



# Dore Methodist Church

## Weekly Update

### 25<sup>th</sup> September 2020



## Message from Gail.

Dear Friends,

In the corner of my office I have a photocopier, it is something I use regularly and at the touch of a button I can produce 1, 10, 20, 50 or more copies in as many seconds – every one identical. Just one of the wonders of technology which we take for granted today.

I went to the supermarket to get our weekly shop on Saturday and as the forecast predicted the weather would be cooler by the end of the week, I decided to buy some soup. There before me were an array of varieties all stacked neatly in uniformed rows. I'm not sure how many were on display, but of course one brand does boast 57!

Walk along any beach and no two stones are alike, in the garden no flower is an exact replica of another. Look at a crowd of faces and no two are the same – individuality is a miracle of creation. Our world is full of such rich diversity we can scarcely take it in – and yet we spend a lot of time striving for conformity. Being united doesn't mean uniform and there is room in Gods family for us all.

Next week we will be celebrating our Harvest Festival and will be thinking about *seeds of potential*. Seeds are a source for growth, which not only give the variety of colour texture shape and size to our crops, but enable individual change and transformation from the ordinary into the extra ordinary in a person's life. So in this coming week let us rejoice in the fact that God who made one hundred thousand different species of butterflies alone, didn't use a photocopier when he made us, and let us give thanks that we all have a unique contribution to make.

Blessings

*Gail.*

## Pause for thought and prayer



**“I lift my eyes to the hills.”**

How fortunate we are in this area to live so close to the Peak District. David and I love to go for a walk among the hills. They are a place of quiet and solitude, and of stunning views. But as beautiful as the hills are, they can also be a place of danger especially when the clouds descend, visibility is lost, and care is needed with every step. I liken that image to where we are in this pandemic. It is as if earlier this year a large cloud, called the Corona virus, came rolling in. Then just when we thought it was lifting and safe to move on, it thickened once more and again we find ourselves cautiously treading the path ahead.

In Psalm 121 the Psalmist uses the hills as a focal point for his thoughts. At the time of writing, hills were a dangerous place for travellers with a high risk of attack. However, the writer reminds us of the assurance of God presence and help.

### **Read Psalm 121**

**Please pray with me:** In trial and tribulation, God of comfort, be near us. In loss and devastation, God of grief, grieve with us. In uncertainty and confusion, God of the way, show us the path. In want and need, God of provision, provide for us. In comfort and joy, God of love, let us not forget you (*Prayer taken from Roots resources September 2020*)

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### **Worship Material for 27<sup>th</sup> September.**

Our worship material for next Sunday, 27<sup>th</sup> September, produced for us by “Twelvebaskets” follows. We hope that by using this we can still feel connected together even though we cannot yet physically meet together.

### **Harvest Celebrations.**

As indicated in Gail’s message we will celebrate our Harvest Festival next week. For obvious reasons this will not be quite the same as in the past, but we are planning to use the theme of “Home and Abroad” and think of the work of the local Grace Foodbank as well as the work done abroad by the Methodist organisation “All we Can”. In next week’s update there will be information on how you can financially support “All we Can”. Also, of course, you can contribute to the regular collections of food for the Food Bank organised by Peter and Ann Smith.

**Please send any contributions for our “Weekly Update” to the Baileys by TUESDAY EVENING. Phone: 2351085. Email: [john.bailey23a@btinternet.com](mailto:john.bailey23a@btinternet.com)**

## The Vine at Home – 27<sup>th</sup> September 2020 - 26<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time

### Call to worship

Father, Son and Spirit, Holy Trinity, present wherever hearts are open and souls laid bare, bless those gathered here today for worship, fellowship and prayer.

Bind our hearts as one as you are one - Father, Son and Spirit, Holy Trinity. **Amen.**<sup>1</sup>

### Hymn: 455 STF – All my hope on God is founded

- 1 All my hope on God is founded;  
he doth still my trust renew.  
Me through change and chance he guideth,  
only good and only true.  
God unknown,  
he alone  
calls my heart to be his own.
- 2 Human pride and earthly glory,  
sword and crown betray our trust;  
what with care and toil we fashion,  
tower and temple, fall to dust.  
But God's power,  
hour by hour,  
is my temple and my tower.
- 3 God's great goodness aye endureth,  
deep his wisdom passing thought;  
splendour, light, and life attend him,  
beauty springeth out of naught.  
Evermore  
from his store  
new-born worlds rise and adore.
- 4 Daily doth the almighty giver  
bounteous gifts on us bestow;  
his desire our soul delighteth,  
pleasure leads us where we go.  
Love doth stand  
at his hand;  
joy doth wait on his command.
- 5 Still from earth to God eternal  
sacrifice of praise be done,  
high above all praises praising  
for the gift of Christ his Son.  
Christ doth call  
one and all  
ye who follow shall not fall.

