



Dore Methodist Church

Weekly Update

15th January 2021



Message from Gail.

January is a time within the Methodist tradition when our attention is drawn towards our annual covenant service. It is something which is at the heart of our heritage and focuses on devotion, discipleship, and our dedication in working for social justice. It is a time when we can celebrate God's gracious offer first made to Israel, and now extended to all people, that "I will be their God and they shall be my people". These words from Jeremiah reminds us of the loving relationship which God extends to us, and our covenant with him is the means of grace by which we accept that relationship and seek to

sustain it.

Each New Year brings new possibilities alongside its challenges, and perhaps more than ever before, this year has started with a number of big challenges. But our covenant with God is a means of helping us to grow in our relationship. Jesus' death on the cross seals the new covenant which Jeremiah foretold, and through the cross we have the right to be called sons and daughters. However, with that right also come the responsibility to live as sons and daughters, to know God's Grace and to share in the work of the Kingdom.

In my video message last week, I gave an introduction to the central prayer at the heart of this service, and if you have access to a computer, please join me for this weeks "zoom" covenant service; (details are below) where we will come together to worship, renew our covenant prayer and celebrate with a love feast. (Please have ready a glass of fruit juice or water and a small piece of bread for this)

If you are unable to join us online, I invite you to reflect first on this reading set for the service - Jeremiah Ch. 31:31-34. Then read the following words and pray the covenant prayer in your own home. Remember as you say that prayer, you are joined by God's hand with all the company of heaven and with our fellowship here at Dore.

Our covenant with God: Sisters and brothers in Christ, by the help of the Holy Spirit, let us accept God's purpose for us, and the call to love and serve God in all our life and work. Christ has many services to be done: some are easy, others are difficult. Yet the power to do all these things is given to us in Christ, who strengthens us. Therefore, let us give ourselves to God, trusting in his promises and relying on his grace.

In faith we renew our Covenant: I am no longer my own but yours. Put me to what you will, rank me with whom you will; put me to doing, put me to suffering; let me be employed for you or laid aside for you, exalted for you or brought low for you; let me be full, let me be empty, let me have all things, let me have nothing: I freely and wholeheartedly yield all things to your pleasure and

disposal. And now, glorious and blessed God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, you are mine and I am yours. So be it, and the covenant now made on earth, let it be ratified in heaven. Amen.

As we have entered this covenant not for ourselves alone, but as Gods servant and witnesses, let us pray for the Church and the world:

Loving God, hear our prayer for your Church throughout the world; make us one, that the world may believe. Inspire and lead those who govern and hold authority in the nations of the world; establish justice and peace. Have compassion on those who are ill or struggling with the difficult situation of this pandemic; grant them the peace of your presence, the healing of your touch and the assurance of your constant love. Amen.

Gail.

Gail Hunt is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.

Topic: Dore Morning Worship

Time: **Jan 17, 2021 11:00 AM** London

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81188645948?pwd=b0RwR0VLdXlDQnd3THJ5TVNSbHluQT09>

Meeting ID: 811 8864 5948

Passcode: 474601

Dial by your location 0203 481 5237 (United Kingdom)

Pause for thought and prayer



Day after day we are hearing and seeing the incredible work of our exhausted, overstretched frontline workers who are working selflessly under severe stress through this pandemic. In one of his famous prayers St Ignatius of Loyola, the 16th century founder of the Jesuits, asked God to teach him to: “ *Give and not to count the cost*”. St Ignatius’s words do not suggest that we shouldn’t take seriously the major personal consequences of what we do for the sake of others. However they do ask for courage to pay the price when we see a greater need. This week we pray for those on the front line of this pandemic:

Loving God, we lift to you:

- All those working in the medical and caring profession, give them comfort and strength to carry on each day.

- The first responders, police, fire-fighters, and paramedics, keep them safe so they can continue to serve and protect our cities.
- The essential workers who didn't expect to be on the front lines, teachers, grocery workers, truck drivers, those who produce our essential goods, and all others serving our communities, encourage and strengthen them too we pray.

Lord there are many heroes in this battle, although none greater than you. For we have no power to face this virus and its impacts on our own, so help us fix our eyes on you for you are with us every step of the way. **Amen.**

Worship for Sunday 17th January.

If you are unable to access our “zoom” service at 11-00 a.m. on Sunday, we attach the weekly service prepared for us by “Twelvebaskets”. Next week’s service from “Twelvebaskets” will also focus on the Covenant Service.

Joan Thorpe.

As announced last week Joan sadly died on Christmas Day. Her funeral service will be held at Hutcliffe Wood on Saturday 16th January at 9-30 a.m. Attendance will be restricted in accordance with current guidelines.

Church Magazine.

This is the last call for any contributions for our January/February magazine. Please send them to John Bailey – details below.

WEEKLY UPDATE – *Please send contributions to the Baileys by Tuesday evening.*
(Tel 2351085 or email john.bailey23a@btinternet.com)

Sunday 17th January - The Vine at Home - Second Sunday of Ordinary Time.

Call to worship.

