Wrenbury & Nantwich Mission Area **Methodist** Churches 

**Sunday 12 July 2020**

This short act of worship has been prepared for us to use as we are not able to gather for worship. We can remain connected in fellowship by following this simple act of worship around the time you would normally be gathered for worship in your chapel/church.

**Call to Worship**

Rejoice! There is now no condemnation in Christ Jesus.

**Hymn: STF 685 In Christ there is no east or west**

In Christ there is no east or west,

in him no south or north,

but one great fellowship of love

throughout the whole wide earth.

In him shall true hearts everywhere

their high communion find;

his service is the golden cord

close-binding humankind.

Join hands, then, all the human race,

whate'er your nation be;

all children of the living God

are surely kin to me.

In Christ now meet both east and west,

in him meet south and north;

all Christlike souls are one in him,

throughout the whole wide earth.

*John Oxenham, pseud. (1852-1941)*

**Let us pray together**

When the seeds of new life are sown, let us   
praise the Lord.  
When crops ripen in the field, let us exalt our maker.   
When the wind blows, or the snow falls, let us draw close to God.

Lord, for all your gifts in creation, for the gift of each other and the gift of the Church we offer our thanks.

Most of all for the gift of Jesus who went about among us as teacher and friend, who lived, died, and rose again we offer our deepest gratitude and amazement. In Jesus’ name. Amen.

Let us take a time of quiet to bring to mind the ways in which we feel we have let God or ourselves down during the last week...

Lord, when we are slow to listen, forgive us.

Lord, when we are hasty in our actions, forgive us.

Lord, for the things we have done, that we should not have done, forgive us.

Lord, for the things we have not done, that we should have done, forgive us.

Rejoice, for in Christ we know our sins are forgiven. In Jesus’ name. Amen.

**Matthew 13: 1-9 & 18-23 - The Parable of the Sower**

That same day Jesus went out of the house and sat beside the lake. Such great crowds gathered around him that he got into a boat and sat there, while the whole crowd stood on the beach. And he told them many things in parables, saying: ‘Listen! A sower went out to sow. And as he sowed, some seeds fell on the path, and the birds came and ate them up. Other seeds fell on rocky ground, where they did not have much soil, and they sprang up quickly, since they had no depth of soil. But when the sun rose, they were scorched; and since they had no root, they withered away. Other seeds fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked them. Other seeds fell on good soil and brought forth grain, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. Let anyone with ears listen!’

“Hear then the parable of the sower. When anyone hears the word of the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what is sown in the heart; this is what was sown on the path. As for what was sown on rocky ground, this is the one who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy; yet such a person has no root, but endures only for a while, and when trouble or persecution arises on account of the word, that person immediately falls away. As for what was sown among thorns, this is the one who hears the word, but the cares of the world and the lure of wealth choke the word, and it yields nothing. But as for what was sown on good soil, this is the one who hears the word and understands it, who indeed bears fruit and yields, in one case a hundredfold, in another sixty, and in another thirty.”

**Time to Reflect**

Over the last few months we have begun to look at the world in a new way. Certainties are no longer as certain as they once were. This time last year no one imagined being in lockdown, although the possibility of a serious virus pandemic was not unimagined.

When I read the parable afresh the first thing I noticed was that for his own safety, and perhaps in order to be better seen, Jesus gets into a boat and puts some distance between himself and the crowd. The Bible does not tell us if it was more than 2 metres! Jesus sits down to teach, indicating his authority to teach. Jesus takes practical steps to be heard and communicates in ways the crowd were used to and addressed them in ways they would understand. The image of a sower was common in first century Palestine.

And when the seed is scattered not all of it bears fruit. Some falls on the path or on stony ground. Some is in shallow earth and fails to mature. Amid much bearing of fruit there is also the failure of hearing and not understanding. Jesus recognized that even with the best news in the world there would still be setbacks.

The disciples have the parable explained to them. They have the benefit of the expertise of Jesus who told this parable and was by definition best placed to explain its meaning.

As we move forward together and plan the activities of our local churches in a world that has been changed we should be encouraged by this parable.

Encouraged to work in ways that we discern are appropriate in our current situation. Perhaps an extra line on the plan for the Circuit’s online worship and resources for those not online and unable to attend a building.

Encouraged to keep trying even if the seed we cast does not always bear fruit straight away or in ways we may expect.

Encouraged to gather as much wisdom as we can from others and glad to listen to those who are called to teach and explain, even when this might move us out of our comfort zones and takes us in unexpected ways. Amen.

**Take a time to sit quietly**

**A time of prayer**

Let us pray for our world; for the worldwide effort to create a vaccine for Covid-19. For all the peoples of the world and for cooperation as we continue to live with this virus.

As we pray for our world we pray especially for those in government and industry whose decisions effect the lives of so many. And we pray for wisdom for those in power.

We pray for our own land. For the NHS and for all those involved in social care and all key workers, giving thanks for the work they do for us. We pray for local communities as we continue to move towards what has been called the new normal.

We pray for the whole Church throughout the world, especially churches in countries with unsympathetic regimes. We pray for the Methodist Church, both at the local level and also the Connexional Team.

