



Dore Methodist Church

Weekly Update

21st August 2020.



Message from David.

Very often in our times of worship we hear the words, "Let us Pray". What thoughts come to our minds? Do we immediately think of all the concerns we have or are we open to tune into the prayers offered by the leader of worship? This year's Prayer Handbook, "The Earth is the Lord's", has prayers for every day of the year, with prayers for the Sheffield District on Day 25 each month. The Handbook is a useful aid to prayer and can widen our



horizons, as we are invited to pray for the work of the Church at home and overseas. This is a resource shared by our Methodist brothers and sisters all around the world. The Methodist Conference has declared 2020/2021 a Year of Prayer. Simple guidance on different ways to pray is available on the Methodist Church website as well as information for a weekly online Church-wide 'prayer meeting' every Tuesday at 12.45pm from 1st September 2020. The challenge is for us to be "part of this movement of prayer as we ask the Holy Spirit to help us be a growing, evangelistic, inclusive, justice-seeking Church of gospel people". We can pray individually or as a community. One of the lessons we have learned in the past months, when we have been unable to attend worship at Church, is that we can be linked together in worship thanks to the material we receive each week with this Weekly Update. Each Sunday at 10.30am we know that other people are 'joining' us as we share in the act of worship. One plus has been that those unable to attend worship even in normal circumstances have said how much they appreciate that sense of belonging to the fellowship. There are so many resources available to us. Last Sunday Daphne and I 'attended' Westminster Central Hall where we shared in their Love Feast with our digestive biscuits and tonic water! The BBC's Songs of Praise has been a source of inspiration for many shut-ins over the years. There is evidence to suggest that people, who are not regular Church attenders, are accessing online worship. Can we build on that interest?

There is also a growing interest in pilgrimages and the latest guide, "Britain's Pilgrim Places", has just been published. We have an older guide, "Sacred Britain", which reminded us of shrines, wells and pilgrimage routes regarded as sacred. The Canterbury Pilgrimage is one of the routes covered. Our weekend paper introduced us to another, the 70 mile long Fife Pilgrim Way from Culross to St Andrews. Twenty years ago we spent a week's holiday walking St Cuthbert's Way from Melrose to Holy Island. How do we account for this interest in pilgrimage routes and how can we build on that interest? Are there different ways of being Church today when the traditional ways are in decline?

God bless you in your particular pilgrimage. *David*

Pause for thought and prayer

In quietness and trust is your strength (Isaiah 30:15)



This week's verse of scripture was originally spoken by the prophet Isaiah warning the people of Judah that turning to other nations for military might could not save them, only God could do that. They must wait upon Him in quietness and trust.

Saying a particular Bible verse several times over is helpful way to reflect on life and to aid our prayer. Find a quiet space each day during the week and repeat this verse and pray for quiet and strength:

Pray for those who face the future with uncertainty of anxiety; for those who face trauma and upheaval in their lives; for those who doubt their ability to cope with what life may bring; for those who are making difficult decisions. Living God in the quietness of our prayer time, and in the strength of your Holy Spirit reach out we pray to all for whom the future seems uncertain, bring light out of darkness, hope out of despair, joy out of sorrow. Lord in your mercy hear our prayer. **Amen**

Worship at Home.

Our worship material for next Sunday, 23rd August, prepared by "Twelvebaskets", follows. As we still cannot meet together physically to worship, we urge as many as possible to use this material at 10-30 a.m. on Sunday.

Grace Food Bank.

The next collection will be on **MONDAY 24th August**. If you are able to make a contribution, please contact Peter on 0114 437 1998 (or email peter.ann.smith@gmail.com) and leave a bag outside your front door for collection by **9-00 a.m. on Monday**.

Building Security.

In order to meet Insurance requirements and also maintain biosecurity, all the locks on the external church doors have been changed. At the moment keys are only being issued to those needing access for weekly security checks.

Opportunity for Re-opening for worship.

Although there is provision in the government's guidance for Churches to re-open for worship, there are very strict criteria attached to this which the Leadership Team have been working through, in conjunction with the replies from the questionnaire that was sent out. There is a desire to start planning for the future and focus on what we may be able to do, rather than what we can't do, with understanding that we also need to be flexible. A meeting of the Church Council (via Zoom) is being convened for 10th September to consider a proposal to start with a small, "Pause for thought and prayer style," midweek act of Worship in October. This will give people the opportunity to see what it is like to worship within a smaller context and for the Stewards to

address any practical issues which may come to light. If all goes well, this will enable us to have the confidence to move onto the next step of facilitating some form of worship to happen on a Sunday. If the Church Council agree to this proposal there will still be a lot of practical arrangements to put in place, and all of this is, of course, subject to any local or national changes in Covid 19 rules.

Church Magazine.

