

The Bridgwater Drive Church, 6 Nov. 2022.

Call to worship (inspired by Psalm 145)

We are here in the name of Jesus Christ,
to worship the God who gave us life and who sustains our every breath,
and to praise the Spirit who enlivens our hearts and enlightens our minds.
Great is our God and deserves our greatest praise,
God is awesome beyond all our imagining.
Each generation shall pass on the good news to the next,
and shall publicly celebrate God's saving actions.

Hymn O for a thousand tongues MP496

Offering

Opening Prayer

The Lord our God overflows with loving kindness,
and is close to all who call on the Holy One's name!
We praise and bless God's holy name forever.

The Lord our Great God is glorious beyond
our imagination, yet God hears our cries for help!
We praise and bless God's holy name forever.

The Lord our God is worthy to be honoured
by every generation, and by people of every age!
We come in worship and praise of God's holy name.

Blessed God, we celebrate who You are, and remember all that You have done for us.
You hold our lives in Your hands and catch us when we stumble.
So, we come together today, led by Your Holy Spirit,
to worship You: to sing Your praise,
to confess our mistakes, and to receive Your love and mercy,
made possible through the sacrifice of Your Son, Jesus Christ.

Holy One, you have promised to be with us,
And long ago You sent your Spirit to abide among us
and guide us to a future of goodness and hope.
We come seeking your truth, your justice, your kindness.
O God, you are with us this morning.
Let us feel your presence and welcome you into our lives.
Come and fill these desires of our hearts.
And open your Word to us, in Jesus' name we pray,
The one who came, not to condemn but to give life abundant. Amen

Hymn Great is thy faithfulness MP 200

Bible readings: **Psalm 77:1-14**
 Deuteronomy 8:1-6, 11

I've been thinking a lot this week about remembering. Yesterday, was of course, Bonfire Night – remember, remember the 5th of November. Tuesday, 1 November was All Saints day, which I remember as the day my dad died, and 2 Nov. is All Souls when we think of all those who have died. Next Sunday we will celebrate Remembrance Sunday, when we remember particularly all those who have died in wars. In more cheerful remembering, all

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this year we have been celebrating the 50th anniversary of the forming of the URC, and of course the 70th jubilee of Queen Elizabeth, and this week was the 3rd anniversary of my ordination.

This Tuesday, in Rayleigh, we had the monthly Memory Worship – an afternoon of worship, and activities designed for those living with dementia, but open to everyone. We sing old, well-known hymns that people remember from their childhood, and there is a lot of repetition, and sensory things – items are taken out of the memory box and handed out to people for them to hold, such as a cross (Ted), a Bible, a candle and a prayer bear, and often the talk includes things for people to touch and smell. I always thought there were two kinds of memory, short-term and long-term, but there are in fact 4 kinds of memory: sensory memory, short-term memory, working memory, and long-term memory.

We store the majority of our memories in our long-term memory. Any memory we can still recall after 30 seconds could classify as long-term memory. These memories range in significance - from recalling the name of a friendly face at your favourite café or shop, to important bits of information like a close friend's birthday or your home address.

Long-term memory can be further split into explicit and implicit:

Explicit long-term memories are memories we consciously and deliberately take time to form and recall. Explicit memory holds information such as your best friend's birthday or your phone number. It often includes major milestones in your life, such as childhood events, graduation dates, or academic work you learned in school.

We are not as deliberate with forming implicit memories as we are with explicit ones.

Implicit memories form unconsciously and might affect the way a person thinks and behaves. Implicit memory often comes into play when we are learning motor skills like walking or riding a bike. If you learned how to ride a bike when you were 10 and only ever pick it up again when you are 20, implicit memory helps you remember how to ride it.

Sensory memory can be very important, especially if the other kinds of memory are failing – objects can bring back memories, though sometimes they can be quite vague (Teddy, dad's cross, Mary statue, elephant). Smells can be very evocative – Channel No 5... And things we hear – people with memory loss will often remember favourite songs and hymns long after memories with information, or working memory is lost.

In our reading from Deuteronomy, the Israelites are told to remember the long way that the Lord had led them during the 40 years in the wilderness. And the psalmist says, 'I will call to mind the deeds of the Lord; I will remember your wonders of old.' It seems to me that quite often in the Old Testament, we are told to remember the Lord our God and God's many good deeds. Jewish festivals often remember a historic event, like being brought out of

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slavery in Egypt, or the night the angel of the Lord passed over the Jewish households and did not kill the firstborn sons. And our Christian festivals are also about remembering – at Easter we remember the Passion of Christ and recount the story of Jesus' last supper arrest and crucifixion. At Christmas, we remember his birth and re-tell that story. We repeat, re-enact and remember Jesus' life.

Today, we celebrate the Lord's Supper, an act of remembrance we perform every month and at the big festivals. Jesus breaks the bread and gives it to his disciples saying, 'Do this is remembrance of me'. With the wine also he says, 'Do this is remembrance of me'. Every time we eat the bread and drink the cup, we remember the death of Christ.

