

# TORRIDGE METHODIST CIRCUIT

## MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

### October 2021 - Issue 120

Welcome to Edition Number 120

Contact e-mail address is [newsletter@torridgemethodistcircuit.org.uk](mailto:newsletter@torridgemethodistcircuit.org.uk) or  
[bucklanddave1953@btinternet.com](mailto:bucklanddave1953@btinternet.com)

This is the 17<sup>th</sup> Special Edition of the Newsletter, which we hope you will find useful during this period of uncertainty & distress in our homes, families, communities, nation & the wider world.

Any comments or items you wish to share, please contact the editor, Dave Watson by e-mail; phone 01237 451437 or to 6 Greenings Road, Buckland Brewer, Bideford, EX39 5LU.

#### **Circuit Contact details: -**

Superintendent Minister – Rev Rob Blackhall – 01805 628041 – [robertjblackhall@gmail.com](mailto:robertjblackhall@gmail.com)

Minister – Rev Andrew Vidamour – 01237 478453 – [vidamour@mybroadbandmail.com](mailto:vidamour@mybroadbandmail.com)

Lay Pastoral Assistant – Frank Watson – 07446 157329 -: [pastoral.torridgecircuit@outlook.com](mailto:pastoral.torridgecircuit@outlook.com)

Circuit Administrator – Sarah Richards – 01237 472649 – [sarahrichards185@gmail.com](mailto:sarahrichards185@gmail.com)

Circuit Safeguarding Officer – Jacqui Watson – [safeguarding@torridgemethodistcircuit.org.uk](mailto:safeguarding@torridgemethodistcircuit.org.uk)

As well as the Circuit Facebook page – **Torrige Methodist Circuit**, we have a private Facebook Group where we care share thoughts, prayers & other material on **Torrige Methodist Circuit Group**. If you wish to join please push the Join button & I can add you.

Please pray for our Ministers, Rob Blackhall & Andrew Vidamour, for Frank Watson & Sarah Richards and all involved in the varied life of the Circuit; for those connected to the various Chapels & the communities in which they live & work.

#### **CIRCUIT ZOOM SERVICES**

The Circuit Services continue to take place weekly on Zoom using the Services that are printed in the Circuit Newsletter. The Services are on Sunday Evenings starting at 6.30pm – but the ‘doors will be open’ at about 6.15pm. The contact/entry details will be send out during the preceding week & the Service can be accessed via a computer/laptop with camera/microphone, I Pad/Phone or using a ‘normal’ phone. Even if you have a device with camera/microphone & do not wish to be seen – you can join in without the camera on.

If you do not receive an email or want further information – please contact Sarah Richards, Circuit Administrator on 01237 472649 or [sarahrichards185@gmail.com](mailto:sarahrichards185@gmail.com)

#### **FROM REV ROB BLACKHALL – SUPERINTENDENT MINISTER**

Dear Friends

I feel privileged, following the circuit meeting, to be staying in the Torrige Methodist Circuit, as Superintendent, for the next few years. Indeed, I shall now, if it all proceeds as we understand, to complete my ministry here. We live in a wonderful part of God’s world; but more importantly there are some wonderful people and some terrific opportunities for Ministry and Mission. There are some great Christian disciples in this circuit – faithful and good people. There are lots of good things happening, or at least there were before Covid. We often think that we should be doing more, and perhaps we should; but first let us rejoice in what we are doing. In the same way we might life more people to join us; but let us thank God for those we have, and cherish each other.

Four years ago, I made various promises and you also agreed to work with me. Let us do that even more so.

As Superintendent I was asked:

*Robert, to you is committed the responsibility for the life and work of this Circuit. Will you, with your colleagues, lay and ordained, care for its people, inspire its witness and watch over its life in the name of Christ?*

To which I replied, I will, and I ask God to help me

In God's strength and in God's grace together we are the Church in North Devon, or at least part of it.

That is not to say that there aren't challenges, and not just because we are coming out of the pandemic. What has happened is that Covid has accelerated and accentuated many of the decisions that we were going to have to make anyway. There are choices to make about our Governance, and I suspect our property. We have a choice – Are we about Ministry and Mission, or something else?

We need to make that choice wisely. Are we going to die slowly, or give things a go?

So, what might be the priorities in the next few years?

### **1. Lay Leadership**

The likelihood is that when Andrew and I complete our time here that this circuit will move to be a single Minister Circuit. I have always believed that the ministry of the Church is about the whole people of God. I believe that we need to realise people to exercise their ministries and gifts among us.

It also raises the question, about what you want your Ministers to do? That is a question for now; but increasingly as we move forward. Last year we had three ministers serving in this circuit. Going forward it will be one. Obviously, things will have to change.

We are delighted that we now have a Lay Pastoral Assistant and we continue to thank God for Frank's work among us. There will be other appointments too.

There will be questions about how we manage our resources, our buildings and our finances.

### **2. Mission**

Mission has to be the priority. What are we here for? Does it make a difference to our communities if we are here or not? We as the people of God have the Good News of Jesus Christ to share by our words and our actions.

### **3. Justice**

There is the whole environmental agenda to consider. Do we use green energy? Are we as Christian people using God's gifts well, or are we continuing to harm the environment?

There are many other questions to consider. We became aware as we shared together through the Marriage and Relationships debate that there were many other things that we might not agree on. Are we brave enough to think about Abortion and Euthanasia? What about the area in which we live? What is going to happen in our rural economy? How might government policy affect us? And what affect does that have on our Chapels?

That is a big agenda, but an exciting one. I am looking forward to working with you, as we alongside our loving God, find the way to go as we continue our pilgrimage.

May God bless us all

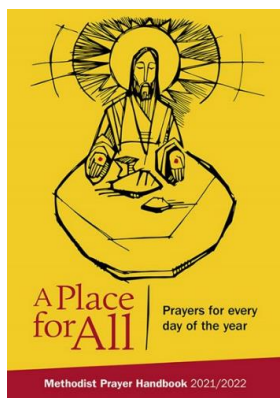
Rob

## DATES FOR OCTOBER

|                                |                     |                  |
|--------------------------------|---------------------|------------------|
| <b>October</b>                 |                     |                  |
| Mon 4 <sup>th</sup> @7.30pm    | Langtree CC         | Langtree         |
| Tues 5 <sup>th</sup> @7pm      | Leadership Meeting  | Kendor           |
| Thurs 7 <sup>th</sup> @ 10am   | Northam CC          | Northam          |
| Fri 8 <sup>th</sup> @ 2pm      | Black Torrington CC | Black Torrington |
| Mon 11 @7pm                    | Alverdiscott CC     | Alverdiscott     |
| Tues 12 <sup>th</sup> @ 2.30pm | Parkham CC          | Parkham          |
| Thurs 14 <sup>th</sup> @7pm    | Buckland Brewer CC  | Buckland Brewer  |
| Wed 20 <sup>th</sup> @ 2.30pm  | Alwington CC        | Alwington        |
| Thurs 21 <sup>st</sup> @10am   | Bideford CC         | Bideford         |
| Thurs 21 <sup>st</sup> @7.30pm | Thornhillhead CC    | Thornhillhead    |

## PLAN DATES

Could Local Preachers send their dates to Sarah and to Rob by 18<sup>th</sup> October.  
 Could Churches send dates to Sarah and to Rob straight after their Church Councils.  
 Alwington, Bideford and Thornhillhead just to Rob as Sarah will be on leave.



## PRAYER

The new Methodist Prayer Diary for this year has been published. Copies are available from the Methodsit Publishing House.

This is a rich resource for use in our own and Church Prayer life.

