



# Dore Methodist Church

## Weekly Update

14<sup>th</sup> August 2020.



## Message from Gail.

What a lot seems to be happening in the world around us at the moment, and have you noticed these past few months how certain words or phrases keep being used over and over again. Here are a few that come to my mind; unprecedented, social distancing, isolation, community, lockdown, shielding, PPE, furlough, global pandemic, I could go on.

An unexpected one which has come to my attention recently is *effort*. I hadn't realised there were so many ways of using the word, but perhaps that's why I've heard it a lot. News bulletins speak of the *relief effort*

following the terrible tragedy in Beirut. Politicians of the long-term *efforts* needed to put our economy back on track. There are the *efforts* of the scientists trying to develop a vaccine and the *effort* to get children back to school, to name a few. Alternatively, I have also heard the phrase "It's not worth the effort."

Looking up the meaning of this word in the English dictionary it is defined as: "A vigorous or determined attempt to do something; strenuous physical or mental exertion; a force exerted in a process; the activities of a group of people with a common purpose such as in the war effort;" And our Bible readings found in the worship material this week, build on this, as they invite us to see and explore a vision of Gods Kingdom founded on unity and shows determination against struggles.

So let us not under estimate our *efforts*. Though they may often seem small, and perhaps insignificant to us, they may not be so small to those we offer them to; and who knows what our God, who created the vastness of the sea and sky will do with them.

Nehemiah is a great example of this. He re-built the walls of Jerusalem knowing that though his human efforts, God was rebuilding something mightier than just a brick wall. So, let us pray with Nehemiah; "*You alone are the Lord. You made the heavens, even the highest heavens with all their starry host, the earth and all that is on it, the seas and all that is in them. You give life to everything.*" ( Nehemiah 9:6) Amen

Just to finish by letting you know I will be taking a breather over the next two weeks and I am grateful to David Willie who will be writing our message, however please note there won't be any video links.

Blessings

*Gail*

## Pause for thought and prayer



***Now repent of your sins and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped away.***

**(Acts3:19)**

Have you ever wandered along the beach barefoot making the first footprints in the sand? A couple of years ago my friend Hilary and I did just this on a beautiful beach in Scotland. However, we weren't the only ones to have been on the beach that day. Ahead of us were a trail of footprints crossing across the sand. All telling the story of the ones who had gone before. There were the deep trainer marks, the hope skip and jump of foot prints made by children, and a variety of other imprints. They all left their mark till the tide came in and washed them away. That experience reminded me of the tide of God's love which flows in over us each day washing away all our mistakes.

### **Read Ephesians 1: 6-10**

Let us pray for the tide of God's blessings to wipe away past mistakes, and to renew and refresh us:

Loving God, wipe away the hurts of the past to bring healing and wholeness; wipe away the memories of lost opportunities to bring a new start; wipe away where our footprints have taken the wrong direction and put us back on the right path. Come among us and grant us the light of your presence. **Amen.**

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### **Worship at Home.**

Our worship for this coming Sunday, 16<sup>th</sup> August, prepared for us by "Twelvebaskets", follows. Although we cannot gather together in our building it would be good if as many as possible could read through this material at 10-30 a.m. on Sunday.

### **Church Magazine.**

Yes, it's that time again! Our Editor (Bridget) is asking for contributions for our September/October magazine. So what have **YOU** been doing over the last few weeks?; what new experiences have you had?; what new skills have you acquired? Share your thoughts with others via our magazine. Please let Bridget have items as soon as possible.

### **Rumour.**

Last week we became aware of a rumour circulating that there are plans being made to close the church permanently. This is certainly **NOT** the case and the rumour is unfounded. Very shortly more information will be available on our plans for the future.

### **Birthday greetings.**

Belated Birthday Greetings to Peter Beardsell who celebrated a special birthday recently.

**Please send any items for our Weekly Update to the Baileys by TUESDAY EVENING.**  
**Tel: 2351085 or email [john.bailey23a@btinternet.com](mailto:john.bailey23a@btinternet.com)**

## Call to worship

We have been called, and we have come.

We have been summoned, and we are here.

We have found the courage to join you in worship, once more, our Lord and our God.

We have come.

Come amongst us, by your Spirit. **Amen.**<sup>1</sup>

## Hymn: 20 STF – Be still for the presence of the Lord

1 Be still, for the presence of the Lord, the Holy One, is here;  
come bow before him now with 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.

David J. Evans (b. 1957) Reproduced from Singing the Faith Electronic Words Edition, number 20  
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## Opening Prayers

Merciful Father,

Thank you for creating all people equal  
and calling us your children.

We thank you for the peace that comes  
when we live together in harmony.

Forgive us for the times when we have caused division  
and when we have been quick to speak and slow to listen.

Help us to be humble in heart  
and seekers of reconciliation and peace.

**Amen.**

Risen Lord,

Thank you for uniting us with your Spirit  
And making us one in you.