We take a time of quiet to remember those who have died, especially those who have been important to us on our own journeys of life and faith.

We make all our prayers in Jesus’ name. Amen.

**The Lord’s Prayer**

Our Father ……

**Hymn: STF 415 The Church of Christ in every age.**

The Church of Christ, in every age

beset by change but Spirit-led,

must claim and test its heritage

and keep on rising from the dead.

Across the world, across the street,

the victims of injustice cry

for shelter and for bread to eat,

and never live until they die.

Then let the servant Church arise,

a caring Church that longs to be

a partner in Christ's sacrifice,

and clothed in Christ's humanity.

For he alone, whose blood was shed,

can cure the fever in our blood,

and teach us how to share our bread

and feed the starving multitude.

We have no mission but to serve

in full obedience to our Lord:

to care for all, without reserve,

and spread his liberating Word.

*Fred Pratt Green (1903-2000)*

**A prayer of blessing**

Dear Lord,  
When times are hard, walk beside us.   
When we are unsure of which way to turn, dwell within us.   
When we need to listen to others, encourage us.   
When our lives and work bear fruit, rejoice with us.

So may the blessing of God who is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit be with us all today and forever more. Amen.

*Original Materials by Rev E Adam Wells*

*Hymns reproduced under CCLi 155789.*

**Broomhall & Sound Chapel will be hosting “Zoom Services” every Sunday in July.**

It’s great to see a number of people from across the mission area joining in.

Why not give it a go? Service will last approx 30 mins **10.30 – 11am.** You can login in from 10.15 and stay on later to chat with people.

Join Zoom Meeting  
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84907348014?pwd=RlJEL3lmWFJNbW8zQW1MZnpITnJYUT09>  
  
Meeting ID: 849 0734 8014  
Password: 074905

*Thank you to everyone who makes this possible, especially Charles who “hosts”.*

**Family News**

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We continue to pray for those known to us who are unwell at home or in hospital at this time. Not everyone wishes to be named, so we respect their privacy. Their needs are known by God.

George Lawrence’s funeral with take place 27th July at Aston Chapel.**\*** Due to Covid 19 numbers must be restricted to family and close friends.

Lord in your mercy, HEAR OUR PRAYER

**\*** My apologies for inadvertently saying last week that George was a member of Acton Church. *Pat*

If anyone has a donation for **Methodist Homes**, **MWiB**, or Bec Hodkinson’s **Midnight** **Walk**, which they are unable to send themselves, please let me know so arrangements can be made to collect them from you. *Pat* – 627170

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I told my doctor that I broke my arm in two places. He told me to stop going there.

***"****Conjunctivitis.com****” that's a site for sore eyes."***

Did you hear about the claustrophobic astronaut? He needed a little space

***Why can't you explain puns to kleptomaniacs? They always take things literally.***

I used to be addicted to soap, but I'm clean now.

*I have a stepladder. I never knew my real ladder.*

**Action for Children Sunday is July12th…**

This year has to be different due to the pandemic and lockdown. In many churches online worship has replaced physical meetings, but some are not able to host online services.  We understand that and assure you that it is okay if you can’t mark Action for Children Sunday on this date. You can pray for us now and mark it later.

Our worship resources were ready before the lockdown and I’d like to share them with you: [www.actionforchildren.org.uk/resources-and-publications/promotional-materials/resources-for-methodist-fundraisers/](http://www.actionforchildren.org.uk/resources-and-publications/promotional-materials/resources-for-methodist-fundraisers/).  There is a booklet with a service outline, a prayer bookmark and a link to a video about Lyle, one of the children your generosity has helped us to support.

Free online advice for parents: I’d also like to tell you that we have boosted our online resources to support children and families.  Our Coronavirus (Covid-19) advice and support brings together a wide range of topics categorised by subject matter and by children’s ages (i.e. 0-5 years, 5-12 years, and 13 years and above):

[www.parents.actionforchildren.org.uk/covid-19-advice-support](http://www.parents.actionforchildren.org.uk/covid-19-advice-support). We also offer free and confidential live chat with our parenting coaches.

I’d like to thank everyone for their support over the years.  It means a lot and we’re proud of our relationship with the Methodist Church.

Stay safe, well and strong,

Karis Kolawole,

Head of Faith Partnerships.

Mobile: 07834 334 634.  Website: [actionforchildren.org.uk](http://www.actionforchildren.org.uk/)

Email:[karis.kolawole@actionforchildren.org.uk](mailto:karis.kolawole@actionforchildren.org.uk).

Action for Children has launched a Coronavirus Emergency Appeal to help provide essentials to the most vulnerable families we support across the UK and those potentially affected in future:  [www.actionforchildren.org.uk/how-to-help/make-a-donation/coronavirus/coronavirus-single/](http://www.actionforchildren.org.uk/how-to-help/make-a-donation/coronavirus/coronavirus-single/)

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I broke my finger last week, On the other hand, I’m OK.

*I told my wife she was drawing her eyebrows too high. She looked surprised.*

I took the shell off my racing snail, thinking it might make him streamlined and faster. If anything, it made him more sluggish.