Written Service Sunday October 26th
Service of worship for use at home and for LA
Prepared by Student Deacon James Blackhall

Nottingham North East Methodist Circuit
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Call to worship- Psalm 8

O Lord, our Sovereign,
how majestic is your name in all the earth!
You have set your glory above the heavens.
Out of the mouths of babes and infants
you have founded a bulwark because of your foes,
to silence the enemy and the avenger.
When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers,
the moon and the stars that you have established;
what are human beings that you are mindful of them,
mortals that you care for them?
Yet you have made them a little lower than God,
and crowned them with glory and honour.
You have given them dominion over the works of your hands;
you have put all things under their feet,
all sheep and oxen,
and also the beasts of the field,
the birds of the air, and the fish of the sea,
whatever passes along the paths of the seas.
O Lord, our Sovereign,
how majestic is your name in all the earth!

We join together to sing a hymn declaring the wonder of God in creation

Hymn - STF 82- How Great thou art

O Lord, my God, when I in awesome wonder
consider all the works thy hand hath made,
I see the stars, I hear the mighty thunder,
thy power throughout the universe displayed:

Then sings my soul, my Saviour God, to thee:
how great thou art, how great thou art!
Then sings my soul, my Saviour God, to thee:
how great thou art, how great thou art!

When through the woods and forest glades I wander
and hear the birds sing sweetly in the trees;
when I look down from lofty mountain grandeur,
and hear the brook, and feel the gentle breeze:
Then sings my soul …

And when I think that God, his Son not sparing,
sent him to die, I scarce can take it in
that on the cross, my burden gladly bearing,
he bled and died to take away my sin:
Then sings my soul …

When Christ shall come with shout of acclamation
and take me home -- what joy shall fill my heart;
then shall I bow in humble adoration,
and there proclaim:my God, how great thou art:
Then sings my soul …

Stuart K. Hine (1899-1989) vv. 1, 2, 4 based on O store Gud1885by Carl Gustaf Boberg (1859-1940)

Prayers of adoration and confession (based on Psalm 8)

O God, our sovereign, almighty one.
Your name is honoured in all the earth. Your name is holy and we come into your presence with awe that we can call you a loving parent- even though you are the one who made all things. When we look up to the sky and see the clouds we can't help but wonder 'who are we that you should think about us?' yet you know every hair on our head and you love us. You shower your goodness upon us and show us your love day by day. Even when we walk away from you, you still wait for us,.

All things are under our care- all things were given by you for us and all things are for us to enjoy. We praise you for the joy of creation, for the joy of love and for the joy of being human.

Yet as we praise you we know that we do not care for creation as we ought to. We do not love others in the way that you have loved us. We do not always acknowledge that you are God of our lives.

O God, our sovereign, how majestic is your name through all the earth. You remind us that when we say we have no sin we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us but when we confess our sin you are faithful and just to forgive and cleanse us. We ask your forgiveness now and we thank you that we know we receive it.

In Jesus name,
Amen

We join in the prayer that Jesus gave us in whatever form or language is most familiar to you or as is written below:

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

We sing of the joy of creation, and the charge we have from God

Hymn - STF 727- God in his love for us lent us this planet

God in his love for us lent us this planet,
gave it a purpose in time and in space:
small as a spark from the fire of creation,
cradle of life and the home of our race.

Thanks be to God for its bounty and beauty,
life that sustains us in body and mind:
plenty for all, if we learn how to share it,
riches undreamed-of to fathom and find.

Long have our human wars ruined its harvest;
long has earth bowed to the terror of force;
long have we wasted what others have needed,
poisoned the fountain of life at its source.

Earth is the Lord's: it is ours to enjoy it,
ours, as God's stewards, to farm and defend.
From its pollution, misuse, and destruction,
good Lord, deliver us, world without end!

Fred Pratt Green (1903-2000)

Reading- Revelation 22:1-5

[1]Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne
of God and of the Lamb [2]through the middle of the street of the city. On either side of the river is
the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit, producing its fruit each month; and the leaves of the
tree are for the healing of the nations. [3]Nothing accursed will be found there any more. But the
throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and his servants will worship him; [4]they will see his
face, and his name will be on their foreheads. [5]And there will be no more night; they need no light
of lamp or sun, for the Lord God will be their light, and they will reign for ever and ever.

Trees Meditation

What if every tree had leaves for the healing of the nations?
Revealing God's design in nature…
bearing fruit
giving out oxygen
removing toxins
talking underground.
What if we stopped a while and listened to what God has done?
To stop our destruction
To let nature heal.
To be like the trees.
What if we stopped and looked? And while we wait for the new creation to come
be like the leaves of the tree that is for the healing of the nations.

We sing a hymn that reminds us that Jesus is the Lord of creation -and the Lord who came to earth not to be served but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many.

STF 352- Jesus is Lord

Jesus is Lord! Creation's voice proclaims it,
for by his power each tree and flower was planned and made.
Jesus is Lord! The universe declares it;
sun, moon and stars in heaven cry: Jesus is Lord!
Jesus is Lord! Jesus is Lord!
Praise him with alleluias, for Jesus is Lord!

Jesus is Lord! Yet from his throne eternal
in flesh he came to die in pain on Calvary's tree.
Jesus is Lord! From him all life proceeding --
yet gave his life a ransom, thus setting us free.
Jesus is Lord! …

Jesus is Lord! O'er sin the mighty conqueror,
from death he rose; and all his foes shall own his name.
Jesus is Lord! God sends his Holy Spirit
to show by works of power that Jesus is Lord.
Jesus is Lord! …

David John Mansell (b. 1936)

Sermon

We've read two passages of scripture- one declaring God's greatness in creation and one declaring what the new creation to come will be like. In both God is sovereign- God is the creator the one who has set everything into being. The river of the water of life in the new holy city comes from the throne of God directly. God is the source of all being. God is the one who creates all things.

