

www.heatonmoorunitedchurch.org.uk

Heaton Moor United Church



The United Reformed Church and The Methodist Church

working together in partnership



Zoom Services and Meetings

Sunday 14th June Circuit Service 3.00pm

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87212246881?pwd=VXpyMzRYV21UZ1ZoYlkc2R4dmV1QT09>

Meeting ID: 872 1224 6881 Password: 974333

Wednesday 10th June Coffee and Prayer 11.00am

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/95327541668?pwd=ekU2QWgzZjVKWTBFTjZsb0tERVQrdz09>

Meeting ID: 953 2754 1668 Password: 794265

Thursday 18th June 'Re-imagining Church' 7.00pm

A conversation and time for prayer about the future of our church for all members across the circuit.

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87212246881?pwd=VXpyMzRYV21UZ1ZoYlkc2R4dmV1QT09>

Meeting ID: 872 1224 6881 Password: 974333

Joining by telephone

Step 1)

Dial any of the following numbers. If one doesn't work try another and another until you are able to connect:

0330 088 5830

0131 460 1196

0203 481 5237

0203 481 5240

0208 080 6591

0208 080 6592

Step 2)

Follow the prompts you hear on the phone.

You may be prompted to enter 3 different things:

1 -- Meeting ID followed by hash #

2 -- Password followed by hash #

3 -- Participants ID -- You will not have one of these, don't worry, all you need to do is enter

Office Telephone number 07471 065729

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"Hash" #

You should then be entered into the service.

Making a stand for Black Lives Matter



A group of us went down to Stockport to show support, Jean was there too, she took the picture !



[Drawing the Faith - Trinity on their knees](#)

Jai ho in response to Jesus' final words to his disciples (Matthew 28:18-20) "go and make disciples of all nations(ethnicities)" has drawn the Trinitarian God kneeling on the road in solidarity with #Blacklivesmatter joining all those people demanding racial justice. Jai ho says, "Trinity is one God in three reflections."

Office Telephone number 07471 065729

Dear Heaton Moor United Church family,

Grace and peace to you all in the name of our Lord and Liberator Jesus Christ.

It has been nearly 12 weeks since the official lock down, and thanks to everyone who have been supporting one another in coping with this situation. Though the government guidance is that the church buildings can now be open for private prayers, the national churches guidance is to stay closed unless the managing trustees feel that they are at a point of opening their building for individual prayers. At our recent leadership meeting, we have discussed about the various possibilities in this regard, and have forwarded the matter to the property committee to make a risk assessment of our building in light of the church guidance, to be prepared for the future.

I personally reckon that our people needed prayers more than ever during this lockdown situation, however they have not been praying less because they have not had buildings in which to pray. And on another note when they have announced that the church buildings can be open for private prayers, I was reflecting isn't prayer a public and a collective act for the people of faith? Are we narrowing prayer to a private and individual thing, limiting prayer to a particular building? When we have all joined in saying the Lord's prayer, did we not say 'our' and 'us' in that prayer? Either we are all in or we are all out in our church buildings. As churches from non-conformist faith traditions, our prayers were never determined by a particular site or a building, for we have celebrated the presence of God in all of the creation. The question for us to consider in moving forward is how will we reimagine a church relevant for our times today post-lockdown? Can I please request you all to join in prayer about the relevance of our church, as we strive to recognise the work of God within and among our community around. There is a circuit consultation on Thursday, the 18th June on zoom about reimagining church, and you are all invited to join in those discussions please.

Herewith I am sending you the reflection for this Sunday along with some worship resources for your meditation and further reflections. Our online circuit zoom services will continue to happen and thank you for joining those services.

Kindly remember in your prayers next week (15-24 June) for the lives of refugees as it is observed as Refugees week, for whom lockdown has been really tough.