Daily reflections and questions to ponder may be found at <https://www.methodist.org.uk/our-faith/the-bible/a-word-in-time/>

Also, you can find a pray of the day at <https://www.methodist.org.uk/our-faith/prayer/prayer-of-the-day/>

## BIBLE STUDY

### November Study

Tuesday 7pm and Wednesday 2pm by **Zoom**

Tues 2<sup>nd</sup>                      Wed 3<sup>rd</sup>

Tues 9<sup>th</sup>                      Wed 10<sup>th</sup>

Tues 16<sup>th</sup>                    Wed 17<sup>th</sup>

Tues 23<sup>rd</sup>                    Wed 24<sup>th</sup>

### ADVENT

Tuesdays at 7pm Zoom

Wednesday at 2pm hybrid face to face at Buckland Brewer and by zoom

Tues 30<sup>th</sup> Nov    Wed 1<sup>st</sup> Dec Advent Course 1

|                              |                      |                 |
|------------------------------|----------------------|-----------------|
| <b>Monday 6<sup>th</sup></b> | Wed 8 <sup>th</sup>  | Advent Course 2 |
| Tues 14 <sup>th</sup>        | Wed 16 <sup>th</sup> | Advent Course 3 |
| Tues 21 <sup>st</sup>        | Wed 22 <sup>nd</sup> | Advent Course 4 |

## **BIBLE COURSE**

|                           |                          |                |
|---------------------------|--------------------------|----------------|
| Tues 25 <sup>th</sup> Jan | Wed 26 <sup>th</sup> Jan | Bible Course 1 |
| Tues 1 <sup>st</sup> Feb  | Wed 2 <sup>nd</sup> Feb  | Bible Course 2 |
| Tues 8 <sup>th</sup> Feb  | Wed 9 <sup>th</sup> Feb  | Bible Course 3 |
| Tues 8 <sup>th</sup> Mar  | Wed 9 <sup>th</sup> Mar  | Bible Course 4 |
| Tues 15 <sup>th</sup> Mar | Wed 16 <sup>th</sup> Mar | Bible Course 5 |
| Tues 22 <sup>nd</sup> Mar | Wed 23 <sup>rd</sup> Mar | Bible Course 6 |
| Tues 29 <sup>th</sup> Mar | Wed 30 <sup>th</sup> Mar | Bible Course 7 |
| Tues 5 <sup>th</sup> Apr  | Wed 6 <sup>th</sup> Apr  | Bible Course 8 |

## **OVERSIGHT AND TRUSTEESHIP**

You will be aware that there has been some discussion about the trusteeship in the Methodist Church for a while. For the circuits that has partly centred on the minimum size of a Church. The number settled on was 12. Clearly this has an impact of the Torrridge Methodist Circuit, where only 4 of our Chapels officially have membership over 12.

I am concerned for our work and our presence across the area of the Torrridge Circuit. For example, if we do nothing, I can see a situation emerging, quite soon, where our work disappears from the area south of Torrington. There are also significant issues about our ongoing work in Bideford.

The recent Conference has reworded **SO 605A Cessation and Merger** (1) *When, in any Local Church, the number of locally resident persons who are members or actively committed to its life as ministers not in the active work falls below twelve, and so continues for four successive quarters, that Church shall cease to be entitled to be recognised as a Local Church and the Circuit Meeting shall at its next meeting close it and transfer any remaining members to another designated Local Church in that or (by agreement with the Other Circuit Meeting) another Circuit.*

The aim is

- Help us to coordinate our Mission and service.
- Find Governance arrangements for any group of Christian disciples in a way that is appropriate to them
- Enable a Methodist emphasis on connexionalism to take place. To find creative ways to work together.

Last year, we shared with you a paper entitled "Reaffirming Our Calling: Oversight and Trusteeship. Torrridge Circuit – towards a way forward". You will recall that had 5 Church Councils across the circuit.

This fits with the Conference report which suggested two models for working together going forward. First, a cluster model where a membership of less than 12 becomes a class of a larger Church. Secondly, a hub or sectional scheme where a group of Chapels would come together to form a Church Council. Both are suggested in that previous paper.

However, we have gone through more months of the affects of the pandemic. I really wonder if we need an even more radical approach, as the previous model leaves us with considerable issues of management of property and finance. I will happily share a more radical approach with the Circuit. I realise none of this is easy; that some hard choices are going to have to be made. We will seek to walk with each other, every step of the way. Clearly this is going to have to be shared at Church Councils this autumn as the clock is ticking towards a new way of working coming in twelve months.

We need to consult together, perhaps first involving the Chapels south of Torrington; then as a whole Circuit.

### **WHAT DO YOU THINK IS THE WAY FORWARD?**

While this is going to be a challenging time, I hope it will also be a blessing to us as we seek to discover how best to serve Christ in the present age.

Rob Blackhall - September 2021

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <b>Meeting for Chapels <u>South</u> of Torrington<br/>Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> October at<br/>10am at Lake</b> | <b>Meeting for <u>All</u> the Circuit<br/>Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> November at<br/>10am at Torrington</b> |
|---|---|

### **FROM REVD ANDREW VIDAMOUR**

Dear Friends,

Two similar experiences from my recent sabbatical remain vividly in my memory, both from time spent sitting in rose gardens. The first was in Saumarez Park in Guernsey on a very warm, still July afternoon with the roses in full bloom. The second was in the gardens of Reed Hall at the University of Exeter on a quiet, fine August evening, when the roses were beginning to droop and fade, with some petals already on the ground. Both were times of great peace and joy in the midst of all the changes and chances of life, not least the current pandemic, though they also caused me to contemplate the passing of time.

T.S. Eliot begins his poem 'Burnt Norton', the first in his 'Four Quartets' sequence, with a similar powerful vision of harmony in a rose garden which is also a symbol of human love and a pointer towards the eternal love of God. And at the end of Eliot's 'Four Quartets' series, at the close of the poem 'Little Gidding', he speaks of the 'fire' of the Holy Spirit and the 'rose' of human love becoming one.

How much humanity needs this vision now, as we always have done, in all the uncertainties and challenges in our experience. The Bible includes many such moments of insight and illumination: Moses at the burning bush and Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration are but two of these.

As we continue to adapt to new realities in the Church and in life generally, especially at this time, we may want to recall and reflect on such points of revelation in the Bible and in our own journeys, as reassurance and inspiration.

For, despite all the difficulties and sufferings T.S. Eliot explores in 'Four Quartets', at the end of his poem he includes the words of Julian of Norwich: '...all shall be well and all manner of things shall be well...' as a sign of God's eternal grace.

Andrew Vidamour

### **FROM FRANK WATSON – LAY PASTORAL ASSISTANT**

As part of my local preachers training I have been looking into 'calling'. The sense of it, what it means to each of us, how we are called, what we are called to. To name but a few different ideas.

Each year at the annual Local Preachers Remembering Our Call Service, in which local preachers take part in an Act of Recollection (reaffirming the promises they made at their accreditation services), there is also an opportunity for someone to share testimony. This year I had the privilege of this, and as I said to the Local Preachers at this service (just a few weeks ago) I would say these words are straight from the heart and exactly what came out as I sat down to write the short testimony.

As not all Local Preachers could be present and also in the hope that everyone who reads this will gain something from it. I share it with you as my thoughts this month.

#### **My Sense of Call**

As most of you will know, I felt from a very young age that God was calling me to be a preacher of his Good News and saving love. But as I got older, I learnt that, as it says Ecclesiastes 3, for everything there is a season, and God has made everything suitable for its time.

I am still in training, not just as a local preacher but as a disciple of Jesus Christ our Lord. As a Christian I am called by God to trust and follow Christ Jesus, to keep company with him; to learn from his words and actions; and to share in his mission.

Over these years since being given a note to preach, I have had to trust in God and trust he has a plan for me. Of course sometimes I wish he would let me know the plan he has in store but of course that often does not happen. I have to trust.

Some people probably think that because I have been on this road for a long time now and progression through my local preacher studies has been slow, sometimes stationary, I obviously don't have that strong of a calling.

Well I would argue with that. One of my go to verses in the bible for guidance and strength is Isaiah 6:8 'Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" And I said, "Here am I; send me!"'

A calling does not just have to be to preaching or ministry. Every time we are asked to renew our promises as accredited and trainee local preachers, I still feel able to answer, as I still feel God is calling me. However, over the years he has also called me to other places and vocations. I feel that I am a better disciple of Jesus Christ and a better preacher of his word because of the places he has called me to go to.

Have I questioned this calling and others, you bet I have... haven't we all! Have I questioned some of God's plan for me, you bet I have. Why would he allow me to get so stressed and tried to the point that I break down in tears in my work place and not return. Well at the time I thought that, but now I know, we are called to learn. As Mark writes "If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me.". By taking up my cross, by going to a low place, I have learnt. I can now relate to a whole section of God's people whom before I could not relate to. How can help and support if you have not been there yourself.

Until I hit that point in my life, I had not completely surrender to my life to God. But after that, that is what I did. I trusted in him. I left that job, the career that I thought I would serve my Lord in for a long time. Not knowing where I would end up next, if I would even find another job. Who in there right mind would voluntarily quit their job in the middle of a global pandemic! I did, because after speaking to others and praying to my Lord. I surrendered or and trusted in him, and we know where he placed me. So now I trust that he will continue to call me and support me through these studies.

Master, speak: and make me ready, when thy voice is truly heard, with obedience glad and steady still to follow every word. I am listening, Lord for thee; Master, speak! O speak to me!

### **CELTIC MORNING PRAYER & COFFEE MORNING**

On Thursday's at 10.30pm there will be a **Weekly Coffee Morning preceded by a Celtic Morning Prayer from the Northumbria Community on Zoom** – Login details will be available on the Circuit Facebook Group page or on the email that Sarah Richards sends out at the start of the week. Come along for a short period of Daily Prayer followed by an opportunity to share, drink a coffee, have a piece of cake with conversation - *Dave Watson*

### **SAFEGUARDING INFORMATION**

#### **Online Training Programme 2021-2022**

For all face-face dates please contact your District Safeguarding Officer or in the case of the Foundation course the Circuit Safeguarding Officer (Jacqui Watson)

Jacqui would like to know if anyone books onto the Advanced & Foundation Courses & when you have completed it – please let her have sight of your certificate for her records.

