

Dear Heaton Moor United Church,

Grace and peace to you all in the name of our Lord and Liberator Jesus Christ. Hope you are doing well and are coping well during this current lockdown.

Thanks to the stewards who are opening the church building on Sundays for private prayers, and we are all reminded that we need more of prayer during these tough times of lockdown. Glad to hear that many have received the vaccinations. We are grateful to all those frontline workers who are working hard during these times.

Thanks to Leo Roberts for his reflections for this Sunday for our Church YouTube channel. Thank you also for joining in the circuit zoom services.

This week starting from 18-25th Jan is observed globally as the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. Joining with global Christians, we as Heaton Churches Partnership are organising a Unity Sunday service on Sunday the 24th January 2021 at 6pm on Zoom. The details of the zoom are given in the notice sheet. May I kindly invite you all to join in this service to celebrate our Christian unity in our neighbourhood.

We had our worship group meeting during this week and have planned for our services till Easter.

Herewith I am sending you the reflection for this week along with the worship resources for your kind perusal.

We have also invited people to join in prayer on Thursdays by lighting a candle from 8-9pm and pray for people who are struggling. I appreciate and thanks all those joining in prayer during this time. Kindly uphold all our friends and church members in your prayers. Keep in touch with one another. For any

pastoral needs please don't hesitate to give a ring to any of us on our staff team.

May the peace of God be with you all and grant you God's strength during these days of national lockdown. We pray that the light at the end of the tunnel will come soon.

Thanking you,

With Warm regards,

Raj

22nd January 2021

MESSAGE FROM THE CO-EDITOR

Well, I'm still here! Home schooling hasn't finished me off yet!

A reminder that even though our building remains closed Church is still here, just in different forms. Here are some new things we can all do together but apart this week;

- Take part in Tune In to God: Fridays@5:17.
- Watch the weekly reflection posted on Sunday morning on our YouTube channel
<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCyhynK2FIPDTbOuqBiO6D9A>
- On Thursday evening light a candle from 8pm until 9pm

This week I took part in training around discipleship. Sometimes, especially for those of us who "work" in the Church, we can get so caught up in making sure that information is shared and activities planned for others to know the word of God we forget to have time for our own discipleship. When was the last time you actively sought to become a better disciple of Jesus? If this is something you would be interested in exploring further please do not hesitate to contact JoAnne or Raj.

It's been wonderful this week to hear of so many of our congregation receiving their vaccinations or having an appointment booked. If I can of any help during this lockdown please let me know; I'm happy to be a walking partner, personal shopper, delivery driver or anything else you may require!

If you have anything you would like included in the weekly notice's please let me know. As always if you have any questions or comments please do not hesitate to contact me.

JoAnne


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 YouTube ^{GB} Heaton Moor United Church

 Heaton Moor United Church

 heaton_moor_united_church



CORONAVIRUS TIER 4

STAY AT HOME

gov.uk/coronavirus

Around 1 in 3 people with Covid-19 have no symptoms
so will be spreading the virus without realising. We must all
take action to protect each other and our hospital capacity.



My Shopping List

Jars of pasta sauce
Tinned vegetables (peas, carrots)
Tinned tomato
Tinned kidney beans
Tinned chick peas
Baked beans
Custard / Rice pudding
Tinned fruit
Jam / peanut butter

School Pantry

Towards the end of January / beginning of February we will be doing another collection for our School Pantry Project.

This project sees us visiting Mersey Vale School before each half term and providing much needed food for those families who need a little bit of help. The Pantry is open to all families who feel they need and to date we have had a fantastic response.

To the left is a list of items that we are currently short of. If you can help in any way that would be great.

If you would like further information please contact JoAnne on community@heatonmoorunitedchurch.org.uk or 07340 269 354

School Pantry donations can be dropped off at Church during the Private Reflection time on a Sunday or JoAnne is in the office on a Wednesday afternoon between 2:30 – 16:30.

Please consider the current guidelines and social distancing rules when dropping off donations



Topsy Turvy Coffee Evening

27th January @ 19:00

This will be a craft evening over zoom. Please contact JoAnne if you would like to attend and to arrange supplies.



