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In Collaboration with:



BIG CHURCH SING AT HOME

12th July 2020

A short act of worship for use in peoples homes while churches are closed.

A Free resource part funded by



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Call to worship

Come amongst us, by your grace, God our creator, Christ our saviour and Holy Spirit,
Come and inspire us, come and transform us,
Come and show us how to seek justice in your world,
in Jesus' name. Amen.¹

Hymn: 82 STF – O Lord, my God, when I in awesome wonder - [YouTube](#)
Brought to us by Swan Bank Methodist Church (featuring Sam Taylor and Tom Hall)

Opening Prayers

Lord God, you have opened my eyes to the world around me.

Let these eyes not grow weary because of what they see:
war instead of peace,
despair instead of hope,
profit instead of prosperity,
want instead of need,
statistics instead of people,
destruction and pollution instead of nurture and growth.

I know your continual challenge to me: to pursue a life of justice and peace.
I know you have provided me the tools to make a difference.

Your message has lit a spark within.

Ensure that I will continue to look upon the people of the world as my neighbours
that I will not stay quiet as injustice continues
that I will not let hatred or despair win over love and hope
that I will not let your people become statistics that remove their humanity
that I will not sit by as your world is damaged beyond repair.

I pray that you will keep the fire burning within me. Amen.²

We say the Lord's Prayer

You might like to join in people saying the Lord's prayer in lots of different languages,
as they did at the Big Church Sing - [YouTube](#)

Reading: Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23 - [Click for Reading](#)

¹ Opening prayers written by Tim Baker

² Prayer from the All We Can website – allwecan.org.uk

Reflections on the reading:

This parable is a reminder of the ways that the word of God has different effects on different people, and our role in being prepared to hear what God is saying to us. Jesus even goes so far as to explain to his disciples the way this metaphor works – demonstrating that it is about how people receive ‘the message about the kingdom’.

However, in light of the theme of justice (which will be picked up in a moment), we may want to see this reading in a new light. Are there places in our world where people don’t have access to what they need in order to thrive and survive? Are there people who can’t produce a bountiful crop, because of the systems, structures and individuals around them that prevent their potential being fulfilled. Maybe that is poverty, racial injustice, abuse, neglect, the effects of climate change, oppressive governments or institutions.

Therefore, it is our role to help to create more ‘fertile soil’ in the world, so that the world might produce more crops, more abundance, more grace – so that justice might roll on like a mighty river.

How can we play our part in moving the systems and structures of injustice to make that world possible? A world in which the kingdom of God is a reality for people here on earth, irrespective of where they happen to have been, irrespective of the colour of their skin, irrespective of the impact of natural or human disasters on their communities.

All We Can is the Methodist Church’s international development agency, working around the world to tackle some of these injustices and to see people’s potential fulfilled. During Coronavirus, they have been focused on tackling the impact of the global pandemic and international lockdown, which has left many people without access to essential services or food supplies. You can support this valuable work at allwecan.org.uk/coronavirus or by calling their team on 020 7467 5132 (Monday – Friday; 9am – 5pm). Thank you for doing all you can to help tackle injustice.³

Readings: Galatians 3:26-28 - [Click for Reading](#)

Reflections on the readings

At the Big Church Sing, Rachel Lampard offered this reflection on the theme of justice and this verse in Galatians. (listen to Rachel - [YouTube](#))

I don’t know how you have experienced “togetherness” over the last few months?

For some of us, perhaps we’ve discovered new forms of togetherness, clapping for carers and meeting our neighbours for the first time. Joining in mutual aid groups.

³ Reflection by All We Can – allwecan.org.uk

Maybe, like my family, you've been shielding and have benefited from the kindness of others.

But maybe you live on your own and have longed to hug your grandchildren? Or perhaps your grief or isolation or struggles have meant you've felt further away than ever from others. As is said, we've all faced the same storm, but we've certainly not been in the same boat.

And yet the coronavirus crisis has reminded us how interdependent we are : locally, nationally and globally. From the transmission of the disease across borders to international efforts to find a vaccine. From our dependence on the lowest paid and often lowest valued workers and carers to the backdrop of the biggest international crisis of climate change, we have discovered how connected we are.

Togetherness is at the heart of our calling as Christians. We are created to live in community together, living inter-dependently, not as islands. John Wesley spoke of social holiness, the idea that we grow towards God's being, God's holiness, not as isolated beings, but with one another.

Paul's call to the Galatians was one for togetherness. Through baptism, earlier believers became one together in Jesus. This was to have huge consequences for their lives together and how they shared God's love. As Paul explains, their togetherness needed to be one based on justice.

And yet, we shouldn't take the reminder that there is neither slave nor free, neither male nor female, as a call to forget our identities or be "colour-blind". We don't need to come together in a soup where all our differences and identities are obliterated. Our togetherness is enriched by the fact that we are women, men, Black, white, gay, straight, young, old, working, retired.... Wouldn't it be boring if we were all the same!

But more seriously, the call for colour-blindness is often used by those who assume we are all equal, but don't recognise their own advantages. Being together "in Christ" doesn't abolish these identities, these gifts of who we are. Rather it wipes out the hierarchy or injustices these identities represent. In our togetherness, can we notice and celebrate our differences, as well as commit to tackle the injustices people experience?

The Coronavirus crisis has highlighted and deepened inequalities that were already present in our communities. In this country have seen that staying safe remains difficult for families in cramped flats, those being pushed into poverty by unreliable work and those seeking asylum dependent on inadequate support as they rebuild their lives. Black people have died of Covid19 at a greater rate than white people.

Other countries with less well-resourced health services face the onset of the virus with fear. And at the same time, we have seen a rising up of righteous anger against other injustices – the Black Lives Matter movement, the continued wave of youth

voices speaking out on the climate crisis. Our togetherness is the very thing that requires us to notice these injustices – and act.

As we look forward, and think about the new world we are making choices about, are there lessons we can share about togetherness? How do we listen to people trapped in hierarchies where they are undervalued, badly paid, discriminated against? Can we hear people who face the severest impact of climate change with the fewest resources to resist it? And how do we respond?

As people of God, we are part of this broken world, and yet we are also called to live as part of God's new creation. Let's celebrate the togetherness that we find here... and, staying alert to justice, let's take up the challenge of God's call to build a new togetherness. So that everyone and the whole planet can flourish, to the glory of God!⁴

Prayers of intercession

God of all grace, our prayers are for justice.

In the quiet, we hold the injustices we see in the world, we hold the pain, we reflect on all that is broken, all the ways in which our world has fallen short.

[Hold a few minutes of quiet].

God of the poor, friend of the weak,
Show me what is mine to do. Show me how to seek justice in my community, my country, my world.

God of all grace, may your Spirit move amongst us today, that we may build a better, fairer, safer world,

In Jesus' name.

Amen.⁵

Hymn:

STF 88 – Praise to the Lord, the Almighty, the King of creation! - [YouTube](#)

You might also like to use one or two of the gospel choir songs that were a part of the Big Church Sing in your worship:

Wakefield Community Gospel Choir – Blinded by Your Grace - [YouTube](#)

London Community Gospel Choir – Praise the Lord - [YouTube](#)

⁴ Reflection written by Rachel Lampard - <http://www.jointpublicissues.org.uk>

⁵ Prayers of intercession by Tim Baker

Blessing

Go on your way, and seek justice.

Arise from this place and seek to build a world in which everyone can see their potential fulfilled.

May we be motivated into action, in Jesus' name,

Amen.⁶

⁶ Additional prayers by Tim Baker