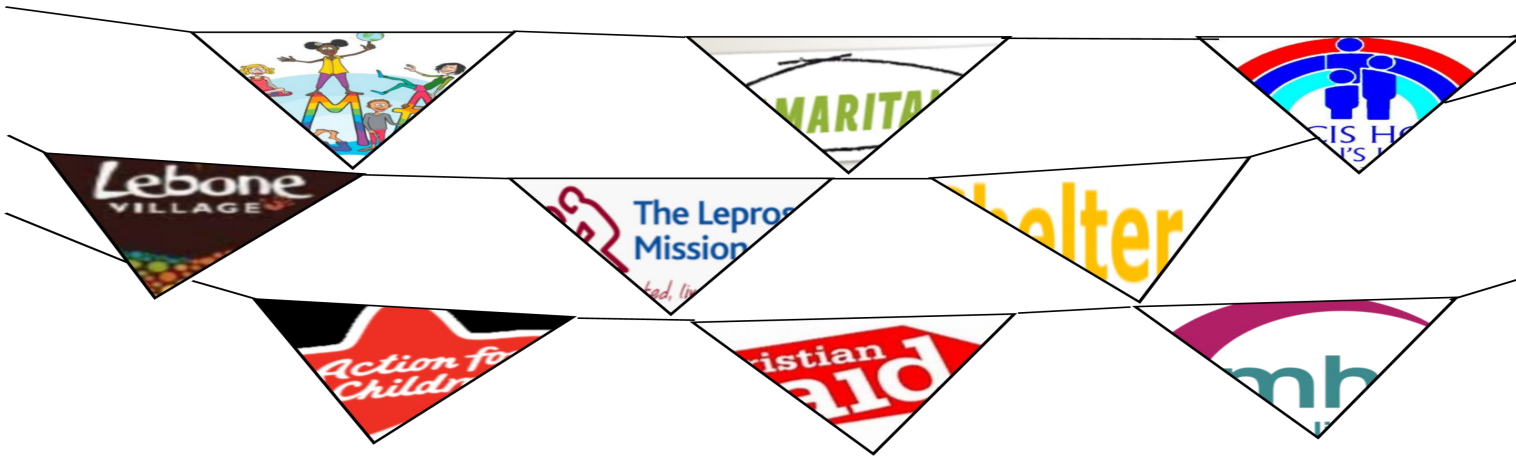
May the Spirit of God continue to lead and guide us all in all our endeavours for the Kingdom of God here on earth.

Thanking you

With warm regards,

Raj

12th June 2020



Gift Day for the Church Charities

We raised £1506

£967 was gift aided

Taking the total to £1805.20

Thank you

Super Sunday

It will be on the 21st June

Look out for the info next week.

When I keep speaking and writing about reimagining Church as God's work in the community, as we move forward to an uncertain future, I hear people chuckling and laughing to themselves at these ideas. They ask me back, when we return to the 'normal' our numbers in the church will become small and the future of Christian church is becoming dim, isn't God's work in the community too abstract to understand church today? When I posted Jai ho's drawing of Trinity kneeling in solidarity with Black lives matter last week, I was trolled to not 'degrade the word' asking me 'how can God bow before humans?' I heard them laugh. These incidents helped me to reflect and ask, is my understanding of reimagining church and God unrealistic and is it a laughing stock? No, these incidents do not deter me to offer hope as the Spirit leads me, for I realise it is ok to be ridiculed. Some are cynical about moving forward to a new future, some are afraid of the future of Christianity for they think everything is in their hands to control. Some are laughing at the ideas of reimagining the church today. It is ok to laugh, for we never know it can serve as a way of prayer and as an expression of our longing for a new future.

In Genesis 18, Abraham hosts three strangers by the oaks of Mamre, offering a radical hospitality by sharing the best portions of food, freshly kneaded bread, tender beef, milk, curds and engaged in a conversation with them after they finished eating their meal. One of the strangers on enquiring where Sarah was, promises, "I will surely return to you in due season and your wife Sarah shall have a son" (10v). Sarah on hearing what the stranger said, began laughing to herself, asking can she have pleasure with her husband in their nineties. Barbara Glasson has recently written on "A Good Laugh" and sought hope in the laughter of Sarah. Barbara writes, "She (Sarah) was told in her ripe old age that she was going to have a baby and laughed out loud and even named her son Isaac (which in Hebrew means 'He laughs') after that outburst of merriment – thank you Sarah for seeing the ridiculous side of Divine action." Sarah laughed when she heard news about something impossible, which Barbara explains Sarah seeing the ridiculous side of the divine in action.

