, for how we live our lives, for how we interact with each other and with God. It won't become something we could listen to for a short while on a Sunday or watching worship online but impacts every moment of our being.

And so I invite you to press pause and to take some time to consider in *your* life, in the way *you* are, in the things that you do – are you declaring that Jesus has all authority over you? or are you proclaiming to have authority over Jesus? - are you claiming to know better, to know more and to have more power than God the Father who gave the authority to Jesus? Take some time and reflect on that question.

Jesus having declared he has all authority gives a number of commandments to the disciples, and that begins with 'Go'. 'Go therefore and make disciples of all nations'. It is not a request, - often as children, I remember being told to remember to say please, and I hear myself saying it now or thinking it if I hear someone ask for something and they don't say please – I have to sometimes hold myself back and not say 'what's the word?'. But Jesus deliberately doesn't say 'Please'. He deliberately doesn't say 'if you would like to'. This is a command. This is written to be something that Jesus is *telling* us to do. Go therefore means, because he has all authority, he is telling us to go and make disciples. What a commission! What a role and responsibility we have as disciples of Christ, to not only disciple ourselves but to take the Good News to all around us - sometimes in the words that we speak, sometimes in the way that we live and sometimes in our actions towards others. But the call is there – to take this good news, that God loves all people - and to make that good news real for people.

But Jesus isn't telling us to go and make believers, even the devil believes. He is wanting us to go and make disciples, people who follow him, people who recognise his authority, read his

word and then do their best to live by it. But for that relationship with Jesus to be more than simply reading the words of scripture, for it to be a real, and alive, and life-giving relationship with Christ.

There've been many occasions I've had conversations where people have found difficulty and they've said, 'I've not known how people could live through this and not have faith, because it is my faith that is keeping me going.' I wonder what life would be like for me without faith – this faith, - knowing that I am loved and responding to that love - has had such an impact. If that has had an impact for you, then surely there is a need to tell others there is more to life. There is a God who loves us and wants a relationship with us. Who wants us to live and be the very best people we can be as disciples of Christ.

When I hear those words – 'go and make disciples' – there's a bit of me going 'Oh but, send them, send somebody else, somebody else can do this'. The story of the calling of Moses, - here I am lord, send my brother. And it's easy for us to think that the making of disciples is somebody else's job. I'm convinced that it is the role of every Christian, to be part of that Good News story. That isn't that we all need to stand on street corners or with big boards on us. But it is how we live, and it is being ready to explain our faith. 'So why do you do this? Why do you worship? - Many times – Why do you go to church on a Sunday? We might think that we can't make disciples. There isn't anything that Jesus asks his disciples to do that he knows they can't do. Jesus doesn't set us up to fail, instead Jesus sets us up to tell stories of Good News. A few months ago, having led a course entitled 'Talking of Jesus', an elderly man from one of my churches rang the manse, he was excited, - he'd got home from doing some shopping, he was excited, because on his way home, somebody had stopped him and asked him about

something, and he had managed to get in to that conversation, 'God loves you'. And he'd never done it before, but the impact it had on him, that he was able to do something, was huge

Jesus goes on reminding us that disciples are baptised into the family of God. But he then commands that we should teach them to obey *everything* that Jesus has commanded. When we hear the stories of Jesus, he tells us and reminds us that the greatest commandments are love: that we love God, that we love one another as God has loved us. This, in so many ways, is the mission of the Church – it is about *showing* love in every possible way. As Methodists we might say that is our call to social holiness or social justice. It is challenging the injustices of this world. It is not simply giving food to a food bank; but challenging why are people poor in the first place? What is unequal about our society? It's going beyond normal and if God loves you this much, why is this happening? Its what we might call mission, but mission and evangelism go together. We are called to be disciples to go and take good news – sometimes that taking of good news is a meal, is clothing, is dignity, is giving of our time to somebody who feels they are worthless, it is praying for somebody when there is nothing else we can do but pray.

Everything that Jesus has commanded, is that we *love*, and that isn't one day a week, or part of the time, or when it suits us, or when the other person is lovable, but it's all the time. Now Jesus knows we are not perfect, just as Mr Edwards had to shout my name once or twice down the corridor, we are not perfect. And perhaps that is one of the greatest aspects of the Church. We are not perfect. And so when we call out to others we're not saying come and be perfect, what we're saying is come and be part of the family of God where we strive to be better than we are, and our imperfections, the things we get wrong, have already been covered by grace.

Jesus reminds them he is with them always. He is with us always – to the end of the age. This is the calling of the Church to recognise that Jesus has all authority in heaven and on earth; to go and make disciples of all nations, of all people everywhere. To teach them everything Jesus has commanded, to love one another as he has loved us. That is our calling as Church. That is who we are meant to be. Make time to consider how *you*, how you as an individual, how you as a part of Church, might respond to the calling of God
Amen.

