

Bangor & Holyhead Methodist Circuit
Sunday Worship Sheet for Education Sunday September 10th 2023

Our worship for this week was written by the Rev'd Nick Sissons. You may wish to have your Bible to hand. Please note the hymns are now at the back of the sheet for ease of printing.
CCLI licence 556292

Theme: Putting out into the deep. For around a hundred and twenty-five years there has been an annual recognition of Education Sunday in England and Wales. It is a national day of prayer and celebration not only for everyone in the world of education at the beginning of the new academic year, but for all of us in our life-long pilgrimage of faith. The gospel reading about the call of the disciples invites us to ponder whether at this point in our lives we are still prepared to trust and obey God's call to put out into the deep.

Call to worship

Mindful that wherever we are, even when we are on our own at home, our worship is joined with that of Christians across the world, let us together offer up our lives to our Creator:
God of the past who has shaped us and shielded us, we are here this morning to thank you.
God of the future who is always ahead of us, we are here this morning to trust you.
God of the present here in the midst of us, we are here this morning to praise you.
God of life beyond and within us, we come to rejoice in your glorious love.

STF 449 Lord of Creation

Opening prayer

Living God, who calls us on the journey of faith - we give thanks to you this day:
You are behind all our thoughts, yet you are beyond thought;
You are behind all our words yet beyond words.
You are uncontainable, without beginning or end;
before anything was created you are God
and after all things have passed away you will still be God.
Therefore, we give you our heartfelt thanks and praise this morning.
Remind us, we pray, that you are always enough for us,
that your faithfulness will always see us through;
so as we step into the future where nothing is certain or safe except you,
give us the quiet confidence to place our trust once more in your goodness and kindness,
that we may know your presence with us as we journey on in faith,
for we ask it in the name of Jesus and together we share the prayer he gave us:

The Lord's Prayer

Introduction to the Psalm: We'll use some words from a psalm to lead us into our prayers of confession. They focus on our need for humility - first so that we realize God is our teacher and we need to be taught; then so that we recognize, by God's mercy, that our faults and failures do not prevent us from being able to step out again on the path of discipleship.

Reading: Psalm 25. 4-12

Prayers of Confession: O God, humble us that we would be honest with you and with ourselves about our needs and our failings; you know when we do good and when we do bad; when we choose the right and when we choose the wrong - we cannot hide from you. When we walk your way, fill us with joy; when we lose sight of your path, do not forget us, but forgive us and help us learn from your saints of old, that we always have your permission to lay down and let go and so move on in your gracious strength.

Lord Jesus Christ, You call and we follow. Help us today to hear your voice clearly and give us the courage to leave behind those things that have held us back and by letting go of what has been to travel on in hope trusting alone in your gracious forgiveness and guidance. And so for calling and disturbing us, for surprising us and making us new, for setting us again on your firm but unfamiliar path we thank you, Lord. Amen.

Gospel Reading: St Luke 5.1-11

Introduction to a song: this song from the Iona community is based upon the passage we have just read from Luke's gospel. Hopefully you'll know the tune!

The Miraculous Catch (*tune: Scarborough Fair © Iona Community*)

Jesus: James and Andrew, Peter and John, men of temper, talent and tide,
your nets are empty, empty and bare, cast them deep on the opposite side.

Disciples: Jesus, you're only a carpenter's son, joints and joists are part of your trade;
but ours the skill to harvest the deep. Why presume to come to our aid?

Jesus: Friends of mine and brothers through love, I mean more than fishing for food;
I call your skill to service my will, call your lives to harvest the good.

Cast your nets where you think it is right, spend your lives where you think there's need.
But if you long for that which is best, let it be on my word you feed.

Disciples: Stir up the waters, Lord, stir up the wind; stir the hope that needs to be stretched.
Stir up the love that needs to be found, stir the faith that needs to be fetched.

James and Andrew, Peter and John, and all those who walk by their side:
hear how your Master calls you by name, asking you all to turn like the tide.

A Short Reflection for Education Sunday

Education is a Latin word meaning "a leading out from," a taking someone from where they are to somewhere where they have not yet been. God's way of education always changes us. Abram and Sarai, the parents of our faith, experience God first of all as someone who says to them: "Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you." And this pattern continues throughout scripture and so we find Jesus destroying the settled routine of the fishermen of Galilee, bursting in upon their ordinary lives with an extraordinary challenge: Stop catching fish, come with me and catch people instead.

Often we think that faith takes us from the unknown to the known. But the Bible shows us a God who leads us in the opposite direction, asking us to embrace a risky faith in the name of the One who has taken every risk for us: who created the world out of nothing with no guarantee it would not all go wrong (indeed it did at first); and who created human beings, loving them all with an everlasting love, whether or not they rejected his love.

Disciples, then and now, have to learn this truth about following Jesus: knowing exactly where we are, having things sorted out, being safe, staying put is not how faith works; if you try to save yourself you'll most probably end up losing yourself; and although the Spirit may lead us into all truth, and that truth may set us free, there is no promise that this will make our life easy or settled; intellectually and spiritually and emotionally God keeps us moving on, inviting us to put out into the deep where we can only trust in him.

But God's demands are never without their promises: to the disciples comes the oft-repeated promise 'Do not be afraid.' And to Abram and Sarai God revealed a new name, 'El Shaday,' which seems to mean 'the God who is enough.' It's the same God that Paul knew and who assured him that his grace would be sufficient, however inadequate or weak he felt or knew himself to be. And the same God offers us this promise today as we journey on, that whatever happens and wherever we are led, God is with us and God is always enough.

