

“Through the day with God”
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Dear Friends,

The theme for this service was suggested by the booklet, 'Day by Day' issued by the Methodist Church at the request of the President and Vice-President in 2017/18. The encouraged us to have times of prayer and reflection throughout the day, specifically at the start of day, at noon, in the evening and at night. And so, taking that pattern, the theme for our service is 'Through the day with God'.

Please feel free to 'customize' your service to your own congregation... e.g. ... The hymns are only suggestions - if your congregation knows others that fit in with the theme, especially any newer ones, you could use those. You may also wish to mention current concerns in appropriate places in the prayers. This is *your congregation's* service of worship to God.

I have suggested that you use 2 leaders and 4 readers, but you can adjust this too!

Chris Odell (Sheasby)

“Through the day with God”

Call to Worship:

EITHER congregation sing Praise him, Praise him...H&P 506 OR

Leader 2: This day, as every day, Lord of the Morning,
Is the day to worship you.

This time, as every time, Lord of our Days,
Is the time to give you praise.

This moment, as every moment, Lord of all Time,
Is the moment we turn to you in faith.

Introduction to the theme of the service: Leader 1

The theme for this service comes from the booklet, ‘Day by Day’ issued by the Methodist Church in 2017-2018. In it we were encouraged to have times of prayer and reflection throughout the day, at its start in the morning, at the height of the day at noon, in the evening and at night. And so, in our service we will be looking at that pattern and thinking about our encounters with God as each day unfolds – how can we pray ‘Through the day with God’? We start with the morning, as we sing our first hymn....

HYMN – New every morning is the love....*StF 137; H&P 636; MP 480.*

Prayer of Adoration: Leader 2 From Psalm 92. Let us pray:

How good it is to give thanks to you, O Lord,
to sing in your honour, O Most High God,

to proclaim your constant love every morning and your faithfulness every night.

Your mighty deeds, O Lord, make us glad; because of what you have done, we sing for joy.

Your unfailing love and mercy never end.

How good it is to give thanks,

to proclaim your constant love every morning

and your faithfulness every night. In Jesus’ Name, **Amen.**

Reading: Reader 1 From Lamentations chapter 3: 23-25

Fresh as the morning, as sure as the sunrise.

The Lord is all I have, and so I put my hope in him.

The Lord is good to everyone who trusts in him,

Comment: Leader 1

What does the coming of morning mean to you? - those first glimpses of sunlight? - that early chorus of birdsong? Feelings of relief after a long, dark night? Or a surge of energy after a good night’s sleep? Whether we feel daunted by the day ahead or eager to embrace it – each morning is a new start, a new page in the book of our lives with God. It is ‘the day that the Lord has made.’

Reading: Reader 1- Mary’s story:

I didn’t sleep a wink last night. It was a difficult day yesterday, a day of waiting, waiting, with my mind full of the horrors of Friday, waiting for the Sabbath to be over so that I could walk to find him, where he rests in the tomb. It is very early, so early that it’s still dark, with only the merest glimmer of light on the distant horizon. But even in this dim light, as I enter the garden I can see that someone has rolled away the heavy stone that was guarding the tomb. I stare into its inner darkness but can see nothing, nothing at all. It is empty!

What shall I do now? There is nowhere else I want to be, but I know I must run to tell the others what I have found, run in the growing morning light, rung from the darkness, with dawning news I cannot understand.

We walk back and it is day. John runs ahead, to the tomb. Peter catches him up and walks into the unknown darkness and out again into the light. Peter is shaking his head in bewilderment, but John is smiling, 'He has gone on' he says. And they go on, too, to their homes, but I do not know where to go. Jesus is dead, and now his body is gone, too. There is nowhere to go, where I can be with him. And so I sit and weep in the morning sunlight that mocks my inner darkness, until I hear a gentle voice, asking why I am weeping.

It must be the gardener. I wipe the sparkling tears from my eyes and see not the gardener, standing there in the sunshine, but Jesus! He is alive! I reach out to hold him, but this is a new day - 'No, Mary', he says, 'you must go and tell the others about me'. New work for this new day!

