



Heaton Moor United Church

The United Reformed Church and The Methodist Church
working together in partnership



Sunday Services at Heaton Moor United Church

Services at 10:45 unless otherwise stated

20 th March	Rev Dr Graham Adams	Communion service Lenten study will follow the service
27 th March	Rev Dr Raj Patta	Mothering Sunday Service
3 rd April	JoAnne Roy & Louise Lee	Super Sunday Final Lenten study will follow the service
10 th April	Palm Sunday	Circuit Service St Peters Square at 12:00
17 th April	Easter Sunday Rev Dr Raj Patta	Breakfast Service at 08:00 Communion Service at 10:45

Additional Services

Wednesday 13 th April at 10:00	Short Communion Service	Short service followed by refreshments. All welcome
Thursday 14 th April at 18:00	Maundy Thursday	Maundy Thursday service with food
Tuesday 19 th April at 14:00	Dementia Friendly Service Heaton Moor United Church	Short service followed by refreshments. All welcome

Additional Events at Heaton Moor Church

Saturday 19 th March at 07:45	Heatons Prayer Breakfast
Monday 21 st March at 19:30 (takes place every other Monday)	Men's Fellowship
Wednesday 23 rd March at 10:30 (takes place weekly)	Coffee Morning – All Welcome
Saturday 26 th March at 09:30	United With Ukraine Short service followed by coffee morning – see notices for further details
Tuesday 12 th April at 14:00	Ladies Fellowship

Dear Heaton Moor United Church,

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

Thanks to Graham Adams who will be leading our Holy Communion service this Sunday at Church. Thanks to all who are joining at our Lent study course after church service, to those who are facilitating the conversations and to those who are preparing the soup. We will meditate on verse 3 of the hymn, "And can it be..." this Sunday at our Lenten study. The circuit is offering the Lenten course on the same hymn on zoom on Thursdays at 7pm and if you are able to join, please do join in.

The Ukrainian war continues to break my heart. Children bombed. Civilians targeted. Millions of people displaced. Natural environment destroyed. Billions spent on life destroying equipment. Lord, have mercy and teach us the ways of peace. Thanks to few of our church friends who spoke to me and who have written to me about the needed Christian response to the situation. Last week, I spoke to the Pastor of a Russian speaking congregation which meets in the area and prayed with him. All he said was, "war is business for many, and the powerful are making profit out of it, at the expense of innocent people's death." He was worried that the aid is not able to be reached to the further most parts of the war-torn regions. He has sought our prayers and support. Let us please uphold the people of Ukraine in our prayers and do our best in supporting them in their quest for peace. Look out for our event on the 26th March in support of Ukraine.

We had a good staff meeting this week, where we discussed our work and future plans leading up to Easter. March 22 is observed as World Water Day and this year's theme is "ground water: making the invisible visible" and let us use water carefully and sensitively. As a church we have got some eco-friendly water bottles made, and you can get them from our church office for a donation.

This week we had a fabulous Friends of Stockport Interfaith event at our church where we worked with clay and made tiles expressing our faiths for unity. The mayor and mayoress of Stockport council were present at this event, and we are thankful to them and to the rest of the interfaith members for their presence and support. I was at Bramhall Methodist church this week speaking at their Lenten talks on racial justice and also attended the Cliff college committee this week.

Here is the link of the Politics in the Pulpit podcast on the lectionary texts for this week:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GbwGHJvCmPc>

If you are able to join at our Heaton Prayer Breakfast on Saturday the 19th at 7.45am at our church, please do join, for it will be an opportunity to pray with our fellow Heaton friends.

May you all have a good week, and may God's mercy and peace be with you.

Thanking you,
Raj 17th March 2022

MESSAGE FROM THE CO-EDITOR

Is it Friday already?



It's been a very busy week - we had water play at our toddler session last week at which some of the little ones got very excited and ended up in the water. This led to parents requesting more water play this week - it's great that parents are taking an active part in the session activities.

We had another good litter pick at litter church on Saturday - little man joined us once again, this time competing against Jean and Deborah to see who could collect the most. As little man was the judge I'm sure you can guess who won!

Our lent study sessions on the song "And Can It Be?" are providing some lively discussion - thank you to Deborah who led the conversation last Sunday. If you would like to join in this week, I have attached this week's notes and paper copies will be available on Sunday.