Robert Bridges (1844-1930) (alt.)  
based on Joachim Neander (1650-1680)  
Reproduced from Singing the Faith Electronic  
Words Edition, number 455. CCLI 554990

### We will now say the Lord's Prayer.

### Readings: Exodus 17:1-7 Water from the Rock

**17** From the wilderness of Sin the whole congregation of the Israelites journeyed by stages, as the Lord commanded. They camped at Rephidim, but there was no water for the people to drink. **2** The people quarrelled with Moses, and said, "Give us water to drink." Moses said to them, "Why do you quarrel with me? Why do you test the Lord?" **3** But the people thirsted there for water; and the people complained against Moses and said, "Why did you bring us out of Egypt, to kill us and our children and livestock with thirst?" **4** So Moses cried out to the Lord, "What shall I do with this people? They are almost ready to stone me." **5** The Lord said to Moses, "Go on ahead of the people, and take some of the elders of Israel with you; take in your hand the staff with which you struck the Nile, and go. **6** I will be standing there in front of you on the rock at Horeb. Strike the rock, and water will come out of it, so that the people may drink." Moses did so, in the sight of the elders of Israel. **7** He called the place Massah<sup>[a]</sup> and Meribah,<sup>[b]</sup> because the Israelites quarrelled and tested the Lord, saying, "Is the Lord among us or not?"<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Call to worship by Tim Baker

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## **Meditation**

Can you remember a time you've been thirsty? Really, really thirsty? Parched.

Desperate for water.

How does it feel?

It's not pleasant, is it?

In the desert, we are thirsty, Lord.

Can you remember a time when you've really appreciated a drink? Perhaps after a long day, perhaps in the hot sun, perhaps after going for a run or doing some exercise.

How does it feel?

The cool, refreshing feeling of water on a dry, parched tongue. The way a long drink gives you energy and renews your strength.

In the desert, we are thirsty, Lord. Imagine a rock. A large, hard, dry rock.

It's not really the place we'd expect water to come from, is it? It doesn't look much like a tap.

Then, in this story from Exodus, the rock becomes the place where thirst is quenched, where water flows, where refreshment reaches the people of Israel.

In the desert, Lord, you provide water.

Has this happened for you?

Have you ever found something you needed in an unexpected place?

Have you, in the midst of a really difficult time, found someone being extra-especially kind to you?

In the hard times, God is still with us, God is looking out for us.

In the desert, Lord, you provide water.

May your refreshing, cooling, inspiring water flow through me today, Lord God.

**Amen.**<sup>3</sup>

### **A prayer of praise**

Living God, you are the most high,

We praise you in the desert places of life,

And we praise you when we are richly fed and all our needs are met.

We praise you in this storm,

and when all is calm around us.

Living God, most high, we praise you.

**Amen.**

### **A prayer of confession**

Here I am, most high God.

Here I am, present to you, open to you,

Knowing that there is much I wish I had done,  
And much I wish I hadn't.

This day, in this moment, I am sorry.

And even as I say the words, O God,  
I know I am already forgiven, loved, set free.

To you be all the thanks and praise,  
Most high God.

**Amen.**<sup>4</sup>

## **Readings: Matthew 21:23-32 The Authority of Jesus Questioned**

**23** When he entered the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came to him as he was teaching, and said, "By what authority are you doing these things, and who gave you this authority?" **24** Jesus said to them, "I will also ask you one question; if you tell me the answer, then I will also tell you by what authority I do these things. **25** Did the baptism of John come from heaven, or was it of human origin?" And they argued with one another, "If we say, 'From heaven,' he will say to us, 'Why then did you not believe him?' **26** But if we say, 'Of human origin,' we are afraid of the crowd; for all regard John as a prophet." **27** So they answered Jesus, "We do not know." And he said to them, "Neither will I tell you by what authority I am doing these things.

## **The Parable of the Two Sons**

**28** "What do you think? A man had two sons; he went to the first and said, 'Son, go and work in the vineyard today.' **29** He answered, 'I will not'; but later he changed his mind and went. **30** The father<sup>[a]</sup> went to the second and said the same; and he answered, 'I go, sir'; but he did not go. **31** Which of the two did the will of his father?" They said, "The first." Jesus said to them, "Truly I tell you, the tax collectors and the prostitutes are going into the kingdom of God ahead of you. **32** For John came to you in the way of righteousness and you did not believe him, but the tax collectors and the prostitutes believed him; and even after you saw it, you did not change your minds and believe him."<sup>5</sup>

## **Philippians 2:1-13 Imitating Christ's Humility**

**2** If then there is any encouragement in Christ, any consolation from love, any sharing in the Spirit, any compassion and sympathy, <sup>2</sup> make my joy complete: be of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. <sup>3</sup> Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility regard others as better than yourselves. <sup>4</sup> Let each of you look not to your own interests, but to the interests of others. <sup>5</sup> Let the same mind be in you that was<sup>[a]</sup> in Christ Jesus,<sup>6</sup> who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited,<sup>7</sup> but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness. And being found in human form,<sup>8</sup> he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death—even death on a cross.<sup>9</sup> Therefore God also highly exalted him and gave him the name that is above every name <sup>10</sup> so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bend, in heaven and on earth and under the earth,<sup>11</sup> and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Prayers by Tim Baker

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<sup>6</sup> 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.

