



Dore Methodist Church

Weekly Update

20th November 2020.



Message from Gail.

Today we reach a triumphant end to our journey through the year from last Advent Sunday to the Feast of Christ the King. Through the year we've been hearing the stories about Jesus and his life among us. Our journey has taken us through many different landscapes. There have been the open plains of day to day life in ordinary times when we've heard the extra-ordinary stories of what Jesus said, how he healed the sick and reached out to the most unlikely members of society. There have been shadowy valleys of temptation, wilderness times of despair, suffering, betrayal and death on the cross. There have also been mountain tops of breath-taking excitement, resurrection, ascension and the coming of the Holy Spirit.

For the last few week our focus has been on the ancient city of Thessalonica, and from there we have thought about how the early church faced adversity and we have taken comfort and strength for our own situation today. Now in the Christian calendar, we've reached this critical point on our journey. From here we can look back and see where we've travelled, and look forward to celebrating once again "God with us". To help us to that point, John gives us a glimpse of Christ the King, who gives us purpose and meaning to our journey of life.

John 18:33-38

*"Crowned with thorns, yet crowned with Glory, Lifted up on a cross yet exalted on high.
Crucified as a criminal yet honoured as Lord, sealed in a tomb yet triumphed over death
Humbled yet exalted, servant yet sovereign.*

In honouring others we honour Jesus and in serving them we serve Christ the King.

*The weak, lonely and oppressed, brought low in this world are exalted in the Kingdom of God.
So awake us to your sovereign presence Lord as we praise your Holy name"*

Gail.

Pause for Thought.



“You alone are the LORD. You made the skies and the heavens and all the stars.

(Nehemiah 9:6)

When was the last time you did some star gazing? On a trip to Africa a few years ago I was totally blown away by the night sky as I viewed it for the first time without any light pollution. A myriad of stars on a sapphire velvet background took my breath away. We may not get quite the same view here in England, but this week, if there is an opportunity to look at the night sky, wrap up warm and gaze upon the heavens at those sparkling symbols of eternity. And remember, it is the same God who made the moon and stars, and all the vastness of the sky, who hears your prayers.

We pray together: God of all brilliance, the heavens declare your glory and remind us of your power. Be with us in our distress; be with our families, friends, and neighbours, our country and our world. Give health to the sick, hope to the fearful, comfort to those who mourn, wisdom to our frontline and key workers, insight to our Government, and patience to us all. Overcome disease with the power of your new life, through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. (Prayer adapted from Church of England national call to prayer.)

Worship for Sunday 22nd November.

This Sunday’s worship for use at home, produced for us by “Twelvebaskets”, follows. We hope that everyone continues to find this material helpful whilst we are unable to meet together.

Treasurer's Thanks.

I would like to give a very big "Thank You" to everyone who has continued with their giving since we last met in March. Banker's Orders have continued as normal and I have received cheques through my letter-box from time to time. It is a remarkable gesture from our members who have been prevented from attending church and missing very much the friendly cup of coffee after the service.

You will appreciate that our income has been reduced because we have not had our usual lettings and our expenditure has certainly increased because of our planned re-decorations and carpet cleaning. In addition of course we have had to purchase Personal Protective Equipment, sanitary requirements etc in anticipation of re-opening. We hope to be open again as soon as we are allowed by Government particularly with Advent and Christmas on the horizon.

I look forward to seeing you all again soon.

Eric Barraclough

**Please send any items for our “Weekly Update” to the Baileys by TUESDAY evening.
Telephone: 235 1085. Email: john.bailey23a@btinternet.com**

The Vine at Home – Sunday 22nd November
Sunday before Advent - 34th Sunday in Ordinary Time.

Call to worship

As the darkness of winter draws in,
As the coldest time of the year approaches,
As we close our doors and turn up our heaters,

Come, Lord of light,
Come, God of the warm embrace,
Come to us, Immanuel, God with us. **Amen.**¹

Hymn: 317 STF – At the name of Jesus

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|---|--|
| <p>1 At the name of Jesus
every knee shall bow,
every tongue confess him
King of Glory now.
'Tis the Father's pleasure
we should call him Lord,
who from the beginning
was the mighty Word.</p> | <p>2 Humbled for a season,
to receive a name
from the lips of sinners
unto whom he came,
faithfully he bore it
spotless to the last,
brought it back victorious
when from death he passed:</p> |
| <p>3 Bore it up triumphant
with its human light,
through all ranks of creatures
to the central height,
to the throne of Godhead,
to the Father's breast;
filled it with the glory
of that perfect rest.</p> | <p>4 In your hearts enthrone him;
there let him subdue
all that is not holy,
all that is not true;
crown him as your captain
in temptation's hour:
let his will enfold you
in its light and power.</p> |
| <p>5 For this same Lord Jesus
shall return again,
with his Father's glory,
with his angel train;
all the wreaths of empire
meet upon his brow,
and our hearts confess him
King of Glory now.</p> | |

Caroline Maria Noel (1817-1877) Reproduced from Singing the Faith Electronic Words Edition, number 317
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Opening Prayers

Let us prepare ourselves

For the encounter
For worship
For the Spirit to come amongst us.

