

**East Durham Methodist Circuit:  
Online Service for 11<sup>th</sup> July 2021**

**Prepared by Rev Dawn Brown and Gwyneth Walsham  
Reader (video): Adele Stockton**

**Theme: Dancing, who is leading you?**



**Call to worship:**

We gather today to worship the One who created us,  
The One who calls us,  
The One who equips us,  
The One who loves us without end.  
With joyful hearts, let us worship God.

Children of God: welcome!  
Welcome to this place of love and grace,  
Welcome to this place of hope and perseverance.  
God invites all of us,  
God invites all of us to share in the good news:  
We are welcome, just as we are. We are loved, just as we are.  
In gratitude for all of this, let us worship God.

**Hymn: Come on and Celebrate** Pat Morgan and Dave Bankhead **StF 44**

Come on and celebrate  
His gift of love, we will celebrate  
The Son of God who loved us  
And gave us life.  
We'll shout Your praise, O King,  
You give us joy nothing else can bring,  
We'll give to You our offering  
In celebration praise.

Come on and celebrate, celebrate  
Celebrate and sing,  
Celebrate and sing to the King.  
Come on and celebrate, celebrate  
Celebrate and sing,  
Celebrate and sing to the King.

**Hymn:**

**Father God I wonder**

Ian Smale

**StF 72**

Father God, I wonder how I managed to exist  
Without the knowledge of Your parenthood  
and Your loving Care  
But now I am Your son, I am adopted in Your family  
And I can never be alone  
'Cause Father God, You're there beside me

**I will sing Your praises  
I will sing Your praises  
I will sing Your praises  
Forever more**

**I will sing Your praises  
I will sing Your praises  
I will sing Your praises  
Forever more**

**Prayers:**

Lord we bring to You now our prayers of adoration and thanksgiving.

We thank you for the many gifts You shower upon us and today we think more specifically of the gift of dance.

Dear Heavenly Father, Thank-you for all the beauty we see around us in particular the beauty and strength we see in people who dance. The strong legs that do much more than stand and walk, but also create the most wonderful shapes.

We thank You for those who create music, sounds that inspire us and make us want to move to the rhythm we feel deep in our souls.

Dance means different things to different people and we think now of those who use it to bring Glory to You. May they demonstrate Your awesomeness and power as they seek to lead others to You.

Thank You for the freedom we have to dance and move in Your presence as we seek to bring blessings on all those around us. In Your glorious name hear our prayers.  
**Amen**

**Hymn: Great is our Redeeming Lord**

Charles Wesley

**StF 683 / H&P 438**

1. Great is our redeeming Lord,  
In power, and truth, and grace  
Him, by highest heaven adored,  
His church on earth doth praise:  
In the city of our God,  
In his holy mount below,  
Publish, spread his name abroad,  
And all his greatness show.

2. For thy loving-kindness, Lord,  
We in thy temple stay;  
Here thy faithful love record,  
Thy saving power display:

With thy name thy praise is known,  
Glorious thy perfections shine;  
Earth's remotest bounds shall own  
Thy works are all divine.

3. See the gospel church secure,  
And founded on a rock;  
All her promises are sure;  
Her bulwarks who can shock?  
Count her every precious shrine;  
Tell, to after-ages tell,  
Fortified by power divine,  
The church can never fail.

4. Zion's God is all our own,  
Who on his love rely;  
We his pardoning love have known,  
And live to Christ, and die:  
To the new Jerusalem

He our faithful guide shall be:  
Him we claim, and rest in him,  
Through all eternity.

**Reading: 2 Samuel 6: 1-5, 12b-19 The Ark Brought to Jerusalem** New International Version

David again brought together all the able young men of Israel - thirty thousand. <sup>2</sup> He and all his men went to Baalah in Judah to bring up from there the ark of God, which is called by the Name, the name of the LORD Almighty, who is enthroned between the cherubim on the ark. <sup>3</sup> They set the ark of God on a new cart and brought it from the house of Abinadab, which was on the hill. Uzzah and Ahio, sons of Abinadab, were guiding the new cart <sup>4</sup> with the ark of God on it, and Ahio was walking in front of it. <sup>5</sup> David and all Israel were celebrating with all their might before the LORD, with castanets, harps, lyres, timbrels, sistrums and cymbals.

Now King David was told, "The LORD has blessed the household of Obed-Edom and everything he has, because of the ark of God." So David went to bring up the ark of God from the house of Obed-Edom to the City of David with rejoicing. <sup>13</sup> When those who were carrying the ark of the LORD had taken six steps, he sacrificed a bull and a fattened calf. <sup>14</sup> Wearing a linen ephod, David was dancing before the LORD with all his might, <sup>15</sup> while he and all Israel were bringing up the ark of the LORD with shouts and the sound of trumpets.

