

# The Methodist Church

## Ripon and Lower Dales Methodist

### Circuit:

### Worship at Home – 12 June 2022

Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Wherever you are sharing in this act of worship, you are welcome.

Let us give to the Lord the glory of His name, and worship God in holy splendour. His voice thunders over the waters and shakes the wilderness. Let all in his church cry 'Glory!' May God give us strength. Let us seek his blessing of peace.

Hymn: How shall I sing that majesty?  
How shall I sing that majesty  
which angels do admire?  
Let dust in dust and silence lie;  
sing, sing, ye heavenly choir.  
Thousands of thousands stand around  
thy throne, O God most high;  
ten thousand times ten thousand sound  
thy praise; but who am I?

Thy brightness unto them appears,  
whilst I thy footsteps trace;  
a sound of God comes to my ears,  
but they behold thy face.  
They sing, because thou art their Sun;  
Lord, send a beam on me;  
for where heaven is but once begun  
there alleluias be.

How great a being, Lord, is thine,  
which doth all beings keep!  
Thy knowledge is the only line  
to sound so vast a deep.  
Thou art a sea without a shore,  
a sun without a sphere;  
thy time is now and evermore,  
thy place is everywhere.

Prayer:

Holy, Holy, Holy is God, our sovereign Lord,  
Who was, and is, and is to come!  
Before Your unfathomable mystery, O God,  
All eloquence of form and language is facile.  
We cannot encompass You,  
For You encompass us.  
So we fall silent,  
And let the child deep within us

Be content in the knowledge  
That we are known, wanted, and loved  
By One infinitely greater than we shall ever  
be.

Amen

(From the Book of Common Order of the  
Church of Scotland, 1994, pp446-447)

Reading: Isaiah 6: 1 – 8

In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the  
Lord, high and exalted, seated on a throne;  
and the train of his robe filled the temple.  
Above him were seraphim, each with six  
wings: With two wings they covered their  
faces, with two they covered their feet, and  
with two they were flying. And they were  
calling to one another:

"Holy, holy, holy is the Lord Almighty;  
the whole earth is full of his glory."

At the sound of their voices the doorposts  
and thresholds shook and the temple was  
filled with smoke.

"Woe to me!" I cried. "I am ruined! For I am a  
man of unclean lips, and I live among a  
people of unclean lips, and my eyes have  
seen the King, the Lord Almighty."

Then one of the seraphim flew to me with a  
live coal in his hand, which he had taken with  
tongs from the altar. With it he touched my  
mouth and said, "See, this has touched your  
lips; your guilt is taken away and your sin  
atoned for."

Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying,  
"Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?"

And I said, "Here am I. Send me!"

Reflection

Where's the fire in our belly today? Do people  
see any excitement in us? Do we encounter  
the power of God in our worship? Will we feel  
it [this Sunday](#) as we gather for worship?

When we go to church, and we have our  
service we need to expect we will be changed  
by an encounter with the divine, his mystery,  
his holiness, his glory, his overwhelming love  
for us. We've become very fussy about our  
worship, which hymns we like, how hard the  
pew is, where we sit and the quality of the  
preacher! I used to ring my Mum on a [Sunday](#)

[afternoon](#) and ask her how the service had been that morning. They had an [11am](#) service. She'd say "it was good" sometimes. "What was good?" I'd ask. "He finished at ten to." Under the hour was good. I'm not sure there was much encounter with God going on.

If we are to be credible, our primary reason for being is to meet God and to expect to be changed. And God should be met by anyone coming into our churches. We enter into the mystery, we come in awe, we glimpse some of God's character, we lose ourselves in wonder, love and praise.

The God whom Isaiah sees is certainly incomprehensible – in the old sense that he cannot be contained, cannot be compassed by Isaiah's vision. There is mystery, but there is also glory. There is the unseen but also the seen. The house was filled with smoke, but also, Isaiah saw the Lord.

And that seeing was a commissioning. When Isaiah saw the Lord, that vision of mystery and glory wasn't for himself alone. Nor was it a single occasion with no impact on the rest of his life. Seeing the Lord – in mystery and glory – was a call. When he saw the Lord, Isaiah realised his own sin and the sin of the society he lived in – I am a man of unclean lips, I live among a people of unclean lips. He realised he needed to repent and be forgiven. And he realised that God had a task for him.

It is seeing God – God in glory and mystery – which makes Isaiah realise who he is – a sinful man, in a sinful society - and what he is called to do – shout God's glory, God's mystery, God's justice into that society, proclaim God's condemnation on acts of pride and arrogance, oppression and violence, on greed that ignores and disregards those it tramples underfoot.

When we meet God in his vastness and find ourselves before him our priorities change and we find a new purpose. "In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord", says Isaiah.

