

Bangor & Holyhead Methodist Circuit

Sunday Worship Sheet – Sunday 13th September 2020

Our Worship for this week was written by Keith Alexander, a 'visiting' URC Local Preacher and a member at Amlwch Methodist Church. You may wish to have your Bible to hand.

Call to worship

"Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us."  Hebrews 12:1

Hymn. StF.6. *Father, we love you*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-6Q1WZN99oo>

Father, we love you,
we worship and adore you:
glorify your name in all the earth.
Glorify your name,
glorify your name,
glorify your name,
in all the earth.

Spirit, we love you,
we worship and adore you:
glorify your name in all the earth.
Glorify your name,
glorify your name,
glorify your name,
in all the earth.

Jesus, we love you,
we worship and adore you:
glorify your name in all the earth.
Glorify your name,
glorify your name,
glorify your name,
in all the earth.

Donna Adkins (b. 1940)

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Prayers of Adoration, Confession & Thanksgiving

Lord, our Lord, how majestic is your name. God of mountain splendour, glorious skies and mountain stream, God of nature, new birth, wakening spring and summertime, we bless your wonderful name.

Lord, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth. God of awesome power, whose word the elements obey; God of redeeming love, who brings us to a promised land, we bless your wonderful name. **Amen**

Help us to love as you love, to accept each person for who they are, precious in your eyes. Forgive the prejudice, intentional or not, that causes us to turn aside, ignore the need or walk away. Help us to love as you love, to accept each person for who they are, just as you have loved us. **Amen**

You are the source of our forgiveness when the lives we lead do not reflect the words that we profess. You are the strength we are searching for when faith is weak, as you draw us to your loving arms to bless. You are the hope that we inherit of a kingdom in heaven and on earth, one that will never cease. You are the source of all that we are or ever could be, and to you we bring this offering of thanks. **Amen.**

The Lord's Prayer

Hymn.StF.152. *This is the day*

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3K3fFp8_Mq4

This is the day,
this is the day that the Lord has made,
that the Lord has made.

We will rejoice,
we will rejoice and be glad in it,
and be glad in it.

This is the day that the Lord has made;
we will rejoice and be glad in it.

This is the day,
this is the day that the Lord has made.

This is the day,
this is the day when he rose again,
when he rose again.

We will rejoice,
we will rejoice and be glad in it,
and be glad in it.

This is the day when he rose again;
we will rejoice and be glad in it.

This is the day,
this is the day when he rose again.

This is the day,
this is the day when the Spirit came,
when the Spirit came.

We will rejoice,
we will rejoice and be glad in it,
and be glad in it.

This is the day when the Spirit came;
we will rejoice and be glad in it.

This is the day,
this is the day when the Spirit came.

Anonymous

*Reproduced from Singing the Faith
Electronic Words Edition, number 152.*

Old Testament Reading:  **Psalm 114**

Epistle Reading:  **Romans 14:1-12**

Hymn.StF.153. *Break thou the bread of life*

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OAigUNye_jl

Break thou the bread of life,
O Lord, to me,
as thou didst break the loaves
beside the sea.

Beyond the sacred page
I seek thee, Lord;
my spirit longs for thee,
O living Word!

Thou art the Bread of Life,
O Lord, to me,
thy holy word the truth
that saveth me;
give me to eat and live
with thee above;
teach me to love thy truth,
for thou art love.

O send thy Spirit, Lord,
now unto me,
that he may touch my eyes,
and make me see;
show me the truth concealed
within thy word,
and in thy book revealed
I see the Lord.

v. 1 Mary Artemisia Lathbury (1841–1913)

vv. 2 & 3 Alexander Groves (1842–1909)

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Gospel Reading:  **Matthew 18:21-35**

Reflection on the Unforgiving Servant Parable

This parable is the result of Peter asking “Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother or sister who sins against me?” He suggests seven times is the limit, but Jesus says it should be 490 times. He is saying Peter should simply keep on forgiving.