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<sup>1</sup> Additional prayers by Tim Baker

Thank you for choosing us to be your body in the world  
to proclaim your good news  
and act in ways of love.

May you be glorified through us  
and be made known to the ends of the earth.

**Amen.**

Compassionate Jesus,  
Thank you for showing us your heart for all people  
for demonstrating welcome to the marginalised  
and hospitality to those who others may deem unworthy.

You do not overlook anyone, but know them by each name  
We thank and praise you for the same concern you have shown each of us.

Truly you are our Good Shepherd, the giver of abundant life.

**Amen.**<sup>2</sup>

**We now say the Lord's Prayer**

**Readings: Genesis 45:1-15 - Joseph Reveals Himself to His Brothers**

**45** Then Joseph could no longer control himself before all those who stood by him, and he cried out, "Send everyone away from me." So no one stayed with him when Joseph made himself known to his brothers. **2** And he wept so loudly that the Egyptians heard it, and the household of Pharaoh heard it. **3** Joseph said to his brothers, "I am Joseph. Is my father still alive?" But his brothers could not answer him, so dismayed were they at his presence.

**4** Then Joseph said to his brothers, "Come closer to me." And they came closer. He said, "I am your brother, Joseph, whom you sold into Egypt. **5** And now do not be distressed, or angry with yourselves, because you sold me here; for God sent me before you to preserve life. **6** For the famine has been in the land these two years; and there are five more years in which there will be neither plowing nor harvest. **7** God sent me before you to preserve for you a remnant on earth, and to keep alive for you many survivors. **8** So it was not you who sent me here, but God; he has made me a father to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house and ruler over all the land of Egypt. **9** Hurry and go up to my father and say to him, 'Thus says your son Joseph, God has made me lord of all Egypt; come down to me, do not delay. **10** You shall settle in the land of Goshen, and you shall be near me, you and your children and your children's children, as well as your flocks, your herds, and all that you have. **11** I will provide for you there—since there are five more years of famine to come—so that you and your household, and all that you have, will not come to poverty.' **12** And now your eyes and the eyes of my brother Benjamin see that it is my own mouth that speaks to you. **13** You must tell my father how greatly I am honoured in Egypt, and all that you have seen. Hurry and bring my father down here." **14** Then he fell upon his brother Benjamin's neck and wept, while Benjamin wept upon his neck. **15** And he kissed all his brothers and wept upon them; and after that his brothers talked with him.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Opening prayers written by Claire Welch

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## Psalm 133 - The Blessedness of Unity

*A Song of Ascents.*

1 How very good and pleasant it is when kindred live together in unity!

2 It is like the precious oil on the head, running down upon the beard, on the beard of Aaron, running down over the collar of his robes.

3 It is like the dew of Hermon, which falls on the mountains of Zion.

For there the Lord ordained his blessing, life forevermore.<sup>4</sup>

### Matthew 15:21- 28 The Canaanite Woman's Faith

<sup>21</sup> Jesus left that place and went away to the district of Tyre and Sidon. <sup>22</sup> Just then a Canaanite woman from that region came out and started shouting, "Have mercy on me, Lord, Son of David; my daughter is tormented by a demon." <sup>23</sup> But he did not answer her at all. And his disciples came and urged him, saying, "Send her away, for she keeps shouting after us." <sup>24</sup> He answered, "I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." <sup>25</sup> But she came and knelt before him, saying, "Lord, help me." <sup>26</sup> He answered, "It is not fair to take the children's food and throw it to the dogs." <sup>27</sup> She said, "Yes, Lord, yet even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their masters' table." <sup>28</sup> Then Jesus answered her, "Woman, great is your faith! Let it be done for you as you wish." And her daughter was healed instantly.<sup>5</sup>

### Reflections on the readings:

*"How very good an pleasant it is when kindred live together in unity!...For there the Lord ordained his blessing, life forevermore." –Psalm 133*

Today we hear from JPIT – the Joint Public Issues Team – who help to ground our Bible readings in the context of their work, advising the Methodist Church, Baptist Church, United Reformed Church and Church of Scotland on issues of public policy.

Our readings this week invite us to see and explore a vision of God's kingdom founded on unity. They paint a picture of what it means to be together as God's people, and in doing so challenge us to see who gets included in God's kingdom, and what this means for our lives as followers of Christ.

Psalm 133, in short but sweet words, says that in God's kingdom, the blessing of the Lord is found when God's people are together. Here, the writer says that the unity of God's people is as precious as holy oils and as sacred as Mount Zion. It is in this unity, the psalm says, that the 'life to the full' of God's kingdom is offered. Here we see what Jesus might be hinting at in John 10:10.

So, what does living in this unity look like? Our other readings offer us some illustrations, to see what this is like in practice.

