

Service on 25 Oct 2020 for High Street Stevenage, Baldock, Arlesey and Stotfold Methodist Churches.

Introduction

This service for High Street, Baldock, Arlesey and Stotfold Methodist Churches.

The theme of the service is loving God and others.

Call to worship

Our call to worship is from Deuteronomy 6 verses 4 to 6

⁴ Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one.⁵ Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. ⁶ These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts.

Hymn

We start worship by singing our love to God. Please click on the link and join in

Singing the Faith 98 Your love is amazing

<https://youtu.be/xl5FdrH0kBs>

Your love is amazing, steady and unchanging

your love is a mountain, firm beneath my feet,

Your love is a mystery, how you gently lift me,

when I am surrounded, your love carries me

Hallelujah, hallelujah,

Hallelujah, your love makes me sing

Hallelujah, hallelujah,

Hallelujah, your love makes me sing

Your love is surprising, I can feel it rising,

all the joy that's growing deep inside of me.

Ev'ry time I see you, all your goodness shines through,

I can feel this God song rising up in me

Hallelujah, hallelujah,

Hallelujah, your love makes me sing

Hallelujah, hallelujah,

Hallelujah, your love makes me sing

Brenton Brown and Brian Doerksen (b.1965)

CCL 052772

Prayer of Adoration

We continue worship in prayer. You are invited to join in the actions.

Lord you are everywhere (indicate everywhere with your hands).

Father we worship you (reach up to reach out for God).

Jesus we love you (make a heart with hands).

Holy Spirit you are in our hearts (clasp heart).

You write your laws in our minds and hearts (point to mind and heart).

In Jesus name we pray.

Amen

Prayer of Thanks

And a prayer of thanks.

Father, thank you for loving us and wanting a right relationship with us.

Brother Jesus, thank you for our new life.

Holy Spirit, thank you for filling our hearts with God's love and law.

Father, thank you for the people who look after us;

family, friends, neighbours, health workers, shop workers, teachers, police, governments, computer fixers
and for those we think of in the quiet.

In Jesus name we pray.

Amen.

Prayer of Confession

We continue worship in a prayer of confession.

Lord,

We fell short of your ways.

We sinned.

We did not put you first.

We thought in ways you reject.

We felt hate.

We held a grudge.

We gave you less than our best.

We are sorry please forgive us.

We promise to right the wrongs.

In Jesus name we pray.

Amen

The Bible tells us that when we accept Jesus as God and say we are sorry for our sins, we are pardoned. There is no need to feel guilty. Thank you Jesus.

Reading

Leviticus 19.1-18

Matthew 22:34-40

Hymn

We continue worshipping love which paid for all sin and fulfilled the law. Please click a link and join in Singing the Faith 332 Lord I lift your name on high

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Vayg6gNXn3E> (choir and band)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IHLtYcbPuRQ&list=PLvGe-2P8-UNU_RbfqSTsHr5tZUdvMytRH&index=62

(gospel festival)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mfxtmpsT-2k> (with cartoons and dance moves)

Lord I lift your name on high,

Lord I love to sing your praises;

I'm so glad you're in my life,

I'm so glad you came to save us.

You came from heaven to earth

To show the way,

From the earth to the cross

My debt to pay,

From the cross to the grave,

From the grave to the sky;

Lord I lift your name on high.

Rick Founds

CCL 052772

Talk

There are so many rules! It's confusing.

- Tidy your desk.
- Follow the one-way system in the shop.
- Eat out to stay alert. Oops! That's not the rule.

And there are all the rules in the Bible.

And it's not just now. There were loads of rules when Jesus had his earthly ministryⁱ. Some religious leaders gave believers extra rules on top of the Old Testament. So, people asked "what is the most important rule?"

Jesus explained that:

- The top rule is:
"Love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul and with all your mind"
- The second greatest rule is:
"Love your neighbour as yourself"
- These two rules summarise "All the Law and the Prophets"

You heard these rules earlier when Tim and I read from the Old Testament. They are mega themes which run through the whole Bible.

To put it another way:

- God's top rule is "love God most".
- God's next to top rule is "love people".
- These rules summarise God's ways and the whole Bible.
- These rules help us prioritise other rules.
- When we love God we treasure and live his rules and priorities.

There is something else that helps us prioritise rules. Hold that thought as I'll come back to it.

God loves us and wants to have a right relationship with us. But sin spoils our relationship with God. Jesus' death paid for all sin. When we become Christians we claim that for ourselves. So Christians have a right relationship with God. We have a right relationship with the Father and Son because of their infinite love and our faith.

Jesus' death paid for all sin forever. Therefore, the Old Testament ways for removing sin and spiritual uncleanness are redundant. Now let's return to the thought about prioritising rules. The Old Testament rituals and rules for removing sin and spiritual uncleanness are redundant. It's the remainder of the Old Testament which applies today. It's Old Testament morals that apply today.