In our preparations, we are sorry.

¹ Additional prayers by Tim Baker

Lord, I have fallen short, I am sorry.

In our preparations, we encounter grace.

Lord, I know I am forgiven, loved and set free.

In our preparations, we give thanks for all we have received.

Lord, today I am thank for so much.

In our preparations, we praise and adore you, for you are the God of all things.

Lord, I praise you, for you are an awesome God.

In our preparations, we still our hearts and listen for your word to us.

Be still with me a while?

[Pause]

Amen.²

We say the Lord's Prayer

Readings: Ephesians 1:15-23 Paul's Prayer

15 I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love^[a] toward all the saints, and for this reason **16** I do not cease to give thanks for you as I remember you in my prayers. **17** I pray that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you a spirit of wisdom and revelation as you come to know him, **18** so that, with the eyes of your heart enlightened, you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance among the saints, **19** and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power for us who believe, according to the working of his great power. **20** God^[b] put this power to work in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, **21** far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the age to come. **22** And he has put all things under his feet and has made him the head over all things for the church, **23** which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.³

Matthew 25:31-46 The Judgment of the Nations

³¹ "When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on the throne of his glory. ³² All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats, ³³ and he will put the sheep at his right hand and the goats at the left.

³⁴ Then the king will say to those at his right hand, 'Come, you that are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; ³⁵ for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, ³⁶ I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me.'

³⁷ Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food, or thirsty and gave you something to drink? ³⁸ And when was it that we saw you a stranger

² Opening prayers written by Tim Baker

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and welcomed you, or naked and gave you clothing? ³⁹ And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?’

⁴⁰ And the king will answer them, ‘Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, ^[a] you did it to me.’

⁴¹ Then he will say to those at his left hand, ‘You that are accursed, depart from me into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels; ⁴² for I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, ⁴³ I was a stranger and you did not welcome me, naked and you did not give me clothing, sick and in prison and you did not visit me.’

⁴⁴ Then they also will answer, ‘Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not take care of you?’ ⁴⁵ Then he will answer them, ‘Truly I tell you, just as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me.’ ⁴⁶ And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.”⁴

Reflections on the readings

Tim Baker (The Vine Editor) shares some of his personal reflections:

2020 will almost certainly go down in the history books as ‘the year of Coronavirus’. Although there are still a few weeks left in the year and we don’t know what might happen, nor are we quite sure how much longer the virus will linger in our midst, this will always be the year when it became a global pandemic. Our great-grandchildren might one day study this year, and analyse how we responded to the earth-shattering events of Covid-19.

I, however, have always been an optimist. So, amongst the recognition that 2020 is the year of Coronavirus, I am hopeful it will also be a year that will be remembered for another reason – for the time that many of us woke up to see and recognise the racism inherent in our systems and structures.

2020 may also be remembered as the year of Black Lives Matter. But that is still up for debate, in fact – it is up to us. Because racism is as old as modern society, it has been going on for centuries and millennia. So our great-grandchildren will only remember 2020 if things actually change. If we change, and the systems and structures we are a part of change with us.

Since the tragic and violent death of George Floyd in America earlier in the year, there has been a renewed and re-energised commitment to the Black Lives Matter movement and to challenging the racism that exists across our societies, communities, institutions and relationships. The reaction to George Floyd’s death, and the protests, social media conversations, TV programmes and dialogues that have opened up have often been fuelled by strong emotions, and characterised by a desire amongst many not to ‘give ground’ or to ‘yield power’. Some of the reactions I have seen fit into the classic ‘5 stages of grief’.

- Anger – there has certainly been anger. And there needs to continue to be anger, whilst black people are dying in the streets, or systems are unjust and discriminate. How do those of us (like me) who have lots of white privilege respond to that anger? Are we trying to close it down and move on from it, or are we finding ourselves angry too?