SPACE AT THE TABLE

Our Space At The Table project continues and is needed more than ever in

these difficult times. It continues to be of huge benefit to volunteers, carers and the Dementia Friends. Occasionally we have spare meals, if you would like to be on the reserve list to receive a meal should we have any then please contact JoAnne with your details. The meals are chilled meals and are delivered on a Wednesday afternoon and can be kept refrigerated for two days before they need to be heated through and eaten.

Parliamentary Covenant Service



The Annual Methodist Parliamentary Covenant Service will take place online this year on Sunday 31 January starting at 6pm. The service by Methodist Central Hall Westminster, can be watched [here](#) and will be available afterwards to watch again.



Tune In to God: Fridays@5:17

3Generate 365 is a year-round process of engagement with children and young people by The Methodist Church. As part of 3Generate 365 they are launching a weekly time of prayer at 5:17pm!

Never stop praying (1 Thessalonians 5:17)

Each Friday at 5:17 children and young people are encouraged to spend some time listening and paying attention to God.

At Heaton Moor United Church we think everyone should take this time, if they can, to have a moment with God. If you have children and young people in the house encourage them to join you. Alternatively spend this time with God and Pray for children and young people at this time.

A 3Gen 365 Prayer

God, you have been with me
From the beginning of my life,
And now you are beside me
At this particular time.
You see, I'm going on a journey
I don't know exactly where
But I'm listening really carefully
For your answer to this prayer.
I pray for all the gifts you give,
That are special just to me.
And I want to know how I can live
So that what you want will be.
So Holy God, pack your bags
And join us on our way
We travel all together,
With you beside us each and every day.



Silver Hearts

This week the little man and I had a go at making silver hearts. They look much better in real life than these pictures! Here's how we did it

- ♥ Cut out a heart from cardboard - we used an old cereal box
- ♥ Cut a piece of tinfoil that is bigger than your heart and fold over the edge
- ♥ Draw on the heart with sharpie pens - if you have older children they can use cocktail sticks and draw patterns to give an embossed look



Prayers from Linda



O God, we pray that you will guide and protect our young people in our world. From the dangers that are ever present in our world today. Be with them, as they experience sorrow and joy, loneliness and friendship, success and failure. Gracious God, give to them the courage and strength to make the right decisions as they journey through life. Through the power of the Holy Spirit, may they come to know and experience your loving care. We make this prayer through Christ Our Lord. Amen.

Our Father.

You are so wonderful and we worship you.

You are the source of a river of love and grace that transforms the troubled world.

We offer you our young hearts, minds and bodies.

Help them to grow in the goodness of your kingdom.

May they shine out in times of darkness, stand safely upon the truth and not be shaken, and see your vision for the world and follow you.

Come take their love to care for the lost.

Come take their creativity to help with the broken hearted

Come use our youthfulness to bring joy and peace, and your hope to bring light to everyone.

Amen.

A Coronavirus Prayer.