Please book via Eventbrite – Follow the online instructions

#### **ONLINE: Advanced Module – Creating Safer Space**

Register by 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2022 for a Gathered Session on Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2022 at 7pm  
<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/online-version-advanced-module-safeguarding-training-registration-159105702439>

#### **ONLINE: Foundation Module – Creating Safer Space**

Tuesday 16th November 2021 at 9:30am

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/methodist-foundation-module-safeguarding-creating-space-registration-159103666349>

Tuesday 8th February 2022 at 7pm

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/copy-of-methodist-foundation-module-safeguarding-creating-space-registration-159103780691>

Thursday 12th May 2022 at 9:30am

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/methodist-foundation-module-safeguarding-creating-space-registration-159103937159>

## **Torrige Circuit Safeguarding Foundation Training (In Person)**

This will take place at **Buckland Brewer Methodist Church** at 2pm on Monday 8<sup>th</sup> November. Please contact Jacqui Watson on 01237 451437 or [pinkjacqui@btinternet.com](mailto:pinkjacqui@btinternet.com) for a space.

An 'In person' Advanced Safeguarding Course is being arranged to take place in the Torrige Circuit area – more details when they are available.

## **WEEKLY SERVICES TO USE ON ITS OWN OR WITH THE ZOOM SERVICE**

### **CIRCUIT ZOOM SERVICE for SUNDAY 3<sup>rd</sup> OCTOBER 2021**

#### **Call to Worship:**

*Almighty and eternal God, we come before your presence in worship. From all that we are, for all that you are, we offer our love to you.*

*You are our Maker and Minder: in you, darkness becomes light; chaos becomes order; and the desert bears fruit.*

*You are our Friend: reaching out a hand of forgiveness and hope through Jesus to the world; embracing us with strength and courage.*

*You are our Guide: breathing your Spirit in us and between us, so that we may know your grace in our lives and show your grace to the world.*

*Loving God, Maker and Minder, Friend and Guide, we come before you now in worship, in the name of Jesus. **Amen.***

#### **Hymn: 'With gladness we worship' (19 HAP / 17 STF)**

#### **Prayers of Adoration and Confession:**

*'Be still before the Lord, and wait patiently for him.'*

*Let us in silence centre our minds on God.*

*(Silence)*

*How great is your being, eternal God; how majestic is your name.*

*You hold all things in existence; you are the fountain of life, the source of all good, the desire of our hearts and the ground of our hope.*

*Without you we are nothing. All praise and glory be yours alone, for ever and ever. **Amen.***

*God of compassion and mercy, you have taught us in your word that the righteous live by faith. Forgive us for misplacing our trust.*

*Forgive us for depending too much on our own understanding and our own wisdom.*

*Forgive us for relying on our own good deeds, and our own strength.*

*(Silent confession)*

*Help us to trust in you alone, and increase our faith that we may guard the good treasure entrusted to us, with the help of the indwelling Spirit, and press on towards the goal that you have set before us in Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.***

#### **The Lord's Prayer**

#### **Psalm 8**

#### **Hymn: 'Forgive our sins as we forgive' (134 HAP / 423 STF)**

#### **Bible Reading: Genesis 2: 18-24**

#### **Mark 10: 2-16**



## Hymn: 'Have faith in God, my heart' (675 HAP / 466 STF)

### Address:

All our Bible passages today highlight the importance and value of human beings in the sight of God. Earlier in Genesis, we find that 'God created humankind in his image' (Genesis 1: 27), both male and female, and here we see God affirming people by offering companionship and care in human relationships.

This is a high view of human life and its potential for goodness and grace: Psalm 8, too, refers to human beings as being 'a little lower than God, and crowned...with honour and glory'. God has been aware from the start of the possibility of things going wrong for people, as we see in Genesis 3, and yet this is a marring of the good and the true, not a total disaster.

And very significantly, in our development as human beings and in our relating with each other, we are called to see each other as God sees us: despite our frailties, each of us has aspects of God's love and wisdom in our hearts and minds, sometimes more discernible than others, perhaps, but always there.

This is a radically hopeful view of how our life and society and culture are and could be, and Jesus makes it still more radical as he underlines our equality before and in God's love: men, women and children are all of equal standing.

Children, for example, have been and still are sadly undervalued and overlooked. The horrors of child labour and exploitation in Victorian England were clearly and movingly documented by Charles Dickens (e.g. in 'Oliver Twist'), and such realities still remain a blight on communities and countries around the world. Formal education for all in this country and others is still relatively recent (the early Sunday Schools played a formative part in this process from the 1770s), and still levels of educational opportunity differ across society. And socially children were often, in our culture, seen as 'little adults', and not given the freedom of self-expression they might have had. The thoughts, feelings and experiences of children have been and still sometimes may be ignored, for example in bereavement.

But Jesus, remarkably, so long ago took a far different view, making clear that we may see in children creative ways of perceiving and responding to God's love: 'whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will never enter it', Jesus said (Mark 10: 15).

Think, for example, of a child's capacity for wonder, often responding to what may seem unlikely things such as blowing bubbles or seeing small creatures.

Think of a child's capacity for trust, affection and kindness.

Think of a child's capacity for enthusiasm, loyalty and commitment.

And think of a child's sometimes apparently insatiable curiosity: all those 'Why' questions!

It is all too easy to exaggerate or over-sentimentalise these and other attributes of children, and to overlook their capacity for wilfulness, cruelty and wrongdoing, for example. Sadly, too, qualities such as wonder, affection and trust in children may all too easily be broken by other people and by circumstances in all sorts of ways.

But the point Jesus makes still holds: to notice and enter the kingdom of God, we may be helped and guided by a child-like humility – part of our sharing in the image of God. **Amen.**

## Hymn: 'Teach me, my God and King' (803 HAP / 668 STF)

### Prayers of Intercession:

*For all who are finding life difficult, people unemployed, struggling to make ends meet, seeking new opportunities, weighed down with responsibility, Loving Lord: **Hear our prayer.***

*For all who are sad, people who are sick, at home or in hospital, anxious for themselves or someone they love, worried by bad news, or lost in bereavement, Loving Lord: **Hear our prayer.***

*For all who feel unloved, lonely people, away from home and friends, families facing separation or divorce, children abused or ignored, Loving Lord: **Hear our prayer.***

*For all who want a better life, people who do not like the way they are, those afraid to go out, or unable to make new relationships, frightened by life itself, Loving Lord: **Hear our prayer.***

*God, you love each and every person; help those we have mentioned in our prayers to know your love, so that their lives are enriched and fulfilled, and they are free to love others.*

*Lord Jesus, who held a special place for children, we pray in loving compassion for the children of our own time.*

*We pray in the name of Jesus Christ. **Amen.***

### **Hymn: 'Love divine, all loves excelling' (267 HAP / 503 STF)**

#### **The Blessing:**

Wherever we go, may the joy of God the gracious be with us. Wherever we go, may the face of Christ the kindly be with us. Wherever we go, may the encompassing Spirit of grace be with us. Wherever we go, may the presence of the Trinity surround us to bless us, and to keep us. **Amen.**

HAP: 'Hymns and Psalms' - STF: 'Singing the Faith'

### **CIRCUIT ZOOM SERVICE FOR SUNDAY 10<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER 2021**

#### **Welcome**

Welcome to this evening service on Zoom. This Sunday has been designated as homeless Sunday and tonight I'd like to explore how recent events have impacted on the homeless and where we, as Christians, can support the work that is going on. I shall be using some resources provided by Housingjustice.org.uk and their site provides up to date information about homelessness if you want to find out more.

