

As we come to worship, you may like to prepare with a period of quiet, or light a candle. Let us remember that wherever we are, God is with us.

As far as we are able, with God's help:

- We will care for ourselves and those around us
- We will learn more about our faith
- We will practice hospitality and generosity

The Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything, and remind you of all that I have said to you.

John 14:26

Breathe on me, Breath of God⁷

Breathe on me, Breath of God; fill me with life anew,
that I may love what thou dost love, and do what thou wouldst do.

Breathe on me, Breath of God, until my heart is pure,
until with thee I will one will, to do and to endure.



Pray

Giving God, who gives us form and breath, we praise you.
Loving God, who gives us Jesus as our friend, we worship you.
Living God, whose Spirit is forever with us, we adore you.

We celebrate the way you created us to think and learn,
giving our life meaning and purpose.
Thank you that through the activity of your Spirit among us,
you teach us to act and care for ourselves and one another. Amen.

RECEIVING

Reading: 1 Thessalonians 5:1-11

These words from Thessalonians challenged the original recipients, and now us, not to fall asleep – to be attentive and awake to the coming kingdom. While at the time Jesus' return was expected imminently (not 2000 more years and counting!), the premise remains the same – faith should not lead us to putting our feet up!

⁷ Breathe on me breathe of God, v1 & 2, by Edwin Hatch, Singing the Faith no.370

As Our Calling puts it, the Church is to grow and learn through mutual support and care. In other words, learning and caring is about how Christians relate to one another, help one another, encourage one another and grow as a community that reflects Christ.

We grow by being open to learning. Jesus promised the Advocate as a presence to remind the disciples and future followers of all Jesus had said and teach them everything. Are you ready and open to learn? To discover new things about God?

The passage from Thessalonians ends with a climactic challenge and affirmation: *'therefore encourage one another and build up each other, as indeed you are doing.'* Discovering for ourselves the salvation and friendship we find in Christ compels us to care for one another and encourage each other as we live in Christ.

RESPONDING

Questions from A Methodist Way of Life for reflection:



How have you practiced generosity recently?

How have you shown hospitality to others lately?

How are you caring for yourself?

How and what are you learning now?

Pray

That God would help you be open to learning.

Ask God who you can encourage and build up this week.

For those who feel no-one cares for them.

Breathe on me, Breath of God⁸

Breathe on me, Breath of God, till I am wholly thine,
until this earthly part of me glows with thy fire divine.

Breathe on me, Breath of God; so shall I never die,
but live with thee the perfect life of thine eternity.



Closing Prayer

We pray A Way of Life prayer on page 1

⁸ Breathe on me breathe of God, v 3 & 4, by Edwin Hatch, Singing the Faith no.370

As we come to worship, you may like to prepare with a period of quiet, or light a candle. Let us remember that wherever we are, God is with us.

As far as we are able, with God's help:

- We will help people in our community and beyond
- We will care for creation and all God's gifts
- We will challenge injustice

He has told you, O mortal, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?

Micah 6:8

Sent by the Lord⁹

Sent by the Lord am I;
my hands are ready now
to make the earth the place
in which the kingdom comes.
Sent by the Lord am I;
my hands are ready now
to make the earth the place
in which the kingdom comes.

The angels cannot change
a world of hurt and pain
into a world of love,
of justice and of peace.
The task is mine to do,
to set it really free.
Oh, help me to obey;
help me to do your will.

Prayer

God of all goodness and grace,
With humbleness in our hearts, we worship and praise you.
we thank you that you are not silent, but call us, encourage us and inspire us,
that Christ lives to set us free and shows us a better way of living,
that your Spirit is with us to reveal truth to us.
As we respond to your call to us with worship and wonder,
may our lives overflow with justice, love and kindness. Amen.

Reading: Ephesians 4:1-16

Lion King II includes the iconic song **We are One**. The song captures young Kiara's desire to find belonging and purpose, as father Simba assures her that the family is

⁹ Sent by the Lord, by Jose Aguiar, © 1991 Jorge Maldonado, Singing the Faith no.239

one – that she does belong. Ephesians 4 begins with the same assurance, we are one body that is called to the one hope, one Lord, one faith, one baptism. At times we sometimes feel we don't fit in, or feel we don't belong. Maybe we think we speak differently, think differently, or dress differently. It is human to want to belong and find purpose; yet it also seems to be human to think ourselves out of finding that which we seek and need as human beings.

Ephesians 4 teaches us a really important lesson, that being **one** does not mean being clones. Being **one** is about being able to call ourselves a community, a body of Christ, despite any differences – because no matter what the differences are, the common ground we share is our belonging – one Lord, one faith, one baptism.

By grace we are given gifts and skills to serve our Lord and our communities in specific ways only we can. Teachers, Doctors, Debt Counsellors, Accountants, Checkout Workers. Intercessors, encouragers, preachers, prophets. No matter what we think of ourselves, our differences are an outpouring of God's grace upon us and the whole body of Christ. God's call to us is to recognise the very gifts of grace he has outpoured on us and use them to best of our ability in service.

RESPONDING

Questions from A Methodist Way of Life for reflection:

How are you seeking to serve others in your community and beyond?



What has helped or hindered you in your service of others?

How are you caring for God's creation?

How are you using God's gifts (including financial resources)?

What issues of injustice are you currently concerned about? What are you doing in response?

Pray

For one another in our service.

For people who find themselves excluded because of their apparent 'difference'

That God would help the body of Christ to recognise and affirm the gifts of others

Sing again: Sent by the Lord (pg9)

Closing Prayer

We pray A Way of Life prayer on page 1