Hymn: Build Your Kingdom Here (Rend Collective)

**Build Your kingdom here
Let the darkness fear
Show Your mighty hand
Heal our streets and land
Set Your church on fire
Win this nation back
Change the atmosphere
Build Your kingdom here
We pray**

**Come set Your rule and reign
In our hearts again
Increase in us we pray
Unveil why we're made
Come set our hearts ablaze with hope
Like wildfire in our very souls
Holy Spirit come invade us now
We are Your Church
And we need Your power
In us**

**We seek Your kingdom first
We hunger and we thirst
Refuse to waste our lives
For You're our joy and prize
To see the captive hearts released
The hurt, the sick, the poor at peace
We lay down our lives for Heaven's cause
We are Your church**

**And we pray revive
This earth (We're prayin' for revival)**

**Build Your kingdom here
Let the darkness fear
Show Your mighty hand
Heal our streets and land
Set Your church on fire
Win this nation back
Change the atmosphere
Build Your kingdom here
We pray (Change the atmosphere)**

**Unleash Your kingdom's power
Reaching the near and far
No force of hell can stop
Your beauty changing hearts
You made us for much more than this
Awake the kingdom seed in us
Fill us with the strength and love of Christ
We are Your church
Oh, and we are the hope
On earth**

**Build Your kingdom here
Let the darkness fear
Show Your mighty hand
Heal our streets and land
Set Your church on fire
Win this nation back
Change the atmosphere
Build Your kingdom here
We pray (Change the atmosphere, build Your
kingdom here)**

**Build Your kingdom here
Let the darkness fear
Show Your mighty hand
Heal our streets and land
Set Your church on fire
Win this nation back
Change the atmosphere
Build Your kingdom here
We pray (Let's win this nation back!)**

THE RESPONSE

Prayers of thanksgiving

Gracious God, we thank you for your great, sacrificial love which bringing us hope whether in times of trouble or of joy.

We thank you for the opportunity at the beginning of this New Methodist Year, to find a fresh new start, a re-commissioning to go forth and tell.

Lord Jesus, we thank you for giving us life and challenging us to find ways to love and serve one another, to work for social justice, to love and serve your Church and so to love and serve you, by the grace and power of the Holy Spirit.

Hymn: StF 409: Let us build a house where love can dwell

- 1. Let us build a house where love can dwell
and all can safely live,
a place where saints and children tell
how hearts learn to forgive.
Built of hopes and dreams and visions,
rock of faith and vault of grace;
here the love of Christ shall end divisions:**

*All are welcome,
all are welcome,
all are welcome in this place.*

- 2. Let us build a house where prophets speak,
and words are strong and true,
where all God's children dare to seek
to dream God's reign anew.
Here the cross shall stand as witness
and as symbol of God's grace;
here as one we claim the faith of Jesus:**

*All are welcome,
all are welcome,
all are welcome in this place.*

- 3. Let us build a house where love is found
in water, wine and wheat:
a banquet hall on holy ground**

where peace and justice meet.
Here the love of God, through Jesus,
is revealed in time and space;
as we share in Christ the feast that frees us:

*All are welcome,
all are welcome,
all are welcome in this place.*

4. Let us build a house where hands will reach
beyond the wood and stone
to heal and strengthen, serve and teach,
and live the Word they've known.
Here the outcast and the stranger
bear the image of God's face;
let us bring an end to fear and danger:

*All are welcome,
all are welcome,
all are welcome in this place.*

5. Let us build a house where all are named,
their songs and visions heard
and love and treasured, taught and claimed
as words within the Word.
Built of tears and cries and laughter,
prayers of faith and songs of grace,
let this house proclaim from floor to rafter:

*All are welcome,
all are welcome,
all are welcome in this place.*

Prayers of intercession

Heavenly Father will you lead us to continue to
find fresh, new opportunities in reaching people
through digital, online means as well as by re-
opening our buildings, in all the ways we can,
wherever we can.

Holy Spirit, will you guide those meeting to
interpret rules on safely being together in new
and relevant ways and enable your gifts to be
used among our neighbours.

We pray for the leaders of the nations and those
who have authority, that you will guide them to

embrace the rich diversity you have created and
lead in justice, freedom and peace

We pray for decision makers and movers in our
country, that they will have compassion on those
marginalised by poverty, illness, disability,
gender or ethnicity,
that they will enable the standards of your
kingdom, of wisdom and integrity to inform their
actions
and that they will govern wisely.

Holy Spirit we pray, too for comfort for all who
are suffering illness or it's long-term effects, for
those who are mourning, for those who are in
need and those who are supporting them, that
they may know your courage, strength and hope.

The Lord's Prayer

We say together the prayer that Jesus gave us:

**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**

The Offering & prayer

We bring you all we can of our gifts of
life and talent,
time and money,
in whatever way we can
to serve you.

Amen

THE DISMISSAL

Hymn: StF 82 – O Lord my God when I in awesome wonder

1. **O Lord, my God, when I in awesome wonder consider all the worlds thy hand has made, I see the stars, I hear the mighty thunder, thy power throughout the universe displayed:**

***Then sings my soul, my Saviour God, to thee:
how great thou art, how great thou art!
then sings my soul, my Saviour God, to thee:
how great thou art, how great thou art!***

2. **When through the woods, and forest glades I wander and hear the birds sing sweetly in the trees; when I look down from lofty mountain grandeur, and hear the brook, and feel the gentle breeze:**

***Then sings my soul, my Saviour God, to thee:
how great thou art, how great thou art!
then sings my soul, my Saviour God, to thee:
how great thou art, how great thou art!***

3. **And when I think that God, his Son not sparing, sent him to die, I scarce can take it in that on the cross, my burden gladly bearing, he bled and died to take away my sin:**

***Then sings my soul, my Saviour God, to thee:
how great thou art, how great thou art!
then sings my soul, my Saviour God, to thee:
how great thou art, how great thou art!***

4. **When Christ shall come with shout of acclamation and take me home – what joy shall fill my heart; then shall I bow in humble adoration, and there proclaim: my God, how great thou art:**

***Then sings my soul, my Saviour God, to thee:
how great thou art, how great thou art!
then sings my soul, my Saviour God, to thee:
how great thou art, how great thou art!***

Prayer & blessing

The Lord bless you and keep you;
the Lord make his face shine on you and be
gracious to you;
the Lord turn his face toward you and give you
peace.

So go in peace to love, serve and tell.

Amen