



All prayers from Methodist Worship Book

Call to Worship: This is the day that the Lord has made. We will rejoice and be glad in it!

Hymn StF 20 Be still for the presence of the Lord **Watch on YouTube** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=laLM9bNhN9w>

Be still for the presence of the
Lord,
The Holy One is here
Come bow before Him now,
With reverence and fear
In Him no sin is found
We stand on holy ground
Be still for the presence of the
Lord,
The Holy One is here

Be still for the glory of the Lord,
Is shining all around
He burns with holy fire,
With splendour He is crowned
How awesome is the sight
Our radiant King of light
Be still for the glory of the Lord,
Is shining all around

Be still for the power of the
Lord,
Is moving in this place
He comes to cleanse and heal,
To minister His grace
No work too hard for Him
In faith receive from Him
Be still for the power of the
Lord
Is moving in this place

Prayer

Let us pray. Holy God, holy and strong, holy and immortal: have mercy on us. *Silence*

Eternal God, source of all blessing, help us to worship you with all our heart and mind and strength; for you alone are God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

Prayer of adoration

Holy God, to you alone belong glory, honour and praise. We join with the hosts of heaven as we worship. You alone are worthy of adoration from every mouth, and every tongue shall sing your praise. You create the earth by your power; you save the human race in your mercy, and renew it through your grace. To you, loving God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, be all glory, honour and praise now and forever. **Amen.**

Let us confess our sins. *Silence*

Loving God, we have sinned against you in what we have thought, said and done. We have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbours as ourselves. We are truly sorry and turn away from what is wrong. Forgive us for the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. *Silence*

Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners. This is his gracious word: 'Your sins are forgiven.' Amen. Thanks be to God.

Reading Matthew 17:1-9

After six days Jesus took with him Peter, James and John the brother of James, and led them up a high mountain by themselves. There he was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and his clothes became as white as the light. Just then there appeared before them Moses and Elijah, talking with Jesus. Peter said to Jesus, "Lord, it is good for us to be here. If you wish, I will put up three shelters—one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah." While he was still speaking, a bright cloud covered them, and a voice from the cloud said, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased. Listen to him!" When the disciples heard this, they fell facedown to the ground, terrified. But Jesus came and touched them. "Get up," he said. "Don't be afraid." When they looked up, they saw no one except Jesus. As they were coming down the mountain, Jesus instructed them, "Don't tell anyone what you have seen, until the Son of Man has been raised from the dead."

Sermon - Break down the barriers of light

I guess you probably haven't met me before. My name is Luke, Luke Smith. I am a Methodist minister and I'm married to Vivian Smith. Sometimes people say to me, are you related to Vivian Smith? And I say, only through marriage. I am the superintendent minister of the Tendering Circuit, which is in the Bedfordshire, Essex and Hertfordshire district. And yeah, so I thought I would... share with you some thoughts.

We have this reading on the Transfiguration and it's very, very complicated. But I just want to try and explain some things really about it. Don't you just love a good football match? I'm sure you do. I'm sure everyone is an Ipswich Town fan. And, you know, maybe this season Ipswich will be promoted. Who knows? But, you know, football is fantastic, isn't it? Vivian really does not like it and she endures it with me. But football is such a brilliant thing. And, you know, everyone's got an opinion. Well, in my world, they do. Everyone has an opinion. And we have memories, memories of wonderful football matches. You know, especially when your team defies the odds and beats massive opposition. Back in the 1980s, yes, I am that old, my team, which is the mighty York City, York is where I'm from, we had a couple of good years in cup runs and I remember when York City beat Arsenal. It was in the FA Cup, fourth round, and we won 1-0 with an 89th minute penalty. And I can remember it like it was yesterday. An 89th minute penalty, scored, and that was it. The end of the game. Absolutely fantastic. And in the fifth round of the cup, we got Liverpool. Let's not go there. But Arsenal was absolutely fantastic. There were maybe 10,000 people all watching. And everyone will be able to tell you exactly what happened from their particular perspective.