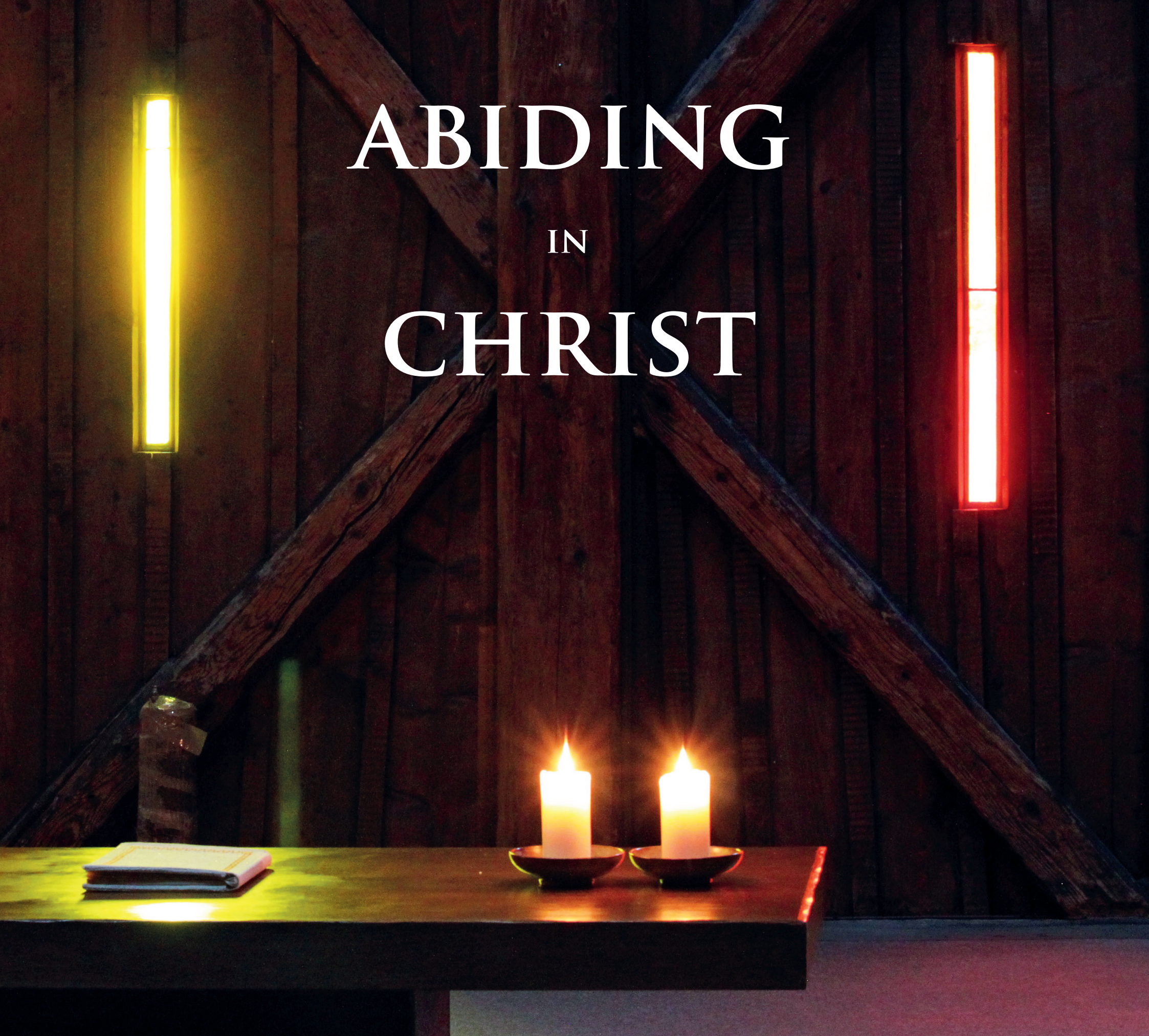
Loving God, Your desire is for our wholeness and wellbeing. We hold in tenderness and prayer the collective suffering of our world at this time. We grieve precious lives lost and vulnerable lives threatened. We ache for ourselves and our neighbour's, standing before an uncertain future. We pray: may your love, not fear, go viral. Inspire our leaders to discern and choose wisely, aligned with the common good. Help us to practice social distancing and reveal to us new and creative ways to come together in spirit and in solidarity. Call us to profound trust in your faithful presence,
Amen

If anyone would like to share a Prayer with the church family, please call Linda on 07564839380 or

E-mail lindawfleming625@gmail.com.



No names required because God Knows.



ABIDING IN CHRIST

Week of Prayer for Christian Unity 2021



Heatons Churches Partnership

Unity Sunday Service

Sunday, the 24th January 2021 at 6pm on Zoom

ctbi.org.uk/weekofprayer

Mission of God is Diverse and Innovative

Reflecting on Mark 1:14-20

When watching the swearing in ceremony of President Joe Biden to his office of the presidency of the United States of America on the 20th of January 2021, there were so many flavours of Christian faith rolling all around. Before, I mention those Christian faith elements in that swearing in ceremony, for me it was the young poet Amanda Goreman whose poem, "The hill we climb," captured the moment at that inauguration. The inaugural service began and concluded with prayers from two clergymen. President Biden sworn into his office by placing his hand on his big fat family Bible, which he has always used at the inauguration of his other offices that he has served. His inaugural speech included a silent prayer remembering all those who have lost their lives in the pandemic. In pumping confidence and hope to his country after a devastating four years, President Biden quoted a verse from Psalm 30:5, "...weeping may stay for the night, but rejoicing comes in the morning." He also quoted the words of St. Augustine from his famous book *City of God*, and said, "Many centuries ago Saint Augustine, a saint in my church wrote that a people were a multitude defined by the common objects of their love," and explained that those objects of love include, "opportunity, security, liberty, dignity, respect, honour and yes the truth." The popular hymn that was sung during the Civil rights movement in the US, "Amazing Grace" was also sung at this inaugural ceremony. I really wish and pray that President Biden will live up to all that he has quoted, said, and sang at the inauguration of his new office, so that faith will not be just limited to a rhetoric but will translate faith into actions in transforming the society today, so that faith finds its relevance in the public sphere.