In the patriarchal (where men assume power and discriminate other genders as inferior to them) society of Abraham, women were restricted to the private spaces, for Sarah had to do all the cooking for the guests, but had no chance of coming out to meet and speak to the guests. But the divine who came as strangers by enquiring Abraham, "Where is your wife Sarah?" (9v) was trying to break open those patriarchal stereotypes that women are limited to the domestic private space and men are out in the public space. On hearing from Abraham that Sarah was 'in the tent', one of the strangers spoke loudly so that Sarah can hear, and pronounced that in due season Sarah shall have a child. Then Sarah laughs to herself. The tent was her own space, for over the years that space would have been a space for her to weep, to laugh, to pray, to lament and to sit in silence. On this occasion, Sarah in her own space, in her own freedom, laughed to herself, for all that she had was, she and herself. Out of the fear generated by the patriarchal society, later on Sarah denies that she laughed and Abraham insisted that she did laugh (15v), for I think the stranger-guests and Abraham would have heard her chuckle from inside the tent. But for Sarah, laughter was an expression of her freedom, an expression of who she was and served as an act of subversion for her. It was an act of subversion against the patriarchal society which confined women to a private space like the tent, and never allowed them to laugh out loud in the public spaces.

On hearing Sarah's laughter, the strangers respond by allowing the divine in them to come out and speak. The activity of God as they spoke can be seen in at least four ways. Firstly, there was a revelation to Abraham that it was God who has come in three strangers(13v). Secondly, on hearing Sarah's laughter God responds, "why did Sarah laugh and say "shall I indeed bear a child, now that I am old?" Thirdly, on hearing Sarah's laughter, God explains God's character, for God works in wonderful ways

and surprising ways, for it is mentioned "Is anything too wonderful to the Lord?" (14v). Fourthly, God offers hope that in the set time and in due season Sarah shall have a child. In a way Sarah's laughter provoked the God in the strangers not only to reaffirm the promise that God made to Abraham in making a great generation but also to make it precise and particular as a defined God-moment out of which that promise will be realised. It is therefore important to acknowledge a divine spark in the laughter of Sarah, which is helpful for us in our faith journeys.

Sarah's laughter served as a way of Prayer:

On hearing the stranger's words that in due season that Sarah shall have a son, Sarah couldn't contain her laughter and laughed to herself. In that laughter, I see a prayer, a subversive prayer that is expressed in emotion. For in that laughter as Sarah spoke to herself with a question, "after I have grown old, and my husband is old, shall I have pleasure?" (12v), she was being heard by God. In her laughter as a way of prayer, Sarah was not questioning the supernatural power of God rather was asking can she and her husband have pleasure at their age and time. Sarah's laughter as a way of prayer demonstrates that the God she believed in is not a God who works through unrealistic fantasy, but a God who works through them. Sarah's laughter was not a laughter of cynicism but a laughter of realism, where prayer is about realistic things. Our prayers therefore reveal the kind of God we believe and the kind of God we believe is exhibited in the way we pray. When Sarah laughed, God not only heard and responded to her laughter as a way of prayer, but I think God would have joined in laughing with Sarah to fulfil the promise God has made to her.

Catherine M Wallace asks "what makes us laugh, after all?" For which she replies, "we laugh at incongruity, at discrepancy. We laugh at the ridiculous and the unexpected. Laughter testifies to our perception of the difference between what is and what ought to be. When we laugh at ourselves, we rise above our own situations. We refuse to be defined either by our failures or by the betrayals and the failures of others." When Sarah laughed, she was rising above her situations which were defined by patriarchy and she was refusing to be defined by the failures that the society has put on her as a child-less woman. Sarah laughed, and that laughter served as a way of prayer and such a prayer was heard by God.

I also see a creative prayer in Sarah's laughter. A prayer with no salutation, no calling on the different names of God, no quoting of scripture, but a prayer where she asks a question to herself. That opens us to understand that as Sarah laughed, the presence of God was opened, for God began to respond to Abraham. In verse 13, we see immediately the change in the tone of the conversation where "the Lord" began to speak.

Sarah's laughter opened the Revelation of God:

On hearing Sarah's laughter, God was quick to speak to Abraham, opening wide the revelation of God. Till then Abraham knew the three people as strangers and suddenly, he had to hear the voice of God spoken through them. Sarah's laughter did not make God angry. The patriarchal society demeaned and diminished Sarah's laughter as a sign of unbelief to the promise of God, but there is freshness in Sarah's prayer which was seen in her laughter. The laughter of Sarah was not seen by God as offensive, for God on hearing the laughter of Sarah did not curtail God's promise nor cursed Sarah at that point, rather God revealed God's character of doing wonderful things in their lives offering hope to them. It was because of Sarah's laughter that God spoke to Abraham, reassuring him, 'is anything too wonderful for God?' Sarah's laughter paved the way for the actions of God's wonderful acts to flow on in their lives. It is important to recognise that God's wonderful acts includes the participation of human beings, for God works wonders through and with God's creation and creatures.