A reminder that Bridget still needs **YOUR** contribution for the next magazine, which will be published in early September. Let's have your thoughts and experiences of the last few months – the highs and lows – and your hopes for the future.

Prayer Handbook 2020/2021

Each year The Methodist Church publishes a Prayer Handbook. The 2020/2021 edition, *The Earth is the Lord's*, includes prayers and a lectionary of Bible Readings and Psalms for every day of the year, starting on Sunday 30th August 2020. If anyone is interested, copies are available on the Methodist Publishing website (www.methodistpublishing.org.uk) at £4.50 each (£4.10 for 10 or more) plus postage. David Willie is willing to order copies if you contact him.

The Vine at Home – 23rd August 2020 - 21st Sunday in Ordinary Time.

Call to worship

God is here, as we, God's people, gather to praise, to pray and to reflect.
Move amongst us, by your Spirit, that we might see your Kingdom come, your will be done.
Amen.¹

Hymn: 36 STF – There's a quiet understanding

- 1 There's a quiet understanding when we're gathered in the Spirit,
it's a promise that he gives us, when we gather in his name.
There's a love we feel in Jesus, there's a manna that he feeds us,
it's a promise that he gives us, when we gather in his name.
- 2 And we know when we're together, sharing love and understanding,
that our brothers and our sisters feel the oneness that he brings.
Thank you, thank you, thank you, Jesus, for the way you love and feed us,
for the many ways you lead us; thank you, thank you, Lord; thank you, thank you, Lord.

Tedd Smith (b. 1927) Reproduced from Singing the Faith Electronic Words Edition, number 36
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Opening Prayers

Let us create a space for the Spirit, this day.

Let us pause, and be still, and listen to the word of God.

^{1 2} Opening prayers by Tim Baker

Let us listen to the quiet understanding that comes from gathering in the Spirit, whether we gather physically or gather as part of God's whole church, meeting on this Lord's day, around the world.

Let us open ourselves up to the love we feel in Jesus, to the promise that you love us, as we gather today in your name.

Let us feel that sense of openness, with our brothers and sisters around the world, that quiet understanding.

Let us give our thanks and praise to you, gracious God.

Let us pray, in the quiet...

[Hold a moment of stillness].

Come amongst us, holy God, clear our hearts and minds from distractions and turn our thoughts to you this day.

May we be at one with you, through Christ our Lord, **Amen.** ²

We say the Lord's Prayer

Readings: Exodus 1:8 – 2:10 - The Israelites Are Oppressed

8 Now a new king arose over Egypt, who did not know Joseph. **9** He said to his people, "Look, the Israelite people are more numerous and more powerful than we. **10** Come, let us deal shrewdly with them, or they will increase and, in the event of war, join our enemies and fight against us and escape from the land." **11** Therefore they set taskmasters over them to oppress them with forced labour. They built supply cities, Pithom and Rameses, for Pharaoh. **12** But the more they were oppressed, the more they multiplied and spread, so that the Egyptians came to dread the Israelites. **13** The Egyptians became ruthless in imposing tasks on the Israelites, **14** and made their lives bitter with hard service in mortar and brick and in every kind of field labour. They were ruthless in all the tasks that they imposed on them.

15 The king of Egypt said to the Hebrew midwives, one of whom was named Shiphrah and the other Puah, **16** "When you act as midwives to the Hebrew women, and see them on the birthstool, if it is a boy, kill him; but if it is a girl, she shall live." **17** But the midwives feared God; they did not do as the king of Egypt commanded them, but they let the boys live. **18** So the king of Egypt summoned the midwives and said to them, "Why have you done this, and allowed the boys to live?" **19** The midwives said to Pharaoh, "Because the Hebrew women are not like the Egyptian women; for they are vigorous and give birth before the midwife comes to them." **20** So God dealt well with the midwives; and the people multiplied and became very strong. **21** And because the midwives feared God, he gave them families. **22** Then Pharaoh commanded all his people, "Every boy that is born to the Hebrews^[a] you shall throw into the Nile, but you shall let every girl live."

Birth and Youth of Moses

2 Now a man from the house of Levi went and married a Levite woman. **2** The woman conceived and bore a son; and when she saw that he was a fine baby, she hid him three months. **3** When she could hide him no longer she got a papyrus basket for him, and plastered it with bitumen and pitch; she put the child in it and placed it among the reeds on the bank of the river. **4** His sister stood at a distance, to see what would happen to him.