The text for this Sunday from Mark 1:14-20, is a recording of Jesus's inauguration of his ministry, and more specifically the beginning of his ministry from Galilee. If you have a Red Lettered Bible, where the words of Jesus Christ are printed in red, we see the colour red begins at 1:15 of Mark, which is to say that the first words of Jesus at his inauguration of his ministry are, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near, repent, and believe in the good news." Jesus lived up to all the words of his inaugural address, taking the kingdom of God near to the people, especially those outcasts and untouchables, and calling those in power to repentance and justice. Jesus' mission inaugural address and his mission engagements have always matched with one another, and Jesus saw to it that his faith and his practice went hand in hand in this entire journey of life. Here I recognise two mission models that Jesus engages with. At a time when we are thinking of mission in the context of the pandemic, these two models that Jesus engaged gives us some guidance in our way forward as churches and as faith communities.

1. Mission as Improvisation:

Right after his baptism in the river Jordan, Jesus was taken into the wilderness for forty days enduring the temptations, and after John the baptiser was arrested, Jesus came to Galilee proclaiming the good news of God. Prior to the arrest of John, the baptiser, John was proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins (1:4) and people from the whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem were going out to him, and were baptised by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins (1:5). Now that John was arrested, that ministry of John has come to a halt, and as soon as Jesus came out of the wilderness, he came to Galilee and continued that unfinished mission of John by proclaiming the good

news of God. Jesus improvised that mission model of John, by announcing the fulfilment of time, and the Kingdom of God to be near along with repent and believe in the good news. Jesus recognised the importance of the mission of John the baptiser, and in his absence, Jesus took up that mission, improvised and continued it. Both Mark and Matthew, picked on this mission as improvisation by Jesus in his inaugural address in their gospels, while Luke records differently where Jesus goes into the synagogue in Nazareth to read out the passage from Isaiah as his inaugural address and manifesto.

What was striking for me in this text in Mark and Matthew is that, when John proclaimed the baptism of repentance, there were many people the whole of Judean countryside and all people of Jerusalem, flocked at him confessing their sins. But when Jesus proclaimed the good news of God, improvising the mission of John the baptiser, both Mark and Matthew are silent in their recording about the number or the group that started to flock and follow him at his proclamation. Why were they silent? Were people not moved as much as they have been moved when John proclaimed a similar gospel? Did this mission model of John not work for Jesus? The learning I take out of our Markan text is, perhaps what worked for John might not work for Jesus, and therefore the gospel writer did not record about the following of people to such a proclamation, as there wouldn't have been many. However, Jesus attempted in his mission with a model as improvisation, building on what John the baptiser was proclaiming, only to learn that God works differently for different people in different contexts. This also explains for me the dynamism of God, for God works in God's own ways beyond any predictions and assumptions, for after all mission is God's. Interestingly, according to Luke, when Jesus spoke about the radical inclusion and preference of the 'outsiders' in his inaugural mission address, the audience were filled with rage, drove him out of the town and tried to push him off a cliff (Luke 4:29). Anyways, Jesus did attempt on the mission model of improvisation, proclaiming the good news like John, the baptiser and at every point in his life, God did not leave Jesus at any moment.

2. Mission as Innovation:

Having proclaimed the good news, right after the arrest of John to the Galileans, Jesus now works on the mission of innovation, perhaps working on a new way of doing mission, which was to move into the communities seeking and finding people to follow him. Such a model of mission, which I call as innovation worked well for Jesus, and ever since then Jesus pioneered in innovating new ways, and adventurous ways of doing mission all along his life and ministry. Again, Mark and Matthew agree to this mission of calling the first disciples, whereas Luke had a different version of calling the first disciples, that included a miraculous catch of fish (Luke 5:1-11). Jesus later passed along the Sea of Galilee and saw Simon and Andrew, two brothers and James and John, two other brothers and invited them to follow him, and they left their nets and followed Jesus Christ. These four disciples were the first recruits of Jesus Christ in his movement for the Kingdom of God, and called them in the public sphere, at their own work places to follow him.

