

Bangor & Holyhead Methodist Circuit

Sunday Worship Sheet for Mothering Sunday 19th March 2023

Prepared by Anne Jackson, a Local Preacher from, St John's, Bangor.

Welcome to Worship on 4th Sunday in Lent, Mothering Sunday

Call to Worship

Jesus said, "While I am in the world, I am the light of the world."

Lord Jesus we long for your light in our lives today.

Hymn 134 StF. Christ whose glory fills the skies, Christ the true and only Light.

The meaning of Mothering Sunday has changed over time. In today's culture it is used to encourage children, young and old, to show appreciation to their mothers. I am all for that. It's a good thing to offer thanks to each other, especially to family and friends whom we can so easily take for granted.

However, reflecting on family life can be painful for many. If so, acknowledging the hurt and pain is the first step towards healing. As the old hymn says, "do your friends despise, forsake you; take it to the Lord in prayer..." Those who have been severely damaged may need human help when seeking God's healing.

There are legitimate tensions in family life as we move from dependence to independence and sometimes back to dependence. We can see that pattern in the Holy Family.

Like all babies, Jesus was totally dependent on his parents. As a teenager, Jesus, much to the consternation of his parents, tried to follow his own interests and remain in Jerusalem to study the scriptures. His parents thought that was not in his best interests and insisted that he came home with them. I imagine it was a very disappointed Jesus who returned home to Nazareth. [Luke 2:14 & 15] During the height of his ministry Jesus refused to be interrupted for a visit of Mary and the family. [Mark 3:31-35. I wonder if they were urging caution or suggesting he return home to safety. As Jesus explained to his disciples "I love the Father and do exactly what my Father has commanded me." [John 14:31] That obedience led to the cross. Adults must make their own decisions. From the cross Jesus provided care for Mary in her old age; arrangements she accepted graciously. [John 19:26 & 27]

In the rough and tumble of family life, these inevitable changes don't always go smoothly. Even caring families experience misunderstandings, hasty words and insensitive remarks. Our own experience may be filled with a mixture of emotions: joy and thanksgiving, shame and regret, or hurt and anger.

Whatever memories Mothering Sunday bring to mind let us bring them to God in prayer.

A Reflective Prayer about Relationships.

We give thanks for all who have showed us love and kindness.

We give thanks for the opportunities we have had to care for and nurture others.

We ask for healing for any hurt or damage caused by the insensitive or cruel action of significant others.

We ask for forgiveness for any damage we have caused to those we love.
Praise God we worship a loving, forgiving, renewing God who makes all things new.

A Prayer for Mothering Sunday

In every family there are seasons of joys and challenges:

Seasons of laughter and seasons of sadness.

Times of unexpected joy and times of unwanted trauma.

Circumstances to cherish and circumstances to overcome.

Seasons of harmony and seasons of discord.

Times of resilience and times of weakness.

Moments to look forward to with hope and moments to look back with thanksgiving.

God in every circumstance and season we bring you our worship and praise. Amen

A Mothers' Union Prayer.

Hymn 531 StF. What a friend we have in Jesus, all our sins and griefs to bear.

Read Ephesians 5:1-2 & 8-15. Living in the Light.

Prayers

Lord Jesus, holy and anointed one, open our eyes to see your power and majesty.

Loving Lord we thank you that we belong to you and live in the light of your love.

Lord Jesus help us to reflect your light in our daily lives.

Help us we use the fruit of your Holy Spirit, love, joy, peace, kindness, goodness, truthfulness and justice to enrich the lives of those around us.

Lord keep us from evil, from selfishness and bad temper, from nastiness and gossip, and all that harms both us and others.

May our lives bring glory to your Holy name. Amen

Prayer of Confession

God of grace, forgive the blindness that stops us from seeing the best in people.

Forgive us for assuming that we are always right, so others must be wrong.

Forgive us when we ignore people's ideas and aspiration because of disability or status.

Forgive our blindness to poverty, to prejudice, to injustice.

Forgive us, and change us Lord.

Open our eyes to the opportunity of learning from others. **Amen.**

Intercessory Prayers.

We pray for those who suffer prejudice because of any kind of disability— physical, emotional, social or mental.

Help us to recognise our prejudices and to treat all people equally.

Heal those who mourn, suffering loss and sadness; those who are alone, rejected by family and friends.

Lord, show us how to be instruments of your healing.

We pray for the people of Ukraine, we give thanks for their strong and resilient spirit.

We pray for a pathway for peace to emerge and an end to this terrible war.

Our prayer is heard: **Thanks be to God.**

The Lord's Prayer.