Let's apply what we've heard. I will ask some questions. You are invited to answer each one, and discuss it with others if you can. I'll share my answers with you.

EXAMPLE 1 Can I lie if my husband asks me to?

ANSWER If I "love God most" I prioritise God's rule over my husband's ask. God says do not lie (Leviticus 19.11). So I cannot lie even if my husband asks me to.

EXAMPLE 2 Can I take the money Tim had for his birthday, without his permission?

ANSWER No! It's stealing which God says is wrong (as in Leviticus 19.11).

EXAMPLE 3 Should I follow the one-way system in the shop? The Bible says nothing about one-way systems.

ANSWER The one-way system is to ensure social distancing, stop people getting covid 19, and preserve life (as in Leviticus 19.16). Preserving life is an example of "loving people". So I try to follow the one-way system.

EXAMPLE 4 Must I be a farmer (as in Leviticus 19: 9 - 10)?

ANSWER No. These verses are an example of "loving people". In this case "loving people" is generosity to those who experience difficulties such as poverty.

EXAMPLE 5 Must I make fellowship offerings as in the reading (Leviticus 19.5 to 8)?

ANSWER No. That is one of the rituals for removing sin. The ritual is redundant as Jesus paid for all sin.

In conclusion, we've heard some important things.

- The Father, Son and Holy Spirit are love.
- They love you, me and everyone.
- The Holy Trinity's rules are love.
- Christians treasure God.
- Christians treasure and live God's rules and priorities.

Let's say a prayer about that.

Repeat after me:

Jackie: Dear God,

All: Dear God,

Jackie: Thank you for loving us.

All: Thank you for loving us.

Jackie: May we love you most.

All: May we love you most.

Jackie: May we treasure and live your rules and priorities.

All: May we treasure and live your rules and priorities.

In Jesus name we pray.

Amen

Prayer of Intercession

We continue worship with a prayer of intercession. When I pray

"Lord have mercy"

Please respond

Lord have mercy

Let's pray

Almighty God,

Watch over your world church.

Be with them where-ever they worship.

Strengthen the persecuted church and hold them close.

May they love and apply your rules and priorities.

Heal those who are ill or suffer.

Lord have mercy.

All: Lord have mercy.

Lord of All,

See your family at High Street, Baldock, Arlesey and Stotfold Methodist Churches.

Be with us in our worship at chapel, at home or elsewhere.

Help us to love one another.

May we love and apply your rules and priorities.

Be with the groups who use the church buildings.

Heal those in our circuit who are poorly or suffering.

Protect us from covid 19.

Lord have mercy.

All: Lord have mercy.

Heavenly Father,

Your Creation suffers from climate change and a pandemic.

Guide governments, leaders, influencers and activists with your priorities.

Help us to live eco-friendly lives.

Help us to fight covid 19.

At this time of change, guide the UK and European governments and leaders in your love and justice.

May they work towards safety, shelter, food, work and hope for all.

Lord have mercy.

All: Lord have mercy.

In Jesus name we pray.

Amen

The Lord's Prayer

Please join in the Lord's prayer.

Our Father, who art in heaven,

Hallowed be thy Name;

Thy kingdom come;

Thy will be done;

On earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread.

And forgive us our trespasses,

As we forgive those who trespass against us.

And lead us not into temptation;

But deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory,

For ever and ever. Amen.

Hymn

We continue worship singing that God's love is the best love. Please click a link and join in

Singing the Faith 503 Love Divine

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0gvCODgV1fc> (Westminster Abbey Commonwealth Day 2020)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UJVAJ63OSsl>

(worship band version)

1 Love divine, all loves excelling,
joy of heaven to earth come down,
fix in us thy humble dwelling,
all thy faithful mercies crown.
Jesu, thou art all compassion,
pure, unbounded love thou art;
visit us with thy salvation,
enter every trembling heart.

2 Come, almighty to deliver,
let us all thy life receive;
suddenly return, and never,
never more thy temples leave.
Thee we would be always blessing,
serve thee as thy hosts above,
pray, and praise thee, without ceasing,
glory in thy perfect love.

3 Finish then thy new creation;
pure and spotless let us be:
let us see thy great salvation,
perfectly restored in thee:
changed from glory into glory,
till in heaven we take our place,
till we cast our crowns before thee,
lost in wonder, love, and praise.

Charles Wesley (1707-1788)

CCL 052772

Offering

If you wish to make an offering to support God's work please contact Rev Malcolm Peacock or your church treasurer. They can explain how to make a donation.

Let's pray

Lord

Thank you for the gifts of money, time and resource which are given to High Street, Baldock, Arlesey and Stotfold Methodist Churches. The money comes as cash, electronic transfer and cheques. Bless all these donations and use them to your glory.

In Jesus name we pray,

Amen

Blessing

And a blessing

Jackie: Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

All: In the name of Christ Amen

References

[New International Version \(NIV\)](#)

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ⁱ NIV footnotes