<sup>16</sup> As the ark of the LORD was entering the City of David, Michal daughter of Saul watched from a window. And when she saw King David leaping and dancing before the LORD, she despised him in her heart.

<sup>17</sup> They brought the ark of the LORD and set it in its place inside the tent that David had pitched for it, and David sacrificed burnt offerings and fellowship offerings before the LORD. <sup>18</sup> After he had finished sacrificing the burnt offerings and fellowship offerings, he blessed the people in the name of the LORD Almighty. <sup>19</sup> Then he gave a loaf of bread, a cake of dates and a cake of raisins to each person in the whole crowd of Israelites, both men and women. And all the people went to their homes.

**Reading: Ephesians 1: 3-14 Praise for Spiritual Blessings in Christ** NIV

<sup>3</sup> Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ. <sup>4</sup> For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love <sup>5</sup> he predestined us for adoption to sonship through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will - <sup>6</sup> to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves. <sup>7</sup> In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace <sup>8</sup> that he lavished on us. With all wisdom and understanding, <sup>9</sup> he made known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ, <sup>10</sup> to be put into effect when the times reach their fulfillment - to bring unity to all things in heaven and on earth under Christ.

<sup>11</sup> In him we were also chosen, having been predestined according to the plan of him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will, <sup>12</sup> in order that we, who were the first to put our hope in Christ, might be for the praise of his glory. <sup>13</sup> And you also were included in Christ when you heard the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation. When you believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, <sup>14</sup> who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession - to the praise of his glory.

**Hymn:**            **Teach me to Dance**            Graham Kendrick            **StF 477**

**Teach me to dance to the beat of  
Your heart  
Teach me to move in the power of  
Your spirit  
Teach me to walk in the light of  
Your presence  
Teach me to dance to the beat of  
Your heart**

1. You wrote the rhythm of life  
Created Heaven and Earth  
In You is joy without measure  
So like a child in Your sight  
I dance to see Your delight  
For I was made for Your pleasure,  
pleasure

**Teach me to love with Your heart of  
compassion  
Teach me to trust in the word of  
Your promise  
Teach me to hope in the day of Your  
coming  
Teach me to dance to the beat of  
Your heart**

2. Let all my movements express  
A heart that loves to say yes  
A will that leaps to obey You  
Let all my energy blaze  
To see the joy in Your face  
Let my whole being praise You, praise  
You

**Reflection:**                            Gwyneth Walsham

Dancing has been a big part of my life since the age of 4.

Ballet, stage, tap, modern, ballroom you name it I did it. I never saw it as a career but I couldn't imagine my life without it. Like Billy Elliott the feeling I got when I danced was like electricity.

I qualified as a dance teacher but again didn't see myself doing this as a career

It wasn't until working in a primary school that I felt God was leading me to put my training to good use. The problem with certain styles of dance is that it requires specific movements that aren't always easily learned or suitable for everyone and I didn't want my dance club to discriminate.

I prayed hard about it and found my answer "Sacred Dance".

Something open to everyone which could be used in school assemblies at a time when sadly religion wasn't always seen as a priority.

God showed me a way I could use my love of dance and God together.

The group went on to perform in Church services, school performances and at dance festivals. I would love to think that some of them remember the songs they danced to, one of them being the first hymn we heard today.

I continued until the age of 50 when gradually health problems took over and I had to hang up my dancing shoes.

I may not be able to physically dance these days but I can assure you that when the Spirit of the Lord comes upon my heart, I still dance in my head like David danced

Amen

**Reading: Mark 6: 14 – 29 John the Baptist Beheaded NIV**

<sup>14</sup> King Herod heard about this, for Jesus' name had become well known. Some were saying, "John the Baptist has been raised from the dead, and that is why miraculous powers are at work in him."

<sup>15</sup> Others said, "He is Elijah."

And still others claimed, "He is a prophet, like one of the prophets of long ago."

<sup>16</sup> But when Herod heard this, he said, "John, whom I beheaded, has been raised from the dead!"

<sup>17</sup> For Herod himself had given orders to have John arrested, and he had him bound and put in prison. He did this because of Herodias, his brother Philip's wife, whom he had married. <sup>18</sup> For John had been saying to Herod, "It is not lawful for you to have your brother's wife." <sup>19</sup> So Herodias nursed a grudge against John and wanted to kill him. But she was not able to, <sup>20</sup> because Herod feared John and protected him, knowing him to be a righteous and holy man. When Herod heard John, he was greatly puzzled; yet he liked to listen to him.

<sup>21</sup> Finally the opportune time came. On his birthday Herod gave a banquet for his high officials and military commanders and the leading men of Galilee. <sup>22</sup> When the daughter of Herodias came in and danced, she pleased Herod and his dinner guests.