#### **Call to Worship**

'The Lord is a refuge to the oppressed, a stronghold in times of trouble. Those who know your name trust in you, for you Lord, have never forsaken those who seek you. Sing the praises of the Lord enthroned in Zion, proclaim among the nations what he has done.' (Ps 9.9-11)

#### **Hymn – Immortal Invisible God only wise (StF55)**

#### **Opening prayers**

*Loving God, as we come to worship you this evening quieten our minds and open our hearts. Inspire us as we listen to your word.*

*Heavenly Father, Almighty God: who loves all his children and is a home to those who are in need or trouble. Inspire your Church with the Spirit of Christ's love.*

*Empower us to battle the injustice of homelessness with compassion and to show each person in need your kindness.*

*Give us your wisdom and your steadfast perseverance for the future. Help us to live in the unity of the body of Christ, as we follow you. Through Jesus Christ our Lord, **Amen.***

#### **Prayers of Thanksgiving (based on Ps 96)**

*Today we offer our thanksgiving and gratitude to the giver of all good and perfect gifts,*

***The Lord be praised.***

*For the army of staff and volunteers from night shelter charities who continue to support those in hotels, those newly in accommodation and those who have unfortunately returned to the streets.*

**The Lord be praised.**

*For the partnerships between local authorities, voluntary and charity organisations, faith and local communities, working together to end peoples' homelessness.*

**The Lord be praised.**

*For the hands of friendship that have been extended to us and the grace we have received.*

**The Lord be praised.**

*For Your continual provision in our lives, may we be generous to those in need.*

**The Lord be praised.**

*For Your mercies that are new at dawn and sustain us through the day, echoing through the night.*

**The Lord be praised.**

*For the gift of Your Son and His blood poured out.*

**The Lord be praised. Great is the Lord and most worthy to be praised!**

*Heavenly Father, my neighbour has nowhere to call home:*

**Help me be aware.**

*My neighbour needs love and community:*

**Help me be active.**

*My neighbour is crying out for justice:*

**Help me be adamant to answer their plea for help. Amen.**

**Reading– Hebrews 4. 12-16**

**Hymn –Only by grace can we enter (StF565)**

**Reading– Mark 10. 17-30**

**Video – Homeless Sunday recording by Rev. Naomi Oates, Methodist Minister**

[\(Dropbox – Homeless Sunday 2021 – Simplify your life\)](#)

**Hymn – Longing for light, we wait in darkness (StF706)**

**Something to think about .....**

'Jesus said: The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. (Luke 4:18)

It's all too easy to become overwhelmed when we start to think about people who are homeless. We may think that there is little we can do about such a massive problem but the Church Homeless Trust has this advice for those who do want to help.

*Currently all the news seems to be bad. The number of people without homes in England, and across the world, is increasing. The willingness and ability to help these people is decreasing. What good news do we have for the homeless poor in our towns and cities today? Providing effective help for homeless people is very difficult. There are no easy answers. There are complex social and structural issues which cause and exacerbate homelessness. And at an individual level, many people who are homeless have suffered trauma and need professional support with mental health issues or addiction. Continuing Christ's ministry is a hard and never-ending task. However, we should not underestimate the difference that we can make. Many homeless people are sustained by food banks, drop-in centres and night shelters run by church communities. Isaiah puts it quite simply: Share your food with the hungry, and provide the poor wanderer with shelter, when you*

*see the naked clothe them. (Isaiah 58:7) Church Homeless Trust provides a free guide called 'How to Help Homeless People', which is available to download at churchhomelesstrust.org.uk or can be ordered in hard copy by contacting us on 020 7269 1630. We suggest that church groups take time to look through the guide and plan how they can help in a realistic and safe way. Likewise, individuals and groups that do not have the resources and capacity to take practical action, should not underestimate the value of prayer, advocacy and a kind gesture.*

We may feel that what we have to offer is so very little that we are powerless to help. We often say things like 'It's just a drop in the ocean, it won't make much difference' but as the poem mentioned on the video by Rev Naomi says, the ocean is made up of drops, without the drops, there would not be an ocean. Our little bit matters. So do what you can, look at the resources, talk about the subject and pray for those supporting the work on behalf of the homeless as well as the homeless themselves.

### **Hymn – Beauty for Brokenness, hope for despair (StF693)**

#### **Intercessory Prayers**

In peace let us pray to the Lord...

Lord God, hear our prayer for all women and men, boys and girls who do not have homes. For those sleeping in doorways and parks, in hostels and night shelters. For families who were evicted because they couldn't pay their rent. For those who have no relatives or friends who can take them in. For those who are afraid and without hope. Jesus, help us to see your face in the eyes of every homeless person we meet. And guide us in what we should do to help them.

For the peace that is from above, let us pray to the Lord:

**Lord, have mercy**

We pray for those who feel hopeless and alone. For those who have been let down by our social safety net.

For all these people, we pray that you will provide shelter, security and hope. We pray that those of us with warm houses not be lulled into complacency and forgetfulness.

For the peace that is from above, let us pray to the Lord:

**Lord, have mercy**

Dear Jesus, our Saviour, thank you for all my blessings, and may I work for you daily, storing up my treasures in heaven. I pray the homeless and poor will see the beauty in themselves and know that they are loved and cherished by you, our All-Faithful King. Be with organizations in our own country and all over the world as they fight against poverty and homelessness. May I do my part as one person on your wonderful earth

For the peace that is from above, let us pray to the Lord:

**Lord, have mercy**

Almighty God, you know our needs before we ask, help us to ask only that which accords to your will. Grant us for the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ, **Amen**

#### **The Lord's Prayer**

### **Hymn – I the Lord of sea and sky (StF663)**

### **The Blessing:**

God the Father, who created the world, give you grace to be wise stewards of his creation. **Amen**  
God the Son, who redeemed the world, inspire you to go out as labourers into his harvest. **Amen**  
God the Holy Spirit, whose breath fills the whole of creation, help you bear his fruits of love, joy and peace. **Amen**

**And may the grace of Christ our Saviour and the Father's boundless love with the Holy Spirit's favour rest upon us from above. Amen**

**CIRCUIT ZOOM SERVICE FOR SUNDAY 17<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER - 29<sup>TH</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time**

**Call to Worship: Psalm 91:9-16 (Sons of Korah Video)**

**Hymn: Jesus calls us here to meet him (StF 28)**

### **Prayer of Adoration**

*God of community,  
you look down from heaven  
on your children on earth,  
and are overcome with love.  
Love that reaches out  
to touch even the most faraway soul.*

*God the Father, who made all creation,  
and shares all good gifts with us.*

***We adore you.***

*God the Son,  
just as you walked on earth with your friends,  
you are always here with us.*

***We adore you.***

*God the Spirit,  
though we don't see you,  
we know you are deep within our hearts.  
You make sense of our place in your world.*

***We adore you. Amen.***

### **Prayer of Confession**

*Lord, sometimes we have very set ideas about communities. The ones we belong to. The ones we aspire to. The ones we stay away from. Help us to see as you do: you love every member of every community. We are all one in you. Forgive us when we look down on others, or consider our way alone to be the right one. Help us to work together with you for good, putting ourselves aside and others always first. **Amen.***

### **Assurance of Forgiveness**

God sees our hearts as we turn to him to seek forgiveness. He doesn't want us to fight for preference but to grow ever closer to him through pure and simple love. As we come to him, acknowledging that we don't always get it right, he freely and abundantly pardons us.

Thank you, most gracious God. **Amen.**

## **Hymn: Man of Sorrows! What a name (StF 361)**

### **Epistle Reading: Hebrews 5:1-10**

### **Gospel Reading: Mark 10:35-45**

## **Hymn: Speak, O Lord, as we come to you (StF 161)**

### **Sermon**

Even if we could, none of us could fill it!

What were they thinking? How could they ask such a question? Had they not listen to Jesus at all?

These are just some of the questions going around in my head when I read our Gospel passage for today. Of course one of the first things we see wrong here is that James and John have got the complete wrong end of the stick, they are barking up the wrong tree. Thinking Jesus will have an earthly kingdom one day and forgetting that he will have a heavenly one instead. And at this point what do the other disciples do, well they start to get angry with James and John, and why do this? Why not try and help Jesus explain why they cannot sit next to him on the throne. Well this is because they did not understand themselves.

So the question is why can't anyone sit next to Jesus on the throne? Well let's look at the passage from Hebrews, and the first place to look is not beginning at our passage but a few verses back. Verses fourteen to sixteen of chapter four which is the start of a section entitled Jesus the Great High Priest, where we found our passage for today later on in the chapter. Let me just read you verses fourteen to sixteen because this will help us understand about Jesus being on the throne. And how it links to our Gospel reading.

### **Hebrews 4:14-16**

*"Since, then, we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast to our confession. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who in every respect has been tested as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore approach the throne of grace with boldness, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need."*

This whole passage speaks of Jesus's death on the cross. The passage says that no one can take the honour of being a high priest unless God has called them to it. And that is what he did. He sent his only Son to be born into a normal earthly family, to then go on to live an earthly life only to die a painful death which he know was always going to happen. And why did he have to die well it was not for him o no it was so that we could be saved from our sinful ways. He died with our sin on his shoulders. Just imagine knowing you were going to die for that. Would you do it?

Taking you back to James and John and the other disciples for a minute, as Jesus know none of them really understood why James and John could not sit next to Jesus on the throne, Jesus like he always did sat them down, and explained it to them. So when they began to understand what he was telling them about how he has to die to save the world from sin. How did they both feel? This meditation which am going to share with you is from the view of both of the brothers. Listen to this.

We did know what we were asking,  
or at least we thought we did.