King Uzziah died in 740BC. He reigned for fifty-two years and his reign was blessed with material prosperity but he became arrogant and proud and tried to manipulate religion

away from the worship of God to worship of him. It's almost that in the Temple here God reasserts his authority. It is in the Temple that, for Isaiah, heaven and earth meet and as they do, the prophet gains a fresh understanding of God's awesomeness. In the light of what his eyes behold, he becomes acutely aware of the breadth and depth of his own shortcomings and insignificance.

The effect is cataclysmic.

His whole world is shaken to its very core but the gap between the individual and his God is bridged dramatically (and painfully!) by a burning coal. In this moment, Isaiah also discovers that the God he has glimpsed in such an overwhelming way is a God who wants to reach out to his people – and it is that realisation that moves Isaiah to do something quite radical. While other prophets are called by God, often by name, to speak and act on God's behalf, here Isaiah volunteers. The young prophet hears God's question, 'Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?' Perhaps Isaiah hears too, the longing in God's voice and he sticks his hand up in the air, asking God to choose him.

This holy, holy, holy God is asking who, in an often broken and unjust world, who will speak... and listen... and 'be', for God?

I gladly share my memory of my college principal at Hartley Victoria College, one Rev Graham Slater. Graham loved philosophy of religion and told us we would understand it by Easter. He didn't say which Easter. So it got to exam time. The passmark was 40 per cent. I got 41. He said to me "there young man, I knew you understood it!" I didn't understand it, I did enough to pass the exam. There was much I didn't get. But maybe with God that's okay. Maybe we aren't meant to know everything. Maybe God is not to be explained but encountered. There are those who've domesticated God to fit their own script. There are churches who've made their church the god while the living God has left the building and is at work down the road...

For Isaiah, the encounter with God led to a sense of his inadequacy but a compulsion to serve.

And what of us? If we've met the living God  
what's our response? Worrying about the  
church or placing ourselves in his hands?

Prayers:

Isaiah saw God in all His glory.

And the prophet was scared.

He saw God –

And in the face of God's awesomeness and  
holiness

Isaiah saw his own, all-too-  
human frailties and feared this was the end.  
Instead, that glimpse marked a new  
beginning.

It started the young prophet on a new journey  
with and for the thrice-Holy God who as one  
God asked and asks still,

"Who can I send.... and who will go for us?"

Holy, holy, holy, God, grant us the courage to  
let You send us out, imperfect, Nfaulty, all-too-  
human though we are, into a community and  
nation and world that so needs to see and  
hear and feel a love that is not about power  
and might but about being...And about being  
with.

So we are confident enough this morning to  
pray for a world that needs help!bSend us  
out by the power of Your Spirit to witness to a  
Saviour, willing to give up everything to help  
every human being catch a glimpse of the  
awesome holiness of a God who draws  
alongside us because that's where God most  
wants to be. Send us out knowing we go in  
God's name and for God's sake. Here we are.  
Send us.

Hymn: Holy, holy holy

Holy, holy, holy! Lord God Almighty!

Early in the morning our song shall rise to  
thee.

Holy, holy, holy, merciful and mighty!

God in three persons, blessed Trinity!

Holy, holy, holy! All the saints adore thee,  
casting down their golden crowns around the  
glassy sea;  
cherubim and seraphim falling down before  
thee,  
which wert and art and evermore shalt be.

Holy, holy, holy! Though the darkness hide  
thee,

though the eye of sinful man thy glory may  
not see,  
only thou art holy; there is none beside thee,  
perfect in pow'r, in love, and purity.

Holy, holy, holy! Lord God Almighty!

All thy works shall praise thy name in earth,  
and sky and sea.

Holy, holy, holy! merciful and mighty!

God in three persons, blessed Trinity!

Reading: Psalm 8

Lord, our Lord,

how majestic is your name in all the earth!

You have set your glory

in the heavens.

Through the praise of children and infants

you have established a stronghold against  
your enemies,

to silence the foe and the avenger.

When I consider your heavens,

the work of your fingers,

the moon and the stars,

which you have set in place,

what is mankind that you are mindful of them,

human beings that you care for them?

You have made them a little lower than the  
angels

and crowned them with glory and honour.

You made them rulers over the works of your  
hands;

you put everything under their feet:

all flocks and herds,

and the animals of the wild,

the birds in the sky,

and the fish in the sea,

all that swim the paths of the seas.

Lord, our Lord,

how majestic is your name in all the earth!

Hymn: O thou who camest from above

O thou who camest from above

the fire celestial to impart,

kindle a flame of sacred love

on the mean altar of my heart!

There let it for thy glory burn

with inextinguishable blaze,

and trembling to its source return

in humble prayer and fervent praise.

Jesus, confirm my heart's desire

to work, and speak, and think for thee;

still let me guard the holy fire,

and still stir up the gift in me.

Ready for all thy perfect will,  
my acts of faith and love repeat;  
till death thy endless mercies seal,  
and make the sacrifice complete.

#### Benediction

May the goodness of the Creator  
and the grace of the Saviour  
guide you in the power of the Holy Spirit.  
The blessing of God,  
Father, Son and Holy Spirit grant you and  
give you his peace now and always.  
Amen.