Jesus mission of calling his first disciples was a mission of innovation. Firstly, Jesus' mission innovation was seen in his choosing the Galilean area as his starting point for his mission engagement. In the first century Palestine, Galilean area had more 'non-Jews' than Jews, for Jews were concentrated in the Judean parts and in Jerusalem, so in order to explain that as a messiah, he has come for all people, including those Galileans. Galilee was also a place for

social dissenters to the Roman empire. So, Jesus chose that part of the world to choose his first disciples, and that explains his innovative and inclusive mission endeavour. Secondly, Jesus mission as innovation was demonstrated in his journeying to the streets and sea coasts of Galilee, rather than to the temples and synagogues. As a Rabbi, Jesus was supposed be in the temples and the synagogues, but to demonstrate his innovative mission, he chose to tread the dusty soils, at this instance on the sea coast of Galilee. Jesus always travelled into the communities that were overlooked and forgotten. Thirdly, Jesus innovative mission was seen in his calling Simon & Andrew, James & John to find them at their work places and inviting them to follow him. Jesus did not search the religious spaces and places to find his first disciples, rather called some hardworking people, who are willing to take the risks and challenges at their work, in this case in fishing on rough seas and waters. Fourthly, we notice Jesus' innovative mission in his call to those first disciples, who were fishermen, to follow him so that he will make them fish for people (17v). Jesus' emphasis was on people, transforming them, and the mission of his first disciples was to fish people for the kingdom, and be a channel of transforming people in their occupied society. That call of Jesus to follow him, gave a sense of confidence to Simon, Andrew, James and John, for they knew they were being called for a greater purpose, and therefore immediately responded to that call and challenge.

On recognising the innovative mission of Jesus, these four disciples found their call, found their sense of discipleship and immediately left everything and followed Jesus Christ to work for the kingdom of God. This innovative mission of Jesus worked well for that time and context, for God who entrusts mission works on God's graciousness, which includes innovation and reimagination.

The relevance of this text for us today is: In the mission of God, God works through God's people with creativity, innovation and wonder. No two ways of doing mission need not be the same. For what has applied in one context, in one time period need not be the same for another context and another time period. So, to those of us engaged in the mission of God, the calling for us is to wait on God to be creative, relevant and challenging in our attempts for the kingdom of God. Mission of God is diverse and innovative. Secondly, following Jesus in this post-secular context is to be 'fish for people,' which is to say that following Jesus is to be and become a channel of transforming people and communities around us for the kingdom of God. Following Jesus today does not account for the numbers in the churches, rather it is sharing God's love through our actions for change in our society. We will know as Christians by our love and only by our love, love for God that needs to be demonstrated as love for neighbour. Thirdly, in our context today, mission is all about treading the dusty roads in our communities, travelling into the overlooked communities, being with them, listening to them, and joining with them in transforming our society. If we want to be innovative in our mission for God, as churches we are called to journey into our communities, for God is at work there. In the mission model of John, people flocked and went to him into the wilderness. In the mission model of Jesus, Jesus went into the outcasted communities, offering hope and being with them. The choice is ours, and may we join with Jesus in being innovative, creative, gracious and relevant in our mission for God.

The final words of Amanda Gorman's poem reverberate in my ears, offering a sense of hope in our mission forward, for the mission of God is diverse and innovative. Allow me to quote her words here:

*When day comes we step out of the shade,
aflame and unafraid
The new dawn blooms as we free it
For there is always light,
if only we're brave enough to see it
If only we're brave enough to be it*

I want to conclude my reflection with the words of John Bell, in his famous song, "Will you come and follow me (The summons)"

*Will you come and follow me
if I but call your name?
Will you go where you don't know
and never be the same?
Will you let my love be shown,
will you let my name be known,
will you let my life be grown
in you and you in me?*

*Will you leave your self behind
if I but call your name?
Will you care for cruel and kind
and never be the same?
Will you risk the hostile stare
should your life attract or scare,
will you let me answer prayer
in you and you in me?*

Raj Bharat Patta,
22nd January 2021



The Methodist Church

United Stockport Circuit (Manchester and Stockport District)

