

Sunday September 5th 2021: Twenty-third Sunday in Ordinary Time

For use by the Central Norfolk Circuit at 10.30 am or other suitable time.

Today is the first Sunday in the new Methodist year.



Hymn StF 364 H&P 744

O for a thousand tongues to sing / my great Redeemer's praise,
the glories of my God and King / the triumphs of his grace!



My gracious Master and my God / assist me to proclaim
to spread through all the earth abroad / the honours of your name.
Jesus – the name that charms our fears / that bids our sorrows cease;
'tis music in the sinner's ears / 'tis life and health and peace.
He speaks; and, listening to his voice / new life the dead receive;
the mournful, broken hearts rejoice / the humble poor believe.

Charles Wesley (1707 – 1788)

Prayer

O Love most holy and most gracious, you bid us welcome to the table you have prepared for all.
That no pride might prevent us taking the place you have given us, grant us humility.
That no shame might prevent us responding to your welcome, grant us forgiveness.
That no unworthiness might prevent us joining with your saints, grant us faith.
That no selfishness might prevent us ministering to those in need, grant us compassion.
Then, humbled and pardoned, confident and caring,
O Love most holy and most gracious, let us sit and eat. Amen.

Jonathan Hustler, Secretary of the Methodist Conference – prayer inspired by George Herbert's poem Love III 1633

Taken from the new Methodist Prayer Handbook page 3.

Epistle reading set for today: James 2 v 1 – 17

Lectionary Gospel reading: Mark 7 v 24 – 37

To think about

Compare and contrast! Look at the similarities and differences between the two healing stories in the gospel reading.

Message from a Circuit friend

What's your favourite seat in chapel? Most seem to like the back, a few perhaps at the front no doubt! If you have ever visited Walpole in Suffolk you probably came across one of the oldest congregational chapels in the country. Converted from two farm cottages in 1689 the chapel shows us where different people sat. If you were part of the local gentry you would sit in a box pew safely shut in but if you were a maid or a servant the very narrow benches at the back were for you. Where do you think you would have sat?

James deals with favouritism in the church. Meeting of course as they did at that time in a house a stranger might come in wearing fine clothes which would show their importance and status and they would be enthusiastically welcomed and shown the best seat. But if a poor person came in they wouldn't even be offered a seat but told to stand or sit on the floor. Now that wouldn't happen today, would it? Both in chapter 1 and here in chapter 2 James reminds us that outward appearance has nothing to do with saving faith, for the free offer of the gospel is to all whether you are rich or poor. But to each person the benefits of receiving Jesus as Saviour can have a different emphasis. To the poor (2:5) they are blessed in knowing that the gospel makes them rich in faith; but to the rich (1:10) the gospel helps them realise how frail and poor they actually are. How temporary and transient wealth and status can be! Such a believing person would echo the

line of Toplady's Rock of Ages: *Nothing in my hand I bring, simply to Thy cross I cling.* Thank the Lord today that my salvation is based not on who I am or what I have but on Christ alone!

Graham Pickhaver (Retired Baptist Minister and Preacher in the Central Norfolk Circuit)

Hymn StF 434 H&P 273

Rock of Ages, cleft for me / let me hide myself in thee;
let the water and the blood / from thy riven side which flowed,
be of sin the double cure / cleanse me from its guilt and power.

Nothing in my hand I bring / simply to thy cross I cling;
naked, come to thee for dress / helpless, look to thee for grace;
foul, I to the fountain fly / wash me, Saviour, or I die.

While I draw this fleeting breath / when mine eyes shall close in death,
when I soar through tracts unknown / see thee on thy judgement throne,
Rock of Ages, cleft for me / let me hide myself in thee.

Augustus Montague Toplady (1740 – 1778)

Prayers of Intercession

We pray for our world with all its places of need and suffering. For our country as schools go back and holidays come to an end. We pray for schoolchildren and teachers beginning a new school year and for students preparing to go to college or university.

We pray for the Methodist Church on the first Sunday of the Connexional year. We think of all ministers in new appointments, especially those beginning ministry for the first time.

We pray for those in our own Circuit who are moving elsewhere, thinking especially of Rev Barbara as she settles into her new home in Buckinghamshire.

We pray for our families, our friends, our neighbours, and ourselves...

Offer to God your offertory for the week, and say the Lord's Prayer...

Hymn StF 673

Will you come and follow me / if I but call your name?
Will you go where you don't know / and never be the same?
Will you let my love be shown / will you let my name be known,
will you let my life be grown / in you and you in me?

Will you let the blinded see / if I but call your name?
Will you set the prisoners free / and never be the same?
Will you kiss the lepers clean / and so such as this unseen,
and admit to what I mean / in you and you in me?

Lord, your summons echoes true / when you but call my name.

Let me turn and follow you / and never be the same.

In your company I'll go / where your love and footsteps show.

Thus I'll move and live and grow / in you and you in me.

John L Bell (b. 1949) and Graham Maule (1958 - 2020) CCL no. 5365402

May the blessing of God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit be with us, and all those we love, this day and always, Amen.

Circuit Information

The national Climate Sunday Service is being live-streamed from Glasgow this afternoon (Sept 5th) at 4 pm. Details can be found at <https://ctbi.org.uk/climate-sunday>.

A small circuit group has prepared suggestions for preparing for COP26 prior to November 1st – 12th. If the handout outlining these does not come with this Worship at Home sheet, and you would like it, please contact your minister or our circuit administrator.