Prayer: **Leader 2** Response: Lord of the morning: **Hear our prayer.** Let us pray –
Loving God, we thank you for this new day that you have given us:
For the opportunities that it offers to experience the beauty of your creation;
Life in all its fullness and love in all its abundance;
Secure in the knowledge of your undying care for us,
Your love that is new every morning.
Response: Lord of the morning: **Hear our prayer.**

Loving God, we thank you (this morning) as we remember that first Easter Morning
When the dark sorrow of Christ's disciples and friends turned to bright joy
And a new chapter in the life of the world began.
We thank you that your forgiveness means that we can put our past mistakes behind us
And start each day afresh, forgiven, loved and free.
Response: Lord of the morning: **Hear our prayer.**

Loving God, we pray for those whose lives are being changed and challenged:
By new situations; new occupations; new relationships and new ways of thinking.
We pray for.....
And we pray, too, for those who face each new day with dread:
Because of illness or pain, poverty or fear, depression or anxiety.
We pray for

Asking that rays of the light of your love might penetrate the darkness of their lives.
Lord of the morning: **Hear our prayer.**

Loving God, we pray for the church, asking that your Spirit might equip us all
With the wisdom, courage and love we need
To witness to your Good News in these new times.
Lord of the morning: **Hear our prayer.**
Loving God, who will make all things new; hear our prayers, in the name of Jesus, **Amen.**

HYMN: Great is thy faithfulness... *StF 51; H&P 66; MP 200.*

Comment: **Leader 1 – Midday**

'Teach me, my God and King, in all things thee to see, that what I do in anything I do it as for thee.' wrote George Herbert 350 years ago, in an age very different from our own. But not so different - people have always been busy, and found it difficult to keep their eye on God in the midst of that busyness. In our modern society people not only work hard, but have many other distractions that turn their eyes from the lasting values, insights and resources of faith. We ourselves know how easy it is to forget the life of faith in the heat of noontide busyness.

New Testament Reading: **Reader 2** - Luke 10: 38 – 42

Reflection: **Reader 3**

However busy I am, I have to find time to breathe!

However busy I am, as a Christian I have to find time to breathe in the Spirit,

(Page 2)

To breathe out my own preoccupations and breathe in the Breath of God.
Each day I have a lot to do and I struggle to put aside time for Jesus,
But if I have time to breathe, I can find time to offer a Breath Prayer, as I fill and empty my lungs.
Prayers like: 'Speak, Lord\your servant hears'; 'The Lord is my Shepherd\I shall not want';
Be still and know\that I am God;
and the 'Jesus Prayer': 'Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God\have mercy on me'.
Praying like this puts God at the centre of my life.

Prayer: Leader 2 Let us pray – Response: Lord of the midday: **Hear our prayer.** Let us pray –
Loving God, we thank you that wherever we are, whatever we do, whatever we experience,
You are there with us, around us and within us, beside us and before us,
Upholding us and guiding us with your love.
You, Lord, know how, in our everyday activities and preoccupations
We often forget you, and put our wants before our spiritual needs.
Help us to become more aware of your presence in our everyday lives,
That others may see you mirrored in the way that we live and care.
Response: Lord of the midday: **Hear our prayer.**

We pray for those whose days are taken up with work.
We thank you for those who find joy and purpose and fulfilment in what they do,
And pray for those who find their work hard, or unfulfilling, or stressful.
We thank you for those who experience friendship and support at their workplace,
And pray for those who dread each day because they are badly treated there.
We pray for those who cannot find work, and those who cannot find enough to do.
Response: Lord of the midday: **Hear our prayer.**
Loving God, help us find your joy in the midst of our everyday lives, in Jesus's Name, **Amen.**

The Lord's Prayer:

Offering and Offering Prayer: Leader 2

God of never-ending love,
take this money and use it,
take our lives and use us,
for we owe every good thing we have to you. **Amen.**

HYMN: Jesus, be the centre... *StF 44; MP 1076 OR*
Forth in Thy Name, O Lord I go.... *StF 550; H&P 381; MP 159.*

Comment: Leader 1 – Evening

After every busy day, evening comes. We may still have things to do, or we may be able to relax or meet with others. But at the end of the day, we go home. To the place that belongs to us, the place where we can be ourselves, the place that reflects who we are. We may go home to those who love and care for us. We may go home to memories of loving relationships. But, as we open the door, we know that we can always say, with Jacob, 'Surely the Lord is in this place!' Listen now to a story Jesus told about a special homecoming....

