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EPIPHANY 2C

16th January 2022

A short act of worship and daily devotions

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Centreing Prayers

Find a comfortable place to sit, and close your eyes
Rest your hands on your lap, and allow your fingers to settle in place
Take a deep breath in through your nose, and slowly let it out through your mouth

Lock your fingers together

Think of the people you share your life with...the connections you have...the networks you are a part of...your loved ones, friends, family, colleagues
Allow your clasped fingers to tense slightly, then relax them
Consider the way our relationships can sometimes feel strained, uncomfortable and tense

Hold all of your relationships in your heart and offer them to God

Cup your hands in front of you

Think of all the precious gifts you have received from God
The strength to face difficult situations
Friends and family
An everlasting relationship with Jesus rooted in a love beyond all understanding

Hold out your hands palms-up in front of you

Allow God to challenge you
To open your eyes and your heart
Through this time of worship, may you hear God's voice, and feel called to serve
To love radically, give generously and stand for justice

Relax your hands, and rest a moment in the silence.

Amen.¹

Hymn: 83 STF – Praise, my soul, the King of heaven

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KkWyBc0bSsl>

You may now wish to say The Lord's Prayer in a version most familiar or comfortable to you.

Readings: [John 2:1-11](#)

¹ Opening prayers written by Emma Dobson

Responding to the reading

The wedding at Cana, and Jesus' miraculous production of additional wine, is a great example of the sense of joy in the character of Jesus. Often, when we depict him and read stories from later in the Gospels as he runs into trouble with the religious institution and faces the pain of his own death, we see only the more austere, severe, troubled face of Jesus. In Cana, here at the beginning of his ministry, he is the guy who provides a free bar at the wedding!

Of course, there is more going on here than simply more booze, the miracle is a response to a certain social situation and to the request of his mother – what son would be foolish enough to ignore one of those! However, it helps to add more range to the Jesus miracles: he is healer of those in agony, but also provider for those wishing to celebrate. The church began as a way to keep the 'Jesus-party' going. Have we sometimes lost the party-atmosphere?

At the beginning of every calendar year, churches all around the Methodist Connexion share in the Covenant Service, where people commit themselves to God again. It is one of the great gifts of Methodism to the Ecumenical liturgy, a powerful service in which we pray the Covenant prayer:

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.
And the covenant now made on earth, let it be ratified in heaven. Amen.

This week, whether you will be part of a Covenant Service in a church this year or not, you could spend some time reflecting on these two questions.

- 1) What do you find difficult or challenging in the Covenant Prayer, which words or sentences are hard for you to say?
- 2) How can you be encouraged and inspired in your journey of discipleship by the Covenant Prayer – where are the words and phrases that can help you?

Prayers of intercession

Omnipresent God,
Stay close to me today, as I pray.

[Pause]

Ever-present God, be with me, throughout the race, and the struggles along the way. You promised to complete the good work you have begun in me.

For our world I pray; wherever good works have begun to help the poor in our world, to help the sick, to help the needy, I pray that you will give me the courage to play my part in completing those good works.

Where good work has begun to tackle climate change, I pray that you will give courage to all seeking to complete that work.

Lord where good work has begun to bring peace where there is war, love where

there is hatred, provision where there is hunger and starvation, I pray that you will help to complete those good works.

Omnipresent God,
Stay close to the world.

Lord for the church we pray. Unite your church in love, mission and in the desire to fight the good fight of faith. Give each of us the grace and courage to speak up against injustice, hatred, bigotry, racism, discrimination and all forms of bullying and abuse. May the church continue to be the salt of the earth and the voice of the voiceless.

Omnipresent God,
Stay close to the Church.

[Pause]

Omnipresent God, I pray for my friends, family, loved ones. (Call names or situations out loud if you'd like).

Thank you for the gift of life, for your provision, for shelter, food, and every blessing. For the sick, I pray for your healing, for the lonely I pray for your peace and presence. For the bereaved, I pray for comfort.

Omnipresent God,
Stay close to me and my loved ones today.

Amen.²

Blessing

May you go from here with the courage of Christ in your heart.
May you go from here with the fierce energy of the Spirit in you body.
May you go from here with the God of love streaming through you and out into the world.

Go in peace, and serve the Lord.

Amen.³

Prayers and Prayer Pointers for This Week

Monday 17th January

- Today is Martin Luther King Jr Day in the USA, so today our prayers are for racial justice. It is 59 years this August since MLK addressed the crowd gathered around the Lincoln memorial in Washington, and yet we still live in a world where racism is rife, institutional and personal.
- Come, God of justice. Come, Lord who is always on the side of the oppressed. Come, change our hearts, cleanse our institutions, embolden our actions of rebellion against unjust systems, give us the courage to choose a better way of relating to our brothers and sisters.

² Prayers of intercession written by Lansford Penn-Timothy

³ Additional prayers by Tim Baker

Tuesday 18th January

- Today is the beginning of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, and materials for this year have been written by the churches in the Middle East and are available from Churches Together in Britain and Ireland. Take a look here: <https://ctbi.org.uk/week-of-prayer-for-christian-unity-2022>
- Lord, amongst all the division, all the uncertainty, all that is broken in our world, may we hold together in you, may we hold together in Christ. Amen.

Wednesday 19th January

- Creator God, great shepherd of the sheep, fill me with your hope as I pray. Holy Spirit, give me the strength and courage for this day, fill me with the peace I need, and the joy of being surrounded by your love. Help me to notice where your love is at work in the world, and to get involved where I can. Lord of love, show me what is mine to do today. Amen.

Thursday 20th January

- Gracious God, I know you have plans for me- plans for me to be a part of your kingdom and an agent of love in the world.
- Today, show me how to respond to the invitations I might receive. Help me to be open to the opportunities to share your love.
- In Jesus' name I pray,
- Amen.

Friday 21st January

- As the working week ends, take a moment today to offer thanks to God for some sort of blessing you have received, something that you can give thanks for, as a gift.
- You might like to start a gratitude diary, or to write down the things you are grateful for every day. Take time to read them aloud, and to say thank you.

Saturday 22nd January

- Today is the saint day of Saint Laura Vicuña, the patron saint of abuse victims, as beatified by the Catholic Church. Today, you can pray for all who feel the pain of abuse – historic and present.
- And pray for those involved in looking to heal those wounds, improve safeguarding practices, and protect those who could be vulnerable to abuse.