

North Kent Methodist Circuit

Worship at Home

Good Friday 2nd April 2021

Call to worship

On this dreadful day Lord, we come into your presence. We come to grapple with and seek understanding about what happened to you. We come with all our questions, with all our fears. But we come. Breathe your spirit upon us we pray, that in these troubled times as we worship you we might know a renewal of our faith, find new hope and to trust in your love. Amen.

'Good' Friday

A dreadful day? It is easy for us to view the crucifixion from a safe distance – both in time and because it happened on a 'green hill far away' - and because we are aware of the Easter event. But this was a dreadful day for those who loved Jesus; his family and friends, and for those who looked to him with hope that things would change.

It does us no harm to be reminded of the horror and despair of that day. To view events from the beside those three crosses, where men writhed in agony and blood dripped onto the rock beneath. In Andrew Brown's hymn which I read now there is an unflinching immediacy about what happened.

A man, despised and laughed to scorn,
insulted, whipped, brought low,
denied and, on the cross, bereft -
what was the crime, the fault, the threat,
that he should suffer so?

The arms pinned wide; will nails now tame
this different, dangerous thought?
The soldiers' dice. The public shame.
The shuddering breaths. The pain-racked
frame.

A trouble-maker caught?

A trouble-maker? No – the one,
through worldly fail and fall
and fears of God-forsakenness,
revealing power in powerlessness -
God's foolish gift to all.

Misunderstood by those who seek
security and fame,
God hangs, arms open to the world,
embracing life - not yet unfurled
by those who claim his name.

Words © 2004 Andrew Brown

**Hymn: StF 272 From heaven you came
helpless babe**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E1LjBR4nSuo>

From heaven you came helpless babe
entered our world, your glory veiled
not to be served but to serve
and give Your life that we might live

*this is our God, The Servant King
He calls us now to follow Him
to bring our lives as a daily offering
of worship to The Servant King.*

There in the garden of tears
my heavy load he chose to bear
His heart with sorrow was torn
'Yet not My will but Yours, ' He said

*this is our God, The Servant King
He calls us now to follow Him
to bring our lives as a daily offering
of worship to The Servant King.*

Come see His hands and His feet
the scars that speak of sacrifice
hands that flung stars into space
to cruel nails surrendered

*this is our God, The Servant King
He calls us now to follow Him
to bring our lives as a daily offering
of worship to the servant king.*

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Opening Prayer

Nothing can prepare us, loving God,
for the reality of this day.

We, Christ's disciples,
had not wanted to understand
that the Day of our Lord
would be like this.

Nothing can prepare us
for the reality of evil.
We do not want to know
that those healing hands were nailed to the
Cross;
or that children can be taken away and killed,
or that whole ethnic groups can be
exterminated.

Nothing can prepare us
for the reality of suffering.
We do not want to hear
Christ's cry of desolation from the Cross;
or the moaning of sick people in pain,
or the sobbing of the mothers of hungry
children.

Nothing can prepare us, loving God,
for the reality of death.
We do not want to witness
Christ's parting from us;
or the last breath of someone we love,
or our own mortality.

Nothing can prepare us
for the realities of Good Friday,
and only you, loving God, can console us
with the fulfilment of our hopes on Easter Day.

*Taken from Open With God by Christine Odell
©Christine Odell (Sheasby)*

The Lord's Prayer

**Reading: John 19: 17-20 The crucifixion
of Jesus**

**Hymn: StF 273 Here hangs a man
discarded**

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9EXisOlsQ
HA](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9EXisOlsQHA)

Here hangs a man discarded,
a scarecrow hoisted high,
a nonsense pointing nowhere
to all who hurry by.

Can such a clown of sorrows
still bring a useful word
when faith and hope seem phantoms
and every hope absurd?

Yet here is help and comfort
for lives by comfort bound,
when drums of dazzling progress
give strangely hollow sound:

Life, emptied of all meaning,
drained out in bleak distress,
can share in broken silence
our deepest emptiness;

And love that freely entered
the pit of life's despair,
can name our hidden darkness
and suffer with us there.

Christ, in our darkness risen,
help all who long for light
to hold the hand of promise,
till faith receives its sight.

*Brian Wren
Words © 1975, rev. 1995 Hope Publishing Company*

Reflection

Prayers of intercession

Hymn: 334 STF – Praise to the holiest

Praise to the Holiest in the height,
and in the depth be praise:
in all his words most wonderful,
most sure in all his ways.

O loving wisdom of our God!
When all was sin and shame,
a second Adam to the fight
and to the rescue came.

O wisest love! that flesh and blood,

which did in Adam fail,
should strive afresh against the foe,
should strive and should prevail;

And that a higher gift than grace
should flesh and blood refine,
God's presence and his very self,
and essence all-divine.

O generous love! that he, who came
as man to smite the foe,
the double agony for us
as man should undergo;

And in the garden secretly,
and on the cross on high,
should teach his followers, and inspire
to suffer and to die.

Praise to the Holiest in the height,
and in the depth be praise:
in all his words most wonderful,
most sure in all his ways.

John Henry Newman

*Adapted by compilers of Hymns for Today's Church 1982
alt.*

Blessing

The cross is our symbol – a symbol of love.
The cross is our symbol – a symbol of hope
Let us carry that cross into a grieving world
as a sign of the love and hope
that God offers to all his children. Amen