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EPIPHANY 1C

9th January 2022

A short act of worship and daily devotions

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Centreing Prayers

God is everywhere
In this space and all spaces
In this time and all times
God is waiting to meet you and is ready to welcome you
Just as has been for all eternity

So be still.

Pause

Get ready to notice the spirit working
Through words on the page
Through sounds around you
Through familiar and unfamiliar smells
Through all that you see when you look up from what you are reading
Through the touch of your hands as you hold them together to pray.

So be still.

Pause

If you feel able speak aloud the following words:

God of all time and space I notice you here

I am ready

Amen.¹

Hymn:

20 STF – Be still for the presence of the Lord - [YouTube](#)

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

Readings: [Luke 3:15-17, 21-22](#)

Responding to the reading

A prophet is not a fortune teller but somebody that recognises the signs of the times, who can see that something much bigger is going on. A prophet is a signpost, a way marker, a finger pointing to something else, something more important, something significant. John was a prophet, he pointed away from himself to Jesus, to the Holy Spirit, to the judgment where wheat will be gathered and chaff burned.

¹ Opening / Centreing Prayers written by Jane Bingham

In this story we see the signpost pulled out of the ground and change direction, actually change dimension. John positions it pointing to Jesus, but the Holy Spirit directs in from heaven, and the direction speaks of a ground breaking love as heaven is opened and a voice speaks to the baptised Jesus, 'You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased.'

John was baptising with water, but Jesus was baptised with the Holy Spirit, a new direction has been announced, one of earth shattering love. God is showing us, in Jesus, a new creation as pleasing as the first, a new order of things, a different sort of power. Through the Creator and the power of the Holy Spirit, Jesus is giving us a new direction of travel, the signpost has been turned around.

The Methodist Way of Life is an important resource available from the Methodist Church's Connexional Team, helping and encouraging us all to think about how we shape our lives in light of our faith.

The Methodist Way of Life is a call to the church to reposition the signpost. Maybe too often, we have become preoccupied with church structures, to meetings and fundraising, to maintenance or panic over our membership figures. The Way of Life reminds us that the signpost should not be pointing to the Church, but to a new way of being inspired and guided by the Holy Spirit. This is not magic, nor is it an easy path, but rather a reorientation of our priorities so that at every step we are asking ourselves 'Is this the Jesus way?' ²

Whether you are familiar with it or not, take some time to read through the guiding principles below. And if you are interested in finding out more – have a look at methodist.org.uk/mwol

As far as we are able:

WORSHIP

- *We will pray daily*
- *We will worship regularly*
- *We will look and listen for God each day*

LEARNING AND CARING

- *We will seek to learn more of God and God's world*
- *We will practice friendship and care for others and for ourselves*
- *We will honour creation and tend the environment*
- *We will practice hospitality and generosity*

SERVICE

- *We will be good neighbours to those in need*
- *We will challenge injustice*
- *We will seek the common good*

² Reflection written by Revd Dr Barbara Glasson

EVANGELISM

- *We will witness to the love of God in Jesus*
- *We will speak of faith to others*
- *We will help each other be better disciples*

We commit to this rule of life and to the well-being of this community, out of gratitude to God who forgives, heals, and makes all things new. May each life be a blessing within and beyond God's church, for the transformation of the world.

You might be interested to also learn that there are a collection of questions accompanying the way of life, designed to enable people to have a conversation about accountability and 'how they are doing' on their walk with God.

You may wish to consider if it would be appropriate for you to meet regularly with a small group to commit to a way of life and support each other on that journey.

Blessing

The Father, who created you, is with you; the Son, who redeemed you, is with you; the Spirit, who strengthens you, is with you. Go in peace and serve the Lord.

Amen.³

Prayers and Prayer Pointers for the Week

Monday 10th January

- On this day in 1946, the first General Assembly of the United Nations met, at Methodist Central Hall Westminster, and began one of its' first major tasks – to rebuild peace after World War II.
- As we give thanks for the work of the UN, and all organisations committed to practicing peace in the world, let us also pray for renewed commitment amongst us all, that we might all play our part in seeking peace and pursuing it (Psalm 34:14).

Tuesday 11th January

- The German theologian Meister Eckhart once said, 'if the only prayer you ever say in your life is "thank you", that will be enough'.
- Today, throughout the day (or whatever is left of the day), simply look for opportunities to pray the words 'thank you' to God.

³ Additional prayers by Tim Baker

- Thank you for the sunrise. Thank you that I have enough food for the day. Thank you for my health, such as it is. Thank you for that lovely conversation with a friend. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Amen.

Wednesday 12th January

- Look at your feet. Notice the scraps and marks on your shoes or slippers, or if your feet are bare notice the lines and wrinkles. Wriggle your toes and notice how that feels.
- Look at the ground your feet are on. Is it a carpet? Or wood? Laminate or something else?
- Pray this prayer:
Lord God, help me to stay grounded today. Help me to stay connected to you and to your beautiful creation, so that all my decisions might reflect your glory. Amen.

Thursday 13th January

- Why not make today a space for stillness?
- As often as you can, and for as long as you can during the day, make moments for stillness and quiet reflection or meditation. You may wish to repeat a mantra (for example, 'The Lord is my strength' or 'The Lord is near to all who call on Him', or 'This is the day that the Lord has made, I will rejoice and be glad in it'. Or you can try to clear your mind and simply hold onto the stillness.
- In the stillness, listen out for what thoughts come to mind. Acknowledge them, write down anything that you need to remember, then put them away again, and return to the mantra or the stillness.
- In the stillness, be open to the presence of the divine.
- Meditating takes practice, and time. If you find it helpful, you could return to this practice and these mantras another day.

Friday 14th January

- Time to get creative.
- Today, if you can, why not make a prayer mosaic? You could take strips of tissue paper, bits of recyclable rubbish, the newspapers from the week that have piled up in the front room, or anything you like...and tear out strips or pieces in different colours and stick them to a piece of paper.
- You might like to make a particular pattern or shape – a cross, a representation of the earth, some praying hands if you feel particularly creative...or you might like to just enjoy the process. Tearing and sticking. Cutting and sticking. Arranging.
- As you make your mosaic, think about the week just gone. Pray for the people you have met. Pray for the news stories that have stuck with you. Offer prayers for those on your heart today.

Saturday 15th January

- Today, you might like to pray for people affected most by the Covid pandemic. People working in health-care services all around the world. People working hard on vaccines and boosters and immunisation. People who have lost family members, jobs, opportunities.
- Lord, in the midst of this terrifying and uncertain time for our world, In a time of so much fear and anxiety, So much death, grief and uncertainty, I look to you to provide light and hope and the possibility that things can get better in the end.
Come Lord Jesus. Come Lord Jesus.
Amen.