Amen.

Prayers of Intercession

Let us pray. On the peoples of the world divided by fear and suspicion and prejudice, Gracious God, **pour out your Spirit;**

On this wonderful world which invites us to explore beyond the boundaries within which we would safely stay put, Gracious God, **pour out your Spirit;**

On your church that it may create spaces where people can deepen and stretch their faith, Gracious God, **pour out your Spirit;**

On those who are frightened of change & opposed to it, Gracious God, **pour out your Spirit;**

On all those entrusted with teaching, that they may engage fearlessly in the search for wisdom and have a genuine love for all whom they teach, Gracious God, **pour out your Spirit;**

On any we know suffering difficulties and hardship, Gracious God **pour out your Spirit;**

On each of us that we might hear and obey the call of God in our lives, wherever it leads us, Gracious God, **pour out your Spirit;**

On tomorrow with its known worries & unknown blessings,

Gracious God, **pour out your Spirit.**

Remember O Lord what you have already done in us and not what we deserve; and as you have called us to follow you in our lives so make us worthy of our calling. **Amen.**

Hymns & Psalms 39 Lord God by whom all change is wrought

Blessing: God calls us to journey on hopefully, accepting the joy and the cost of following Jesus his Son. Let us go, therefore, carrying within us the love of the Father, the peace of Christ and the encouragement of the Holy Spirit in trial and in rejoicing, now and always.

Amen.

Hymns:

STF 449 Lord of Creation

- 1 Lord of creation, to you be all praise !
Most mighty your working, most wondrous your ways !
Your glory and might are beyond us to tell,
and yet in the heart of the humble you dwell.
- 2 Lord of all power, I give you my will,
in joyful obedience your tasks to fulfil.
Your bondage is freedom ; your service is song ;
and, held in your keeping, my weakness is strong.
- 3 Lord of all wisdom, I give you my mind,
rich truth that surpasses my knowledge to find ;
what eye has not seen and what ear has not heard
is taught by your Spirit and shines from your word.
- 4 Lord of all bounty, I give you my heart ;
I praise and adore you for all you impart,
your love to inspire me, your counsel to guide,
your presence to shield me, whatever betide.
- 5 Lord of all being, I give you my all ;
if I should disown you, I stumble and fall ;
but, led in your service your word to obey,
I'll walk in your freedom to the end of the way.

Jack Copley Winslow (1882–1974)

Song on sheet: The Miraculous Catch

Hymns & Psalms 39 Lord God by whom all change is wrought

1. Lord God, by whom all change is wrought,
By whom new things to birth are brought,
In whom no change is known;
whate'er Thou dost, whate'er Thou art,
Thy people still in Thee have part;
Still, still Thou art our own.
2. Ancient of Days, we dwell in Thee;
Out of Thine own eternity
Our peace and joy are wrought;
We rest in our eternal God,
And make secure and sweet abode
With Thee, who changest not.
3. Spirit, who makest all things new,
Thou ledest onward; we pursue
The heavenly march sublime.
'Neath Thy renewing fire we glow,
And still from strength to strength we go,
From height to height we climb.

4. Darkness and dread we leave behind,
New light, new glory still we find,
New realms divine possess;
New births of grace new raptures bring;
Triumphant, the new song we sing,
The great Renewer bless.

To Thee we rise, in Thee we rest;
We stay at home, we go in quest,
Still Thou art our abode.
The rapture swells, the wonder grows,
As full on us new life still flows
From our unchanging God

Readings:

Reading: Psalm 25. 4-12

Make me to know your ways, O Lord; teach me your paths.

Lead me in your truth, and teach me, for you are the God of my salvation;
for you I wait all day long.

Be mindful of your mercy, O Lord, and of your steadfast love, for they have been from of old.

Do not remember the sins of my youth or my transgressions;

according to your steadfast love remember me, for your goodness' sake, O Lord!

Good and upright is the Lord; therefore he instructs sinners in the way.

He leads the humble in what is right, and teaches the humble his way.

All the paths of the Lord are steadfast love and faithfulness,
for those who keep his covenant and his decrees.

For your name's sake, O Lord, pardon my guilt, for it is great.

Who are they that fear the Lord? He will teach them the way that they should choose.

Reading: Luke 5.1-11

Once while Jesus was standing beside the lake of Gennesaret, and the crowd was pressing in on him to hear the word of God, he saw two boats there at the shore of the lake; the fishermen had gone out of them and were washing their nets. He got into one of the boats, the one belonging to Simon, and asked him to put out a little way from the shore. Then he sat down and taught the crowds from the boat. When he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, "Put out into the deep water and let down your nets for a catch." Simon answered, "Master, we have worked all night long but have caught nothing. Yet if you say so, I will let down the nets." When they had done this, they caught so many fish that their nets were beginning to break. So they signalled their partners in the other boat to come and help them. And they came and filled both boats, so that they began to sink. But when Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, "Go away from me, Lord, for I am a sinful man!" For he and all who were with him were amazed at the catch of fish that they had taken; and so also were James and John, sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon. Then Jesus said to Simon, "Do not be afraid; from now on you will be catching people." When they had brought their boats to shore, they left everything and followed him.

