

Bangor & Holyhead Methodist Circuit
Sunday Worship Sheet – Sunday 21st April 2024

Our worship for this week was written by Keith Alexander, Visiting Preacher and URC Elder, worshipping at Amlwch Methodist Church. You may wish to have your Bible to hand. The hymns are at the back of the sheet. CCLI licence 556292

Call to Worship

And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. LORD, you are my God; I will exalt you and praise your name, for in perfect faithfulness you have done wonderful things, things planned long ago. (Isaiah 25:1)

Hymn 481 StF The Lord's my Shepherd, I'll not want

Prayers of Adoration, Confession and Thanksgiving

Adoration:

What is love? And it is this, that you, creator God, who set this universe in motion, should care for people like us. What is love? It is this, that you, Good Shepherd, who know each of your sheep should lay down your life for people like us. What is love? It is this, that we should follow the example of Christ in this world and love all people like us.

Confession:

You know us better than we know ourselves, our thoughts, our motives, our burdens. Living water, flow through these lives; wash away all that hinders- the past we cling to, the accumulated debris of our daily lives. Cleanse, refresh, revive. Make us fit for service, that we might be your hands, your feet, your words, wherever you might need us.

Thanksgiving:

On this, our journey of faith, we trust in you alone, Good Shepherd, guiding us along a path you are familiar with; Leading us beside green pastures and quiet waters; feeding us with your word as refreshment for our souls; Steering us from that which might tempt and divert; Protecting us from that which might harm or destroy. We trust in you alone, Good Shepherd, on this, our journey of faith, and we thank you for your constant care.

Amen.

Lord's Prayer

Hymn 394 StF Spirit of God, unseen as the wind

Scripture Readings: Psalm 23; John 10:11-18

Reflection:

Some years ago, I took early retirement from Local Government. With my severance pay I bought a small grocery business. It failed almost immediately. It cost me a lot of money. I was talking about it to my son who commented "You should always do something you know, Dad."

Not long after this I spotted an opportunity when talking to a young woman at a place where I was working. She was, in her spare time, a business advisor for small businesses through an agency in Manchester. She introduced me to the directors who asked me what I could offer in the way of help and advice for small businesses. I explained that, in my local government career I had worked on Business Rates and that there was a process available whereby I could submit appeals for business owners against rateable values. The work was funded by the European Union so it was free to the clients. I started work with them in my spare time and then branched out to other similar agencies in Greater Manchester. I was very successful in getting a large number of reduced bills for the clients. It became a full time job

My son was right. I used my specialist knowledge of Business Rates and made a living. Looking at the story of the shepherd and the sheep we can see that, as well as many other gifts he possessed, Jesus worked as a shepherd. He was a carpenter by trade in a rural area where there were many sheep. As a child he must have watched how the local shepherds worked and so brought this as a picture in his teaching. The shepherds knew their sheep intimately just as Jesus knew God intimately. He stressed the difference between hired shepherds and those who owned their flocks. He had used, on other occasions, the image of a shepherd leaving his 99 sheep as he searched for the single lost one.

He was able to show what the term, "Good Shepherd", meant, because his listeners knew that rural scene. In other words he spoke in the local vernacular. Jesus was able to show how he cared for his sheep who were listening to him. Just as with a shepherd of that time, they had started following him. Ultimately, Jesus would be able to show how that intimate relationship with his Father was available to his sheep too. It reminds us of those words from John's third chapter: "God so loved the world that he gave his only son so that all who believe in him should not die but have eternal life."

How far will God go for us? He will allow the death of his only son to be the means of our eternal life. How much more could he give? He did give Jesus and we are now able to have life in all its fullness. Such love! **Amen**

Prayer of intercession:

Father, you have given us the choice:

to listen, learn, love and lose, to gain the Kingdom,
or to accept worldly values and lose our lives.

The excitement and challenge is greater than any game!

Will we give you our hearts, or merely our lips.

Will we offer our lives as well as our wealth.

Dare we take the risk?

Or do we prefer faith with insurance,

safe in our well ordered lives,
relying on popularity and image,
instead of integrity and love.

In this world of materialism, position and power
help us to seek the wisdom of your word,
to choose your way,
to live our lives by your law
and to encounter the living spirit,
through everyday contact with Christ Jesus.
May we step out with faith unbounded,
in the knowledge of your forgiving love,
to share the pain and suffering,
as well as the joy,
as we grow closer to Jesus,
seeking daily the prize for which you call us,
through Christ's resurrection,
eternal life and a place in your Kingdom. Amen

Hymn 526 StF Lord of all hopefulness, Lord of all joy

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God And the fellowship of the Holy Spirit Be with us all evermore Amen

Hymn 481 StF The Lord's my Shepherd, I'll not want

- 1 The Lord's my shepherd, I'll not want ;
he makes me lie in pastures green,
he leads me by the still, still waters,
his goodness restores my soul.
*And I will trust in you alone,
and I will trust in you alone,
for your endless mercy follows me,
your goodness will lead me home.*
- 2 He guides my ways in righteousness,
and he anoints my head with oil ;
and my cup — it overflows with joy,
I feast on his pure delights.
- 3 And though I walk the darkest path —
I will not fear the evil one,
for you are with me, and your rod and staff
are the comfort I need to know.

Stuart Townend (b. 1963)

Hymn 394 StF Spirit of God, unseen as the wind

*Spirit of God, unseen as the wind,
gentle as is the dove,
teach us the truth and help us believe,
show us the Saviour's love.*

- 1 You spoke to us long, long ago,
gave us the written word ;
we read it still, needing its truth,
through it God's voice is heard.
- 2 Without your help we fail our Lord,
we cannot live his way ;
we need your power, we need your strength,
following Christ each day.

Margaret V. Old (1932–2001)

Hymn 526 StF Lord of all hopefulness, Lord of all joy

- 1 Lord of all hopefulness, Lord of all joy,
whose trust, ever childlike, no cares could destroy,
be there at our waking, and give us, we pray,
your bliss in our hearts, Lord, at the break of the day.
- 2 Lord of all eagerness, Lord of all faith,
whose strong hands were skilled at the plane and the lathe,
be there at our labours, and give us, we pray,
your strength in our hearts, Lord, at the noon of the day.
- 3 Lord of all kindness, Lord of all grace,
your hands swift to welcome, your arms to embrace,
be there at our homing, and give us, we pray,
your love in our hearts, Lord, at the eve of the day.
- 4 Lord of all gentleness, Lord of all calm,
whose voice is contentment, whose presence is balm,
be there at our sleeping, and give us, we pray,
your peace in our hearts, Lord, at the end of the day.

Jan Struther (Joyce Placzek) (1901–1953)