



Circuit Contact

Welcome to our Circuit Worship for
31st July 2022
prepared by Rev Richard

Worship in the following locations:

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

Endon Methodist Church - at 10am with Rev Julie Hassall

Cheadle & Tean - at Tean Methodist Church - at 10.30am with Mrs Hayley Edmondson

Wetley Rocks Methodist Church - at 10.30am with Mr Howard Monks

Trinity Church, Leek - at 10.30am with Rev Richard Pope

Ipstones Methodist Church - at 10.30am with Mrs Eva Massey

Rudyard Methodist Church - at 11am with Deacon Peter Ogle

Waterhouses Methodist Church- at 6.30pm with Mrs Eva Massey



Dear Staffordshire Moorlands Methodist Circuit

On behalf of our Christian Council we would like to thank you for your donations of a wooden cross from Thorncliffe Methodist Church and 2 piano stools from Meerbrook Methodist Church. They will be used a lot at St Edward's Academy, Cheddleton, please see the pictures of them.

Thank you again from Christian Council
St Edward's Academy
Cheddleton

Methodist Homes Services

If you have any donations from your Methodist Homes Services

Please kindly contact

Carol Parker
01782 360009





MWiB Annual Coffee Morning

Saturday 24th September
At Trinity, Leek
9.30am - noon

 Methodist Women
in Britain
for women, for justice, for Christ

Please note there will be no Circuit Contact during August

There will also be no usual YouTube worship during August however there will be a Prayer & Song available each Sunday on our Trinity Church, Leek channel

Both will resume in September with a new shorter YouTube worship

Join us to give thanks for 'the circle
of life down on the farm'

At Eaves Ford Farm

Whiston, ST10 1JF

With the kind support of the Fallows Family

On Friday September 2nd

A 7pm service will be followed by a
walk around the farm and then a Pie & Pea supper

For further details or to let us know you will be attending please
Call 01538 266272 or Circuit Office 01538
723666/admin@staffmoorlandsmethodists.org.uk



When the complexities of life cause confusion and bewilderment,
we will strive for God.

When we are duped into believing success is measured by possessions,
we will strive for God.

When it seems as though no one cares anymore,
we will strive for God.

When politicians put profit before justice,
we will strive for God.

When wisdom is ignored and selfishness is promoted,
**we will strive for God,
and offer God our worship.**

HYMN: Praise My Soul

[Praise My Soul - Graham Kendrick with Martin Smith - Lyric Video - YouTube](#)

PRAYER:

Let us pray:

Lord,
we strive to find you,
yet you have come to us;
we find you by our side – in good and testing times;
gently encouraging us and enabling us
to play our part for your kingdom.

Lord,
we strive to find you,
even though you are in the obvious places –
among the poor, the outcast, the rejected,
offering your healing words,
and welcoming embrace.

Lord,
we strive to find you,
for you are busy in our world -
fending off injustice and establishing peace;
whispering to your people,
to join in with you.

Lord, on the surface we strive to find you but, in reality, we try to keep you at arms-length; your gospel challenges us on the things that eternally matter, and we fear that you expect us to change. So, we are silent in the face of oppression, we turn a blind eye to injustices and overlook those who are hungry, homeless or victims of violence. We hope your kingdom comes but expect others to pick up the challenge of your kingdom, for we lack the confidence in your gospel, and feel we have nothing to offer. Lord – forgive us.

Silence is kept.

We do not need to strive, for God is with us.

In God's presence, we start again – forgiven, transformed, made whole.

Thanks be to God.

Amen.

We pray the affirming words of Jesus:

**Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your Name,
your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.
Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours,
now and for ever. Amen.**

READING: Ecclesiastes 1: 2, 12 – 14; 2: 18 - 23

[Ecclesiastes 1: 2, 12 – 14; 2: 18 - 23 NIV - "Meaningless! Meaningless!" says - Bible Gateway](#)

Psalm 107: 1- 9, 43

Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good;

his love endures forever.

Let the redeemed of the LORD tell their story—

**those he redeemed from the hand of the foe,
those he gathered from the lands,
from east and west, from north and south.**

Some wandered in desert wastelands,
finding no way to a city where they could settle.

They were hungry and thirsty,
and their lives ebbed away.

**Then they cried out to the LORD in their trouble,
and he delivered them from their distress.**

**He led them by a straight way
to a city where they could settle.**

Let them give thanks to the LORD for his unfailing love
and his wonderful deeds for mankind,

for he satisfies the thirsty
and fills the hungry with good things.

**Let the one who is wise heed these things
and ponder the loving deeds of the LORD.**

HYMN: O Lord, Our Lord

[StF 112 O Lord our Lord - YouTube](#)

READING: Luke 12: 13 – 21

[Luke 12: 13 – 21 NIV - The Parable of the Rich Fool - Someone - Bible Gateway](#)

Chant: He Became Poor

[StF 344 He became poor - YouTube](#)

Reflection

I remember some years ago talking to a relative who was complaining because she thought she wasn't paid enough for the job she did. I asked her if she would mind telling us how much she earned which she did. At this point she was not working full-time, but what she earned was still higher than the national average at the time. She had no idea that that was the case.

The wealthy who seem to rule over us can seem quite out of touch with the reality of living to our budgets. It is

currently documented about people having to choose food rather than heating, and parents going without so that children are fed. When a Prime Minister bemoans the wage because they can't afford a nanny, which is a debate most of us can't even afford to begin, I wonder how we are all in this together? Whatever else is going on behind these discussions, money has its role.