The king said to the girl, "Ask me for anything you want, and I'll give it to you." <sup>23</sup> And he promised her with an oath, "Whatever you ask I will give you, up to half my kingdom."

<sup>24</sup> She went out and said to her mother, "What shall I ask for?"

"The head of John the Baptist," she answered.

<sup>25</sup> At once the girl hurried in to the king with the request: "I want you to give me right now the head of John the Baptist on a platter."

<sup>26</sup> The king was greatly distressed, but because of his oaths and his dinner guests, he did not want to refuse her. <sup>27</sup> So he immediately sent an executioner with orders to bring John's head. The man went, beheaded John in the prison, <sup>28</sup> and brought back his head on a platter. He presented it to the girl, and she gave it to her mother. <sup>29</sup> On hearing of this, John's disciples came and took his body and laid it in a tomb

### **Message: Would you like to Dance?**

It's been some time since many of us have been out there dancing. Dressing up and going down to meet friends for our weekly time of fun, laughter and a trot on the dance floor.

Do you like to dance? I am just asking do you like to dance? Do you ever dance at home when no one is around? Have you ever been in a great mood and one of your favourite songs comes on the radio as you are driving and before you know it your head is moving and your shoulders are swaying to the beat. Most people like to dance sometimes! So it never ceases to amaze me that with few exceptions we never dance in church particularly in Churches. Oh no, even a sway .

Is there someone in the room with you? So turn, smile at them and ask them if they have ever danced? If you alone it's okay, you can speak to yourself, I find myself doing that often. Now ask: Who's your dance partner? Now give yourself a big hug and say I will dance before the LORD with joy! I will dance before the LORD with joy!

In two of our scripture today there is some dancing going on. David danced before the LORD as the ark of God was being brought to Jerusalem. Herod's step daughter danced before him and his dinner guest. David's dance was a holy dance and well .... Herodias' daughter's dance was less than holy. A lot less than holy!

The Scriptures teach us that King David was a man after God's own heart. Despite his many faults and he did have many, what David wanted to do most in life was to please God. David was far from a perfect man but he was a passionate man. He was passionate as he played the harp to soothe King Saul. He was passionate about honouring God when he went against the Philistine Giant Goliath. He was passionate in his devotion to his friend Jonathan, Saul's son. He remained passionate about honouring Saul as King of Israel, even after Saul tried to kill him. David was indeed a passionate man. He was passionate on the battlefield. David was a passionate poet as he wrote over 100 psalms.

King David is not only passionate in song but he is a passionate dancer as well. We heard how Verse David danced before the Lord with all his might. Not only is David dancing with passion he is dancing out of his clothes. David and most of Israel was excited because the ark of the LORD had finally been brought home to Jerusalem. The ark of the LORD was significant because it represented the very presence of God on earth.

The ark of the Lord had been away from the heart of Israel, for twenty years. That is a long time to be in a spiritual drought. Twenty years of bad decisions, pain, heart ache and brokenness. David a man after God's own heart knew the value of the ark

of the LORD. David knew the value of God's presence. So shortly after David becomes King he goes to get the ark of the LORD and as he leads the Israelites into Jerusalem he dances passionately, as the Spirit of the Lord is upon him.

King Herod, well he was very different. Very different and no King David. King Herod was having a different party, and God was no where near. Herod was so eager to please people and get people to like him, he would do anything. He has his stepdaughter dance before his guests and he is so pleased with his stepdaughter's dance that he promises to give her anything up to half his kingdom. Well, his stepdaughter does not ask for money, she does not ask for land or even power in King Herod's court. After consulting with her mother, she asks for the very head of John the Baptist on a plate, revenge on John the Baptist.

Two very different dances indeed. For us to dance in life what do we need.

We need to choose the right Dance partner!

David may have chosen some inappropriate dance partners in his life but at this point in his life he chose the best dance partner you could ever choose. David danced before the ark of God. David was dancing in the presence of Almighty God. God was his dance partner! Near the end of chapter 6 of 2 Samuel, David rebuked his wife when she criticized him for dancing without his royal clothes in front of slave girls. He told her it was before the LORD that I danced! I will celebrate before the LORD!

King Herod did not like John the Baptist but at least he had the good sense to fear doing him any harm. The Bible says King Herod gave orders to have John arrested, and he had him bound and put in prison. Because John the Baptist had been saying to King Herod, "It is not lawful for you to have your brother's wife." Herod feared John and protected him, because he considered him to be a righteous and holy man. So even though he had put John the Baptist in prison he refused to execute him because he knew John the Baptist was a prophet. Somewhere along the way King Herod had learned the scripture that says touch not my anointed and do my prophet no harm. However, he forgot that valuable lesson, King Herod lost his mind and was led astray when he began to dance with the wrong partner.