Sharon led our Dementia Friends Service, we learnt a new term "wintering", welcomed a new couple and had a lovely time of worship and fellowship.

Finally, we hosted the Friends of Stockport InterFaith group on Wednesday at which we were joined by the Mayor and Mayoress of Stockport. It was a great evening working with clay to produce tiles around what our Faith means to us.



After feedback from church members and the local community we are having a United With Ukraine Event on Saturday 26th March with all proceeds going to All We Can Ukraine Emergency Appeal. We will be having a short service followed by a coffee morning with a bring and buy. There will also be a space for people who are interested in the Homes For Ukraine initiative to meet and see how we can work together to support potential hosts. If you are able to help at the event, please let me know.

As always if I can be of any assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me.

JoAnne

community@heatonmoorunitedchurch.org.uk

07340 269 354

www.heatonmoorunitedchurch.org.uk



Heaton Moor United Church



Heaton Moor United Church



@hmuccommunity



heaton_moor_united_church

Office Hours This Week

Monday 09:00 – 14:00

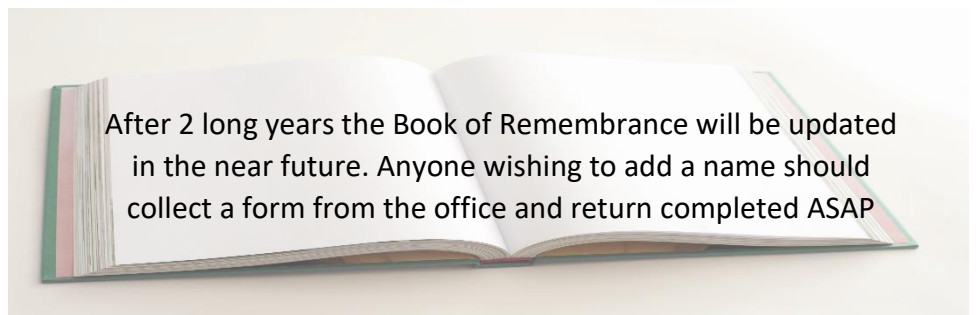
Tuesday 09:00 – 14:00

Wednesday 09:00 – 14:00

Thursday CLOSED

Friday CLOSED

After 2 long years the Book of Remembrance will be updated in the near future. Anyone wishing to add a name should collect a form from the office and return completed ASAP



We are down to the last 20 packets or rice!



In Malawi secondary school education is not free and often far too expensive for the majority of the population to afford. This means that less than one in three children is able to attend school. 90kg of fairly traded Kilombero Rice is all it takes to enable a farmer to send their child to secondary school for a year. As a Church we have taken up the challenge to sell 90kg of rice to help JTS and their partnership with farmers in Malawi. You can help make a difference by buying one (or more!) bags of rice. We are asking for a suggested amount of £3 per bag of rice.

To Confirm the Bravura Concert scheduled for the 19th March has had to be postponed. Further details will follow once a new date has been set.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

If you can help with any of the following please speak with JoAnne
07340 269 354 or community@heatonmoorunitedchurch.org.uk

Yurt - Monday 21st March

Are you available at 13:00 to help pitch a tent?

United With Ukraine Saturday 26th March

Short Service at 9:30; welcome and duty

Coffee Morning 10:00 - 11:30; kitchen, cake stall and bring and buy stall

Providing items for the cake stall

Holy Week Monday 11th April - Thursday 14th April

07:30 - 09:00 daily

Handing out hot cross buns and drinks at The Plough, Heaton Moor Road

Good Friday 15th April Walk of Witness

From 10:00

Stewarding the walk of witness



We would love to do a celebratory event for the Queens Platinum Jubilee this year on Sunday 5th June. We are looking for a team of volunteers who can help plan and carry out the event – the staff team can help with planning but unfortunately none are available on the day. If you are interested in volunteering, please contact JoAnne as soon as possible. Without volunteers we will not be able to hold an event.

SMALL GROUPS at the Church Meeting and other gatherings
some of the congregation have expressed an interest in getting together in small groups for bible study, reflection, fellowship. If you are available to host and facilitate a small group please let a member of the team know your preferred day and time.



