



June 13th 2021

Welcome & Call to Worship

Welcome to our Church Anniversary service. As we gather to celebrate God's goodness and faithfulness so we here the words of the Psalmist: *"It is good to praise the Lord and make music to your name, O Most High, proclaiming your love in the morning and your faithfulness at night, to the music of the ten-stringed lyre and the melody of the harp.*

For you make me glad by your deeds, Lord; I sing for joy at what your hands have done. How great are your works, Lord, how profound your thoughts!" (Psalm 92: 1 – 5)

We praise God together in music and song as we sing two songs: *My lips shall praise him* and *Goodness of God*.

Songs

*My lips shall praise you,
My great Redeemer;
My heart will worship
Almighty Saviour.*

You take all my guilt away,
Turn the darkest night to brightest day,
You are the restorer of my soul.
My lips shall praise you...

Love that conquers every fear,

I love You Lord
Oh Your mercy never fails me
All my days
I've been held in Your hands
From the moment that I wake up
Until I lay my head
I will sing of the goodness of God
*All my life You have been faithful
All my life You have been so so good
With every breath that I am able
I will sing of the goodness of God*

I love Your voice
You have led me through the fire
In darkest night

In the midst of trouble you draw near,
You are the restorer of my soul.
My lips shall praise you...

You're the source of happiness,
Bringing peace when I am in distress,
You are the restorer of my soul.
My lips shall praise you...ⁱ

You are close like no other
I've known You as a father
I've known You as a friend
I have lived in the goodness of God
All my life You have been faithful...

Your goodness is running after
It's running after me
Your goodness is running after
It's running after me
With my life laid down
I'm surrendered now
I give You everything
Your goodness is running after
It's running after me

*All my life you have been faithful...
I will sing of the goodness of Godⁱⁱ*

Prayers

Almighty God, at the beginning of this new day we lift ourselves into your presence as we praise you for your consistent love every morning and your faithfulness every night.

We praise you for your mighty deeds Lord, as you are supreme over everything, and you know us completely. We praise you for the beauty of a June day, for the beauty of the blue sky, for the beauty of each tree in full leaf and the summer flowers. The wonders of your creation are seen in the glorious colours in our garden and surroundings. We lift our praise to you our gracious God, for each perfect gift and your love so freely given to each of us.

We are different ages and in different places, but we lift our praise to you today, your name has been glorified down the years in our Burley church by the faithful members. Today we join with the hosts of heaven and our fellow Christians everywhere as we lift your name and worship you.

At the beginning of this new day we rise above temptations, we turn to you and ask that you turn us from the darkness and towards your light. Guide us as we experience new opportunities throughout this week. Be with us in the beginnings of each thought, word, and deed. May you God. show your presence in our life, homes, and work.

Forgive us for all the times that we have made decisions, spoke words and done things that benefit ourselves while disregarding how it affects others.

We can place our trust in you Lord because your love is constant, and your will is always to save us from our sins. If you kept a record of our sins who of us could escape being condemned by God, but you do not keep an account of our sins, you forgive us. All is done by God through Christ, and we stand in awe of you. As you forgive us, empower us, and send us out in your name to show others your love and faithfulness. Amen

Introduction to the Theme

I wonder what you know about the history of this church, how it came to be here and who was involved? Do you know when it was built or how much it cost? Do you know who the people were who enabled it to take shape and what their lives were like? Do you know what changes have taken place throughout the years and why? Do you have ideas of how it might grow into the future? Do you know why countless people throughout the last 205 years have come here to sing and prayer, read and listen, act and care?

The thing that they all share is a knowledge that they are loved by God and a desire to love God in return. When we truly know God's love and respond to it with wholehearted love for God, then amazing things begin to happen and people begin to see the Kingdom of God at work. What does that look like? Well there are countless possibilities – maybe you could make a list of some of the things you think might be a glimpse of the kingdom of God at work?

We're going to listen to two short readings from the Bible now which might give you some clues!

Readings

When he was alone, those who were around him along with the twelve asked him about the parables...

He said to them, "The kingdom of God is as if someone would scatter seed on the ground, and would sleep and rise night and day, and the seed would sprout and grow, he does not know how. The earth produces of itself, first the stalk, then the head, then the full grain in the head. But when the grain is ripe, at once he goes in with his sickle, because the harvest has come."

He also said, "With what can we compare the kingdom of God, or what parable will we use for it? It is like a mustard seed, which, when sown upon the ground, is the smallest of all the seeds on earth; yet when it is sown it grows up and becomes the greatest of all shrubs, and puts forth large branches, so that the birds of the air can make nests in its shade."

With many such parables he spoke the word to them, as they were able to hear it; he did not speak to them except in parables, but he explained everything in private to his disciples. **(Mark 4: 10 & 26 – 34)**

Therefore, knowing the fear of the Lord, we try to persuade others; but we ourselves are well known to God, and I hope that we are also well known to your consciences. We are not commending ourselves to you again, but giving you an opportunity to boast about us, so that you may be able to answer those who boast in outward appearance and not in the heart. For if we are beside ourselves, it is for God; if we are in our right mind, it is for you. For the love of Christ urges us on, because we are convinced that one has died for all; therefore all have died. And he died for all, so that those who live might live no longer for themselves, but for him who died and was raised for them.