You have called us here, O God,
 And we have come, to worship, to pray, to praise and to reflect.
 You have called us here, O God,
 And you will call us on, into the actions and activities of this week.
 Give us your grace, your wisdom, and your strength, to know the tasks that are ours to do, today and in the coming days. **Amen.**¹

¹ Call to Worship written by Tim Baker

Hymn: 82 STF – O Lord, my God, when I in awesome wonder

- 1 O Lord, my God, when I in awesome wonder
consider all the works thy hand hath made,
I see the stars, I hear the mighty thunder,
thy power throughout the universe displayed:
*Then sings my soul, my Saviour God, to thee:
how great thou art, how great thou art!*
*Then sings my soul, my Saviour God, to thee:
how great thou art, how great thou art!*
- 2 When through the woods and forest glades I wander
and hear the birds sing sweetly in the trees;
when I look down from lofty mountain grandeur,
and hear the brook, and feel the gentle breeze:
- 3 And when I think that God, his Son not sparing,
sent him to die, I scarce can take it in
that on the cross, my burden gladly bearing,
he bled and died to take away my sin:
- 4 When Christ shall come with shout of acclamation
and take me home -- what joy shall fill my heart;
then shall I bow in humble adoration,
and there proclaim: my God, how great thou art:

Stuart K. Hine (1899-1989) vv. 1, 2, 4 based on O store Gud1885 by Carl Gustaf Boberg (1859-1940)
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Opening Prayers

As we prepare for worship, O Lord, we hold the stillness.

Let us be still, and be here.

Let us be quiet, and be present.

Let go of the past.

Forget about the future.

And just be here. Just for a minute or two.

Right now...

[Hold a moment of silence – for at least a minute]

In the stillness, in the silence, in the moments of self-doubt and self-pity, we know you close to us – by some mystery.

Come close, forgiving and accepting God, today – and accept us by your grace.

In Jesus' name we pray. **Amen.**²

² Additional prayers by Tim Baker

We say together the Lord's Prayer

Readings: 1 Samuel 3:1-10 - Samuel's Calling and Prophetic Activity

3 Now the boy Samuel was ministering to the Lord under Eli. The word of the Lord was rare in those days; visions were not widespread.

2 At that time Eli, whose eyesight had begun to grow dim so that he could not see, was lying down in his room; **3** the lamp of God had not yet gone out, and Samuel was lying down in the temple of the Lord, where the ark of God was. **4** Then the Lord called, "Samuel! Samuel!"^[a] and he said, "Here I am!" **5** and ran to Eli, and said, "Here I am, for you called me." But he said, "I did not call; lie down again." So he went and lay down. **6** The Lord called again, "Samuel!" Samuel got up and went to Eli, and said, "Here I am, for you called me." But he said, "I did not call, my son; lie down again." **7** Now Samuel did not yet know the Lord, and the word of the Lord had not yet been revealed to him. **8** The Lord called Samuel again, a third time. And he got up and went to Eli, and said, "Here I am, for you called me." Then Eli perceived that the Lord was calling the boy. **9** Therefore Eli said to Samuel, "Go, lie down; and if he calls you, you shall say, 'Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening.'" So Samuel went and lay down in his place.

10 Now the Lord came and stood there, calling as before, "Samuel! Samuel!" And Samuel said, "Speak, for your servant is listening."³

John 1:43-51 - Jesus Calls Philip and Nathanael

43 The next day Jesus decided to go to Galilee. He found Philip and said to him, "Follow me." **44** Now Philip was from Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter. **45** Philip found Nathanael and said to him, "We have found him about whom Moses in the law and also the prophets wrote, Jesus son of Joseph from Nazareth." **46** Nathanael said to him, "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" Philip said to him, "Come and see." **47** When Jesus saw Nathanael coming toward him, he said of him, "Here is truly an Israelite in whom there is no deceit!" **48** Nathanael asked him, "Where did you get to know me?" Jesus answered, "I saw you under the fig tree before Philip called you." **49** Nathanael replied, "Rabbi, you are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!" **50** Jesus answered, "Do you believe because I told you that I saw you under the fig tree? You will see greater things than these." **51** And he said to him, "Very truly, I tell you,^[a] you will see heaven opened and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man."⁴

Reflections on the readings

'How do you know me?'

Nathaniel's question of Jesus is incredulous. He's put-out, taken off-guard, disarmed. How do you know me? What do you know about me? What do you want with me?

Nathaniel's defence mechanisms kick-in, the same way mine do when I realise the person I've just opened the front door to is trying to sell me something, or when I discover the Facebook advert I was about to click on was specifically designed to make me do just that... We don't like it when

^{3,4} 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

people invade our personal space, or appear to know something about us that we don't think they should.

Most of us like to just 'mind our own business, thank you very much'.

But that's not really how our relationship with God works, is it? Our human relationships are not great comparisons for what it is like to come to know God more, to be immersed in the way of the divine. Often people have used marriage as a kind of example – but we all know that neither of the parties in a marriage is perfect, so it can't be a fair reflection of our relationship with God. Sometimes we hear about the 'love of a Father' or the 'all-Parent'. This perhaps helps some of us, but God is so much more loving, so much more generous than our earthly parents could ever be, and knows us more deeply.