We wanted a share of the spoils,  
to be identified with Jesus,  
when he came into his kingdom,  
as his right-hand men,  
his loyal followers,  
sharing in the limelight,  
basking in his glory,  
only that's not what his glory meant.  
We hadn't fathomed it at all,  
both of us still thinking in terms of human values,  
the approbation of this world.  
And we couldn't have been more wrong,  
for the crown he would wear was one of thorns,  
his lifting up to be on a cross  
and his victory to be won through death.  
Would we have asked to share that glory had we known what it involved?  
Would we have taken the way of service and sacrifice,  
of costly commitment?  
I don't think so,  
for though we'd followed Jesus for years,  
we'd still barely grasped what he'd come to do.  
I tell you what though,  
we grasped it later,  
for we saw him suffer,  
watched him die,  
his life freely offered as a ransom for many.  
He's enthroned now, of course,  
but his kingdom is in heaven, not on earth,  
and he, the King of kings and Lord of lords,  
rules there as servant,  
the one who surrendered all to make us his.  
It's my turn now to take up my cross,  
and for me that's not just a figure of speech;  
it's meant literally,  
for I too now must give everything.  
I asked for glory,  
and I've got it,  
though not of this world.  
It's been an honour, Lord, to serve.

Jesus the son of man who came not to be served but to serve and then give his life as a ransom for many was given his throne by his father God, and that is what he had to do for it.

So let us go back to my opening line, even if we could, none of us could fill it, and that is true. No one in this world would give up their life freely to save the rest of the world. No one is sin free like Jesus. He died to save us from our sins. We all still sin, we all still ask for God's forgiveness every day.

We cannot be like him but we can try to get closer to him. By praying more to him, trying to understand his word more by reading our bibles more. Being a good neighbour by watching out for each other. And the most important thing taking up our cross every day and showing everyone that we love our Lord Jesus and will do everything for him.

### **Let us pray.**

*Lord Jesus Christ, we try to see beyond this world, but we struggle to do so, for the here and now is what we know best, the context in which we play out our daily lives. Though we strive to do otherwise, automatically we assess things from a human point of view, from what popular opinion counts as success.*

*Help us instead to grasp the values of your kingdom, in which defeat is victory, the last are first, the weak are strong, and death brings life – to recognise that glory, as you understand it, is not about lording it over others but about selfless service, about giving rather than receiving, a cross instead of a crown. If we would share you glory, teach us first what it truly means.*

**Hymn:** From heaven you came, helpless babe (StF 272)

### **Prayers of Intercession**

*Let us pray for right judgement and good desires in the Church and in the world.*

*Give to the servant Church grace to follow the example of her Lord who came into the world to serve... Shield her ministers from pride of place and desire for power, so that when they lead it shall be with humility and love.*

*Grant that those in authority shall act not as tyrants but with care for the rights of those they govern... Draw the nations of the world together in the love of peace and the ending of old rivalries.*

*Bless us, our families, friends and neighbours, with the spirit of love that seeks no advantage but only the good of all... Bless with the same spirit those who make decisions for this community.*

*Have mercy on all who suffer under tyranny, the nations governed by fear, those who are unjustly and bring treated in their work or in their homes... Forgive those who are locked in the struggle for power them to a better understanding.*

*We give thanks for the departed who have passed from the temptations and dangers of this world... May they be forever joyful in the place prepared for them in glory.*

*We offer our prayers through Christ who gave his life for the ransom of many. **Amen.***

### **The Lord's Prayer**

**Hymn:** Hail, thou once despised Jesus (StF 301)

### **The Blessing**

*God, who has called us into life and to him, make us worthy of our calling; strengthen, establish, settle us; and the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, be among us, and remain with us always. **Amen.***

**CIRCUIT ZOOM SERVICE FOR SUNDAY 24<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER 2021**



**Call to Worship:**

*Gracious God, give us the ears to hear your voice, the eyes to see your glory, the hearts to know your love, and the will to worship – for you are God, we are your people, and it is right that we offer you praise.*

*Bless our time of worship, that here and now, and wherever we are, we may know your ceaseless presence in the power of your Spirit. In the name of our living Lord Jesus Christ. **Amen.***

**Hymn: 'Born in song!' (486 HAP / 21 STF)****Prayers of Adoration and Confession:**

To you, O God, be glory for ever. **Holy is your name.**

You dwell in majesty and might. **Holy is your name.**

You act with truth and righteousness. **Holy is your name.**

You love the world without reserve. **Holy is your name.**

You deal with us with great compassion. **Holy is your name.**

To you, O God, be glory for ever. **Holy is your name. Amen.**

*Holy God, you call us to a life of holiness and command us to love you with our whole being and our neighbours as ourselves.*

*We confess that we have disobeyed your call and broken your commandments. We have yielded to temptation and turned from your ways. We have ignored the needs of our neighbours. We have been selfish and greedy and reluctant to share with others. We have been proud and complacent and unready for humble service.*

*(Silent confession)*

*In mercy and grace, forgive us, and plant in our hearts such love for you and our neighbours that our lives shall show forth your praise; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.***

**The Lord's Prayer****Psalm 126****Hymn: 'How sweet the name of Jesus sounds' (257 HAP / 322 STF)****Bible Reading: Hebrews 7: 23-28****Bible Reading: Mark 10: 46-52****Hymn: 'God whose almighty word' (29 HAP / 106 STF)****Address:**

The story of Bartimaeus is about vision in more ways than one. Bartimaeus not only wants his physical sight, but he knows where to go for help and who to ask for it: Jesus commends him for his faith (though significantly it must be remembered that faith does not guarantee physical or other cure from ills and illnesses).

Insight does not depend on having physical sight: John Milton produced the epic poem 'Paradise Lost' when he was blind, and we may reflect too on similar feats such as Beethoven creating musical masterpieces when he was deaf. More recently, too, in the twentieth-century Helen Keller achieved much while being blind and deaf.

Perhaps all this is reflected in the several meanings we attach to the word 'vision'. One is clearly physical sight, and how precious that is as the story of Bartimaeus reminds us.

But we also use 'vision' in a more symbolic way, suggesting the use of the imagination and 'the mind's eye' to help bring hope and inspiration. So at Pentecost, Peter quotes from the Old Testament prophet Joel where he speaks of young people seeing visions and old people dreaming dreams (Acts 2: 17). Think too of Martin Luther King Junior's great 'I have a dream' speech back in 1963, echoing the great visions of justice and peace we find in such sources as the Jewish prophet Isaiah.

In these ways, 'seeing' is about 'what might be' as well as 'what is', affirming what is healthy and creative in the here and now but also looking for new and better ways of being human and living together in society. Les Isaacs had a vision to create the Street Pastors movement some years ago, and this has now become a reality in many places across the world, with volunteers working alongside the police and local authorities in helping to make the streets of our towns and cities safer places to be. And we have similar organisations in School Pastors and (in Bude) Beach Pastors.

Let us pause for a few moments to consider the visions we have for the world, the Church, our communities, ourselves.

*(Pause)*

What dreams are we being given by God as we follow Jesus, as Bartimaeus did?

*(Pause)*

Who are our visionaries, within the Church and beyond it?

*(Pause)*

That may seem to take us a good way from our starting-point, but themes of faith, courage and renewal are there in the encounter between Jesus and Bartimaeus as well.

And perhaps it is no accident that Mark places this episode just before the events of Holy Week: the inward eyes of many would soon be opened to who Jesus was and what he came to do.

How do we see Jesus? **Amen.**

### **Hymn: 'Amazing grace' (215 HAP / 440 STF)**

#### **Prayers of Intercession:**

*God of salvation, healing and wholeness, we bring our prayers to you that we might know your healing grace.*

*We pray for people who are ill, physically, mentally, emotionally or spiritually, in hospital or at home.*

*(Silence)*

*Loving God, may each one know the peace, hope and courage of Christ.*

*The Lord hears our prayer / **Thanks be to God.***

*We pray for people of any age who are caring for a sick loved one.*

*(Silence)*

*Merciful God, may each one know the value of what they do, find space for themselves and accept help that is offered by other people.*

*The Lord hears our prayer / **Thanks be to God.***

*God of compassion, we pray for people who are dying and those who watch with them, and we pray too for people who are mourning the loss of a loved one.*

*(Silence)*

*God of hope, may each one find ways to share their feelings and fears, and so know companionship even in their darkest hour.*

*The Lord hears our prayer / **Thanks be to God.***

*Holy God, we pray for people who offer medical help and emotional or spiritual support and care. We pray for doctors, for nurses, for psychiatrists, for counsellors, for ministers, and for others who seek to help people in different ways.*

*(Silence)*

*Lord God, may each one work with sensitivity and care, seek the best for those they help and know where they can find support when they need it.*

*The Lord hears our prayer / **Thanks be to God.***

*God of salvation, healing and wholeness, we bring our prayers to you in the name of Jesus Christ the Healer. **Amen.***

**Hymn: 'Lord, thy Church on earth is seeking' (774 HAP) / 'I, the Lord of sea and sky' (663 STF)**

**The Blessing:**

*God, who calls us to follow, enlarge our vision of you, let your Spirit move through us, filling us with light and life. Make us clear channels of your love and grace that we might serve you in serving others. Jesus, the light of the world goes with us. And to that end, the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, be with us and with all people, now and always.*

