

Sunday 12th July 2020

Call to Worship

Rejoice! There is now no condemnation in Christ Jesus.

Hymn: STF 685 In Christ there is no east or west
<https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=3TiiH1nV17w>

In Christ there is no east or west,
in him no south or north,
but one great fellowship of love
throughout the whole wide earth.

In him shall true hearts everywhere
their high communion find;
his service is the golden cord
close-binding humankind.

Join hands then all the human race,
whate'er your nation be;
all children of the living God
are surely kin to me.

In Christ now meet both east and west,
in him meet south and north;
all Christlike souls are one in him,
throughout the whole wide earth.
John Oxenham, pseud. (1852-1941)

Let us pray together

When the seeds of new life are sown, let us
praise the Lord.
When crops ripen in the field, let us exalt our
maker.
When the wind blows, or the snow falls, let us
draw close to God.

Lord, for all your gifts in creation, for the gift of
each other and the gift of the Church we offer our
thanks.

Most of all for the gift of Jesus who went about
among us as teacher and friend, who lived, died,
and rose again we offer our deepest gratitude and
amazement. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Let us take a time of quiet to bring to mind the
ways in which we feel we have let God or
ourselves down during the last week...
Lord, when we are slow to listen, forgive us.
Lord, when we are hasty in our actions, forgive us.
Lord, for the things we have done, that we should
not have done, forgive us.
Lord, for the things we have not done, that we
should have done, forgive us.
Rejoice, for in Christ we know our sins are
forgiven. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Today's Reading from the New Testament

Romans 8.1-11

Today's Gospel Reading:

Matthew 13.1-9 & 18-23

Time to Reflect

Over the last few months we have begun to look at the world in a new way. Certainties are no longer as certain as they once were. This time last year no one imagined being in lockdown, although the possibility of a serious virus pandemic was not unimagined.

When I read the parable afresh the first thing I noticed was that for his own safety, and perhaps in order to be better seen, Jesus gets into a boat and puts some distance between himself and the crowd. The Bible does not tell us if it was more than 2 metres! Jesus sits down to teach indicating his authority to teach. Jesus takes practical steps to be heard and communicates in ways the crowd were used to and addressed them in ways they would understand. The image of a sower was common in first century Palestine.

And when the seed is scattered not all of it bears fruit, some falls on the path or on stony ground. Some is in shallow earth and fails to mature. Amid much bearing of fruit there is also the failure of hearing and not understanding. Jesus recognized that even with the best news in the world there would still be setbacks.

The disciples have the parable explained to them. They have the benefit of the expertise of Jesus who told this parable and was by definition best placed to explain its meaning.

As we move forward together and plan the activities of our local churches in a world that has been changed we should be encouraged by this parable.

Encouraged to work in ways that we discern are appropriate in our current situation. Perhaps an extra line on the plan for the Circuit's online worship and resources for those not online and unable to attend a building.

Encouraged to keep trying even if the seed we cast does not always bear fruit straight away or in ways we may expect.

Encouraged to gather as much wisdom as we can from others and glad to listen to those who are

called to teach and explain, even when this might move us out of our comfort zones and takes us in unexpected ways. Amen.

Take a time to sit quietly

A time of prayer

Let us pray for our world; for the worldwide effort to create a vaccine for Covid-19. For all the peoples of the world and for cooperation as we continue to live with this virus.

As we pray for our world we pray especially for those in government and industry whose decisions effect the lives of so many. And we pray for wisdom for those in power.

We pray for our own land. For the NHS and for all those involved in social care and all keyworkers, giving thanks for the work they do for us. We pray for local communities as we continue to move towards what has been called the new normal.

We pray for the whole Church throughout the world, especially churches in countries with unsympathetic regimes. We pray for the Methodist Church, both at the local level and also the Connexional Team.

We take a time of quiet to remember those who have died, especially those who have been important to us on our own journeys of life and faith.

We make all our prayers in Jesus' name. Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father

Hymn: STF 415 The Church of Christ in every age.

<https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=3vTdkbuFKGA>

Listen

The Church of Christ, in every age
beset by change but Spirit-led,
must claim and test its heritage
and keep on rising from the dead.

Across the world, across the street,
the victims of injustice cry
for shelter and for bread to eat,
and never live until they die.

Then let the servant Church arise,
a caring Church that longs to be
a partner in Christ's sacrifice,
and clothed in Christ's humanity.

For he alone, whose blood was shed,
can cure the fever in our blood,
and teach us how to share our bread
and feed the starving multitude.

We have no mission but to serve
in full obedience to our Lord:
to care for all, without reserve,
and spread his liberating Word.

Fred Pratt Green (1903-2000)

A prayer of blessing

Dear Lord.

When times are hard, walk beside us.

When we are unsure of which way to turn, dwell within us.

When we need to listen to others, encourage us.

When our lives and work bear fruit, rejoice with us.

So may the blessing of God who is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit be with us all today and forever more.
Amen.

Original Materials by Rev E Adam Wells

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