Forgiveness is a difficult thing for many people. I remember once preaching on the love of God and saying that God loves all people, even those who have perpetrated the most awful crimes. That Easter in a reflection during Holy Week, the playwright Alan Bennett was considering Jesus’ love for Zacchaeus, a senior, hated tax collector. Bennett asked, “Who are the hated people today? Perhaps the child molesters? I commented on this in my sermon. A woman quietly walked out of the congregation. After the service I was shouted at by the caretaker who had been in the congregation. “My daughter was attacked with a knife and nearly lost her life! Are you saying we should love them? You just don’t know!” I also discovered that a child who had died a year earlier and was included in our prayers in the service was the child of the woman who had left the service. No one had told me the special circumstances surrounding the death. These two people could not forgive these crimes. Who are we to say they should? But I still believed I was preaching the truth in saying that *God can forgive the most terrible crimes.*

Yet, here we have a parable telling us we must forgive, not seven, but seventy times seven. In other words, we are called to forgive a wrong for the whole of our lives. We are also called to forgive wrongs each time they happen. It is hard to be a Christian, living by the rules given to us by Jesus. People outside our numbers think we have chosen an easy life by following Jesus. How wrong they are! I call to mind words included in the ordination of a United Reformed Church minister: “Will you live a holy life?” Not only a minister, but every Christian faces this question and we all have to answer for ourselves.

If we fail to live a holy life by an action against another person, are we going to be forgiven? We may or may not be forgiven by the other person, but we can count on God’s forgiveness. It is God’s forgiveness that Jesus calls us to emulate. We have been set the pattern that must reflect the life of our Saviour. It will be hard on some occasions to feel forgiveness in our hearts. So, how can we find that level of forgiveness that is required? Turn to Psalm 121 and the first two verses give you the answer: “I lift up my eyes to the hills, where shall I find help? My help comes only from the Lord, maker of heaven and earth.”

One man who knew this was Gordon Wilson, trapped with his dying daughter in the rubble of the Enniskillen Remembrance Day bombing. There was this beautiful moment when his daughter, Marie, holding his hand, said her last words: “Daddy I love you very much!” Later his forgiveness was amazing. Of the event, he said, in a BBC interview: *"But I bear no ill will. I bear no grudge. Dirty sort of talk is not going to bring her back to life. She was a great wee lassie. She loved her profession. She was a pet. She's dead. She's in heaven and we shall meet again. I will pray for these men tonight and every night."*

This was the forgiveness of which Jesus spoke when he told this parable.

Can we feel such forgiveness in our hearts when we have been hurt? If we turn to God in prayer, we shall find that strength needed to (1) forgive and (2). To be free of pain. Both are needed if we are to keep on living a life of love. **Amen.**

☉☉ *Take time to sit quietly* ☉☉

Prayers of Intercession:

Lord, we pray “give us this day our daily bread!” We remember before you:
the many in our world for whom daily bread means daily struggle,
and far too often a vain struggle;
our brothers and sisters who are stricken by famine and shortages,
and oversupplied with despair.

Guide and inspire us to share the bounty of the fruitful earth so that compassion becomes the key, and life the hope.

Lord, we pray “forgive us our trespasses!” We remember before you:
the many in our world beset by a sense of paralysing guilt;
those driven by forces within themselves over which they have little control;
those nursing ancient sins long forgiven by those they once hurt, and by you.
Release and uplift them so that they know the offer of freedom and life renewed
that lies at the heart of the gospel.

Lord, we pray, “deliver us from evil!” We remember before you:
the many in our world beset by evils of unjust, withering and wasteful conflict,
of oppression from compassionless leaders, of rejection by the prejudices of communities
and wider society.

Redeem and revive your fallen world so that outcasts know themselves included in the feast
of heaven, and peace and right-purpose is pursued by leaders and trend-setters.

In Jesus’ name, **Amen.**

Hymn.StF.487. *You shall go out with joy*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=unWnWSgoSt0>

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

Stuart Dauermann (b. 1944) and Steffi Geiser Rubin

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The Aaronic Blessing:

The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord make his face to shine upon you, and be gracious unto you.

The Lord lift up his countenance upon you, and give you peace.” **Amen.**

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PASS IT TO A FRIEND OR NEIGHBOUR WHO MAY APPRECIATE IT. THANK YOU.**