We live with the 'X Factor' generation who sees reality TV as a route to fame and wealth. We have YouTubers who are millionaires for basically giving their opinion or playing digital games. Yet inflation has meant that in real terms peoples pay packets have not seen an increase but the prices in the shops keep rising significantly; hardly a wonder that more and more people are dissatisfied. But there's no point in protesting as the government want to clamp down on that too.

So by the time we all cry out "It's not fair" – who is going to listen?

Jesus says a lot about money. He was so angry about the abuse of money in the temple he caused chaos. Money does mean that people don't have to worry about the future, so when people are living from one pay day to the next, it causes anxiety. But if you think you have been cheated, you do look for a fair arbiter, someone who may wish to take up our cause, and validate our cry of "it's not fair".

Jesus story about the rich man filling his barns, can seem on the surface to be both wise and practical – why not store up as much as we can so we can take life easy – but as the story points out, none of us knows when this life will end, and as is often said, you cannot take it with you – Jesus' challenge is to face up to the "unfairness" we see in society, and our part in the kingdom of God. When profits are put before compassion, or greed before need, why store up everything in this earth when it could all end today? Or to put it another way, isn't Jesus asking his hearers to consider what is really important in life? It was interesting during the recent lockdowns how many people discovered things to be more important than the daily rat-race, the acquisition of more and more, and discovered people mattered – but how quickly we have slipped back into some of the old ways of being.

People who entertain us can be paid megabucks, I've often wondered how some of these entertainers who proclaim faith justify some of the great wealth they have. I don't know how these people do actually use their money. But I wonder if behind Jesus' story, is the idea that the things we have whether that be some money, or great wealth, or huge barns full of crops, it's what we do with it that makes a difference. I suspect Jesus' story is to make this unknown man from the crowd consider his motives. I am not sure I find much Gospel value in the story of the "flashy" bishop who had a million dollars' worth of jewellery stolen while he was giving a live-stream sermon.

It is quite difficult to make blanket rules about money. If you earn £100 and give a tenth away, you are left with £90. If you earn £200, and give a tenth away, you were left with £180. When people are struggling to make ends meet, and even in our locality we have seen an increasing use of food banks, this story is a real challenge to the "as long as I am alright" culture.

If you have been following the plastic free agenda, you will be aware of all the problems caused by the amount of stuff we have and the problems of packaging and single-use plastic. The photos of the plastic island in the pacific, or the photographs of wild animals whose lives are threatened because they have become trapped in some packaging or other, or anecdotal stories of traveling through deserts and seeing sporadic trees in the middle of nowhere with plastic bags caught in the branches all reveal something about our attitude to the world, and our attitude to each other. Elise Boulding said, "The consumption society has made us feel that happiness lies in having things, that has failed to teach as the happiness of not having things." There are many stories of lottery winners who have not found happiness, and perhaps behind this story are these issues. Will this unnamed man be happy if he gets what he believes is his fair share? Or is it his unfair share? Or in reality, will there just be something else for him to complain about?

The author of Ecclesiastes does not seem to have found happiness – even though traditionally King Solomon is attributed as the author, that has been highly questioned - but there is some consensus that the thinking within its content comes from royal palaces. A place of wealth and power. It is also unclear as to which period the book comes from. But the cries of the author, resonate so often with us. There is nothing new under the sun, and it can all seem useless. I wonder what the author is pursuing. Some think the pursuit of happiness is futile, and true happiness is found as a by-product of living.

When life becomes so difficult for someone, there is no time to pursue anything – and all our time, energy and effort is put into getting through another day. I hear the street preacher shouting at people “where will you spend eternity” - but for some they already live in hell on this earth. Yet Jesus’ example is to come alongside all sorts of people with compassion and Jesus affirms them as being part of God’s people. It strikes me that perhaps we are not asking the right question.

Interestingly Jesus does not tell this unnamed man the answer he wants to hear, but maybe tells the story he needs to hear. When our attitudes reveal our greed, our discrimination, our hatred, our false piety – maybe it’s as if we are filling barns in this life with no consequence for the kingdom of God. But when we help to reveal the light to someone stumbling in the darkness, when someone is shown the love of God in practical ways and with the words we say, when hope is reborn, when someone no longer spends a sleepless night worrying about their own inadequacies, when someone nobody else would give the time of day to is shown how much God loves them, then the kingdom of God has come close. The riches God’s kingdom offers and values seem to be so far removed from the riches we value in this life.

It seems to me that Jesus is re-orienting the whole of our lives to consider God, and God’s kingdom, in our everyday; in the petty squabbles that dominate, in the prejudices that cause so much division, in the injustices that feed oppression and dissatisfaction, and asks of us how are we making God’s kingdom known.

Amen

HYMN: In The Darkness Of The Still Night
[In the darkness of the still night - YouTube](#)

Prayers:

Let us hold in confidence before God

- those who struggle to make ends meet;
- those embittered by experiences in this life;
- those who struggle to trust another;
- those who are recovering from abuse;
- those who cry out for justice;
- those who long for peace;
- those who have experienced violence;
- those whose life lacks joy;
- those who are waiting treatment on hospital waiting lists;
- those who face serious illness;
- those who live in the shadow of death;
- those who live with bereavement;
- those who have nowhere and no one to turn to;
- those whose hearts are broken;
- those who have lost their sense of self;
- those who long for light;

God – may your kingdom break into our situations,
And transform our living,
until your kingdom comes.

Amen.

HYMN: Show Me How To Stand For Justice
[Show me how to stand for justice | Lyrics - YouTube](#)

Go and live as kingdom people,
-so that love will guide you in every encounter,
-the Spirit fill your every word and action,
-and God’s presence is made known among us.

Amen.