In the Morning Wednesday, March 3, 2021
Wesley, John and Charles, Priests, 1791, 1788

Welcome

Opening Prayer

Lord God, you inspired your servants John and Charles Wesley with burning zeal for the sanctification of souls, and endowed them with eloquence in speech and song: Kindle in your Church, we entreat you, such fervor, that those whose faith has cooled may be warmed, and those who have not known Christ may turn to him and be saved; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. *Amen.*

Dwelling in the Word - Psalm 103:1-4, 13-18

Bless the Lord, O my soul, *  
and all that is within me, bless his holy Name.

Bless the Lord, O my soul, *  
and forget not all his benefits.

He forgives all your sins *  
and heals all your infirmities;

He redeems your life from the grave *  
and crowns you with mercy and loving-kindness;

As a father cares for his children, *  
so does the Lord care for those who fear him.

For he himself knows whereof we are made; *  
he remembers that we are but dust.

Our days are like the grass; *  
we flourish like a flower of the field;

When the wind goes over it, it is gone, *  
and its place shall know it no more.

But the merciful goodness of the Lord endures for ever on those who fear him, *  
and his righteousness on children’s children;

On those who keep his covenant *  
and remember his commandments and do them.
As you hear the passage being read, what word or phrase is God calling you to notice? As you hear the passage read a second time, what might God be calling you to try on at this time?

Following your silent meditation after the second reading, please type your word or phrase into the Chat if you would like to share it. The officiant will invite all of us into a quiet time for a few minutes to prayerfully read and reflect on the words offered in the Chat.

The officiant will end this time of silent prayer with The Lord’s Prayer.

The Lord’s Prayer

Zoom Call

At end of zoom call

Closing Prayer

O thou who camest from above
the fire celestial to impart,
kindle a flame of sacred love
on the mean altar of my heart...

Jesus, confirm my heart’s desire
to work, and speak, and think for thee;
still let me guard the holy fire,
and still stir up the gift in me...

-Amen

Hymn #704, Stz. 1,3
The Hymnal 1982, Charles Wesley

Blessing

Wesley, John and Charles, Priests, 1791, 1788

John was the fifteenth, and Charles the eighteenth, child of Samuel Wesley, Rector of Epworth, Lincolnshire, and his wife, Susannah. John was born on June 17th, 1703, and Charles on December 18th, 1707. Of the nineteen Wesley siblings, only ten lived to
maturity. Under their mother’s tutelage, all of them were schooled each day in six-hour sessions, always begun and concluded with the singing of psalms. Their theological writings and sermons are still widely appreciated, but it is through their hymns—especially those of Charles, who wrote over six thousand of them—that their religious experience, and their Christian faith and life, continue to affect the hearts of many. Both Wesleys were educated at Christ Church, Oxford, John later being elected fellow of Lincoln College, where they gathered a few friends to join a “Holy Club” in strict adherence to the worship and discipline of the Prayer Book, and were thus given the name “Methodists.” John was ordained in 1728 and Charles in 1735. Both were profoundly attached to the doctrine and worship of the Church of England, and deeply moved by and critical of the church’s neglect of the poor, and remained so, despite abusive opposition to their cause and methods.

The two brothers went together to Georgia in 1735, John as a missionary of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, and Charles as secretary to James Oglethorpe, the Governor. The mission was a disaster, and both brothers returned to England, dejected and disappointed. Shortly after their return home, however, they each experienced an inner conversion. On May 21st, 1738—Pentecost—Charles “felt the Spirit of God striving with his spirit ‘till by degrees He chased away the darkness of unbelief.” Three days later, at a meeting on May 24th in Aldersgate Street in London with a group of Moravians, during a reading of Luther’s Preface to the Epistle to the Romans, John recorded, “I felt my heart strangely warmed. I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone, for salvation; and an assurance was given me that he had taken away my sins, even mine, and saved me from the law of sin and death.”

So the revival was born. The two brothers placed a strong emphasis on preaching, and appointed lay people, both men and women, as preachers and evangelists to work together with the clergy in proclaiming the gospel.

The formal separation of the Methodists from the Church of England occurred after the deaths of the two brothers in London —Charles on March 29th, 1788, and John on March 2nd, 1791. In recent decades there has been increased cooperation and growth in agreement between Anglicans and Methodists and growing appreciation for our common heritage.

From Lesser Feasts and Fasts 2018