But we're not here to talk about football. I want to talk about the transfiguration. You've got Peter, James and John taken up a mountain by Jesus. And then some pretty strange stuff happens really. Jesus' face shines like the sun. Then his clothes are as white as light. Then in front of them, appeared Moses and Elijah talking with Jesus. Then Peter starts talking. And while he's talking, a white cloud appeared and covered them. Then there was a voice from the cloud saying, this is my son. So we guess it's the voice of God. The disciples fell down in shock. I think if I'm honest, that would be an understatement if I was there. Fell down in shock. You're not joking. I too would fall down with shock. Jesus touched them. and they all saw Jesus. It makes a football match seem fairly insignificant. As we look at this reading from Matthew, I think there are three things to think about.

First of all, God broke down the barriers of history. Secondly, God today breaks down the power, breaks down generations, and we're called to reflect the light that breaks down barriers. First of all, God broke down the barriers of history. I don't know if you're a science fiction kind of person. I'm not really. I kind of grew up with Doctor Who, but it just seems a bit strange for me now. I don't quite get it. It's too complicated for my brain. But I do like it. I used to like that programme. I don't know if you remember. Good Night, Sweetheart, where Nicholas Lindhurst travels between the modern day and the 1940s. And he travels and, you know, he walks through this world and he travels back in time. And it's all amazing and it's all interesting. And he tries to have a role in different periods of history. But you can't do it. But in this reading, what God did was... He showed his presence in different periods of history.

God broke down the barriers of history. It shows that the God of Elijah and Moses is the same God in Jesus' time and the same God in our time in 2026. He broke down these barriers of history. I don't know how often you celebrate Holy Communion. But it's an aspect of worship where the barriers of history are broken down. We say that God is with us and we acknowledge all those people who've been fed around the table, sometimes in the very place where we gather and sometimes it's metaphorical.

You know, the God we worship is timeless, but also beyond time. Do you know what I mean? it's much more than the good night sweetheart time travel much more than doctor who we have a god for all time one to timothy one verse nine says grace was given to us in Jesus before the beginning of time so first of all god breaks down the barriers of history secondly god breaks down the generation I'm getting old I'm nearer 60 than 50 that's old isn't it! I remember when I first got my driving license. I passed my test at 17. I got my driving license and it has a date of expiry and it was when I'm going to be 70, 2039. And 2039 when you're 17 seems a long way off. Now it's not so far away.

But I knew I was getting old when I had to ask people what was on the radio. I asked my daughter, I asked my niece, "Who are these people who are singing?" At Christmas time we put a Christmas Top of the Pops or a

Review of the Year. I don't know who these people are. Who are these people? What's happened? What's happened to Adam and the Ants? What's happened to all Spandau Ballet Soft Cell? All those other singers of the proper age. I don't know. I'm getting old. I've lost my hair. I'm overweight. No! And then I sometimes sit with people in church and they're talking about things I haven't got a clue what they're talking about because they're talking about life before I was here. I'm kind of like stuck in the middle. I am well and truly middle age.

I've been a minister for some years. I've been a preacher for even longer. And people often used to say to me, how do we bring young people into church? How do we engage people of different generations in church? I don't know. How do we break down the generations, those barriers? I don't know, but God can.

We should take it to the Lord in prayer, as the hymn writer says. We should think about asking God to help us speak to generations that are not of our own, because God has the power to break down generations. So God can break down the barriers of history. God can break down the power of generations. And finally, we are called to reflect the light that breaks down the barriers.

So, I'm married to Vivian, as you may or may not know. Vivian lives in the manse that is in the circuit that I am part of. Not far from Brantham, really, not far outside the circuit, just over the water in Essex, just in North Essex. And it's very dark where we live. The town of Manningtree doesn't have many streetlights. And if you come down to the Manse in the winter, it is... There are no lights. At Christmas time, we had some lights up and had illuminated reindeer, which made things a bit easier. But at the moment, it's quite dark. I'm very pleased that for Christmas I received a head torch so I could see what was going on. And it's brilliant.

You have this torch and the darkness is gone. Peter says that he was a witness to what happened. And through that we are called to be witnesses. Those disciples on the mountains spoke of a light. We are to speak of a light. We are called to be like torches or headlights, shining in darkness, witnessing to what we've experienced of God. Because I'm sure everybody here watching this has got an experience of God. So, we are called to reflect the light that breaks down barriers in all sorts of areas of life, where there is tension, where there's worry, anger or hatred. And try to enable peace, calm and love.