5 The daughter of Pharaoh came down to bathe at the river, while her attendants walked beside the river. She saw the basket among the reeds and sent her maid to bring it. **6** When she opened it, she saw the child. He was crying, and she took pity on him. "This must be one of the Hebrews'

children,” she said. **7** Then his sister said to Pharaoh’s daughter, “Shall I go and get you a nurse from the Hebrew women to nurse the child for you?” **8** Pharaoh’s daughter said to her, “Yes.” So the girl went and called the child’s mother. **9** Pharaoh’s daughter said to her, “Take this child and nurse it for me, and I will give you your wages.” So the woman took the child and nursed it. **10** When the child grew up, she brought him to Pharaoh’s daughter, and she took him as her son. She named him Moses,^[b] “because,” she said, “I drew him out^[c] of the water.”³

Romans 12:1-8 - The New Life in Christ

12 I appeal to you therefore, brothers and sisters,^[a] by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual^[b] worship. **2** Do not be conformed to this world,^[c] but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God—what is good and acceptable and perfect.^[d]

3 For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of yourself more highly than you ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned. **4** For as in one body we have many members, and not all the members have the same function, **5** so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually we are members one of another. **6** We have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us: prophecy, in proportion to faith; **7** ministry, in ministering; the teacher, in teaching; **8** the exhorter, in exhortation; the giver, in generosity; the leader, in diligence; the compassionate, in cheerfulness.⁴

Matthew 16:13-20 - Peter’s Declaration about Jesus

13 Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, “Who do people say that the Son of Man is?” **14** And they said, “Some say John the Baptist, but others Elijah, and still others Jeremiah or one of the prophets.” **15** He said to them, “But who do you say that I am?” **16** Simon Peter answered, “You are the Messiah,^[a] the Son of the living God.” **17** And Jesus answered him, “Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father in heaven. **18** And I tell you, you are Peter,^[b] and on this rock^[c] I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not prevail against it. **19** I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.” **20** Then he sternly ordered the disciples not to tell anyone that he was^[d] the Messiah.⁵

Reflections on the readings

It doesn’t matter how old we are or what we are doing in our lives, we all have to follow rules. We have to obey the law, and we also have rules for our schools and workplaces.

Why do we need rules?

The main reason for having almost any set of rules is to keep us safe. For example, the law says you have to be 17 years old before you can drive a car, as we have to be sure we keep all drivers, walkers and cyclists safe.

You have to be a certain height to ride some roller coasters, because the rides aren’t built to be safe for every body type. You’ll only be kept safe by the bar or harness if you’re a certain height - you wouldn’t want to slip free and fall off the roller coaster!

^{3 4 5} Bible Text is from New Revised Standard Version Bible, copyright © 1989 National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

All cars have to drive on the same side of the road, so people don't crash. Cars have to stop at red lights, so everyone can move around safely. Loud music has to stop at a certain time of night in lots of places, so that people can sleep. These rules all make sense, and we would live in a much more dangerous world if they didn't exist.

Some people make up rules that we know, deep down, aren't fair. Maybe a group of children at school make a den in the playground and go around telling everyone, "No girls allowed", or tell a certain person they can't join in. In some countries across the world, until very recently, there was a rule that women weren't allowed to drive cars. There have been rules all over the world that allow people to treat others differently and unfairly because of the colour of their skin, where in the world they come from, their religious beliefs, and who they love (that is to say, there have been rules that allow people to treat gay people unfairly). Lots of work has been done to change these rules, but it's still a problem in a lot of places in our world.

In the Bible story from Exodus, the King tells everyone there's a new rule. He's a bit worried because he thinks there are too many Israelites. He makes the Israelites work for him as slaves, but he's worried they might get to be too big a group and start taking over. So, the first thing he does is to work them harder and harder. Then, he tells the women who act as midwives for the Hebrew women: when you help the women to give birth, let the baby girls live, but kill the baby boys. That's the new rule they're given. But they know, deep down, that's wrong. They trust in God and they feel in their hearts that God is telling them not to follow it. So they play a little trick. They secretly let all the babies live, and when the King demands to know why they haven't killed any of the boys, they say, 'These Hebrew women, you know? They're just too quick for us. They're so fast - they always have their babies before the midwives even arrive!' The story says that the women get rewarded for this - God sees the good they've been doing and is very pleased. They were very clever, and they found a way to avoid following the cruel new rule.

Sometimes, I think we are called to do something when we see people making unfair rules. Sometimes we just get a feeling inside us that something isn't right, and God can help us to see that. In the book of Romans, it says:

Do not be shaped by this world. Instead be changed within by a new way of thinking. Then you will be able to decide what God wants for you. And you will be able to know what is good and pleasing to God and what is perfect. (Romans 12:2)

That doesn't mean we should ignore the world and just focus on God. It's ok to enjoy being a part of the world, because we were created to live life to the full. What I think this passage means is that, sometimes, we'll come across things that just don't feel right, and that's ok; we can turn to God, who will help us to think differently about it.