A Message from the Superintendent Minister

January 19th, 2021

My Dear Friends,

The news this last week or so has been taken over by the rolling out of the Covid-19 vaccination programme. As I write, more people have now received the vaccination than have tested positive for the coronavirus, so whilst we know that we still have a long way to go before any sense of normality can resume, we can at least believe that there is an end in sight. I know that some of you – those in the priority categories – have already had the jab and I want to encourage all of you, as soon as you are able to, to get it done. Surprisingly there does seem to be some resistance and scepticism around, possibly as a result of scaremongering and fake news, possibly as a result of fear of side effects or lack of confidence in the efficacy of the available vaccines. Please be assured that prior to each vaccination, you will be asked questions about any prior allergies or relevant health conditions and in the very small eventuality of the vaccination not being suitable for you, you will be informed. So do take the opportunity when you are offered it and give thanks for the skill and commitment of the scientists who have developed the vaccination in what is really a remarkably short space of time.

The vaccine, of course, is not just for our own protection. It is also our responsibility to have it to protect others – even if we have questions and concerns. As with many things at the moment, we all need to balance our rights with our responsibilities. For example, just because our churches have the legal right to be open does not necessarily mean that it is the responsible thing to do to be open. It might be a better witness to keep our church buildings closed to ensure that people are kept safe. We believe, after all, that church is about so much more than our buildings – we have learned over the last year that we can still be church even without the security of the sanctuary and church hall. Another example - in the news this week it has been reported that the World Health Organisation has suggested we might be facing a global moral crisis, as it becomes clear that people in the wealthy developed world will more easily be able to get the vaccine than people in poorer nations, the very same nations in many instances which are themselves the major producers of the vaccines. We should **ALL**, as a human race, have the right and the possibility of receiving the vaccine as soon as is practically possible, but those of us in a more privileged place also have a responsibility to speak out to say that poorer nations have an equal right to supplies.

In all of this, I am thinking about Jesus' response to the scribes when asked about the most important commandment. Love God, says Jesus, but also love your neighbour as you love yourself. The proverbial Golden Rule which is there in nearly all the major world faith traditions – treat others as you would like to be treated yourself. The Covid-19 vaccination

is about finding a way forward as a global community – it is as much about others as it is about ourselves – even if this means putting to one side any personal feelings or anxieties we might have about it.

Actually, there are very few areas of our life and faith in which we have 100% certainty about things. Every time we set foot outside the door or move around our homes, we have placed our trust in others to ensure that things are safe, whether its road traffic management or the work of the emergency services, or the people who have built all the technical gadgets and machinery we rely on. We place our confidence in expertise and experience and although we have never met the people who make our lives easier and safer we trust that they have done a good job because to do otherwise would make our lives very difficult to live indeed; and in any case, our own experience tells us that by and large other people have done a good job in making sure things are for the best for us. And to that we bring our own common sense and reason.

As people of faith we know this all too well. There is a common misconception that faith is about certainty, and there are some who would tell us that being a Christian gives us a monopoly on truth and certainty. Yet one of my mantras has always been that the opposite of faith is not doubt, but certainty; in other words, certainty is the enemy of faith! At the heart of faith is the acceptance that there will always be things that we cannot and do not know.

Certainty can make us complacent and arrogant and leave us with a sense that we don't need anyone else to help us. Faith, on the other hand means to have complete trust in something. Even something we do not fully understand. We continually engage with that inner sense of there being 'something more' without necessarily being able to put our finger on what that 'something more' is. Of course, we bring our reason and our experience into the picture as we grapple with the great questions of life. We then encounter scripture and the stories and teachings of Jesus and the journeys and liberations of the people of the Old Testament. And in all this we are led into the heart of the great mystery of faith which offers us the assurance of unconditional love and forgiveness. At the same time we are lead into a life which is lived in the service of others – to love God and to love one another, the New Commandment which if we open ourselves to it can guide and lead us in all that we do and in all the difficult decisions of life.

Stay safe everyone. And please remember as always, as we continue to live with lockdown measures:

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

See your local church notices for details but for the time being we are continuing our Circuit wide Zoom service at 3pm on Sundays.