Vivian told me my talk had to be about 10 minutes and we're just over the 10 minutes. So, I'll shut up. The transfiguration. We see that God breaks down the barriers of history, breaks down the barriers of generations, and we are called to break down the barriers of light. Amen.

Hymn StF 531 What a friend we have in Jesus **Watch on YouTube** https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6c7L_tqQGjc

What a friend we have in Jesus,
all our sins and griefs to bear!
What a privilege to carry
everything to God in prayer!
O what peace we often forfeit,
O what needless pain we bear,
all because we do not carry
everything to God in prayer!

Have we trials and temptations?
Is there trouble anywhere?
We should never be discouraged;
take it to the Lord in prayer!
Can we find a friend so faithful
who will all our sorrows share?
Jesus knows our every weakness;
take it to the Lord in prayer!

Are we weak and heavy laden,
cumbered with a load of care?
Precious Savior, still our refuge--
take it to the Lord in prayer!
Do your friends despise, forsake
you?
Take it to the Lord in prayer!
In his arms he'll take and shield
you;
you will find a solace there.

Prayers of thanksgiving : Let us give thanks to God.

For the love of our Father, the Maker of all, the giver of all good things: let us bless the Lord. Thanks be to God.

For the world's beauty and the changing seasons, and for the life that we have been given: let us bless the Lord. Thanks be to God.

For Jesus Christ our Saviour, who lived and worked among us: let us bless the Lord. Thanks be to God.

For his suffering and death on the cross and his resurrection to new life: let us bless the Lord. Thanks be to God.

For his rule over all things and his presence in the world: let us bless the Lord. Thanks be to God.

For the Holy Spirit, the giver of life, who teaches and guides us: let us bless the Lord. Thanks be to God.

For the grace of the Spirit in the work of the Church and the life of the world: let us bless the Lord.
Thanks be to God. Amen.

Prayers of intercession : God our Father, grant us the help of your Spirit in our prayers for the salvation of all people.

We pray for the Church throughout the world for this church and all its members for . . .
that in faith and unity we may be constantly renewed by your Holy Spirit for mission and service.
Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

We pray for the peoples of the world for the leaders of the nations for . . .
that they may seek justice, freedom and peace for all.

Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

We pray for our country for those who have authority and influence for . . .
that all may serve one another in wisdom, honesty and compassion.

Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

We pray for those among whom we live and work for all our neighbours for . . .
that we may so use your gifts that together we may find joy in your creation.

Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

We pray for all in sorrow, need, anxiety or sickness for . . .
that in their weakness they may know your strength, and in despair find hope.

Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

In you, Father, we are one family on earth and in heaven. We remember in your presence those who have died . . .
giving thanks especially for those who have revealed to us your grace in Christ. Help us to follow the example of your saints
in light and bring us with them to the fullness of your eternal joy; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Lord's Prayer : Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your Kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in
heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Lead us not into
temptation, but deliver us from evil. For the Kingdom, the power and the glory are yours. Now and forever Amen.

Hymn StF 470 Lord for the years

Watch on YouTube <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RkkYUEcN234>

Lord, for the years your love has kept and guided,
urged and inspired us, cheered us on our way,
sought us and saved us, pardoned and provided:
Lord of the years, we bring our thanks today.

Lord, for that word, the word of life which fires us,
speaks to our hearts and sets our souls ablaze,
teaches and trains, rebukes us and inspires us:
Lord of the word, receive Your people's praise.

Lord, for our land in this our generation,
spirits oppressed by pleasure, wealth and care:

for young and old, for commonwealth and nation,
Lord of our land, be pleased to hear our prayer.

Lord, for our world when we disown and doubt him,
loveless in strength, and comfortless in pain,
hungry and helpless, lost indeed without him:
Lord of the world, we pray that Christ may reign.

Lord for ourselves; in living power remake us -
self on the cross and Christ upon the throne,
past put behind us, for the future take us:
Lord of our lives, to live for Christ alone

The blessing of God, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, be among *you/us* and remain with *you/us* always. **Amen.**