We see a similar impulse in today's Gospel reading, don't we? As Peter names Jesus as his Lord, as he recognises that this man Jesus is also – somehow – the Messiah, the Son of God, Jesus affirms him. But that affirmation also includes an instruction to engage in the here and now. This isn't just a gospel reading about how important it is to 'know Christ as our Lord and Saviour', it is also a reading about what happens when we come to that realisation. It is about the invitation to build a church, a society, a world, where love reigns – here and now.

Lots of people throughout history have found clever ways of showing that they don't think a rule is right. Rosa Parks is a great example. She was the woman who refused to give up her seat on the bus for a white man – by doing that very simple but extremely brave thing, she was sending the message that she, and other people of colour, deserve to have the same rights as white people.

Black Lives Matter protesters all over the world are using their voices today to tell people in charge that people of colour are still not being treated fairly.

Greta Thunberg is a name you might have heard quite often. She started the 'School Strike for Climate' movement where she encouraged school children all over the world to take a Friday off school as a protest for more action on climate change. She wants to make sure kids her age and younger actually have a world to live in when they are adults, and wants the people in power now to do their bit to save the planet for their grandchildren. She broke the rules that say that every child needs to be in school every single day to send a message that she is serious about wanting change. If you think there is a rule that is unfair, you can sign a petition or write a letter to your member of Parliament. If it's a problem at school, or in your job, you can talk to your teacher or manager to say that things aren't fair.

There are lots of things we can do, and the passage from Romans continues to say:

Each one of us has a body, and that body has many parts. These parts all have different uses. We all have different gifts. Each gift came because of the grace that God gave us. If one has the gift of prophecy, they should use that gift with the faith they have. If one has the gift of serving, they should serve. If one has the gift of teaching, they should teach. If one has the gift of encouraging others, they should encourage. If one has the gift of giving to others, they should give freely. If one has the gift of being a leader, they should try hard when they lead. If one has the gift of showing kindness to others, that person should do so with joy.

For me, that means that we don't all have to do the same things. We all have ways we can make a difference. Some of us are teachers. Some of us are scientists. Some of us are artists. Some of us are writers, singers, builders or doctors. Whatever our skills, and whatever our gifts, we can use them to make a difference. All of these things give us skills to speak out when a rule is leading to people being treated unfairly.

The one thing we know for sure is that God is with us and, when we speak out for people who deserve more love from others, we know we are doing God's work.⁶

Hymn: 673 STF – Will you come and follow me

- 1 Will you come and follow me if I but call your name?
Will you go where you don't know and never be the same?
Will you let my love be shown, will you let my name be known,
will you let my life be grown in you and you in me?

- 2 Will you leave yourself behind if I but call your name?
Will you care for cruel and kind and never be the same?
Will you risk the hostile stare should your life attract or scare?
Will you let me answer prayer in you and you in me?

- 3 Will you let the blinded see if I but call your name?
Will you set the prisoners free and never be the same?
Will you kiss the leper clean, and do such as this unseen,
and admit to what I mean in you and you in me?

⁶ All Age Talk written by Emma Dobson

- 4 Will you love the 'you' you hide if I but call your name?
Will you quell the fear inside and never be the same?
Will you use the faith you've found to reshape the world around,
through my sight and touch and sound in you and you in me?
- 5 Lord, your summons echoes true when you but call my name.
Let me turn and follow you and never be the same.
In your company I'll go where your love and footsteps show.
Thus I'll move and live and grow in you and you in me.

John L. Bell (b. 1949) and Graham Maule (b. 1958) Reproduced from Singing the Faith Electronic Words Edition, number 673Words: (c) 1987, WGRG, Iona Community, Glasgow G2 3DH Scotland. www.wgrg.co.uk CCLI 554990

Prayers of intercession

God of all grace, hear us now, as we join in with people praying all around the world.
You know that there is much that is not right with our world, our community, our family and our own lives. You know the things that trouble us, the thoughts that weigh heavy on our hearts.

God of all grace, we hand these thoughts and prayers to you now. You who say 'come to me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest'.

As we've reflected on Greta Thunberg's story, so we pray for all affected most by the climate crisis and climate injustice – those whose homes, livelihoods and families are at risk of destruction by rising sea-levels, floods or increased storms.

God of all grace, we hand these thoughts and prayers to you now. You who say 'come to me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest'.

As we have reflected on your invitation to Peter, to become the rock on which your church is built, so may we find our place in your story. May we come to know the calling you have on our lives, the ways we can be an answer to prayer.

God of all grace, we hand these thoughts and prayers to you now. You who say 'come to me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest'.
Come amongst us, by your Spirit. **Amen.**⁷

Blessing

Lord of all hopefulness, Lord of all joy, Lord of all we have and are, Inspire us by your Spirit to be a part of your mission. **Amen**⁷

⁷ Additional prayers by Tim Baker