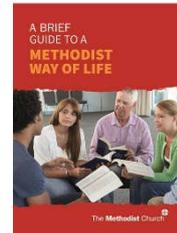


Tavistock Circuit: At Home Service Sunday 5th September 2021

Prepared by Kit Harbottle

September: a new year starting in schools and colleges, and also within the Methodist Church. This service includes prayers for those moving on to new places, and draws on the resource "A Methodist Way of Life" as we look ahead to living out our faith wherever we are (You may have received a postcard sized booklet about this through your church.)



We start with thanks for God's presence and past blessings.

Hymn (HP 69)

1. The King of love my Shepherd is,
Whose goodness faileth never;
I nothing lack if I am his
And he is mine forever.
2. Where streams of living water flow
My ransomed soul he leadeth,
And where the verdant pastures grow
With food celestial feedeth.
3. Perverse and fooling oft I strayed,
But yet in love he sought me,
And on his shoulder gently laid
And home rejoicing brought me.
4. In death's dark vale I fear no ill
With thee, dear Lord, beside me,
Thy rod and staff my comfort still,
Thy cross before to guide me.
5. Thou spread'st a table in my sight;
Thy unction grace bestoweth;
And O what transport of delight
From thy pure chalice floweth.
6. And so through all the length of days
Thy goodness faileth never:
Good Shepherd, may I sing thy praise
Within thy house for ever.

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. (Methodist Prayer Handbook 2021/22)

Bible readings:

Read these passages, pausing after each to reflect on a phrase or idea that struck you:

Psalms 119 v 33-40

Luke 11 v 25-37

1 Timothy 6v10-11.

Prayer

Whether you say or sing it, use this next hymn as a prayer for the earth and its peoples. Take a moment to prepare for this – bringing to mind troubling things you have heard or seen, and offering them to God.

Hymn (StF 693)

1. Beauty for brokenness, hope for despair,
Lord in your suffering world, this is our
prayer.
Bread for the children, justice, joy, peace,
Sunrise to sunset, your kingdom increase.
2. Shelter for fragile lives, cures for their ills,
Work for all people, trade for their skills;
Land for the dispossessed, rights for the
weak,
Voices to plead the cause of those who
can't speak.
3. Refuge from cruel wars, havens from fear,
Cities for sanctuary, freedoms to share,
Peace to the killing-fields, scorched earth
to green,
Christ for the bitterness, his cross for the
pain.
4. Rest for the ravaged earth, oceans and
streams
Plundered and poisoned – our future, our
dreams.
Lord, end our madness, carelessness,
greed;
Make us content with the things that we
need.
Refrain
5. Lighten our darkness, breathe on this
flame
Until your justice burns brightly again;
Until the nations learn of your ways,
Seek your salvation and bring you their
praise.
Refrain

Refrain:

God of the poor, friend of the weak,
Give us compassion we pray:
Melt our cold hearts, let tears fall like rain;
Come, change our love from a spark to a
flame.



Reflection

The three passages from the Bible which we read deal in different ways with the question: how should we live as people of God? The lawyer who questioned Jesus put it as a debating point. Unable to challenge the answer directly, he came back for a definition. "Love my neighbour? OK, let's be clear about who's included in that term, and who's not." Jesus responded with a story which has

been told and retold around the world and down the ages, with mercy being shown by a Samaritan – an outsider – when the respectable characters passed by on the other side.

The psalmist prays for understanding of how God wants him to live. In the short section we read from a long and complex exploration, we see that this is about more than a list of commands – it involves our understanding and the things we care about. It's about delight in finding a good path. Another memorable idea comes in advice to Timothy – the love of money as the root of all kinds of evil. It's not hard to find examples of that today. Paul, writing to the younger disciple, urges him not to get lured into that, but to pursue virtues such as faith and love.

Living out our Christian faith is a life-long journey of learning under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Jesus had little time for religious people whose interest was in imposing rules on others rather than becoming closer to God themselves. But a shared “way of life” we help each other follow is helpful. Read through the points below, which Methodists are encouraged to commit to. Maybe return to them over coming days to reflect on what each might mean in your current situation.

The calling of the Methodist Church is to respond to the gospel of God's love in Christ and to live out its discipleship in worship and mission.

As far as we are able, with God's help:

Worship

- We will pray daily.
- We will worship with others regularly.
- We will look and listen for God in Scripture, and the world.

Learning and Caring

- We will care for ourselves and those around us.
- We will learn more about our faith.
- We will practise hospitality and generosity.

Service

- We will help people in our communities and beyond.
- We will care for creation and all God's gifts.
- We will challenge injustice.

Evangelism

- We will speak of the love of God.
- We will live in a way that draws others to Jesus.
- We will share our faith with others.

May we be a blessing within and beyond God's Church, for the transformation of the world.

Prayer:

Gracious God, our world is not as you would have it.
Our systems, our leaders and we ourselves fall short of your glory.
Where potential is not fulfilled, may your kingdom come;
May all creation have life and have it in all abundance.

May we hear your invitation to be part of the change, and build your church into a beacon of justice and joy. (Methodist Prayer Handbook 2021/22)

God of journeys and of stillness, we ask you to bless all who start a new stage of life this month: children starting or returning to school; students travelling to courses; workers leaving or taking up jobs. We thank you for all those in Methodist ministry who take on new roles now, and ask your blessing on those arriving in the Plymouth and Exeter District, and those moving on from it, including Rev Phil Griffin and his family. We ask your blessing on Sandra Dodd on her appointment as lay worker in this Circuit. We remember also the many people around the world who are unwillingly leaving their homes due to conflict, persecution or the effects of climate change, and ask that they may find safety, welcome and new purpose.

Continue in prayer for people on your heart, and offer God the plans, hopes and concerns you have for the week ahead.

Use the **Lord's Prayer** in your preferred form.

Hymn (HP 705)

We close with this lyrical but challenging hymn.

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| 1. Take my life and let it be
Consecrated, Lord to thee;
Take my moments and my days,
Let them flow in ceaseless praise. | 4. Take my sliver and my gold,
Not a mite would I withhold;
Take my intellect and use
Every power as thou shalt choose. |
| 2. Take my hands and let them move
At the impulse of thy love;
Take my feet and let them be
Swift and beautiful for thee. | 5. Take my will, and make it thine;
It shall be no longer mine;
Take my heart – it is thine own;
It shall be thy royal throne. |
| 3. Take my voice and let me sing
Always, only, for my King;
Take my lips, and let them be
Filled with messages from thee. | 6. Take my love: my Lord, I pour at thy feet
its treasure-store;
Take myself, and I will be
Ever, only, all for thee. |

Moving out from that personal focus, think of others worshipping today, known to you or linked only through using the same words and vision, and say aloud:

May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all, evermore.