New Testament Reading 2: Reader 4 - Luke 15:11-24

Prayer: Leader 2 Response: Lord of the evening: **Hear our prayer.** Let us pray –
Loving God, help us to offer you thankful prayers each evening:
Thankfulness for the day we have shared with you;
Thankfulness for the love and friendship we have received,
For the beauty of your world and any especial joys we have known;
For our homes and all that they mean to us, for our daily bread,
The people and pets and things around us that enrich our lives.

Lord of the evening: **Hear our prayer.**

Loving God, help us to offer you prayers for others each evening:
Sharing with you our concerns for those who have no home to go to;
For those who dread returning to conflict & hatred, violence or abuse;
For those returning to cold rooms and empty cupboards;
For those returning to loneliness, sorrow or anxiety,
And for all who do not feel 'at home' in their own homes.

Lord of the evening: **Hear our prayer.**

Loving Parent God, in the story of the Lost Son, Jesus reminds us
That you welcome us all into your home with open arms.
Help us, each evening, as we come home to you in prayer,
To feel the blessing of your love upon our lives.

Lord of the evening: **Hear our prayer.**

In the name of your Son Jesus, who made his home among us, **Amen.**

Comment: Leader 1 – Night

The shadows of evening have gathered. The night draws day to a close with darkness. The blessings of the night await us – sleep and repose. But there is also fear in the darkness. Can we find God in the dark, when the light has gone out? Our next hymn was written by a Scottish Anglican, Henry Francis Lyte. He wrote it as a poem in 1847 and set it to music while he lay dying from TB. He lived for only three weeks after its completion. It is a prayer for help, but also a triumphant expression of trust in the constant Love of God in even the darkest times.

HYMN: Abide with me... *StF 141; H&P 665: MP 4*

Bible Reading: Reader 4 - from Psalm 63

O God, you are my God, and I will give you thanks as long as I live;
I will raise my hands to you in prayer.

My soul will feast and be satisfied, and I will sing glad songs of praise to you.

As I lie in bed, I remember you; all night long I think of you, because you have always been my help.

In the shadow of your wings I sing for joy. I cling to you, and your hand keeps me safe.

Bible Reading: Reader 1 - Psalm 139: 1-12 (OR read responsively, StF835, 1-11; H&P 883A)

Prayer: Leader 2 Response: Lord of our days and nights: **Hear our prayer.** Let us pray –
Loving God, in the night, and in the night-time of our lives, help us to be aware of your presence
holding our hand in the darkness, and dispelling our fear or despair.

Lord of our days and nights: **Hear our prayer.**

Loving God, in the night, help us to bring all our concerns to you; our prayers of anxiety for
ourselves and for those we love. Help us to pray for others who are awake – unable to sleep, or at
work; nursing their children or caring for those who are sick; perhaps troubled or in pain.

Lord of our days and nights: **Hear our prayer.**

Loving God, may our days be days of prayer: in the morning, when your Love rises new with the
sun; in the busy midday, when we so often forget you; in our homes at evening time; and in the
dark, peaceful night.

Lord of our days and nights: **Hear our prayer.**

In the name of your Son, our Saviour, who walks through our days with us, **Amen.**

HYMN: Lord of all hopefulness... *StF 526; H&P 552; MP 882*

Blessing: Leader 1 (from Psalm 42) May the Lord bless us, may he show his constant love to us
every day, so that we may have a song at night; a prayer to the God of our lives. **Amen.** (Page 4)