



# The Methodist Church

Nottingham North East Circuit - Sunday 20 June 2021

This short act of worship has been prepared for you by Deacon Helen Snowball to use at home. If you are well enough, why not spend a few moments with God, knowing that other people are sharing this act of worship with you

## Psalm 133

The Blessedness of Unity

A Song of Ascents.

1 How very good and pleasant it is

when kindred live together in unity!

2 It is like the precious oil on the head,

running down upon the beard,

on the beard of Aaron,

running down over the collar of his robes.

3 It is like the dew of Hermon,

which falls on the mountains of Zion.

For there the Lord ordained his blessing,

life for evermore.

## Hymn - StF 409

Let us build a house where love can dwell,  
and all can safely live.

A place where saints and children tell,  
how hearts learn to forgive.

Built of hopes and dreams and visions.

Rock of faith and vault of grace.

Here the love of Christ shall end divisions,

All are welcome, all are welcome,

All are welcome in this place.

Let us build a house where prophets speak,  
and words are strong and true.

Where all God's children dare to seek  
to dream God's reign anew

Here the cross shall stand as witness.

And a symbol of God's grace.

Here as one we claim the faith of Jesus,

All are welcome, all are welcome,

All are welcome in this place.

Let us build a house where love is found,  
in water, wine and wheat.

A banquet hall on holy ground,  
where peace and justice meet

Here the love of God, through Jesus,

is revealed in time and space.

As we share in Christ the feast that frees us

All are welcome, all are welcome,

All are welcome in this place.

Let us build a house where hands will reach,  
beyond the wood and stone.

To heal and strengthen, serve and teach,

and live the word they've known.

Here the outcast and the stranger,

bear the image of God's face,

let us bring an end to fear and danger.

All are welcome, all are welcome,

all are welcome in this place.

Let us build a house where all are named,  
their songs and visions heard.

And loved and treasured, taught and claimed,  
as words within the Word.

Built of tears and cries and laughter,

prayers of faith and songs of grace,

let this house proclaim from floor to rafter.

All are welcome, all are welcome,

all are welcome in this place.

Marty Haugen, b. 1950

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=N9bOiAxwi4U](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N9bOiAxwi4U)

## Let's pray

Calm me Lord, as you calmed the storm.

Still me Lord, keep me from harm.

Let all the tumult within me cease,

Uphold me Lord, in your peace.

David Adam

For those who seek you Lord, you are a safe  
refuge, a stronghold, when circumstances conspire  
against us and we have nowhere else to turn.

For those who seek you, Lord, you are the word of truth, your Spirit giving wisdom, when faith is tested so we can bear witness to your name.

For those who seek you, Lord,  
You are the source of life, for your love, like living water, pours into our hearts, and brings us to your feet in praise.

If anything, we say or do, causes one of your dear ones to stumble, please Lord, forgive us.

Sometimes we fail to see the potential damage our words and actions can cause.

Help us to always only have you at the centre of all we do, forgive us when we say or act in a way that causes hurt. Forgive us when we do not act, and so cause pain by our inaction.

Your Grace and mercy allow us to live knowing we are forgiven by your love for us, our saving Lord, Jesus Christ.

### **Thanksgiving**

It's good to know in stormy days that wind and waves obey your word, and in the midst of our stress your calling voice can still be heard.

Amen

© John Birch Act of Prayer adapted.

### **Today's Bible reading:**

#### **Mark 4:35-41**

35 On that day, when evening had come, he said to them, 'Let us go across to the other side.' 36 And leaving the crowd behind, they took him with them in the boat, just as he was. Other boats were with him. 37 A great gale arose, and the waves beat into the boat, so that the boat was already being swamped. 38 But he was in the stern, asleep on the cushion; and they woke him up and said to him, 'Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?' 39 He woke up and rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, 'Peace! Be still!' Then the wind ceased, and there was a dead calm. 40 He said to them, 'Why are you afraid? Have you still no faith?' 41 And they were filled with great awe and said to one another, 'Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?'

