

**East Durham Methodist Circuit:**

**Online Service for 16<sup>th</sup> January 2022**

**Prepared by Jean Shotton**

**Theme: Have you heard God's Voice?**

**Call to Worship:**

As God is with us in Christ and the Holy Spirit, so we are glad to be with God and one another in our worship.

**Hymn: Be still for the presence of the Lord**

David J. Evans

**StF 20**

1. Be still for the presence of the Lord The Holy one is here,  
Come bow before him now, In 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.

2. 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.

3. 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.

**God speaks to us in Creation...from the dawn of time**

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters. And God said, "Let there be light," and there was light ... Genesis 1 v 1

**Prayer of approach:**

Creator God, we thank You for the gift of life, the world in which we live - the variety of each creature, the breath-taking beauty of amazing landscapes – our responsibility in caring for every part of Your Creation.

Loving God, there are things that we will never understand, there are questions that we will never answer. There are problems that we will never work out, there are discoveries that will never be made.

Yet we know that You know. There are mysteries that will always be a mystery, and there is love that will always be love and we know that is Your love.

Generous God, You have given us more than our fair share of Your love. You have cared for our material and emotional needs, have forgiven us and welcomed us back again. You have shown us how to love unconditionally. Generous God, we come to praise You today, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

**Amen**

Let us now say the Lord's prayer together:

**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**

### **Old Testament Readings:**

#### **God speaks through His Word – the patriarchs and prophets**

God has chosen to speak plainly through His Word and everything that He has to say to us in it. We can turn to Isaiah 43 v 1... 'I have called you by name. God reaching out to us. He verifies and confirms with those who can prophesy by the Spirit, by dreams, visions, our conscience, and even known angelic visitations who are God's "messengers." The Bible is the mediator of God's word to us, to reveal God's purposes reaching us when we meditate on His Word.

#### **1 Kings 19: 9-13,15, 16            The Lord Appears to Elijah**

Elijah reached Horeb, the mountain of God. <sup>9</sup> There he went into a cave and spent the night. And the word of the LORD came to him: "What are you doing here, Elijah?" <sup>10</sup> He replied, "I have been very zealous for the LORD God Almighty. The Israelites have rejected your covenant, torn down your altars, and put your prophets to death with the sword. I am the only one left, and now they are trying to kill me too." <sup>11</sup> The LORD said, "Go out and stand on the mountain in the presence of the LORD, for the LORD is about to pass by."

Then a great and powerful wind tore the mountains apart and shattered the rocks before the LORD, but the LORD was not in the wind. After the wind there was an earthquake, but the LORD was not in the earthquake. <sup>12</sup> After the earthquake came a fire, but the LORD was not in the fire. And after the fire came a gentle whisper. <sup>13</sup> When Elijah heard it, he pulled his cloak over his face and went out and stood at the mouth of the cave. Then a voice said to him, "What are you doing here, Elijah?" ...<sup>15</sup> "Go back the way you came and go to the Desert of Damascus. When you get there, ... <sup>16</sup> anoint Elisha to succeed you as prophet.

#### **Isaiah 32: 1-4**

<sup>1</sup> See, a king will reign in righteousness and rulers will rule with justice. <sup>2</sup> Each one will be like a shelter from the wind and a refuge from the storm, like streams of water in the desert and the shadow of a great rock in a thirsty land. Then the eyes of those who see will no longer be closed, and the ears of those who hear will listen. <sup>4</sup> The fearful heart will know and understand, and the stammering tongue will be fluent and clear.

#### **Joel 2 v 28            The Day of the LORD - an echo of Pentecost**

"And afterward, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions,

**Hymn: God has spoken by his prophets**

George Wallace Briggs

**StF 157**

1. God has spoken by his prophets,  
spoken his unchanging Word;  
each from age to age proclaiming  
God the one, the righteous Lord!  
In the world's despair and turmoil  
one firm anchor still holds fast,  
God is on his throne eternal,  
He alone the first and last.

2. God has spoken by Christ Jesus,  
Christ the everlasting Son,  
brightness of the Father's glory,  
with the Father, ever one:  
spoken by the Word incarnate,  
God, before all time began,  
light of light, to Earth descending,  
Man, revealing God to man.