In writing to the Corinthians, Paul provides the first written account of the last meal Jesus shared with his disciples that had been passed down through oral tradition. The meal is also described in the Gospels and shows how deeply this memory shaped the early church. The early Christians always had the Lord's Supper as part of a community shared meal. Paul reminds the Corinthians of the origin of that shared meal. The supper's purpose is to remember Jesus. It is not a time for lavish display or ostentation. It is not a time to display wealth or position. Instead, this meal is a time to reflect on what Jesus has done in giving his life for others. It is a time, Paul later explains, for self-examination. The Corinthians are to discern the body — both Christ's corporeal body and the corporate body of believers — so they can overcome division and re-member the body of Christ to which they belong. As he begins his account, Paul reports that he "delivers" or "hands on" this tradition about the night on which Jesus was "handed over" or "delivered up." Our modern English versions often obscure the echo of the word in Paul's introduction. The NRSV, for example, uses "handed on" and "betrayed", associating Paul's language with Judas's betrayal. While "handing over" may recall that event, Paul elsewhere also stresses that God, acting for the world's salvation, hands Jesus over.

Paul then narrates the actions of Jesus. First, Jesus took bread, gave thanks, and broke it. In the Synoptic tradition (that is all the Gospels except John's), the meal Jesus shares with his disciples is Passover, so the bread would have been unleavened, remembering the haste with which the Israelites left Egypt's oppression. Secondly, after dinner, Jesus took the cup and shared it with them. After both the bread and the cup, Jesus instructs his disciples to: "Do this in remembrance of me". In the context of the Passover meal whose participants remember God's deliverance from slavery, Jesus now calls his disciples to see a new act of God's deliverance, one they experience through his death.

The disciples are to observe this memorial repeatedly. They are to keep on breaking the bread and sharing the cup. Each time they do so, they remember Jesus, whose gifts

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resound with and echo God's gifts of freedom and deliverance in the Exodus. They remember Jesus' giving of his own body and blood for them and in their place. This gift fashions a new covenant, freeing them and creating a people bound to God and to each other. This gift calls the Corinthians to look beyond the narrow confines of the present, to look back to the saving acts of God in the exodus and in Christ's self-offering. Following Christ's example, they are to look beyond self-interest to offer life for others. But the Corinthians are also to look forward in hope, as they proclaim the Lord's death "until he comes". Their worship thus contains a future dimension, as it also proclaims Christ's ultimate victory.

Hymn Let us break bread together (trad. Version) MP414

LORD'S SUPPER

Read MP 1344

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

Loving God, the world you made is beautiful and full of wonder.

You made us, with all your creatures, and you love all that you have made.

You gave us the words of your prophets, the stories of your people throughout the generations, and the gathered wisdom of many years.

You gave us Jesus, your Son, to be born and to grow up in difficult times where there was little peace.

He embraced people with your love and told stories to change us all.

He healed those in pain and brought to life those who had lost hope.

He made friends with anyone who would listen and loved even his enemies.

For these things, he suffered. For these things, he died.

And he was raised from death and lives with you forever.

You give us your Holy Spirit, to teach and to strengthen us, to remind us of Jesus Christ and to make us one in him.

For all these gifts we thank you, and join with all your people on earth and in heaven, in joyful praise, saying:

Holy, holy, holy Lord

God of power and might,

heaven and earth are full of your glory.

Hosanna in the highest.

Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord.

Hosanna in the highest.

This is the mystery of faith:

Christ has died

Christ is risen

Christ will come again.

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Lord God, send your Holy Spirit upon this bread and wine,
and upon your people, that Christ may be with us,
and we may be ready to live for you
and do what you ask of us, today and every day to come. **Amen**

On the night when he was betrayed, Jesus took bread and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, this is my body which is broken for you. Do this is remembrance of me. In the same way he took the cup after supper saying, this cup is the new covenant in my blood, Do this as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me. For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

Sharing of bread and wine

Prayer after communion

Most gracious God, we thank you for what you have given us.
You have fed us with the bread of life and renewed us for your service.
Now we give ourselves to you, and ask that our daily living
may be part of the life of your kingdom,
and that our love may be your love
reaching out into the life of the world, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

Prayers of intercession

Lord Jesus, if we have died with you, we will live with you;
if we endure, we will reign with you;
So we pray for all the needs and
concerns on our minds and hearts,
knowing that God always remains faithful.

God, we pray for the church,
especially in this jubilee year we prayer for the URC
and all her leaders, both local and national.
Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

O God, in your might you rule forever,
and your eyes keep watch over the nations.
We pray for our nation, our community, and all in authority.
Grant them wisdom to navigate the times ahead for the benefit of all people,
being especially considerate to those who cannot work due to illness or disability,
and those dependent on benefits.
Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Gracious God, all the earth bows down before you,
and sings out your name.
We pray for the nations of the earth,
that your peace may protect us all.
We pray especially today for peace in Ukraine, for a calming of the situation in Iran, for
migrants living in unsuitable places, and for all those affected by the tragedy in South
Korea....
Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Gracious God, in this season of remembrance we pray for all who mourn
We pray for those injured or killed in wars.

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And in the silence we bring to mind all those known to us who need your healing....
Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Holy One, in your faithfulness to us,
you shower us with grace, mercy, love, and all we need;
we pray that you would shape our hearts
that they would be filled with gratitude,
that we might always return to you and give you thanks. **Amen.**

The Lord's Prayer

Hymn O God, our help in ages past MP 498

Blessing

May the love of Christ embrace you,
The divinity of the Creator infuse you,
And the joy of the Spirit lead you always
Further into all bliss. Amen

The Bridgwater Drive Church sung Blessing.

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