Login details as usual as follows:

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

Meeting ID: 872 1224 6881 Password: 974333

Circuit Prayer

As we continue into lockdown, let's continue to say this prayer together when we can, at 11am on a Sunday morning. This way we stay connected in a very really and tangible way with all those who are not yet able to come back to church. You can also read more about each church on the Circuit Website

www.stockportcircuit.org.uk

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 , Dialstone Lane Methodist Church , Davenport Methodist Church , Edgeley Community Church , Hazel Grove Methodist Church, Heaton Mersey Methodist , Heaton Moor United Church, Jubilee Methodist Church, (Marple Bridge), Marple Methodist Church, The Ridge Methodist Church, (Marple), Romiley Methodist Church, St. Johns Methodist Church, (Cheadle Heath), Tiviot Dale Methodist Church (centre of Stockport), Trinity Methodist Church, (Bramhall Lane), Windlehurst Methodist Church (High Lane), Woodley Methodist Church

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.

For all Church Council and Circuit Meeting Members

Churches today are required to have a level of 'professionalism' when engaging in work with communities and delivering their Mission. Our District Team are offering governance training for managing trustees, whether Church Council, or Circuit Meeting members, and all are strongly encouraged to attend.

There will be three training sessions during February, one in the daytime, one in the evening and one on a Saturday to encourage as many people as possible to attend. The sessions will be the same as each other so please do sign up for whichever suits you best. Please book early on

[Eventbrite https://www.eventbrite.com/e/135309635763](https://www.eventbrite.com/e/135309635763)

Looking Forward to Lent

Next time we will give more details about opportunities for Lenten Study and Reflection across the Circuit, but for now, please consider this request.....During Lent, we want to share what our faith means to us with one another through social media. We'd love to hear about something that really helps you in your Christian journey, whether it's a favourite hymn or worship song, a particular bible reading, a place you find it easier to feel God's presence, a piece of music, a picture, or anything else. If you'd like to be part of this, please email let us know what helps you and a little bit about why and then look out for #FortyDaysOfFaith on our social media feeds.

email admin@stockportcircuit.org.uk

Sunday 24 January 2021

This short act of worship has been prepared for you to use whilst we are unable to use Methodist Church premises. 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.

Opening Prayer

As we prepare for worship this morning – let us sing or say-

Hymn: Turn Your Eyes Upon Jesus

<https://youtu.be/UnX1hRZi0-w>

Turn your eyes upon Jesus,
look full in his wonderful face
and the things of earth will grow strangely
dim

In the light of his glory and grace.

Helen Howarth Lemmel (1863-1961)

**Hymn: Dear Lord and Father of Mankind
(Stf 495)**

<https://youtu.be/WqOnjmr9Ah0>

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

Dear Lord and Father of mankind
forgive our foolish ways;
reclothe us in our rightful mind;
in purer lives thy service find,
in deeper reverence, praise.

In simple trust like theirs who heard
beside the Syrian sea
the gracious calling of the Lord,
let us, like them, without a word
rise up and follow thee.

O sabbath rest by Galilee!
O calm of hills above,
where Jesus knelt to share with thee
the silence of eternity,

interpreted by love!

With that deep hush subduing all
our words and works that drown
the tender whisper of thy call,
as noiseless let thy blessing fall
as fell thy manna down.

Drop thy still dews of quietness,
till all our strivings cease;
take from our souls the strain and stress,
and let our ordered lives confess
the beauty of thy peace.

Breathe through the heats of our desire
thy coolness and thy balm;
let sense be dumb, let flesh retire;
speak through the earthquake, wind, and fire,
O still small voice of calm!

John Greenleaf Whittier (1807-1892)

Let us pray together

Lord God, despite the restrictions placed upon us and the circumstances in which we are living in these days, we are thankful that we can turn our eyes upon you to praise and worship you the living God, drawing comfort in the knowledge of your gracious and compassionate nature.

We are conscious Lord of those who have not been able to meet with others, concerned perhaps not to be in other people's company because of health reasons. We think of them now, think of them sitting where they normally would be on a Sunday in church.
.....We ask you Lord, to bless them, just where they are now, uniting us together through the love of Christ. Amen.

Prayer of confession

Gracious God, you offer us new life in Christ, yet so often we try to live in our own way and in our own strength. We stray from the paths you want us to follow. Forgive us for our half-hearted efforts, our self-centredness, our selfish prayers. Challenge our minds and hearts and lead us towards your truth.

