

Worship at Home - Sunday 14 August 2022

This short act of worship has been prepared for you to use at home. We invite you to spend a few moments with God, knowing that other people across the Methodist Connexion are sharing this act of worship with you.

Opening Prayer

May the words of our mouths and the thoughts of our minds be acceptable to you,

O Lord, our strength and redeemer. Amen.

Hymn: StF334 Praise to the Holiest in the height

Sing/ Read /pray /proclaim the words or listen to it here:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TAAz_iWp6vE

[Praise to the Holiest in the height \(StF 334\) \(methodist.org.uk\)](https://www.methodist.org.uk)

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 (1801-1890)
adapted by Compilers of Hymns for Today's Church 1982 (alt.)*

Let us pray together

Prayer of adoration: Loving God, wherever we are, wherever we go, you are there. You created the world to be our home and our place of journeying. Your glory shines through the world and yet far transcends it. Loving God, we praise you, Creator of the World.

Loving God, wherever we are, wherever we go, you are there. You sent your only Son to be our guide, our companion and our saviour. Your love shines through his life. Your love has conquered death. Loving God, we praise you, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Loving God, wherever we are, wherever we go, you are there. You have sent your Holy Spirit to warm our hearts, to challenge and encourage us. Your power shines through your people. Your power unites them in love. Loving God, we praise you, Giver of the Holy Spirit. Amen

Meditation: The apple shone among the leaves, glinting in the sunlight. The new-made world smelt soft and fresh. All was relaxed, nothing to strive for, totally laid back.

The apple glinted like a knife just out of reach on a table-top. 'Don't touch, child Adam, child Eve. That hard, sharp knife, though of infinite use, can cut and scar and maim.'

The apple shone among the leaves. Its radiance burnt into their hearts; its fragrance excited their every thought. Child Eve reached up, picked it, ate it. And it was very sharp.

Readings from the Old & New Testament

Genesis 3:1-15 1-Corinthians 3:16-17

Time to Reflect - If you read chapter 1&2 of Genesis before today's reading you will find: A high point – humans made in the image of God; then a low point – humans made from the dust of the earth. And now in chapter 3 there are the tensions when you put the two views together! The high point was the special **knowledge** needed to care for the earth and the animals. Now we get Adam and Eve in the garden with the serpent wanting to know more. Knowledge is a powerful thing: it can be used for good but also for evil. (Chemistry can be used to make pain killers, but also to make bombs.) Knowledge can also be a burden – we know we shall get old and die, but not enough to prevent it (if we wanted to!). We cannot keep the innocence of early childhood.

How do we get knowledge? One way is trial and error. Tell children not to do something, and they want to do it (like Adam and Eve!) If it goes wrong it can be disastrous, but often not. The serpent was right – they didn't die; well not yet – Adam was still fathering sons at age 105! See chapter 5.

This story is often taken as a story of how sin came into the world: they did wrong, the man blames the woman, the woman blames the snake. But are there other interpretations, as the Hebrew translated *crafty* could also be translated *clever* or *prudent*, which do not have sinister undertones. Likewise Eve is often translated as Adam's *helper* but it could be *partner*, which implies an equality of status, rather than a subordinate.

So Eve wants to learn. She has more curiosity than Adam. She is willing to try things, and take risks. And the snake asks a question – is it evil to ask questions?

Like Adam & Eve in the story wanting to learn, in our journey of life we have to

learn and discover, re-learn and re-discover our dependence on God, and our knowledge of God; and we of course as Christians learn it through Jesus Christ.

Take a time to sit quietly

A time of prayer - *The world is God's temple.* Let us pray for the world:

- for the powerful, that they may know that the world belongs not to them but to the God of love and justice;
- for the powerless, that they may know that God is alongside them in their hunger, fear and suffering. (Silence)

The church is God's temple.

Let us pray for the church:

- for its leaders, that they may guide their people and the world to worship in word and deed;
- for the different denominations, that in unity they may come to know and worship the one, undivided God. (Silence)

We are God's temple.

Let us pray for ourselves:

- for churches meeting in buildings, that they and we may become sanctuaries for the lonely, the worried and the sad, peoples of love and hope;
- for each one of us, that our lives may be hymns of worship to the eternal God, sung in confidence and joy. (silence)

In the name of our High Priest, Jesus Christ. **Amen**

The Lord's Prayer *Our Father*

Hymn StF 618 Sacred the Body

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W6NNs9WSIL4>

This recording uses the tune Tenderness StF729.

or sing a verse of a hymn that comes to mind

Sacred the body God has created,
temple of Spirit that dwells deep inside.
Cherish each person; nurture creation.
Treat flesh as holy, that love may abide.

Bodies are varied, made in all sizes,
pale, full of colour, both fragile and strong.
Holy the difference, gift of the Maker,
so let us honour each story and song.

Love respects persons, bodies and boundaries.
Love does not batter, neglect, or abuse.
Love touches gently, never coercing.
Love leaves the other with power to choose.

Holy of holies, God ever loving,
make us your temples; indwell all we do.
May we be careful, tender and caring,
so may our bodies give honour to you.

Ruth C. Duck (b. 1947)

Prayers of offering and a blessing: Generous God, Out of love you created all that is; Out of love you created humankind; Out of love you save us from the consequences of our sin. Out of love, we offer you ourselves and all that we have.

Accept them and us, in the name of the second Adam, your Son, Jesus Christ.

Amen.

God, the Creator, fill you with joy.

God, the Redeemer, fill you with hope.

God, the Comforter, fill you with peace. And the blessing of God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, be with you, now & evermore. Amen.

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We are grateful to all the Ministers and Local Preachers from around the Connexion who have contributed to Worship at Home. This resource is administrated by Ministries: Vocations and Worship in the Connexional Team.

For more worship resources see

[The Bible \(methodist.org.uk\)](http://methodist.org.uk)

[Singing the Faith Plus \(methodist.org.uk\)](http://methodist.org.uk)

Genesis 3:1-15 Now the serpent was more crafty than any other wild animal that the Lord God had made. He said to the woman, 'Did God say, "You shall not eat from any tree in the garden"?' The woman said to the serpent, 'We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden; but God said, "You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the middle of the garden, nor shall you touch it, or you shall die."' But the serpent said to the woman, 'You will not die; for God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.' So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate; and she also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate. Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made loincloths for themselves.

They heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden at the time of the evening breeze, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden. But the Lord God called to the man, and said to him, 'Where are you?' He said, 'I heard the sound of you in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself.' He said, 'Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?' The man said, 'The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit from the tree, and I ate.' Then the Lord God said to the woman, 'What is this that you have done?' The woman said, 'The serpent tricked me, and I ate.' The Lord God said to the serpent, 'Because you have done this, cursed are you among all animals and among all wild creatures; upon your belly you shall go, and dust you shall eat all the days of your life. I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will strike your head, and you will strike his heel.'

I-Corinthians 3:16-17 Do you not know that you are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in you? If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy that person. For God's temple is holy, and you are that temple. © NRSV.