From now on, therefore, we regard no one from a human point of view; even though we once knew Christ from a human point of view, we know him no longer in that way. So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting the message of reconciliation to us. So we are ambassadors for Christ, since God is making his appeal through us; we entreat you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God. **(2 Corinthians 5: 11 – 21)**

Song

Your grace is enough
More than I need
At Your word I will believe
I wait for You
Draw near again
Let Your Spirit make me new

*And I will fall at Your feet
I will fall at Your feet
And I will worship You here*

Your presence in me
Jesus light the way

By the power of Your word
I am restored
I am redeemed
By Your Spirit I am free
And I will fall at your feet...

Freely You gave it all for us
Surrendered Your life upon that cross
Great is the love poured out for all

This is our God
Lifted on high from death to life
Forever our God is glorified
Servant and King rescued the world
This is our God
And I will fall at your feet... x2

Freely you gave it all for us...x2ⁱⁱⁱ

Reflection

Rev Tim Perkins

"Growing into a new future"

The videos can be viewed at www.burleymethodist.org
Alternatively, the written text is provided below

Prayers of Intercession

Faithful God,

We thank you that you are with us wherever we go;

when we go into those dark places and feel alone and helpless; when we feel wonderful, contented and invincible; when we are desperate for your help or when we believe we can manage without you.

Father, you are unchanging in your care and concern for us and unwavering in your plan for our lives. You are able to use the small spark within us to create a fire. You are able to plant the tiny seed that will grow into a mighty tree. You have faith that your goodness in us will prevail and, for that, we are grateful and overawed, especially when we consider our weaknesses and flaws. Amen

God of reconciliation and the second chance, as we reflect on the way you treat us, help us to take that example into the world:

To try and see the good in everyone and nurture it; to not judge but encourage; to not give up but persevere; to not despair but to pray; to not condemn but to help; to not withdraw but to engage; to not count the cost but be generous to a fault; to not settle for personal comfort but strive for a connected world; to not confine your love to ourselves but to display it in our words and actions. And when all else fails, to look to Jesus for guidance and inspiration, Jesus, who was obedient to you in everything and taught us to pray to you in this way:

The 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.

Song

Be thou my vision, O Lord of my heart,
Be all else but nought to me, save that thou art;
Be thou my best thought in the day and the night,
Both waking and sleeping, thy presence my light.

Be thou my wisdom, be thou my true word,
Be thou ever with me, and I with thee, Lord;
Be thou my great Father, thy child let me be;
Be thou in me dwelling, and I one with thee.

Be thou my breastplate, my sword for the fight;
Be thou my whole armour, be thou my true might;
Be thou my soul's shelter, be thou my strong tower:

O raise thou me heavenward, great Power of my power.

Riches I heed not, nor earth's empty praise:
Be thou mine inheritance now and always;
Be thou and thou only the first in my heart:
O Sovereign of heaven, my treasure thou art.

High King of heaven, thou heaven's bright Sun,
O grant me its joys after victory is won;
Great Heart of my own heart, whatever befall,
Still be thou my vision, O Ruler of all.^{iv}

Closing Prayer

Almighty God. to whose glory we celebrate our anniversary; we thank you for the fellowship of those who have worshipped here, and we pray that all who seek you here may find you, and, being filled with your Holy Spirit, may become a living temple, a dwelling place for your life-giving presence in the world. We ask it through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.^v

And so may the Spirit of truth lead us in power, give us grace to follow Jesus Christ our Lord and fill us with compassion so that we may serve this present age and proclaim the love of God; and the blessing of God, Spirit, Son and Father, remain with us always. Amen.

Reflection
Rev Tim Perkins
"Growing into a new future"

As we begin to reflect upon God's Word today, I want to share with you "*A meditation of an exhausted missionary*" written by Nick Fawcett and taken from his book, "*No Ordinary Stories*." It is based on our reading from Mark's Gospel:

"I thought it was down to me, the way he'd been talking. For one awful moment I actually thought that the dawn of the kingdom hinged on *my* efforts, *my* faithfulness, *my* contribution to the cause. What a frightening prospect! Imagine what it might mean if it were true: I'd be waiting for ever, looking forward in vain to a day I would never come to see, for, despite my best intentions, I'd be bound to fail – I always do – the job seems hopelessly beyond me.

Don't get me wrong, it's not that I haven't got a role to play – we all have that, each of us having something vital to contribute – but, thank God, his purpose is bigger than any one of us, his kingdom growing as often as not despite rather than because of us!

Whether we see it or whether we don't, it's there slowly growing – seeds starting to sprout, shoots bursting into flower, fields ripening for harvest – God's hand inexorably at work, refusing to be denied.