Hear good news. For all who put their trust in Christ. Jesus says: 'Your sins are forgiven.'
Amen. Thanks be to God

Today's Reading from the Old Testament

Jonah 3:1-5,10

Today's Gospel Reading: Mark 1:14-20

Time to Reflect

Just as Jesus called Peter and Andrew, James and John, so he calls us to follow him. Just as they had to make a decision to do so, so do we. He calls us because he wishes to make us more useful to him, to make our lives more fruitful in the changing world around us. It's a challenge because to follow him, means letting him take the lead. If he says do it, we do it. If he says don't do it, we don't do it.

Following Jesus means accepting him as the way, as far as our lives are concerned, taking him as the truth. God's truth to us. It means accepting that he is the life, our life, and without him there is no life as God intended it to be.

So, if that is the case, the question is.....How are we doing - answering his call and following him?

You see, following Jesus is a transforming work, a continuing work because the day we came to the Lord was only a beginning of a conversion process that started and goes on and on. It really means 'our becoming something we were not'.

So, are we further forward now than when we made that commitment to be a follower?

We can answer that question for ourselves because we know, if over the years, we have been able to do things that before we just couldn't do. Like, talk to other people about our Christian experience, discuss God's word with one another, share our doubts as well as our joyful discoveries; being aware of the knowledge of God's help at our side at difficult times.

Can we say now that, looking back, we have known his presence and direction in our lives? Do we continue to do so? And what about the future? Those disciples Jesus called had no idea where his call would take them. They just went with him and continued to follow him which is what he expects of us too.

Take a time to sit quietly

A time of prayer

Lord God, throughout history you have called people to respond to your challenge to follow you, undaunted by the task to which they were called believing that you would guide and lead them, inspire and enable them to fulfil the work to which they were called. We give thanks for those whose faithful discipleship and friendship encouraged and guided us. Help us to learn from their example and to respond faithfully and willingly whenever you call. Help us to have faith to follow wherever you lead.

We ask these prayers in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and share together in the Lord's Prayer

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father who art in heaven
Hallowed be thy name
Thy kingdom come.....
Thy will be done
On earth as it is in heaven
Give us this day our daily bread
And forgive us our trespasses
As we forgive those who trespass against us
And lead us not into temptation
But deliver us from evil
For thine is the kingdom

The power and the glory
For ever and ever
Amen

***Hymn: Spirit of God unseen as the wind,
(Stf 394)***

<https://youtu.be/uGiCOx1obNg>

Spirit of God, unseen as the wind,
gentle as is the dove,
teach us the truth and help us believe,
show us the Saviour's love.

You spoke to us long, long ago,
gave us the written word;
we read it still, needing its truth,
through it God's voice is heard.

Without your help we fail our Lord,
we cannot live his way;
we need your power, we need your strength,
following Christ each day.

Margaret V. Old (1932-2001)

A prayer of blessing

May the Lord bless us and keep us in his love
as we answer his call to follow and serve him
in the world today. Amen

Original Materials by Keith Edlington

All

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Local Churches please insert CCCLI No here

We are grateful to all the Ministers and Local Preachers from around the Connexion who have contributed to Worship at Home. This resource is administrated by Ministries: Vocations and Worship in the Connexional Team. We aim to continue to provide these resources until the end of August 2021.

Jonah 3:1-5, 10

The word of the Lord came to Jonah a second time, saying "Get up, go to Nineveh, that great city, and proclaim to it the message that I tell you." So, Jonah set out and went to Nineveh, according to the word of the Lord.

Now Nineveh was an exceedingly large city, a three days' walk across. Jonah began to go into the city, going a day's walk. And he cried out, "Forty days more, and Nineveh shall be overthrown!"

And the people of Nineveh believed God: they proclaimed a fast, and everyone, great and small, put on sackcloth. When God saw what they did, how they turned from their evil ways, God changed his mind about the calamity that he had said he would bring upon them; and he did not do it.

Mark 1:14-20

Now after John was arrested, Jesus came to Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God, and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe the good news." As Jesus passed along the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting a net into the sea-for they were fishermen. And Jesus said to them, "Follow me and I will make you fish for people." And immediately they left their nets and followed him. As he went a little farther, he saw James son of Zebedee and his brother John, who were in their boat mending the nets. Immediately he called them; and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired men, and followed him.