Sarah's laughter made God to offer hope that in due time and season they shall see a wonder in their lives. God's wonders are not like magic, and thankfully God did not turn Sarah and Abraham into a young couple and then gave them a child. God in their old age creates pleasure among them and paves the way for an offspring. When things unfolded as promised, I can imagine Sarah would have kept laughing at every point of her life that followed and eventually named her son Isaac, after her deep spiritual experiences of laughter with God, which served for her as a prayer. God acts in God's own times and seasons, offering courage, hope and perseverance to people.

One of the features of lockdown has been sharing jokes about our shared living experiences. As we hear Sarah's laughter, we are called in our reimagining the church, to recognise that laughter serves as a site of divine intervention and to be reminded that when we laugh at every ridiculed situation, God's presence is with us. For Abraham and Sarah there was uncertainty about their future, anxiety in moving forward and when Sarah heard something unexpected from the divine, she couldn't but laugh, laugh at herself and laugh out loud so that the divine who came as strangers along with Abraham heard her laugh. In her laughing, Sarah gathered strength, Sarah gathered courage, Sarah offered a prayer, soon to know that God is offering new life that will bring new possibilities in their journey of life. It is easy to go back to the ways we have always been doing in the life of the church, perhaps longing to reboot the old. But God's ways are different, inviting us to step into an unknown future offering new possibilities. Laughter is a natural expression of human spirit, and when future appears bleak, when things are annoying around us, when going gets tough, laughter as a faith space helps us as a defiance against all those oppositions. May the courage of Sarah be with each of us so that we can laugh at ourselves on hearing that God is leading us into an uncertain future with a confidence of new hope in Jesus Christ. Let us together join with Sarah in laughing out loud and celebrate hope, for God works wonderfully through each of us. God hasn't given up on the Christian faith nor on the church, but is leading us to offer hope in our community by building on laughter, kindness, peace and justice.

Allow me to conclude with an old Tibetan proverb: *The secret of living well and longer is: eat half, walk double, laugh triple and love without measure.*

Rev. Dr. Raj Bharat Patta

11th June 2020



The
United
Reformed
Church



The Methodist Church

United Stockport Circuit (Manchester and Stockport District)

**A Message from the Superintendent Minister
2020**

June 10th

Dear Friends,

It is now the middle of June, and we have been in lockdown for nearly 3 months. The government have announced that churches can start to open soon for personal prayer, although it looks like the Methodist Church are asking us to hold off on this and they will issue advice following the annual Methodist Conference at the start of July. There are mixed feelings around. On the one hand we long to see one another, to gather and worship face to face. On the other hand we are aware that to do so might endanger our health and we, rightly, feel very cautious. Please be assured that along with my colleagues Raj and Lindsay, local church stewards and the wider circuit leadership team, we are considering our next steps, listening for guidance from the government and the Methodist Church and we will not rush into anything. If you would like to be part of a conversation in our Circuit about how we move forward with Church after this time of Covid-19, there will be a special Zoom gathering – not a service exactly but an opportunity for everyone to join in conversation and sharing, grounded in prayer – on Thursday 18th June at 7pm on Zoom. For now, we give thanks for the small signs of life we are able to see in the world outside, for the people who matter to us and who are helping us, and for the sense of ‘being Church’ that we have been able to maintain in one way or another throughout this difficult period.

The world has not stopped turning during lockdown! People have not stopped loving, neither have they stopped suffering. Increasingly as lockdown eases, other events in the world are quite rightly creeping back into the headlines and into our consciousness. On Saturday 30th May, over 50 of us joined a conversation with 2 of our local MPS – William Wragg and Nav Mishra, to discuss what a Good Society will look like after Covid-19. We talked about the valuing of our key workers, maintaining a good climate, what schools will look like. We didn’t necessarily have all the answers, but we all agreed how important it will be for people to work together for good in the coming months and years, recognising that poverty and hardship are likely to increase. The Church, and faith communities will play an important part in this.

Dominating the headlines recently has been the tragic death of George Floyd in the USA at the hands of police officers, and the resulting protests there and in the UK. The tragedy of racism is one we still live with, but which as Christians we can never accept. We have a

responsibility to denounce sin when we see it and racism is undoubtedly a very real sin in the world today.