**Amen.**

HAP: 'Hymns and Psalms' - STF: 'Singing the Faith'

**CIRCUIT ZOOM SERVICE FOR SUNDAY 31ST OCTOBER 2021**

**A Service on the eve of the COP 26 Conference**

*'This day I call the heavens and the earth as witnesses against you that I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Now choose life, so that you and your children may live'*

*Deuteronomy 30:19*

**StF 102 For the Beauty of the earth**

**Prayer**

*You spoke into the silence*

*Light suffusing darkness.*

*You spoke into the silence*

*Blowing clean life giving air into the space*

*You spoke into the silence*

*Warmth and cold infusing the air*

*You spoke into the silence*

*Solid ground formed out of gushing water.*

*You spoke voice carrying over the sound*

*People, plants and animals came to life.*

*You spoke each creation balanced against the next so life would be abundant and sustainable.*

*You saw everything you had made and declared it to be very good.*

*You spoke choosing to give us humans stewardship over all that You had made.*

*We speak and act*

*Darkness of pollution limits light levels and damages the air we breathe.*

*We speak and act  
Ground poisoned, burnt, stripped bare.  
We speak and act  
Spoiling, limiting, destroying quality of life and life itself.  
We speak and act*

*Without hearing Your call over the noise of the world to be good stewards.  
You speak. You create. You want us to be stewards of Your creation.  
We come to You to re-learn how to care for the earth and people you have made.  
In Jesus name - **Amen***

### **Prayer of Confession**

*You delight in creation, its colour and diversity; yet we have misused the earth  
and plundered its resources for our own selfish ends.*

*Lord, have mercy.*

*Lord, have mercy.*

*You have brought order out of chaos, light in darkness, good out of evil,  
but we have preferred darkness in words and deeds which dishonour God's holy name.*

*Christ, have mercy.*

*Christ, have mercy.*

*You have showered us with blessings, but we have been grudging towards others  
and lacking in generosity in word and deed.*

*Lord, have mercy.*

*Lord, have mercy.*

### **Collect**

*Almighty God, you have created the heavens and the earth, and made us in your image: teach us  
to discern your hand in all your works and your likeness in all your children; through Jesus Christ  
your Son our Lord, who with you and the Holy Spirit reigns supreme over all things now and for  
ever. **Amen***

### **Psalm 104:1-10-26**

### **StF 107 I sing the almighty power of God**

### **Mark 4:1-10**

**Talk 1** i) God's love of Creation

ii) How we damage Creation and how that is impacting people in poverty

#### **i) God's Love of Creation**

Our readings from Psalm 104 and Mark 4 vary in many ways: their purpose, their setting, and when they were written, are all noticeably different. But they also have a lot in common.

Both passages demonstrate an intimate knowledge of creation.

The psalmist describes the beauty of creation, declaring, 'O Lord, what a variety of things you have made! In wisdom you have made them all.' The author understood how creation works. They knew where the birds nest, and where the mountain goats live, the great skill of a lion as it hunts its prey, and the vast array of creatures living in the water.

They knew creation intimately: they must have spent time observing and learning how all things fit together, and they were inspired to worship as a result! In verse 31 of the psalm, just after the part we've heard, it says God rejoices in his creation. The beauty and variety of all he's made brings God joy!

Similarly, in our New Testament passage from Mark, Jesus demonstrates his own detailed understanding of creation. He describes the issues that can hinder the growth of crops: he knows how drought can cause plants to wither, or how rocky ground prevents the development of roots. Even though he was a carpenter by trade, he knew the importance of nutritious soil for a bountiful harvest. Jesus has an intimate knowledge of the workings of creation.

This shouldn't be a surprise to us; the Bible tells us how all things were created for Jesus and by Jesus. In him, all things hold together: he's Lord of all creation. It's not a surprise that Jesus considers it important to observe the creation around us.

But Jesus shows us something else too. He teaches us that not only does he have an intimate relationship with creation, but that also we can learn about our heavenly Father through it. Whether it's through the relentlessness of weeds, the character of birds or the power of a mustard seed, time and again, Jesus points to the Father and the way he works through creation. We live in a busy world and often fail to take time to observe creation, but as the writer of Proverbs advises, 'Go to the ant... consider its ways.'

From the psalms to the gospels, we see the ways creation can reveal more of God's character and inspire us to worship, and we see how God delights and finds joy in all he's made!

## ii) **How we damage Creation and how that is impacting people in poverty**

But when we look at the world today, we can see the many ways that we've damaged this beautiful gift God has given us. The ways that we live and work and consume have pushed creation to breaking point.

In Paul's letter to the church in Rome, he explains how creation is in bondage to decay, trapped in frustration and crying out for liberation.

Whether it's plastic pollution littering seas and the poorest communities, or species going extinct at record rates, or the climate crisis making droughts, floods and storms more frequent and severe, we've misused and damaged this beautiful gift of God. We're feeling some of the effects in the UK, but the impacts are hitting people in poverty the hardest.

It's hard to grasp what that really means: it's big and abstract.

So let me quickly introduce you to Orbisa.

In the service we will show a Video but here is her story

This is her on the screen. She's a 35-year-old mother who lives in the Afar region of Ethiopia. A few years ago, Orbisa could rely on the rains: now, because of the changing climate, they are far less predictable. So she walks up to ten hours a day, every day, to find water for her family to drink. Her livelihood depends on selling livestock – but drought has killed nine of her ten cows. She's lost nearly half her goats too. Let's pause for a second... The stark reality is that Orbisa is paying the price for emissions which have mostly been generated by developed nations like ours. This is what she said to Tearfund: 'We used to get rain every four to five months; the area was very fertile and green. But it hasn't rained for six months and I don't know when it will rain next. I feel worried whenever I think about the future.'

Around the world, millions of people like Orbisa are being pushed back into poverty because of climate change. In 2016, world hunger started to increase for the first time in a decade and has

continued to increase every year since. And that's because of climate change and conflict, with climate change exacerbating the risk of conflict.

The science is clear: the climate crisis is being caused by us, especially us in developed nations, and the impacts are accelerating. We are running out of time to prevent the worst effects. We have to act fast and change the way we live, and governments have to be much more ambitious. But right now, we have a unique window of opportunity. How the government chooses to rebuild after the pandemic will shape our economy, climate and society in the decades to come. This is a crucial moment.

In the Bible Jesus tells us the most important commandments are to love God, and to love our neighbours. Tackling the climate crisis is vital to both of these – honouring God by protecting his creation and loving our global neighbours who are hit first and worst by what is now a climate emergency.

## **StF 727 God in his love for us gave us this planet**

**Talk 2** i) The hope we find in Jesus  
ii) An invitation to respond

### **i) The Hope we have in Jesus**

Colossians 1:19–20 says this:

*'For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him [Jesus], and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross. 'To reconcile to himself all things, things on earth and things in heaven...' Our world is broken, but God is at work reconciling and restoring.'*

Animation here: <https://vimeo.com/451780056/841556a0a7>

### **Explanation**

To me, this says I need a much bigger view of Jesus. He didn't come just to reconcile me with my Father in heaven, but to reconcile and restore ALL things – in heaven and on earth! That's far more than just us. Jesus came to begin the restoration of the world to how God intended it to be. To make all things new.

Jesus values creation, shows us how it reveals the love of the Father, and brings restoration and healing – uniting everything back with God.

We can have hope. Because of Jesus' death on the cross, all things can be made new; everything sin has broken and corrupted is being restored and reconciled to God. And what's more, we can be part of it. Jesus invites us to participate in his mission in this world.

The world is crying out, but God is at work and we're invited to join him in a ministry of reconciliation – reconciling people to their Father, but also reconciling people to the creation we've been given to steward, and seeing it restored. This is the fullness of the gospel, not a side issue.

### **ii) An Invitation to Respond**

So how can we respond?

To answer that question, let's turn to Esther in the Old Testament. In the face of a crisis, she responds with faith and courage.

In the book of Esther, the Persian king makes plans to wipe out the Jews, but Esther's uncle, Mordecai, warns her about the plan. Esther's response to the news of the threat to her people is remarkable. She tells Mordecai to gather people together to pray and fast. While they do so, she

will approach the king and ask him to reconsider – even though she knows that it is against the law and she could lose her life.

In chapter 4 she says to Mordecai: 'Go, gather together all the Jews who are in Susa, and fast for me. Do not eat or drink for three days, night or day. I and my attendants will fast as you do. When this is done, I will go to the king, even though it is against the law. And if I perish, I perish.'

Esther teaches us that following Jesus requires us to speak up against injustice, even when it's costly to ourselves – and that we should act from a foundation of prayer.

So I want to invite you to commit to both of these things: to prayer and to action, so that we can address the huge injustice of climate change and its impact on the poorest people around the world, especially in the days that follow during the COP 26 Conference.