Come to the next HCP Prayer Meeting



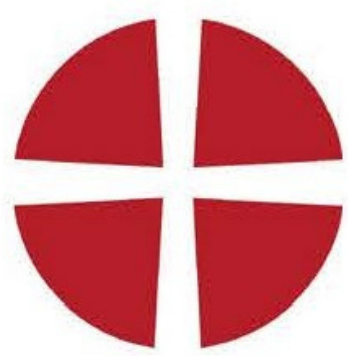
On Saturday March 19th

7.45 for 8.00-9.00am

At Heaton Moor United Church

To pray for:-

- Each other
- Each other's churches
- Mission in the Heaton's
- Mission in Stockport



**HEATON MOOR
UNITED CHURCH**

UNITED WITH UKRAINE

Saturday 26th March

9:30 - 11:30

Stanley Road, Heaton Moor, SK4 4HL

community@heatonmoorunitedchurch.org.uk



9:30 - 10:00

Short Service

A time to gather in
prayerful solidarity

10:00 - 11:30

Coffee Morning

Bring & Buy

There will also be space available for people who are thinking of registering or have registered with Homes for Ukraine to talk together

Bring and Buy – brings goods to sell to raise funds for Ukraine. All items will be sold at a communal table and funds raised sent to All We Can Ukraine Emergency Appeal. Families who have signed up to host Ukrainian Refugees may have items for free. All left over items will be taken to charities supporting refugees and asylum seekers.

ALL PROCEEDS TO ALL WE CAN UKRAINE EMERGENCY APPEAL WWW.ALLWECAN.ORG.UK

Lent 2022

'And Can It Be'

And can it be that I should gain
an interest in the Saviour's blood?
Died he for me, who caused his pain?
For me, who him to death pursued?
Amazing love! How can it be
that thou, my God, shouldst die for me?

'Tis mystery all: the immortal dies!
Who can explore his strange design?
In vain the firstborn seraph tries
to sound the depths of love divine.
'Tis mercy all! Let earth adore,
let angel minds enquire no more.

He left his father's throne above –
so free, so infinite his grace –
emptied himself of all but love,
and bled for Adam's helpless race.
'Tis mercy all, immense and free;
for, O my God, it found out me!

Long my imprisoned spirit lay,
Fast bound in sin and nature's night;
Thine eye diffused a quick'ning ray—
I woke, the dungeon flamed with light;
My chains fell off, my heart was free,
I rose, went forth, and followed Thee.

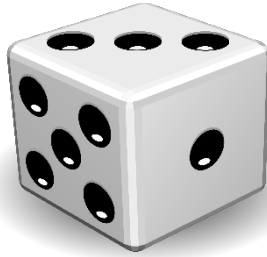
No condemnation now I dread;
Jesus, and all in him is mine!
Alive in him, my living Head,
and clothed in righteousness divine,
bold I approach the eternal throne,
and claim the crown, through Christ, my own.

Singing the Faith Hymn 345

By Charles Wesley

Week 3

The Lenten Liturgy



Symbol: A Dice

We remember that as Jesus hung, suffering on the cross, the soldiers 'diced' for his clothes. A game of chance willed away the last vestiges of his dignity. A turn of the dice decided who was the richer that day. Yet Jesus offered the message that all are equal in God's sight. God does not play games with his love.

Lord, we recognise that all people and nations are equal in your sight. Your love freely given is not a game of chance dependent on our deserving, our status or where we are born.

As we lay our pieces of rubbish at the foot of the cross may they be symbols of the inequality between people and nations; the dice that determine the quality of life that we are born to.

Lord, as we lay these symbols at your cross, forgive us for all the ways we uphold the inequalities of the world so that we live in comfort whilst others have no life at all.

We sing, or listen to verse 3 of the hymn

He left his father's throne above –
so free, so infinite his grace –
emptied himself of all but love,
and bled for Adam's helpless race.
'Tis mercy all, immense and free;
for, O my God, it found out me!

Let me go there: The Incarnation

By Cathy Bird

Today we consider the third verse of the hymn.