Read the Gospel for the day: John 9:1-41

A story about the healing of a man born blind and various people's reaction to it.

Now let us consider each section.

John 9: 1-12. The light comes to a blind man.

A man born blind led the disciples to ask theological questions but it led Jesus to heal him. The healing seems to have changed the man's whole appearance.

John 9:13-24. The parents' response.

Having been considered responsible for their son's blindness left his parents lacking in confidence and self-esteem so they handed responsibility to their son to avoid any discussion or conflict.

John 9:25-34. Healing brings opposition.

People had difficulty in reconciling their traditional beliefs with new signs of God's power. Religious leaders stuck rigidly to what they already believed. The healed man recognised that God must be at work.

John 9:35- 41. Seeing, and deliberately not seeing.

The healed man accepts Jesus claims to be the promised Messiah and worships him. The religious leaders maintain their superior knowledge and status, an attitude condemned by Jesus.

In the story people responded differently to God's transforming power.

We pray regularly "Your Kingdom come". God's kingdom involves change. Are we ready for change?

God is always on the move. In Advent 2021 my heart was filled with a hope as I became aware of signs of hope. Changes I had worked for but hadn't expected to see were taking place. I still believe that this is a special time of blessing. In Bangor, churches are working together in new, exciting but demanding ways. Throughout the circuit there are new situations requiring new approaches and new skills.

Change is challenging and stressful. We need discernment and godly wisdom to know how to respond lovingly and bravely to these new opportunities.

We have reflected on the way people responded to Jesus' healing miracle.

May we have open minds, and loving hearts to recognise and welcome the God-given opportunities presented to us.

Let us pray.

Then the man said to Jesus, 'Lord I believe' and he worshipped him.

Jesus, light of the world we worship you. May we recognise where you are leading.

Lord give us open, enquiring minds as we face the challenge of sharing your message of hope and healing with those around us.

Bless you, Lord. Amen.

Hymn 662 StF. Have you heard God's voice; has your heart been stirred?

A Blessing:

May we take the light of Christ out to share with others this week. Amen.

Hymn 134

- 1 Christ, whose glory fills the skies,
Christ, the true, the only Light,
Sun of Righteousness, arise,
triumph o'er the shades of night ;
Day-spring from on high, be near ;
Day-star, in my heart appear.
- 2 Dark and cheerless is the morn
unaccompanied by thee ;
joyless is the day's return,
till thy mercy's beams I see,
till they inward light impart,
glad my eyes, and warm my heart.
- 3 Visit then this soul of mine ;
pierce the gloom of sin and grief ;
fill me, radiance divine ;
scatter all my unbelief ;
more and more thyself display,
shining to the perfect day.

Charles Wesley (1707–1788)

- Hymn 531
- 1 What a friend we have in Jesus,
all our sins and griefs to bear !
What a privilege to carry
everything to God in prayer !
O what peace we often forfeit,
O what needless pain we bear,
all because we do not carry
everything to God in prayer !
 - 2 Have we trials and temptations,
is there trouble anywhere ?
We should never be discouraged :
take it to the Lord in prayer.
Can we find a friend so faithful
who will all our sorrows share ?
Jesus knows our every weakness :
take it to the Lord in prayer.
 - 3 Are we weak and heavy-laden,
cumbered with a load of care ?
Precious Saviour, still our refuge —
take it to the Lord in prayer !

Do your friends despise, forsake you ?
Take it to the Lord in prayer ;
in his arms he'll take and shield you,
you will find a solace there.

Joseph Medlicott Scriven (1819–1886)

Hymn 662

- 1 Have you heard God's voice ; has your heart
been stirred ?
Are you still prepared to follow ?
Have you made a choice to remain and
serve,
though the way be rough and narrow ?
*Will you walk the path that will cost you
much
and embrace the pain and sorrow ?
Will you trust in One who entrusts to you
the disciples of tomorrow ?*
- 2 Will you use your voice ; will you not sit
down
when the multitudes are silent ?
Will you make a choice to stand your ground
when the crowds are turning violent ?
- 3 In your city streets will you be God's heart ?
Will you listen to the voiceless ?
Will you stop and eat, and when friendships
start,
will you share your faith with the faithless ?
- 4 Will you watch the news with the eyes of
faith
and believe it could be different ?
Will you share your views using words of
grace ?
Will you leave a thoughtful imprint ?
*We will walk the path that will cost us
much
and embrace the pain and sorrow.
We will trust in One who entrusts to us
the disciples of tomorrow.*

Jacqueline G. Jones