### **Let's sing again, Lord of all Hopefulness, StF 526**

Lord of all hopefulness,  
Lord of all joy,  
Whose trust, ever child-like,  
No cares could destroy,  
Be there at our waking,  
And give us, we pray,  
Your bliss in our hearts, Lord,  
At the break of the day.

Lord of all eagerness, Lord of all faith,  
Whose strong hands were skilled  
At the plane and the lathe,  
Be there at our labours,  
And give us, we pray,  
Your strength in our hearts, Lord,  
At the noon of the day.

Lord of all kindness, Lord of all grace,  
Your hands swift to welcome,  
Your arms to embrace,  
Be there at our homing,  
And give us, we pray,  
Your love in our hearts, Lord,  
At the eve of the day.

Lord of all gentleness, Lord of all calm,  
Whose voice is contentment,  
Whose presence is balm,  
Be there at our sleeping,  
And give us, we pray,  
Your peace in our hearts, Lord,  
At the end of the day.  
Jan Struther (1901-1953)

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=oAeq77rAsIU](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oAeq77rAsIU)

### **Reflection**

This is a story about power and trust, and perhaps knowing who God is through Jesus Christ. Here we have Jesus, in a boat with his disciples, after spending some time teaching using his familiar way of parables. He has spoken about the Kingdom of God being like a mustard seed, it starts off tiny, but when it is sown in good soil it grows and becomes strong, so strong in fact that birds can nest in its powerful branches. This is the first extension of his Jesus' ministry into Gentile territory, which the writer Mark sees as especially important. This is the spread of Jesus' teaching to a much wider audience and Jesus has been preaching and teaching, healing and generally

being out and about with the public, he probably needed a bit of peace and sleep. And so, he curls up in the bottom of the boat and nods off.

Whilst he is asleep, a storm gathers pace and threatens to sink the boat. From what we read in the gospels this is no ordinary storm. It isn't just strong winds and rain blowing the boat about, causing some waves – no this is a tremendous storm, waves casting the boat from side to side, rain pouring down on the frightened disciples. Maybe thunder and lightning, howling wind no doubt making the boat hard to handle. The disciples are terrified, and yet Jesus remains asleep in the bottom of the boat. I think the fact that the disciples are so afraid tells us how much of a storm this must have been. These are hardened fishermen, they are used to the weather out on the open water, used to a certain amount of danger when fishing, but this particular storm sees them terrified for their lives.

The disciples think Jesus doesn't care about them, why isn't he bothered that we're all going to die they wonder. How can he sleep through all this? However, at the same time, the disciples are fully aware that Jesus can do something about this, otherwise what would it matter whether he was asleep or awake? They expect him to be able to do something to somehow fix this. And of course, he does fix it. The same way he heals the sick and casts out demons, he orders the storm to desist. He rebukes the wind. 'Peace.' He says. 'Be still!' and immediately the wind ceases, and all is calm. Jesus asks the disciples why are they scared? He is completely in control, Jesus shows his power, over all things, he has previously shown power over demons, over disease, and now he even has authority and power over the weather, the very forces of nature.

It's interesting that Jesus asks the question – 'why are you afraid?' Surely, he would realise they are afraid of drowning in a ferocious storm? They have not yet come to realise the power of the man, that he can control these waves with a simple command. And yet... they know that he can do something about this, they realise that here is the man asleep who can save them. Jesus sleeps, they panic, he sleeps the sleep of the content, the man with trust in a higher power – he knows that God has got this, Jesus himself has complete trust in God.

It's interesting that this incident comes just after Jesus has talked about faith, when he has mentioned the tiny mustard seed growing into something remarkable and powerful. The disciples have Jesus in their actual boat, and yet they still don't have the faith in him that they need. Jesus, even though asleep, still has faith that God can deal with this, he isn't worried, but the disciples see the rain, the wind and the way the boat is tossed about, isn't it understandable they'd be afraid? And, even being with Jesus and seeing what he can do, isn't it a natural reaction to be scared by such a storm? Jesus, as ever, is calm and thoughtful. He knows what he has to do, and he knows what he will be up against.