## **Intercessions**

*Let us pray to God the almighty, the King of creation.*

*God said, 'Let there be light.'*

*Eternal God, we thank you for your light and your truth.*

*We praise you for your fatherly care in creating a universe which proclaims your glory.*

*Inspire us to worship you, the creator of all and let your light shine upon our world.*

*God of life: **hear our prayer.***

*God said, 'Let there be a firmament in the midst of the heavens.'*

*We thank you for the vastness of the universe and the mysteries of space.*

*We pray for all scientists and astronomers who extend the boundaries of our knowledge.*

*As we contemplate the wonder of the heavens, confirm us in the truth that every human being is known and loved by you.*

*God of life: **hear our prayer.***

*God said, 'Let the waters be gathered together, and let dry land appear.'*

*We thank you for the beauty of the earth, for the diversity of land and sea, for the resources of the earth.*

*Give us the will to cherish this planet and to use its riches for the good and welfare of all.*

*God of life: **hear our prayer.***

*God said, 'Let there be lights in the sky to separate the day and the night.'*

*We thank you for the warmth of the sun, the light of the moon, the glory of the stars.*

*We praise you for the formations of clouds, the radiance of dawn and sunset.*

*Save us from wasting or abusing the energy on which all life depends.*

*Open our eyes to behold your beauty, and our lips to praise your name.*

*God of life: **hear our prayer.***

*God said, 'Let the waters bring forth living creatures, and let birds fly across the sky.'*

*We thank you for the teeming life of the seas, and the flight of the birds.*

*Help us to protect the environment so that all life may flourish.*

*God of life: **hear our prayer.***

*God said, 'Let the earth bring forth living creatures of every kind.'*

*We rejoice in the variety of animal life.*

*Grant us grace to treat all animals with respect and care; to protect endangered species, to preserve the variety of habitats, and to honour the delicate balance of nature.*

*God of life: **hear our prayer.***

God said, 'Let us create human beings in our own image.'

We pray for the human family.

We exult in its diversity and giftedness, we repent of its sins, divisions and violence.

By the power of your Spirit, restore your image within us, through Christ who came to remake us by his death and resurrection.

God of life: **hear our prayer.**

Heavenly Father, you have filled the world with beauty:

open our eyes to behold your gracious hand in all your works; that, rejoicing in your whole creation, we may learn to serve you with gladness; for the sake of him through whom all things were made, your Son Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

## The Lord's Prayer

### StF 692 Your hand, O God, has guided Blessing

#### **CIRCUIT ACTION FOR CHILDREN—A VICTORIAN FAMILY CHRISTMAS CONCERT.**

**Advance notice** for Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> December - 6.30pm for 7pm start. The church at Torrington and the Circuit has many talented people. Please offer your help to raise funds for this important work. Any soloists, poetry readers, drama groups, choir, musicians etc will be welcomed. The theme will be central. Admission fee to be decided and due to Covid restrictions tea/coffee together with a piece of wrapped cake will be included. Victorian dress optional. Prizes for the best costume. Contact Vivienne Sheriff on 01805 623024,

Let us light up Christmas and enjoy a wonderful evening of entertainment by our local talented people.

#### **LANGTREE METHODIST CHURCH - SAMARITANS PURSE OPERATION CHRISTMAS CHILD SHOEBOX APPEAL**



We decided earlier in the year to support Operation Christmas Child Shoebox Appeal as in previous years. We are not sure if we will be able to meet this year for a packing party so we will continue to pack boxes in our homes. (If the situation improves and meeting indoors becomes a plausible option, I will let you know). We have some flat-pack boxes available (saves time wrapping) and some leaflets with packing instructions and ideas. If you would like a box/leaflet, please let me know and I will make sure you get one. I can make sure that any filled boxes get to a distribution centre in November. More details are available on the Samaritans Purse website with options to pack a box online, stories, craft ideas, resources etc.

<https://www.samaritans-purse.org.uk/what-we-do/operation-christmas-child/>

Many thanks



Cathy Ley on 01805 601247 or [withacott@btconnect.com](mailto:withacott@btconnect.com)

## **FROM JULIA SPENCER - TUESDAY AUTUMN BIBLE STUDY 'WOMEN WHO MET JESUS'**

Place: 10 Yeo Drive Appledore EX39 1RD

Date and Time: WEEKLY from September 14th Tuesday's @ 2-3 pm.

### **Topics and Readings :**

Week 1. Psalm 48. Great is the Lord, our God. Women who met Jesus

Week 2. The Samaritan Woman. John: 4: 5 - 26 [ 27 - 42]

Week 3. The Woman Who touched his garment. Mark 5: 24 - 34

Week 4. The Syro Phoenician Woman. Matthew 15: 21 - 28

Week 5. The Woman Taken in Adultery. John 7: 53 - 8: 11

Week 6. He Woman Who anointed Jesus for his Death. Matthew 26: 6 – 13

Week 7. The Woman Bent Double. Luke 13: 10 – 17

This Bible Study Group is open to anyone: YOU are welcome.

Please phone Julia for more information on 01237 425 361

### **BUCKLAND BREWER**

The new updated Chapel has now restarted Services in Buckland & Community activities have started to resume. There will be an official **re-opening Service** on Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> November at 3pm when Rev Graham Thompson, Chair of the Plymouth & Exeter District & President Designate of the Methodist Conference, will led worship – this should be Live Streamed but please come along.

There was a problem with the Live Streaming System but the problem has been identified – we will now Live Stream on the Buckland Brewer Methodist Church You-Tube Channel and not on the Facebook page.

The Weekly '**Time Together**' **Toddler Group** has recently restarted at **Buckland Brewer Methodist Church** with both Methodist & Anglican volunteers being present. We meet on Monday's from 9.30am to about 12noon initially during Term Time, but we have been meeting during the Summer. The cost is £1.50 per family & the numbers have been steadily increasing – families do not just come from Buckland but from neighbouring communities – they often come as friendship groups – so if anyone is aware of any Babies & Toddlers, who with their parents, grandparents or carers are looking for a 'chilled out' session of play & chat with tea/coffee/biscuits – just point them in the direction of Buckland Chapel – Dave Watson 07484 223515 or [bucklanddave1953@btinternet.com](mailto:bucklanddave1953@btinternet.com)

A **Wednesday Weekly Coffee Morning** is running in **Buckland Brewer Methodist Church** from 10am-12noon – this is for **ALL** but especially for those who have moved into the parish/village since lockdown or anyone who would like to meet others in the community over a mug of tea/coffee with Tradecraft Biscuits & possibly Cake!! – details from Dave Watson (see above)

The **Snooker Club** has restarted at 7pm at the Chapel on a Monday Evening & the monthly '**Mini Market**' has now resumed – this is to raise funds for the Community & takes place in the Chapel from 10am-1pm – the next one is on Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> October

### **ALVERDISCOTT METHODIST CHURCH**

There will be a **Coffee Morning** at **Alverdiscott** on Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> October from 10am to 12noon.

The charity to Benefit will be The Christian Hospital in Berhampur, India. This is the MWiB project for the two years following. The district is also supporting this venture.

## **PARKHAM METHODIST CHURCH**

Over 200 adults plus children visiting the various Gardens available in the Parkham Open Garden Weekend, with many happy people socialising at a distance plus much food and laughter, £1680.50 raised – Half each for Parkham Chapel & Parkham Parish Church

### **ALL WE CAN AND Y CARE INTERNATIONAL ANNOUNCE NEW PARTNERSHIP**

Covid-19 has thrown into sharp focus the many injustices which shape our world. Vaccine inequality, gender injustice and youth unemployment have all risen sharply as a result of the pandemic. So there has never been a better time for organisations to come together to tackle these challenges.

That's why All We Can has entered into a formal a partnership with Y Care International, the relief and development agency of the YMCA in England and Wales, Scotland and Ireland. United by our commitment to work with talented change-makers rooted in local communities, our shared faith, and our drive fearlessly to challenge poverty and injustice, the union of All We Can and Y Care International will help to enable millions of people across the globe to see their potential fulfilled.

Y Care International was founded by humanitarian Terry Waite, together with National Council of England members, John Naylor and David Bedford – a Methodist local preacher. Today, the charity supports international youth and community focused development and emergency programmes. They seek to help marginalised young people and their communities gain the skills and employment opportunities needed to embrace a better future.

All We Can and Y Care began discussing and sharing experiences about partnership approaches more than two years ago, and then started to explore ways of collaborating and working more closely together earlier this year. Y Care International will remain a separate charitable body, but all its services will be fulfilled by All We Can. Its staff will join All We Can's small and friendly team, and together, we will work towards the mission of both charities.

All We Can's dedicated supporters will find that everything they know and love about our work will remain the same. However, joining together with Y Care International will allow us to invite more talented organisations and churches to engage with our innovative, locally-led partnership approach. It also allows for greater collaboration during humanitarian emergencies – meaning that together, we can respond quickly and effectively in times of urgent need.