I love the passage from Revelation, and it is a passage of scripture I return to often, I love the phrase "the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations." If you travel in Birmingham, you may have seen a sculpture with that on outside Birmingham New Street Station. Commuting to Birmingham I often want to ask people if they know where that comes from. It's a passage that gives hope of the creation to come. The goodness of the Creator has not ended, we have the promise of eternal life and we will be in that city one day.

Some Christians use that passage to say that because this earth is our temporary home it somehow does not matter- and that could not be further from the truth. God created this earth and calls it 'good,' God became human in Jesus on the earth. God the Spirit, who hovered over the face of the waters, is still here – she continues to inspire us, to challenge us and to give us the assurance of God's love. The creation we have now is important. God's name is majestic over the whole earth. This world matters and we are called to be responsible stewards.

I return then to our passage from Revelation. I asked in our meditation what it would be like if the leaves of every tree was for the healing of the nations? What would it look like in our world if we all took one extra step to care for the environment better? What if we looked at nature as the wonderful thing that it is- if we looked at trees next time we see it and remember that God has given us nature with all sorts of wonderful power- giving out oxygen and breathing in toxins. Walking in the nature is healing, touching the bark of the tree is healing. We already have these wonderful resources at our fingertips. The power of nature is fantastic- and for that we can give thanks to our bountiful God who created it all and that it sustains it all.

Yet we do know that creation is not perfect. There is natural disaster and there is suffering. Some of that is brought on because of human behaviour but others appear to be more difficult to understand why and that is where we can return to our passage from Revelation. When I'm having a difficult time, I sometimes read that passage and imagine the river, a river that is the deepest blue that you can imagine, and that river flows from the throne of God and the Lamb. The Lamb we know to be Jesus and we can imagine getting to see Jesus face to face. On either side is the tree of life and the leaves that are for the healing of the nations. One day God will restore all things, all things will be made new, and it will be beautiful.

There one day we will gather, in that beautiful city, where we will worship day and night. That will be wonderful but to return to where we started- that this vision is not one that can lead us to forget the natural world now and mistreat it. Instead, this vision should lead us to make earth as near to that vision as possible. It will not be perfect but as we worship God, as we look to Jesus, we can work to make the world nearer that vision. It may be a small action – picking up a piece of litter on your walk, choosing a more sustainable option for having our morning coffee or planting a tree in our garden if you have the space. The changes don't need to be large, even small actions can make bring the world that bit nearer to how God intended it to be. We all have a part to play. Imagine the witness to the world if as Christians we were known as the ones who were helping improve the environment. Also, imagine the witness if we partner with others doing that and can talk about the extra motivation we have because of our knowledge of God's love of creation and ourselves.

Amen

Hymn - STF 102- For the beauty of the earth

For the beauty of the earth,
for the beauty of the skies,
for the love which from our birth
over and around us lies:
Gracious God, to you we raise
this our sacrifice of praise.

For the beauty of each hour
of the day and of the night,
hill and vale, and tree and flower,
sun and moon and stars of light:
Gracious God …

For the joy of ear and eye,
for the heart and mind's delight,
for the mystic harmony
linking sense to sound and sight:
Gracious God …

For the joy of human love,
brother, sister, parent, child,
friends on earth, and friends above,
pleasures pure and undefiled:
Gracious God …

For each perfect gift and sign
of your love so freely given,
graces human and divine,
flowers of earth and buds of heaven:
Gracious God …

Folliott Sandford Pierpoint (1835-1917)

Prayers of thanksgiving and intercession (adapted by James Blackhall from the Additional Orders for Holy Communion, Methodist website)

Let us pray.
In thankfulness for creation and all the goodness of God- Creator God, we pray for the world you have made…
Silence
Creator God, draw the world to Christ.
Lord, hear us.
Lord, graciously hear us.

Let us pray.
In thankfulness for the church of Christ here and around the world
We pray for our circuit ministers and the Lay Workers across the circuit
Holy God, we pray for your Church in every place…
Silence
Holy God, draw your Church to Christ.
Lord, hear us.
Lord, graciously hear us.

Let us pray.
In thankfulness that we know God will hear our every prayer
Healing God, we pray for all who suffer…
Silence
Healing God, draw those in need to Christ.
Lord, hear us.
Lord, graciously hear us.

Let us pray.
In thankfulness for those we love and see no longer.
Eternal God, we pray for those who mourn and we remember the departed.
Silence
Eternal God, draw us with them to you, and raise us up on the last day.
Lord, hear us.
Lord, graciously hear us.

We offer these and all our prayers in the name of Jesus Christ our Saviour.
Amen.

Offering Prayer
Holy God,
We thank you for all that you have given and every blessing we have received
Receive these gifts of money as a symbol of our time and our talents. Use them to serve your creation.
Amen

Hymn - STF 487- You shall go out with joy

You shall go out with joy and be led forth with peace,
and the mountains and the hills shall break forth before you.
There'll be shouts of joy and the trees of the field
shall clap, shall clap their hands,

and the trees of the field shall clap their hands,
and the trees of the field shall clap their hands,
and the trees of the field shall clap their hands,
and you'll go out with joy.

Stuart Dauermann (b. 1944) and Steffi Geiser Rubin

Blessing
May the God who created us bless you
May the God who redeemed you bless you
May the God who sanctifies you bless you
And may you know the love of God
Amen