Today is World Refugee Day, a day to think of the people who have travelled sometimes thousands of miles, to find a safe haven, a better life. We've all seen pictures in the newspapers and on TV of boats – little more than dinghies – packed with men, women and children, all desperately seeking a new place to live, crossing storm tossed seas in desperation. Often, these voyages end in tragedy, and we can wonder why people have taken such a risk. Perhaps they are seeking refuge because of persecution, because of economic strife or famine and disease. People are searching for a better life, a safer life with their families, living without fear. Covid 19 has of course caused much greater danger for people, there are many, many countries that do not have the health service like the NHS that we are blessed with. It's easy to see the people on the news coming to the UK, and for people to feel negativity towards them, perhaps by not understanding their reasons for seeking help in the west. And we may not understand the reasons behind people making these perilous journeys, but what we can understand is that Jesus is the source of all compassion and love.

Jesus saved the disciples by calming the storm, has he calmed storms for you recently? We all go through turbulent times in our lives, and it's important to remember that we can rely on Jesus to help us, to support us and to renew our faith. That doesn't mean all will be perfect, we know that - things go wrong, we have hard times and tragedies, but Christ is alongside us, when our lives are filled with storms, we remember that Jesus is with us, he is in the boat being rocked by storms, alongside us. Amen

### **Prayers of intercession**

On this, World Refugee Day, we pray for those people who are fleeing danger, disease and war, bringing families to try to find a safer place to live. Help us to be compassionate, to find space in our hearts for those who just need somewhere safe to lay their heads.

For all those who are dealing with storms of life, at home or abroad. We think of the situation in India where people are fighting Covid 19, and Israel Palestine, where people are fighting each other and unjust systems. Guide those in power Lord, give them compassion, wisdom and the grace to listen to the other side.

For the NHS and its continuing work, whether Covid related or other needs, we pray for those working so hard to care for the sick.

For the Methodist church, as it prepares for Conference, that the business of the church will be undertaken safely and graciously, and when decisions are made, they will be made peacefully and for all the member of the church.

For ourselves, for our families and friends that we may not be able to see yet and we miss. For the families and friends we are worried about, be they ill or worried, lonely or anxious, grieving or sad.

We pray for the people who need God the most, and those who think they need God the least.

We bring all these prayers to you, Lord our God, through the name of your Son, our Saving Lord, Jesus Christ.

#### **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,  
and the power, and the glory,  
for ever and ever. Amen.

### **Our final hymn - StF 645**

#### **Will your Anchor Hold**

Will your anchor hold in the storms of life,  
when the clouds unfold their wings of strife?  
When the strong tides lift and the cables strain,  
will your anchor drift or firm remain?

Refrain:

We have an anchor that keeps the soul  
steadfast and sure while the billows roll,  
fastened to the rock which cannot move,  
grounded firm and deep in the Saviour's love!

Will your anchor hold in the straits of fear,  
when the breakers roar and the reef is near?  
While the surges rave and the wild winds blow,  
shall the angry waves then your bark o'er flow?

Refrain:

Will your anchor hold in the floods of death,  
When the waters cold chill our latest breath;  
On the rising tide it can never fail,  
While our hopes abide within the veil.

Refrain:

Will your eyes behold through the morning light  
the city of gold and the harbour bright?  
Will you anchor safe by the heavenly shore,  
when life's storms are past forever more?

**Priscilla Jane Owens (1829-1907)**

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=UQQO8v-0VBo](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UQQO8v-0VBo)

#### **Blessing**

May the love of the Father,  
the tenderness of the Son,  
and the presence of the Spirit,  
gladden your heart  
and bring peace to your soul,  
this day and all days, Amen.

Go in peace, to love and serve the Lord,  
In the name of Christ. Amen