



Circuit Contact

Welcome to our Circuit Worship for
15th May 2022
prepared by Rev Eleanor

Worship in the following locations:

Youtube Worship on the Trinity Church, Leek Channel from 10.30am

Endon Methodist Church - at 10am with Rev Eleanor Smith

Cheadle & Tean - at Cheadle Methodist Church - at 10.30am with Rev Simon Sutcliffe

Trinity Church, Leek - at 10.30am with Dr Lynne Bradbury and CTLD at St. Edward's -
at 4pm

Rudyard Methodist Church - at 11am with Rev Colin Cooper

Onecote Methodist Church - at 11am with Local Arrangement

St. Andrew's, Cheddleton - at 10.30am with Rev Richard Pope

Wetley Rocks Methodist Church - at 2.30pm with Mr Roger Cutts

Waterhouses Methodist Church - at 6.30pm with Local Arrangement

Jubilee Events

Please forward any events you would like promoted to the Circuit Office by **Monday 23rd May**

They will appear in our Jubilee Circuit Contact in the run up to the 'big day'



Stage 9 of the **Two Saints Way**

Thursday 19th May at 9.30am

Walking from Stoke Minster to Tittensor,

6.8 miles along the canal to Trentham & around the estate (there are a
couple of hills)

Parking @ St Luke's church (Bracken Close, Tittesworth, S-o-T, ST12 9JD).

All welcome

Please contact Sylvia Harrison for more details or if you wish to join the
walk

sylviaharrison524@gmail.com



**Welcome to worship
at the start of Christian Aid Week**

Prayers come from the resources provided by Christian Aid



Call to worship

Let us come to the river
and be like trees planted by streams of water,
putting our roots down deep into God's word,
bearing good fruit that will last
not withering from fatigue,
stretching out to receive
and be a source of healing.
Amen.

Hymn STF 116 [StF 116 Sing for God's Glory - Bing video](#)

Prayer

Creator, Son and Spirit,
we seek your presence in our time of worship.

WE ARE HUNGRY FOR YOU

Meet us at our point of deepest need.
Connect us with the needs of others.
Equip us to join in your creative work.
Transform us more into your likeness.

WE ARE HUNGRY FOR YOUR RIGHTEOUSNESS

We gather with Jessica and her community in Zimbabwe this Christian Aid Week.
May her story make us hungry for justice and even more impatient for change.

WE ARE HUNGRY FOR YOUR JUSTICE

We gather with all of creation;
with the mountains and the hills.
We shall burst into song, with the trees of the field we will clap our hands.

WE ARE HUNGRY TO PRAISE YOU. AMEN.

Good God of creation, we sing praise to you.
But even as we raise our voices
we know we have faltered and failed.
Where we have failed to bear good fruit
and share your abundance for the earth

GOD HAVE MERCY

When our actions and intentions
have been as chaff for the winds of heaven

GOD HAVE MERCY

Forgive us. Restore us. Inspire us now
to delight in your purposes,
to embrace your possibilities,
to inhabit your promises,
to flourish as fruit for the world you so love

and bring healing for all the nations.

AMEN.

Psalm 148

[Psalm 148 NIV - Praise the LORD. Praise the LORD from - Bible Gateway](#)

Reflection

We have all seen the news of the devastating war in Ukraine. We've heard heart-breaking stories of people fleeing violence, not knowing when they'll see their loved ones again. In Zimbabwe, another crisis – the climate crisis – is causing aching hunger for families like Jessica's. She lives in Zimbabwe and says '*my children crave a decent meal but I can't provide it. It pains me to send them to bed hungry. One year we had no rain, the scorching sun burnt my crops.*' Jessica and her family are at the mercy of climate change and hunger. Even though it's 7,000 miles away, the war in Ukraine will drive up food prices in Zimbabwe and around the globe. Ukraine and Russia produce large amounts of the world's fertiliser and food, like wheat and cooking oil. Without them, vulnerable families will be pushed even deeper into hunger. But we must have, we can have hope. Every prayer, every gift, every action brings hope to people facing disaster, from conflict to climate chaos. Join us this Christian Aid Week as we celebrate and share hope with our sisters and brothers facing crisis around the world, from Ukraine to Zimbabwe.

We have heard the story of Jessica – she and her family are hungry because the crops are not growing. In part due to effect of climate change. One cause of climate change is the increase of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere. The Methodist Conference in 2021 decided that the Methodist Church should adopt a policy of net zero carbon emissions by 2030.

Why is tackling climate change important? Firstly because of our desire for justice. As a generalisation it is the richer nations that cause climate change because of the emissions of CO2 from industry and lifestyle, but it is the people of the poorer countries that feel the effects. Martin Luther King said - 'I cannot sit idly by when injustice is happening elsewhere'.

Secondly, it is God's world; God is concerned for all of creation and has appointed humans to care for the planet. Remember that we came last in the order of creation after the plants and creatures. Thirdly, compassion. As Christians we need to cultivate a revolution of compassion, not only for those in our neighbourhood, but those across the world.

How do we implement the decision of Conference? How do we as individuals, and as churches and circuits can make changes that will have an impact on climate change. The circuit will need to have conversations, but a starting point should be to find out what we need to do to become eco churches.

Hymn STF 727

[God in His love for us lent us this planet \(Pratt Green\) - Gareth Moore - Bing video](#)

Reading

[Matthew 3:1-10 NIV - John the Baptist Prepares the Way - In - Bible Gateway](#)

Reflection

The Gospel reading from Matthew chapter 3 has been chosen by the Christian Aid worship group because of the metaphors of the axe and fruit. John the Baptist had been baptising people who followed him; they needed to confess their sins, repent of the things they had done, before baptism. Watching them were the religious leaders of the day – John called to them and challenged them also to repent, and then they might have the possibility of producing good fruit. John goes on to say: *The axe is already at the root of the trees, and every tree that does not produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire.* Two images of good fruit and an axe.