- Denial – there has been even more of that. So much of the conversation here in the UK has been about denying our own racism and claiming that we are ‘not like the States’, or that we ‘have black friends so can’t be racist’. It is time we moved beyond denying the presence of racism in our society. How can each of us challenge that denial when we see it at action?
- Bargaining – how many of us have tried to bargain (perhaps with ourselves) about some of the racist prejudices or attitudes we have been taught and have internalised? How many have said, ‘I’m not racist but...’? Time to stop bargaining.
- Depression – there has been plenty of this too. The energy-sapping lethargy that follows on from trying to drive change and finding out that those in power don’t want to change. The frustrating, depressing realisation that our world is a long way from fair and that black people and people of colour still get a much worse deal than those of us with white privilege.
- Acceptance – this is a vital first step. To accept that society is racist, and that those of us who have been brought up with any kind of racial privilege are at least a little bit racist too. Society made us that way, because it suits the society made ‘by white people, for white people’. If we can accept that, and do away with the denial and the bargaining, perhaps we can change.

If we can accept the presence of racism in our midst, and wrestle with what that means for our working lives, our families, our relationships, our churches, our communities...then perhaps we can start to **do** something.

And that’s where I think we need a sixth stage in the journey that we are on, processing the grief that comes with acknowledging our racism. That sixth step is action.

And that is what today’s gospel reading is all about, isn’t it – action. Not, ‘what books did you read about the poor?’, or ‘which statistics did you look up about the number of people in prison or hospital?’, but what did you **do**?

Whichever you did for the least of these, you did for me.

I’ve never been particularly comfortable with the phrase ‘the least of these’, but we take Jesus’ point: wherever you are in the social structure, your life matters. Those who are most abused and overlooked – their lives matter the most. And for any of us who find ourselves in a privileged position, how we treat those with less privilege than us is the defining feature of our lives and our discipleship.

So what are we going to do? What is your next step on becoming actively ‘anti-racist’?

Do you need to do some reading and learn something about black history, or read something that might challenge you to grapple with your own racism?

Do you need to find people who are on this journey who you can have conversations with about tackling racism?

Are their friends or family members you need to ‘call out’ for their own attitudes or the things they say?

Are there movements or organisations you could support, by volunteering or donating, that are helping to tackling racism?

Wherever you are on your journey, today is the day to take the next step. To move into action – for it is by action that Jesus lived, and he calls us to do the same. Let us make 2020 the year we began to dismantle white supremacy.⁵

Prayers of intercession

During our prayers of intercession today, we will hear a few short reflections, and then pause. We invite you to bring your own prayers, thoughts and reflections to God during the times of quiet. If it's helpful, you might like to get a notebook and pen or pencil to write or draw your ideas and thoughts as your pray. Otherwise, you might like to close your eyes to avoid distractions.

Let us pray.

Christ our King, enthroned on the cross bearing insults and torments, by your pain and your story, may true peace reign.

[Pause]

Bless and guide your body, the Church, that we may exalt you and share in the inheritance of the saints in light.

[Pause]

Christ our King, you endured the scoffing of leaders and ridicule from bystanders.

Rescue us from the grip of darkness and cynical abuses of power. Strengthen all who strive for justice and peace.

[Pause]

Christ our King, still our hearts to know your presence and share your peace. Bring us to declare that you are our righteousness.

[Pause]

Christ our King, in lonely agony you bore the pains of the world. Be with all who are desolate and afflicted, whose world is shaken. Be a present help, O Lord, in times of trouble and give courage and strength to all who live in fear.

[Pause]

We bring these, and all our prayers, in Jesus' name.

Amen.⁶

⁵ Reflection written by Tim Baker

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⁶ Taken from Intercessions for Year C by Ian Black

Hymn: 611 STF – Brother, sister let me serve you

- 1 Brother, sister, let me serve you,
let me be as Christ to you;
pray that I may have the grace
to let you be my servant too.

- 2 We are pilgrims on a journey,
and companions on the road;
we are here to help each other
walk the mile and bear the load.

- 3 I will hold the Christ-light for you
in the night-time of your fear;
I will hold my hand out to you,
speak the peace you long to hear.

- 4 I will weep when you are weeping;
when you laugh I'll laugh with you;
I will share your joy and sorrow
till we've seen this journey through.

- 5 When we sing to God in heaven
we shall find such harmony,
born of all we've known together
of Christ's love and agony.

- 6 Brother, sister, let me serve you,
let me be as Christ to you;
pray that I may have the grace
to let you be my servant too.

Richard A. M. Gillard (b. 1953) Reproduced from Singing the Faith Electronic Words Edition, number 611
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Blessing

We rise from this moment, inspired by your message of inclusivity Lord God.
We go to welcome all people, to make space for all things,
We go to do all that we can, in the name of love.

Amen.⁷

⁷ Additional prayers by Tim Baker