Choosing the right partner is important indeed, however once the choice has been made, then it's the challenge of Who leads, whose guidance do we follow. If you are dancing with someone and both of you are trying to lead there will be confusion, there will be unnecessary tension, there will be some pain if both dance partners try to lead. Plenty of sore toes. As soon as you realise we can't do it ourselves, as soon as we realise that we don't have the answer, as soon as we realise we need help. And we allow our partner to lead us, as Paul mentions in our Ephesians reading. Our Spiritual blessings when we are one with Christ, filled with the Holy Spirit, we can dance all day and night.

If God is our partner and He guides us, dear oh dear, we will dance all day. With God guiding us, there will be no end to our dancing. Stop and think of the word 'Guidance'.

May I suggest that the "G" represents of God, followed by "u" and "i". "God," "u" and "i" dance." God, you and I dance.

I know it's hard, but we should dance with the LORD when we are afraid. Because the LORD is my rock and my strong tower!

I know it is hard, but we should dance with the LORD when the road seems long and dark. Because Jesus is the way the truth and the life! He is our light and our salvation.

Let's put on our dancing shoes, invite our God to be our partner and trusting Him to lead us. Let our heartbeat with the power of the Holy Spirit.

He is waiting for you, Will you Dance with Him?

### **Prayers of Intercession:**

Almighty God, You promised through Your Son Jesus Christ to hear us when we pray in faith.

Lord we come before You today as the world races to administer vaccines in a bid to outrun the Covid 19 virus. We ask You to keep us all safe as we try to return to a new normal. Many people are tired of the restrictions whilst others fear the effects this may bring. Guide us all to behave sensibly and not act selfishly so we can protect each other.

We pray for people living in areas of our world who have the added pressures of war, violence and hunger. Give wisdom to all in authority and direct every nation in the ways of justice and peace.

Lord in Your mercy, hear our prayer.

We pray for our churches in the East Durham Circuit as we seek to provide a witness in our communities. Help us to spread Your message of love and forgiveness so that Your glory may be revealed to all.

Lord in Your mercy, hear our prayer.

We pray for the sick, those known to us who need to feel Your hands upon them. Give strength to them and all those who care for them. Bring comfort and healing to the troubled minds and courage and hope as well as the joy of Your salvation

Lord in Your mercy, hear our prayer.

We think now of those who have died and those who mourn their loss.

We pray for all who died or were injured in the building collapse in Florida. May they know your presence in their lives. Hear us as we remember those who have died in the faith of Christ and grant them a share in Your eternal Kingdom.

Lord in Your mercy, hear our prayer.



Finally, we pray for ourselves and our community. God of healing and wholeness help us to look after our minds and the bodies You have given us. We thank you for the good feelings and harmony that we have discovered within our neighbourhoods during the pandemic. May they continue into the future, so that people will be inspired to help one another and show the love You show us.

Lord in Your mercy, hear our prayer.

God, we ask that You accept these prayers for the sake of You Son our Saviour Jesus Christ.

**Amen**

**Hymn:** **Lord of the Dance** The Dubliners

1. I danced in the morning  
When the world was begun,  
And I danced in the moon  
And the stars and the sun,  
And I came down from heaven  
And I danced on the earth,  
At Bethlehem  
I had my birth.

**Dance, then, wherever you may be,  
I am the Lord of the Dance, said he,  
And I'll lead you all, wherever you  
may be,  
And I'll lead you all in the Dance,  
said he**

2. I danced for the scribe  
And the pharisee,  
But they would not dance  
And they wouldn't follow me.  
I danced for the fishermen,  
For James and John  
They came with me  
And the Dance went on. **Dance,  
then...**

3. I danced on the Sabbath  
And I cured the lame;  
The holy people  
Said it was a shame.  
They whipped and they stripped  
And they hung me on high,  
And they left me there  
On a Cross to die. **Dance, then...**

4. I danced on a Friday  
When the sky turned black  
It's hard to dance  
With the devil on your back.  
They buried my body  
And they thought I'd gone,  
But I am the Dance,  
And I still go on. **Dance, then...**

They cut me down  
And I leapt up high;  
I am the life  
That'll never, never die;  
I'll live in you  
If you'll live in me -  
I am the Lord  
Of the Dance, said he. **Dance, then...**

**Blessing:**

As we walk onto the dance floor of life, let us be willing to trust our Partner to guide us through the journey of life.

My prayer for us today is that God's blessings and mercies be upon us now and everyday.

May we abide in God as God abides in us.

Dance together with God, trusting God to lead and to guide us through each season of our lives.

**Amen**