On Saturday 6th June, I was proud to join a small and safely socially distanced gathering in the centre of Stockport in solidarity with the Black Lives Matter movement. We were Methodists, Lutherans, Anglicans and member of the United Reformed Church and we stood on the Lancashire Bridge crossing and engaged with passers-by about the reasons for the protest. We met with a lot of support – people waving from buses and clapping as they walked by and stopping to find out more. Some people who stopped wanted to say, ‘all lives matter’ and of course that is true, but we were able to explain that for centuries, the lives of black people have mattered less in many walks of society. We know that black people are more likely to be randomly stopped by police, more likely to suffer physical and verbal abuse as a result of the colour of their skin, paid less for doing the same jobs as white people, more likely to receive unfavourable treatment when applying for jobs or using public services, and little attention has been given to the reasons behind the disproportionate numbers of Black, Asian and minority ethnic people who have died from Covid-19. For far too long, in many people’s thoughts, consciously and subconsciously, white lives have mattered most and that must change. Here’s a way of explaining why to say ‘all lives matter’ in this context is not a kind or helpful thing to say. Imagine your child has died. And that you are speaking at their funeral about how important they were to you, how much you loved them, how much their life mattered. And at that point someone else jumps up and says, ‘but all children matter.’ Of course all children matter, but at that time, in that place, in those circumstances, in the face of tragedy and grief and anger, the focus must be on the one child who mattered. The message that black lives matter is one which the UK needs to hear and I was proud that the Methodist Church could play a part in spreading that message in Stockport as we seek to create the genuinely fair and inclusive society which was at the heart of what Jesus called the Kingdom of God.

As we reflect on these things, I want to include a wonderful prayer to which I was introduced this week. It is a prayer from the Jewish faith but which translates beautifully for our own situation. I hope you can pray it with me in these coming days. *Adonai* is simply the Hebrew word for God. *Shabbat* is the Sabbath, the day for rest and prayer.

Let us pray:

Disturb us, Adonai, ruffle us from our complacency;
Make us dissatisfied. Dissatisfied with the peace of ignorance,
the quietude which arises from a shunning of the horror, the defeat,
the bitterness and the poverty, physical and spiritual, of humans.
Shock us, Adonai, deny to us the false Shabbat which gives us
the delusions of satisfaction amid a world of war and hatred;

Wake us, O God, and shake us
from the sweet and sad poignancies rendered by
half-forgotten melodies and rubric prayers of yesteryears;
Make us know that the border of the sanctuary
is not the border of living
and the walls of Your temples are not shelters
from the winds of truth, justice and reality.
Disturb us, O God, and vex us;
let not Your Shabbat be a day of torpor and slumber;
let it be a time to be stirred and spurred to action. Amen.

(from 'World Union of Progressive Judaism Prayer Book')

And please remember as always:

In this time of isolation and separation may we feel the unity of God's spirit in the bonds of peace and love which connect us to one another.

- **When we feel lonely let us know that in Christ we are never alone.**
- **When we feel isolated may we be reminded that within the worldwide Body of Christ we are always connected.**
- **When we need a hug help us to feel the warmth of God's embrace**
- **When we are compelled to keep our distance, may we be drawn close to each other within the Spirit of Companionship that flows from God and which moves through and between each one of us.**

With love and blessings,

Rev Cathy.

NOTICES

Worship

Forthcoming services are:

Sunday 14th July 3pm and Sunday 21st July 3pm

Thursday 18th June 7pm 'Re-imagining Church'– a conversation and time for prayer about the future of our church for all members across the circuit.

You can join all the above services via Zoom with a video link and see and hear everything and everyone else who is participating, or you can join just with audio, *or you can telephone in.*

Login details for *all forthcoming services* are as follows:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87212246881?pwd=VXpyMzRYV21UZ1ZoYlkc2R4dmV1QT09>

Meeting ID: 872 1224 6881

Password: 974333

Circuit Prayer

In addition, every **Sunday morning at 11am** – when we would all normally be in worship in church – we are encouraged to pray the following prayer. This way we stay connected in a very really and tangible way.