That doesn't excuse us, of course, never think that! We all have a responsibility to help it happen, through word and deed to bring the kingdom closer. But equally it doesn't mean that we must try and do everything, bear the whole burden on our shoulders, for we're in this together, partners in faith, dependent ultimately on God to take what we offer and use it to his glory.

Take heart from that when progress seems slow or stuck in reverse; when your efforts seem in vain, when the fulfilment of his promises seems further away than ever. Never give up, never lose faith, for the kingdom has dawned and its growth is assured – the final picture is not down to us but to him."^{vi}

As we celebrate our Church Anniversary today, and as we begin to look forward to the final easing of the restrictions we have lived through over the last 16 months, the challenge before us is to discern together the sort of church God is calling us to be now and in the future. Not 16 months ago, not back in 2016 when we celebrated our 200th anniversary, and not back in 1816 when the first church building was originally opened. We must discern who God is calling us to be now and we must balance the need to allow God to create that picture with our own individual calling as Christians to play the part that best suits us in the whole.

It is no good overstretching ourselves because that only causes burnout and excludes others from being able to play their part. But neither is it any good leaving it all to God and assuming that he will call other people to take up the mantle. So, what sort of church is God calling us to be here and now and what part is God calling you to play in that?

Our Circuit Meeting has invited all the churches in the Circuit to reflect over the course of this year on the nature of their mission. To ask themselves: what do we need to let go of which may well have been valuable in the past, but which may now be past its use-by date? And what new thing might God be calling us to focus on instead? We recall the words of one of Charles Wesley's great hymns: "*To serve the present age, my calling to fulfil!*"

We are being asked to consider what it might look like for us to serve the present age. We are asked, as we share in that process of reflection to develop a growth plan and our Church Leadership Team has been working on this over recent months. I want to share some of it with you now to encourage us on our anniversary, and as we prepare for the lifting of restrictions, to reflect upon and pray about what we might seek to do for God's kingdom in the coming year.

For our friends, sharing with us today at Otley and Menston, your Leadership Teams and Church Councils have been doing similar work and will have identified different priorities but hopefully this will encourage us all to look to the future with hope, enthusiasm, and a great sense of anticipation.

So, here at Burley, one of the things we have been thinking about is our aspirations. What sort of church do we want to become? What is the best that we can imagine for ourselves? What do we imagine God might do through

us? These are some of our hopes and dreams: To be growing and active in numbers and faith; to increase the number of volunteers working with our children and young people; to be generous; to be relevant to the needs of our community; to be a compassionate community; to play a full role in the life of the village; to be a place where things happen and transformation takes place; to be a community whom others in the village actively look to for support; to be a place where our young people are encouraged to be radical in their expression of faith that enables them to make a difference and to have their voices heard; to move from the theoretical to the practical and to change the world for the better!

I think there are some fabulous aspirations there and we need to pray for God to turn them into realities. But God will not do that without each one of us being prepared to play our part and to partner with God in his work. So, we have also been doing some thinking about specific aspects or areas of the life of the church which we feel led to focus on and develop over the coming 12 months. And this is what we have identified:

We want to appoint a new Youth and Children's Worker to be in place as soon as possible. We want to work towards achieving the eco-church gold award as part of our commitment to living sustainable lives in a sustainable world. We want to further develop our provision for recording and live-streaming services so that we can reach out to a wider audience with the good news of God's love in Christ Jesus. We want to establish a worship planning group to focus on developing theme preaching series and ensuring that our worship is as vibrant and varied as possible. We want to re-establish our weekly coffee morning and set up a mid-week service alongside it so that folk who drop in might be welcomed and fed both physically and spiritually. We want to grow our work with other community groups to develop wellbeing provision in the village so that no one feels excluded or discarded but can come to experience something of the fulness of life that Jesus promises. And once we have done some of that we feel the time will be right to review our Church Mission Statement to ensure that it continues to guide our hopes and dreams, our visions, and our actions.

I hope something in there speaks to you, excites you and captures your imagination because none of it will happen unless people like you choose to get involved. So, is there a tiny seed of an idea somewhere in there that is now sitting in your mind or heart which needs prayer, thought, encouragement, conversation, or action for God to nurture it and cause it to burst through into life and growth? I do hope so and I urge you to respond to the calling that God is placing on your heart as to what part you might play in the future of our Church and community. Amen.

ⁱ Words and music by Noel and Tricia Richards, 1991, Thankyou Music, StF 430.

ⁱⁱ Words and music by Brian Johnson, Jason Ingram, Jenn Johnson, Ed Cash & Ben Fielding, 2019, Bethel Music.

ⁱⁱⁱ Words and Music by Reuben Morgan, Hillsong worship, 2008.

^{iv} StF 545, TMCP, 2011.

^v The Methodist Worship Book, TMCP, 1999, P. 562.

^{vi} Nick Fawcett, No Ordinary Stories, Kevin Mayhew Ltd, 2008, P. 124.