### **The following is the Plan for October & November**

|                      |                             |
|----------------------|-----------------------------|
| HC= Holy Communion   | PC= At Parish Church        |
| MC= Methodist Church | C& F= Coffee and Fellowship |
| Café= Café Worship   | SB=Sunday Breakfast         |

### **Post codes of Chapels**

|                                   |                             |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Alverdiscott – EX31 3PT           | Alwington – EX39 5BU        |
| Bideford (High Street) – EX39 2AN | Black Torrington – EX21 5QF |
| Buckland Brewer – EX39 5LP        | Langtree – EX38 8NF         |
| Littleham – EX39 5HW              | Milton Damerel – EX22 7DJ   |
| Northam – EX39 1BS                | Parkham – EX39 5PG          |
| Shebbear – EX21 5SJ               | Sheepwash – EX21 5NA        |
| Thornhillhead – EX39 5NT          | Torrington – EX38 8AL       |

|  | <b>Oct 3</b>                                     | <b>Oct 10</b>   | <b>Oct 17</b>                      | <b>Oct 24</b>                                | <b>Oct 31</b>   |
|--|--|---|------------------------------------|--|---|
|  | <b>Ordinary 27</b>                               | <b>Ordinary 28</b>  | <b>Ordinary 29</b>                 | <b>Ordinary 30</b>                           | <b>Ordinary 31</b>                                    |
| <b>Circuit Zoom</b>                          | <b>6.30pm</b>                                    | <b>6.30pm</b>   | <b>6.30pm</b>                      | <b>6.30pm</b>                                | <b>6.30pm</b>   |
| <b>Alverdiscott</b><br><b>11am</b>           | <b>Blackhall</b><br><b>Harvest</b>               |   | <b>Withall</b>                     |  | <b>Potter CW</b>                                      |
| <b>5pm</b>                                   |  | <b>Vidamour CW</b>  |                                    | <b>Blackhall HC</b><br><b>Explore</b>        |   |
| <b>Alwington</b><br><b>11am</b>              |  |   | <b>Vidamour</b><br><b>Harvest</b>  |  |   |
| <b>Bideford</b><br><b>10.30am</b>            | <b>Vidamour HC</b>                               | <b>D Watson</b>   | <b>Potter</b>                      | <b>Ley</b>                                   | <b>Vidamour HC</b>                                    |
| <b>Black Torrington</b><br><b>Friday 3pm</b> |  | <b>Blackhall</b><br><b>Harvest</b><br><b>8<sup>th</sup> Oct</b> |                                    | <b>Withall</b><br><b>22<sup>nd</sup> Oct</b> |   |
| <b>Buckland Brewer</b><br><b>10am (PC)</b>   | <b>HC (9.30am)</b>                               | <b>Hall-Tomkin</b>  |                                    |  |   |
| <b>10am (MC)</b>                             |  |   | <b>Anglican</b><br><b>preacher</b> | <b>D Watson</b>                              | <b>Blackhall</b><br><b>11am</b><br><b>Christening</b> |
| <b>Clovelly</b>                              |  |   |                                    |  |   |
| <b>Langtree</b><br><b>11am</b>               | <b>F Watson</b>                                  | <b>Parish Church</b>  | <b>Blackhall HC</b>                |  |   |
| <b>Littleham</b><br><b>10.30am</b>           | <b>Burgon HC</b>                                 |   | <b>Spencer</b>                     |  |   |
| <b>Milton Damerel</b><br><b>11am</b>         |  | <b>Ley</b><br><b>All age</b>                                    |                                    | <b>Hall-Tomkin</b>                           |   |
| <b>Northam</b><br><b>10.30am</b>             | <b>Harris</b><br><b>Harvest</b>                  | <b>Vidamour</b>   | <b>Burgon HC</b>                   | <b>Sheriff</b>                               | <b>Ley</b>  |
| <b>Parkham</b><br><b>11am</b>                | <b>Parish</b><br><b>Church</b><br><b>Harvest</b> | <b>SB</b>   |                                    | <b>F Watson</b>                              |   |
| <b>Shebbear</b><br><b>11am</b>               |  | <b>C&amp;F</b>  |                                    | <b>Withall</b>                               |   |
| <b>Sheepwash</b><br><b>2.45pm</b>            | <b>Blackhall US</b>                              |   |                                    |  |   |
| <b>Thornhillhead</b><br><b>11am</b>          |  | <b>Blackhall</b><br><b>Harvest</b>                              |                                    |  |   |
| <b>Torrington</b><br><b>10.30pm</b>          | <b>Bray</b>                                      | <b>Briggs</b>   | <b>Harris</b>                      | <b>Blackhall HC</b>                          | <b>Burd</b>   |

### Lectionary

Oct 3 – Job 1:1, 2:1-10; Psalm 26; Hebrews 1:1-4,2:5-12; Mark 10:2-16

Oct 10 – Job 23:1-9,16-17; Psalm 22:1-15; Hebrews 4:12-16; Mark 10:17-31

Oct 17 – Job 38:1-7; Psalm 104:1-9,24,35c; Hebrews 5:1-10; Mark 10:35-45

Oct 24 – Job 42:1-6,10-17; Psalm 38:1-7(19-22); Hebrews 7:23-28; Mark 10:46-52

Oct 31- Ruth 1:1-18; Psalm 146; Hebrews 9:11-14; Mark 12:28-34

|  | <b>Nov 7</b>                                     | <b>Nov 14</b>  | <b>Nov 21</b>                                | <b>Nov 28</b>                           |
|--|--|--|--|---|
|  | <b>Ordinary 32</b>                               | <b>Ordinary 33<br/>Remembrance</b>                                 | <b>Sun before Advent<br/>Christ the King</b> | <b>Advent</b>                           |
| <b>Circuit Zoom</b>                                  | <b>6.30pm</b>                                    | <b>6.30pm</b>  | <b>6.30pm</b>                                | <b>6.30pm</b>                           |
| <b>Alverdiscott</b><br>11am<br><br>5pm               | <b>Harris</b>                                    | <b>Potter CW</b>   | <b>Blackhall HC</b>                          | <b>LA Explore</b>                       |
| <b>Alwington</b><br>11am                             |  |  | <b>Harris HC</b>                             |   |
| <b>Bideford</b><br>10.30am                           | <b>TBC</b>                                       | <b>Bate</b>  | <b>Sheriff</b>                               | <b>Harris</b>                           |
| <b>Black Torrington</b><br>Friday 3pm                |  | <b>Vidamour HC</b><br>12 <sup>th</sup> Nov                         |  | <b>F Watson</b><br>26 <sup>th</sup> Nov |
| <b>Buckland Brewer</b><br>10am (PC)<br><br>10am (MC) | <b>HC (9.30am)</b><br><br><b>Thompson</b><br>3pm | <b>M Bray Rem</b><br>10.45am<br><b>War Memorial</b><br>& <b>MC</b> | <b>Anglican preacher</b>                     | <b>Bate</b>                             |
| <b>Clovelly</b>                                      |  |  |  |   |
| <b>Langtree</b><br>11am                              | <b>Bate</b>                                      | <b>Parish Church</b>   | <b>Withall</b>                               |   |
| <b>Littleham</b><br>10.30am                          | <b>D Watson</b>                                  |  | <b>Dawe</b>                                  |   |
| <b>Milton Damerel</b><br>11am                        |  | <b>Harris</b><br>All age   |  |   |
| <b>Northam</b><br>10.30am                            | <b>Vidamour +<br/>Thompson</b>                   | <b>PC Rem</b>  | <b>Macbeth</b>                               | <b>Vidamour HC</b>                      |
| <b>Parkham</b><br>11am                               | <b>SB</b>  | <b>PC Rem</b>  | <b>Vidamour HC</b>                           |   |
| <b>Shebbear</b><br>1am                               |  | <b>PC Rem</b>  |  | <b>Spencer</b>                          |
| <b>Sheepwash</b><br>11am                             | <b>United Service</b><br><b>Burgon</b>           |  |  |   |
| <b>Thornhillhead</b><br>11am                         |  | <b>Vidamour HC</b>   |  |   |
| <b>Torrington</b><br>10.30pm                         | <b>Blackhall</b>                                 | <b>Sheriff</b><br>Rem  | <b>A Biggs</b>                               | <b>Whatton HC</b>                       |

### **Lectionary**

Nov 7 – Ruth 3:1-5,4:13-17; Psalm 127; Hebrews 9:24-28; Mark 12:38-44

Nov 14- 1 Samuel 1:4-20; 1 Samuel 2:1-10; Hebrews 10:11-25; Mark 13:1-8

Nov 21 – 2 Samuel 23:1-7; Psalm 132:1-18; Revelations 1:4b-8; John 18:33-17

Nov 28 – Jeremiah 33:14-16; Psalm 25:1-10; 1 Thessalonians 3:9-13; Luke 21:25-36