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In Genesis 45, after a long time apart, Joseph and his brothers find themselves together once again. Remarkably, after his life has been turned upside down by their unkindness, Joseph shows his brothers forgiveness. These are people who have treated Joseph unjustly. And yet, just as Joseph has found life by the provision and mercy of God, so he extends this to others – even those who have stood against him.

Instead of turning away, Joseph chooses to stand face to face with those he has been distanced by, and recognises that God's mercy can be shown to them just as it has been to him.

In Matthew 15, we are called to hear this message once again from an unlikely voice. Here, we see Jesus finding himself face to face with a Canaanite woman, pleading for him to heal her daughter. It's important to know that as a Jewish teacher, Jesus would have known the way that his people and the Canaanites were distanced from one another. Their history was one of conflict and distrust, rather than unity. Yet this woman finds the courage and faith to declare that in the Kingdom of God, everyone is brought in. She knows and declares that in Jesus' kingdom, there is space for everyone – Jew and Gentile. God's kingdom is a calling for unity, and in unity, transformation.

Between these stories, we see a picture of unity which calls for radical inclusion. Those who from whom we might once might have been distanced are brought close, an act made possible in God's mercy. These passages paint a vision of God's kingdom where everyone is seen, heard and offered fullness of life in God's love.

For the many who hear this call to inclusion from places of exclusion, this is a call for justice. Justice that sees equality, where all people are offered the life of God's kingdom. That together, our understanding of who we are might change, so that all can be offered space.

In Matthew 15, we hear this message from someone standing in a place of exclusion. Yet, whilst the Canaanite woman might once have been considered excluded from God's kingdom, in her faith she declared that with the coming of Christ, she is welcomed in. Justice is offered, that all might be given life.

The picture these passages paint invites us to consider what radical inclusion would look like for us today.

You might like to reflect on these questions, and maybe share your responses with someone who you trust or a small group:

Who in our community today do we see as outsiders?

Who do we exclude from our vision of God's kingdom?

In seeking unity, where might we find life in choosing to stand face to face with those we who are excluded, and listen to their call for change? <sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Reflection written by Hannah Brown – Joint Public Issues Team

## Closing prayers

Loving and gracious God  
We give you thanks for the gift of our voices.

For those whose voices make beautiful music, and express emotions and thoughts too complex for words.

For the parents and carers whose voices are a source of security, encouragement and guidance. For the voices that offer us words of comfort and encouragement, that build us up and give us the strength to keep moving forwards.

For the voices that bring us new ideas and insights that help us better understand the world we live in.

For strong voices that speak up for justice, and fight for a world where no one is forgotten or left behind.

Today we pray for the voiceless in our world, for those who feel their voice is not being heard.

We pray for those who have been robbed of their voice by an oppressive government or an abusive relationship. May they feel the warmth of your love, and be reminded of their worth. May our voices join with theirs to call for justice and peace.

We think of those who use their voices to oppress and intimidate. May they be shown a new way to live and govern, and learn to do so with humility and compassion.

We think of all the ways in which we can use our own voices. We pray for the compassion to offer words of comfort to others, the wisdom to offer guidance and encouragement, and the motivation to raise our voices and stand up for what we believe in.

We are sorry for the times when fear has tightened our throats...

Fear of speaking out of turn and saying the wrong thing. Fear of sticking our heads above the parapet.

Fear of speaking out the ideas and thoughts that could change lives.

God, grant us the courage to raise our voices in your name, in the name of love and justice. May we be your voice in this world, seeking to bring your kingdom closer,

In Jesus' name,

**Amen.**<sup>7</sup>

## 546 STF – Behold the servant of the Lord

1 Behold the servant of the Lord!  
I wait thy guiding eye to feel,  
to hear and keep thy every word,  
to prove and do thy perfect will,  
joyful from my own works to cease,  
glad to fulfil all righteousness.

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<sup>7</sup> Prayers of intercession written by Emma Dobson

- 2 Me if thy grace vouchsafe to use,  
meanest of all thy creatures, me,  
the deed, the time, the manner choose;  
let all my fruit be found of thee;  
let all my works in thee be wrought,  
by thee to full perfection brought.
- 3 My every weak though good design  
o'errule or change, as seems thee meet;  
Jesus, let all my work be thine!  
Thy work, O Lord, is all complete,  
and pleasing in thy Father's sight;  
thou only hast done all things right.
- 4 Here then to thee thine own I leave;  
mould as thou wilt thy passive clay;  
but let me all thy stamp receive,  
but let me all thy words obey,  
serve with a single heart and eye,  
and to thy glory live and die.

Charles Wesley (1707-1788) Reproduced from Singing the Faith Electronic Words Edition, number 546

## **Blessing**

Go in grace, and know that you are called,  
Go in love, to find that calling and pursue it,  
Go in the Spirit of the Living God, to grow and learn and be transformed,  
Seeking justice in our world, through Jesus Christ, our Lord.<sup>8</sup>

**Amen.**

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<sup>8</sup> Blessing by Tim Baker