3. God is speaking by his Spirit,  
speaking to the hearts of men;  
in the age-long Word declaring  
God's own message, now as then.  
Through the rise and fall of nations  
one sure faith is standing fast:  
God abides, his Word unchanging,  
God the first and God the last.

**New Testament Readings:**

**Luke 3: 21-22**

**God speaks through His Son**

<sup>21</sup> When all the people were being baptized, Jesus was baptized too. And as he was praying, heaven was opened <sup>22</sup> and the Holy Spirit descended on him in bodily form like a dove. And a voice came from heaven: "You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased." God's voice, the voice from heaven, when Jesus came up from the water and received the Holy Spirit. 'This is my Son, my beloved son, and with Him I am well pleased'.

**Is God saying the same to you? That you are loved by Him and wants us to heed His voice... hear words of reassurance, and that He truly cares for each and everyone of us.**

**Jesus' ministry - his teaching, healing; the resistance of His message, the trial, His suffering, death and resurrection – ALL speak of God, His Father, His Kingdom, His Love.**

**Acts 2: 1-4**

**God speaks by His Spirit**

<sup>1</sup> When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. <sup>2</sup> Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. <sup>3</sup> They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. <sup>4</sup> All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.

**Message: God speaks to us today**

In the day of the Wesleys, there were voiceless people, violent crowds, city streets, distressing news – these are all part and parcel of our world today, just as they were in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. The challenge to us is much like it was for those past generations, struggling in difficult circumstances to share their faith. But if we are called in Christ's name, we can't remain silent, on the sidelines, while there is suffering. We are called to share words of faith

and love in action, to point to the One who cares for the lost. As individuals and as a community of faith we speak of Him.

We can show that **we trust the One who entrusts to us the disciples of tomorrow.** God wants us to recognise His voice, that we be attentive, attuned to what He has to say to us.

When we seek the Lord with all our hearts and listen for His voice, we will have the guidance we need to face all circumstances. We can enjoy a powerful relationship with Him that will change our lives; begin to listen and be confident in knowing that He wants to speak to us, to hear His voice. Thank you, thank you Lord.

Father, we thank You that You desire to speak to us every day. May we know your voice. Guide our thoughts and bless us with Your Word, the life of Your Son and the strength of your Spirit always.

**Amen**

**Hymn: Have you heard God's voice**

Jacqueline G. Jones

**StF 662**

1. Have you heard God's voice;  
has your heart been stirred?  
Are you still prepared to follow?  
Have you made a choice  
to remain and serve,  
though the way be rough and narrow?

**Will you walk the path that will cost you much  
and embrace the pain and sorrow?  
Will you trust in One who entrusts to you  
the disciples of tomorrow?**

2. Will you use your voice; will you not sit down  
when the multitudes are silent?  
Will you make a choice to stand your ground  
when the crowds are turning violent? **Will you...**

3. In your city streets will you be God's heart?  
Will you listen to the voiceless?  
Will you stop and eat, and when friendships start,  
will you share your faith with the faithless? **Will you...**

4. Will you watch the news with the eyes of faith  
and believe it could be different?  
Will you share your views using words of grace?  
Will you leave a thoughtful imprint?

**We will walk the path that will cost us much  
and embrace the pain and sorrow.  
We will trust in One who entrusts to us  
the disciples of tomorrow.**

**Prayers of Intercession:**

Lord God, you can do anything. We pray for all who need to know your love and power.

Some people are ill or hurting, some are lonely or on the edge of society.

Others are afraid to tell others about you, to speak of Your Loving Care.

Some feel small, insignificant, helpless, hopeless.

**We pray for all who need your love and power.**

**Amen**

**Hymn: Spirit of the Living God** Daniel Iverson

**StF 395**

Spirit of the living God fall afresh on me

Spirit of the living God fall afresh on me

Break me, melt me, mould me, fill me.

Spirit of the Living God, Fall afresh on me.

**Blessing:**

Lord God, bless us and keep us. May we be a blessing to others in all we think and say and do.

**Amen.**