The axe John wields conveys the urgent action that is needed for a change of lifestyle. And as such, it serves as a powerful symbol for the times we are living through and the climate crisis. The axe has at least three symbolic meanings:

Firstly, it speaks of what has been cut down that has led to the droughts and hunger in Zimbabwe. The axe that has felled the trees has led to land becoming desert. In rainforests we know of how deforestation has had major consequences for the environment, the creatures that live there, and the lifestyle of the ancient tribes of the Amazon.

Some of the axing of trees has been to clear huge areas for the planting of palm trees to produce palm oil used in food production and the manufacture of cosmetics, soaps and cleaning products.

Secondly it speaks of what needs to be cut down in terms of systemic structures that cause the suffering and anguish of hunger in the world. The axe is used to break the chains of injustice.

And it speaks specifically to John the Baptist's challenge in the reading – the need to take an inventory of our own society, what needs to be cut down from our expectations of how everyone should live? An axe is needed to allow for a return to nature, for the process of rewilding to take hold. It is needed to chop away everything that stops us from having fullness of life.

This cutting down is removing all the things that have got in the way of how we need to live as co-creators with God. Metaphorically, John puts the axe in our hands, it's lying there at the foot of the tree. What will we do with it? Ignore it or use it?

Finally, we reflect on the fruit as a source of hope. The axe is not required if the tree is bearing fruit - the fruit of the spirit of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. It is not fear but faith that inspires our choices to create a fairer world and protect creation. We end with the vision of a fruitful future of a stable economy, of resources available to all, where everyone's lives are not worse but better than they are today.

Hymn STF 693 [Beauty for Brokenness - YouTube](#)

Readings [Revelation 21:1-8 NIV - A New Heaven and a New Earth - Then I - Bible Gateway](#)
[Revelation 22:1-5 NIV - Eden Restored - Then the angel showed - Bible Gateway](#)

Reflection

John writes of his vision in the book of Revelation. It is a revelation that brings not only hope for the future, but also a vision of how God wants the world to be. John's vision challenges us today to not settle into this contemporary global empire but to seek to understand a 'new heaven and new earth.' God comes to dwell with us in a new earth, to live in the home that earth was intended to be. The earth as God's home should give us inspiration to participate in that work of re-creation now. A work that challenges the loss and damage caused by climate injustice. In seeing the new heaven and new earth in Revelation chapter 21, John draws our attention to God wiping away every tear from the eyes of those who have suffered.

The anticipation of such comfort and tender compassion can serve as a catalyst to us to ensure the tears of frustration and desperation of those hungry to provide can be wiped away. To stand with people like Jessica who are living at the sharp end of the climate crisis.

In the Book of Revelation, chapter 22 we read *'The angel showed me the river of the water of life, as clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God'*. The river of the water of life is a particularly poignant and evocative image as we reflect on the devastation of drought in Zimbabwe this Christian Aid Week.

As we anticipate the refreshing and life-giving flow of water, may the crystal waters spur us to action, to work for the day when no one hungers or thirsts anymore.

Prayers

Creator God, cultivator of our faith,
thank you for the privilege of living in this global garden planted to bear your fruit,
to delight our tongues, to fill our stomachs, to energise our bodies.
You have given us life in all its fullness.
You have given us life, yet millions still hunger.

In our hunger for peace, we pray for the people of Ukraine and their leaders.
But may our concern for them not stifle our concern for Zimbabwe, Afghanistan, Syria.

GOD WILL WIPE AWAY EVERY TEAR FROM THEIR EYES

In our hunger for justice, we pray for those we have heard about in the news and know in our community who suffer.

We pray for those who turn to the foodbanks to feed their families.
But may our concern for them not stifle our concern for Jessica and her family in Zimbabwe
GOD WILL WIPE AWAY EVERY TEAR FROM THEIR EYES

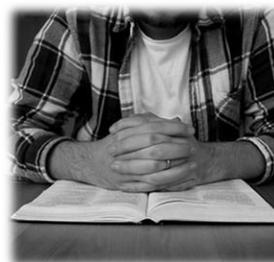
In our hunger for justice we pray for the leaders in positions of power and authority:
those in government at the start of a new year in local government and national government.
But may our prayers for them not stifle our concern for your little ones,
children who go to bed hungry, whose parents struggle to provide for them
in times of desperate drought.
GOD WILL WIPE AWAY EVERY TEAR FROM THEIR EYES

And in our hunger, we pray that you will fill us with your hope, your passion and your life,
that we may go into the coming week to give, act and pray.
So, all who hunger to provide may be filled to overflowing.
In the name of Christ, farmer, gardener and cultivator,
AMEN.

Lord's Prayer **We pray the prayer first spoken by Jesus**

Lord's Prayer

Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name.
Thy Kingdom come,
thy will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory. for ever and ever. Amen



Hymn STF 82

[O Lord my God; How great thou art StF 82 \(with lyrics for congregations\) - YouTube](#)

Blessing

In the name of God who plants the seed of justice:
Be hungry for justice.
In the name of Christ who hangs on the tree of love:
Be fruitful.
And in the name of the Spirit who inspires God's will in our hearts and our lives:
Be celebrated.
You are Christ's people, here and throughout the world now and forever.
Amen.