God knows so much of us, all of us, 'every hair on our head' as is often quoted. But what do we know of the divine? That, I believe, is why God calls us. God is relationship, God is invitation. God desires us to be closer to the divine spirit that flows through all things.

I want to just touch on three ways that God calls us:

1) All callings include that sense of deepening relationship with the divine. God's calling to us may be specific, but it is also an invitation to be more in tune with the Spirit of God, to be more in line with the love that God has for the whole of creation.

God's call echoes that of Aslan in the final chapter of C. S. Lewis' Narnia series: 'come further up and come further in'. As the characters from the series enter heaven – they are invited further and further into the love of God. So are we.

2) Many people experience a sense of calling to a specific task or vocation: this happens in myriad different ways, and there is no blueprint for what a calling has to look like. Some people feel the clear sense of call to pursue ordained ministry, others to follow a particular career path or to lay down a job in order to follow a specific direction. We see something of this kind of call in our Old Testament reading today: God knows Samuel by name, calls him by name, and here – even as a young boy – begins his vocation as one of the leading prophets of the Old Testament.

Have you ever had an experience like this? Might God be calling you to something specific right now? To what extent are you listening for the prompts (like Samuel), or are you assuming that 'this would never happen to you' (like Eli appears to assume for the first few verses of today's reading). Alternatively, perhaps you are actively running away, like Jonah?

3) Thirdly, and perhaps most importantly of all, God calls us to be 'fully ourselves'. This principal is at the heart of much of the writing and reflection done by Richard Rohr – who leads the Centre for Action and Contemplation in the USA. His work has focused on inviting us all to recognise the Christ within us, and to accept ourselves for who we are. Rohr warns us against the self-destructive, self-critical voices of human nature (they are not 'of God') and invites us to see ourselves as 'fearfully and wonderfully made' as the Psalmist puts it.

Today – perhaps you are just being called to be you.

To be authentically, totally, and divinely you. That doesn't mean you have to be like anyone else, it just means you have to listen out for the Christ within you.

This is what Nathaniel experiences in the story from the Gospels – Jesus knows him. Jesus knows him even before they met. The Christ-energy within Nathaniel calls out to the Christ-energy that is Jesus, and there is a connection. Nathaniel is offended at first, but within seconds is declaring "Rabbi, you are the Son of God; you are the king of Israel."

The God who made the mountains and the stars is calling you.

Desiring you.

Hoping for relationship with you.

And has a plan for you – a plan designed just for you.

Are you going to take the next step today towards seeing that plan fulfilled? Are you going to listen for the still small voice, calling your name?

It takes great awareness and an openness to the ways of the Spirit to sense God's promptings on our lives, but trust me – they are there. Can we still the mindless chatter of our everyday lives, and really listen?

There, listen...the divine is calling your name.... **Amen.**⁵

Prayers of intercession

[You may wish to light a candle and place a small mirror beside it, so that it reflects the candle flame.]

Creator God, we bring ourselves into your holy presence and give you our full attention. We praise you for your greatness, your awesome power, your majesty and beauty that we see mirrored in the world around us. We treasure each opportunity to discover more of you in times of prayer. Jesus, Son of God, you greet us as individuals who are intimately known by you. For you know our name, our personality, our potential for good and for evil. We long to reflect your goodness in our lives. We listen for your word of forgiveness, comfort and challenge.

Holy Spirit of God, you urge us to share our faith with others, through acts of kindness, words of truth and commitment to your call. Please show us where there is particular need in our local community, and help us to respond with love and generosity, sensitivity and wisdom, courage and perseverance.

Loving God, the world is crying out for justice, renewal and peace. We call to mind those parts of the world that are in pain and offer them into your loving care. We long that you will show us how to reflect your message of truth, hope and love in all creation.

In the name of Christ, we pray. **Amen.**⁶

Hymn: 728 STF – O God, you search me and you know me

1 O God, you search me and you know me.
All my thoughts lie open to your gaze.
When I walk or lie down you are before me:
ever the maker and keeper of my days.

2 You know my resting and my rising.
You discern my purpose from afar,
and with love everlasting you besiege me:
in every moment of life or death, you are.

⁵ Reflection written by Tim Baker

⁶ Prayers of intercession written by Alison Judd. ⁷ Additional prayers by Tim Baker.

- 3 Before a word is on my tongue, Lord,
you have known its meaning through and through.
You are with me beyond my understanding:
God of my present, my past and future, too.
- 4 Although your Spirit is upon me,
still I search for shelter from your light.
There is nowhere on earth I can escape you:
even the darkness is radiant in your sight.
- 5 For you created me and shaped me,
gave me life within my mother's womb.
For the wonder of who I am, I praise you:
safe in your hands, all creation is made new.

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Blessing

You have called us here, O God,
And now you call us out, you call us on, you call us forwards.
As we go from here, O God,
We know your Spirit goes before us.
Guide us, by that Spirit, to know your voice when you call, to follow in your way, and to bring your Kingdom closer, today. **Amen.**⁷