## Shining as Lights in the World

<sup>12</sup> Therefore, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed me, not only in my presence, but much more now in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; <sup>13</sup> for it is God who is at work in you, enabling you both to will and to work for his good pleasure.

### Reflections on the readings:

So often it's hard to do the right thing, isn't it?

It always seems to take energy and effort, a commitment beyond what might be involved in just watching one more episode of our favourite show or breaking out of our comfortable patterns and rhythms of life. Most of the time, we want to do the right thing, but how?

How do we discern what is the next best step forward?

How do we discover the direction of travel?

What about all the obstacles and difficulties in the way?

Where will the energy come from?

Are we prone to be a risk taker or are we more risk adverse?

Every time we say the Lord's Prayer we say your kingdom come, your will be done...but I'm really busy this week, so can we look at finding a date next month when I might have a few hours to help out?

We say the words, but how easy is it to postpone Kingdom-living?

In today's Gospel reading, we read this classic account of Jesus going toe-to-toe with the chief priests and elders – as he did several times during his ministry. They are trying to trap him with clever words and get him to say the wrong thing. I wonder, however, if many of us don't have a dialogue rather like this one going on inside our heads all the time as we wrestle with what it means to be a person of faith?

Are we constantly challenging our own motives? Do you hear the little voices of doubt, challenge and discomfort piping up every now and then to hold us back, to keep us from taking that next best step forward?

Are we caught in this trap that Jesus describes in the parable of the two sons: sometimes saying good things or having good intentions and doing nothing about it, and sometimes the opposite? Do we talk a good game, then drift back into our old, selfish, self-centred ways?

Jesus is calling us out today, in the way he so often called out the religious leaders and super religious-types of his day. Can we respond to the challenge?

As Paul puts it in Philippians:

“Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others.”

May it be so, and let it begin with me.

The resources around A Methodist Way of Life offer us a helpful way to wrestle with our inner-Pharisee, with those voices of doubt and selfishness. Do you have a close friend or small, trusted group that you could introduce to the Methodist Way of Life? The commitment to daily actions and

the questions of spiritual accountability help us to seek the clarity about what our next step is, and the courage to take it.

Details of “A Methodist Way of Life” are given at the end of this worship material.

God out in peace, surrounded by love, emboldened by the Spirit, and take the next step of faith. **Amen.**<sup>7</sup>

### **Intercessions**

God of all grace, I come to you in prayer again.

God of all hope, I pray today for a world in need, and world full of stories of despair and pain.

God of all love, show me what is mine to do amongst all the uncertainty and fear in my community, my nation and my world.

Where, O Lord, are you calling me?

As the Coronavirus rumbles on and continues to dominate our news agenda and affect much of our way of life, I pray for all those most affected, most isolated, most vulnerable. As support systems, charities, churches and infrastructures all feel the pressure of this prolonged time of lockdown, show me how I can be a force for love.

Where, O Lord, are you calling me?

As many of the other injustices and inequalities of our world are not receiving the attention and focus that they should be (because we continue to battle the Coronavirus), I pray for all who are victims of injustice. Show me how I can bring hope, bring change, demonstrate your love.

Where, O Lord, are you calling me?

Today, I pray, where, O Lord, are you calling me? **Amen.**<sup>8</sup>

### **Hymn: 664 STF Lord, you call us to your service (Tune Angel Voices)**

1 Lord, you call us to your service,  
each in our own way.  
Some to caring, loving, healing;  
some to preach, or pray;  
some to work with quiet learning,  
truth discerning,  
day by day.

2 Life for us is always changing  
in the work we share.  
Christian love adds new dimensions  
to the way we care.  
For we know that you could lead us,  
as you need us,  
anywhere.

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<sup>7</sup> Reflection written by Wayne Grewcock and Tim Baker

<sup>8</sup> Prayers written by Tim Baker

3 Seeing life from your perspective  
makes your challenge plain,  
as your heart is grieving over  
those who live in pain.  
Teach us how, by our compassion,  
you may fashion  
hope again.

4 Lord, we set our human limits  
on the work we do.  
Send us your directing Spirit,  
pour your power through,  
that we may be free in living  
and in giving  
all for you.

Marjorie Dobson (b. 1940) Reproduced from Singing the Faith Electronic Words Edition, number 664  
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## **Blessing**

Go in the name of Jesus, who stands amongst us and changes the story for humanity.  
Go in the name of the Creator, who breathes life into all creation, even today.  
Go in the name of the Spirit, moving alongside and within you, this day and forever.

**Amen.**<sup>9</sup>

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## **A Methodist Way of Life**

The calling of the Methodist Church is to respond to the gospel of God's love in Christ and to live out its discipleship in worship and mission

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

### **Worship**

- We will pray daily,
- We will worship with others regularly
- We will look and listen for God in Scripture, and the world.

### **Learning and Caring**

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

### **Service**

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

### **Evangelism**

- We will speak of the love of God.
- We will live in a way that draws others to Jesus. We will share our faith with others.

**May we be a blessing within and beyond God's Church, for the transformation of the world.**

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<sup>9</sup> Additional prayers by Tim Baker