God of Love and Life,

We pray to you this morning for the life the United Stockport Methodist Circuit, for our sisters and brothers who belong to:

(pausing briefly to reflect after each name)

Christ Church Methodist /URC Davenport Methodist Church Dialstone Lane Methodist Church

Edgeley Community Church Hazel Grove Methodist Church Heaton Mersey Methodist Church

Heaton Moor United Church St. Johns Methodist Church Tiviot Dale Methodist Church

Trinity Methodist Church Windlehurst Methodist Church

In this time of isolation and separation may we feel the unity of your spirit in the bonds of peace and love which connect us to one another. We worship you, we give you thanks, we praise you for your glory. We ask that this time of crisis might pass and that those who suffer might find comfort and strength within the knowledge of your grace, revealed through the kindness and compassion of the people of God. Eternal God, though the self-offering of your Son you have filled our lives with your presence. Help us in our sufferings and trials. Fill us with hope and strengthen us in our weakness. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Moving into the Future – A Monthly Circuit Service?

Before Covid-19 and the lock down hit, the Circuit Leadership Team had begun to talk about the possibility of starting a monthly Circuit Service at Tiviot Dale. Over the last few weeks, this idea has gained strength as we have enjoyed worshipping together as a Circuit on Zoom. Obviously, we cannot yet plan to hold this service, and it may be some time before we can. No decision has been taken about when the service will be – it could be a Sunday evening or a weekday evening for example – or about what sort of service it will be, but we hope it will be something a bit different and we to want to be prepared. ***If you would be interested in being part of a group to help organise a monthly circuit service, and/or if you have musical ability and would like to be part of a circuit worship band, then please let Revd Cathy Bird know so that as soon as we can gather again, we have something in place! cathy.bird@methodist.org.uk or 0161 483 4952***

A Message from MHA

You will be well aware from the media that the coronavirus pandemic has been a difficult time in the care of people in later life, especially those living in care homes. Sadly, MHA has not been immune to some of the tragic events that have taken place and we are mourning the deaths of residents, members and colleagues.

As part of our reflection on the pandemic, we will be leading a service for MHA Sunday on June 14th and we would like to invite you to join us for that act of worship. The service will include reflections, prayers and music from across MHA on how coronavirus has impacted us and there will also be an act of memorial led by our patron, Pam Rhodes and a blessing given by Professor Clive Marsh, Vice President of The Methodist Conference. The service will be streamed on www.mha.org.uk/mhasunday from 3pm on Sunday June 14th and also available at any time afterwards.

Sunday 14th June 2020

This short act of worship has been prepared for you to use whilst you are unable to attend church. If you are well enough why not spend a few moments with God, knowing that other people are sharing this act of worship with you

This is the day that the Lord has made
Let us rejoice and be glad in it

Hymn: Singing the Faith 87 Praise to the living God

Sing/ Read /pray /proclaim the words or listen to it here

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0u6diH2j>

[Vll](#)

Praise to the living God!
All praised be his name,
who was, and is, and is to be,
for e'er the same!
The one eternal God
ere aught that now appears:
the First, the Last, beyond all thought
his timeless years!

Formless, all lovely forms
declare his loveliness;
holy, no holiness of earth
can his express.
Lo, he is Lord of all!
Creation speaks his praise,
and everywhere, above, below,
his will obeys.

His Spirit flowing free,
high surging where it will:
in prophet's word he spoke of old,
is speaking still.
Established is his law,
and changeless it shall stand,
deep writ upon the human heart,
on sea, on land.

Eternal life has he
implanted in the soul;
his love shall be our strength and stay,

while ages roll.
Praise to the living God!
All praised be his name,
who was, and is, and is to be,
for e'er the same.

*Mediaeval Jewish Doxology
translated by Max Landsberg (1845-1928) and Newton Mann
(1836-1926)*

Let us pray together

Living Lord, we gather together across time and space to worship you; united by the words we read; united by our love for you. We celebrate your awesome majesty, your holiness, and your amazing love. We acknowledge you as Lord of our lives. We sing your praise and we bless your name. Living Lord, we give thanks for all that you have done in our lives and pray that we will continue to be open to your work in us in Jesus' name. Amen.

Today's Gospel Reading: Mt 9:35 – 10:8

Time to Reflect

Every year we tell the story of Jesus ... through Advent to Christmas ... through Lent to Easter ... through the Easter season to the Ascension and on to Pentecost when we celebrate the birth of the church and the coming of the Spirit. And it's a glorious story ... full of challenges and hard choices and wonders, and betrayal and suffering. And it's a story that ends with joy, hope, forgiveness and new life.

But today the story has been told and we move back into what the lectionary calls

“ordinary time”. The story’s been told but it hasn’t ended. In many ways it’s just begun. You and I, together with all those who worship across the world today ... whether we’re reading and reflecting on written services like this one, or sharing in streamed services on the internet, or gathered in households for prayer, or alone in our homes ... we are the church, and we live in ordinary time ... we live with the joyful knowledge of the resurrection, and there is work to be done.

In our Gospel reading it was compassion for those in need that moved Jesus to commission the twelve disciples and send them out to help with the work. He sent them out to those who needed the message of hope, to those who needed healing, and he sent them out to love and bring healing to those whom society considered untouchable and unlovable – the outsiders and the outcasts. To such as these the disciples were called to proclaim the good news of the Kingdom of God.

And it’s the same today. Our buildings may be closed but the people are still here. For some the needs are obvious, for others they are hidden, invisible to casual observation. And society still has its outsiders and outcasts.

Healing takes many forms – physical, emotional, mental, spiritual. There are people who need our prayers. There are people who need us to reach out to them ... to hear a friendly voice on the phone or receive a card or a letter or a ‘hi’ across the internet. There are people who need more practical help. Some encounters will be easy and pleasant ... others will not.

So, as the church year moves once again past Trinity Sunday and back into ordinary time, we’re reminded afresh that every day is a new beginning. Our buildings are closed but the Church is not, and Jesus, filled with compassion, is still calling workers to the field to proclaim the Kingdom of God in word and

deed. And the field to which he calls us is all around us.

Take a time to sit quietly

A time of prayer

Our Father in heaven we lift our world to you today, knowing that you have called us to do so and knowing that you care about even the smallest detail of that world.

We lift to you all who suffer today at the hands of others, through war, greed, the abuse of power, or the abuse of words. May they find you standing with them, giving them strength. May they find your people upholding them and giving them a voice, that your love may be seen and known.

We lift to you all those who find themselves in positions of authority today, whether it be by choice, or because their skills have been recognized and needed, or because there is no one else available. May they seek wisdom in the right places and have the humility to know when they need help.

We lift to you all who suffer today as a result of this pandemic; through sickness, through the loss of loved ones, or through the exhausting workload of caring for others. May they know comfort, healing, reassurance and hope.

And we lift to you all those known to us personally who are in need today ... *(name them)* ... May they find grace, healing, and blessing.

We bring all these prayers in the name of Jesus who taught us when we pray to say ...

The Lord’s Prayer

Our Father

Hymn: STF 407 Hear the call of the kingdom

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gDfuGb89x_8

Hear the call of the kingdom,
lift your eyes to the King;
let his song rise within you
as a fragrant offering
of how God, rich in mercy,
came in Christ to redeem
all who trust in his unfailing grace.

Hear the call of the kingdom
to be children of light
with the mercy of heaven,
the humility of Christ;
walking justly before him,
loving all that is right,
that the life of Christ may shine through us.

King of heaven, we will answer the call.
We will follow, bringing hope to the world,
filled with passion, filled with power to
proclaim
salvation in Jesus' name.

Hear the call of the kingdom
to reach out to the lost
with the Father's compassion
in the wonder of the cross,
bringing peace and forgiveness,
and a hope yet to come:
let the nations put their trust in him.

King of heaven, we will answer the call ...

*Keith Getty (b. 1974), Kristyn Getty (b. 1980) and Stuart
Townend (b. 1963)*

A prayer of blessing

May the One who makes all things new fill us
with grace, hope, peace and joy that together
we may live and work to God's praise and
glory in our world. Amen.

Original Materials by Mary G Elms

Matthew 9: 35 – 10: 8

The Harvest Is Great, the Labourers Few

Then Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and proclaiming the good news of the kingdom, and curing every disease and every sickness. When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, 'The harvest is plentiful, but the labourers are few; therefore ask the Lord of the harvest to send out labourers into his harvest.'

The Twelve Apostles

Then Jesus summoned his twelve disciples and gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to cure every disease and every sickness. These are the names of the twelve apostles: first, Simon, also known as Peter, and his brother Andrew; James son of Zebedee, and his brother John; Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas and Matthew the tax-collector; James son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus; Simon the Cananaean, and Judas Iscariot, the one who betrayed him.

The Mission of the Twelve

These twelve Jesus sent out with the following instructions: 'Go nowhere among the Gentiles, and enter no town of the Samaritans, but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. As you go, proclaim the good news, "The kingdom of heaven has come near." Cure the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out demons. You received without payment; give without payment.'