In reflecting upon this verse, I am immediately put in mind of RS Thomas' wonderful poem 'The Coming'

And God held in his hand
A small globe. Look he said.
The son looked. Far off,
As through water, he saw
A scorched land of fierce
Colour. The light burned
There; crusted buildings
Cast their shadows: a bright
Serpent, A river
Uncoiled itself, radiant
With slime.
On a bare hill a bare tree saddened
The sky. Many People
Held out their thin arms
To it, as though waiting
For a vanished April
To return to its crossed
Boughs. The son watched
Them. Let me go there, he said.

R.S. Thomas

"Let me go there he said"

"He left his Father's throne above."

These are explicit statements about incarnation – about God living willingly **as** a human being, **among** human beings.

For many centuries, the early church argued about what it meant that God should come to earth to live, apparently, as a human being. The early Christian community struggled to express what Jesus had come to mean to them. They knew his words and his actions had the power to transform lives, they knew that although he had been violently killed, he was still very much alive in their hearts and minds, inspiring them to want to share the essence of his message with the whole world. They instinctively sensed that in Jesus they had glimpsed the very nature of the God of love and justice they had been worshipping all their lives. But was Jesus fully God? If so, how could he also be fully human? Was he God just trying to *give the*

impression of being a human? Or was he a human who just happened to have a really special connection with God? Such questions were, for a long time, the cause of persecution and subject to claims of heresy. Eventually in the year 451 a position was arrived at in which Jesus was deemed to be both fully human and fully divine. It's a position that we more or less hold onto today and it is expressed within the Nicene Creed that remains a lynch pin of traditional liturgy [*if you want to read more about this, and about how it might impact our lives as Christians today, get hold of a copy of Robert Van de Weyer's book 'The Call the Heresy.'*]

But what might it say to us today, this idea that Jesus was both fully human and fully divine? This third verse – the centre of the hymn – seems to offer a summary of everything about Jesus we know and have come to believe. As an act of compassion (“**so free, so infinite his grace**”) Jesus chose came to live among humanity, as a human being (“**he left his Father's throne above.**”) He lived a life to show humankind what God's intention is for humankind (**“he emptied himself of all but love”**), he was killed as a direct result of that life and ministry (“**he bled for Adam's helpless race**”) and his life, teachings and ministry continue today in the lives of his followers (**‘tis mercy all, immense and free, for O my God it found out me.**) In this verse is all we need to know! In order to fully appreciate the divinity and humanity of Jesus we need to take the whole story on board.

Yet our lives as Christians can very easily focus just on the birth and death and resurrection of Christ. We move from Christmas to Easter so quickly, and even when we are in Holy Week, we talk about the death of Jesus forgetting that it only came about as a consequence of a life lived in a particular way. Incarnation is not just for Christmas! Crucifixion is not just for Good Friday! Resurrection is not just for Easter Sunday! Incarnation, crucifixion and resurrection all come together in the pivotal line of the verse in which we sing that God **‘emptied himself of all but love.’**

For the human Jesus, we can understand this emptying as God ridding Godself of all the trappings of divinity – the throne, the crown, the omnipotence, the cherubim and seraphim waiting upon God. This human Jesus embodies pure, unadulterated love. At the same time, Jesus as a manifestation of that which is Divine, shows us that God is pure love. God is love. Love is God. Nothing more, nothing less.

And it is this absolute purity of love - this transformative, compassionate, challenging, angry, not to be diverted, justice seeking love – which plays out in the life, teaching and ministry of Jesus and which ultimately leads to his death. This is a love which seeks to bring the mighty down from their thrones, a love which understands that ‘levelling up’ can only happen if the rich and powerful also empty themselves, a love which crosses divides and accepts humanity in all its glorious diversity and imperfection.

It is also a love which continuously chips away at the self-centredness and greed which undermines and veils God's blessing and against which some, whose hearts have become so hardened fight back in a desperate attempt to protect their own position and status quo. Make no mistake, Jesus bled and died because he took the side of the helpless – the poor, the marginalised – and demonstrated God's bias for the poor. Jesus' death happened because he led a life of pure love and it was just too challenging for some people. Jesus' death was a sign

of the incredible lengths to which God's love was prepared to go for the sake of the world which God loves.

So, when we come to think about the death of Jesus, we miss out thinking about his life and ministry at our peril! For here is the key to resurrection!

Jesus knew that he was choosing a way that would lead to his own suffering and death, but he also knew that his dying would have a purpose. That somehow, in some way, as a result of his death, people – you and I - would be brought into a closer relationship with God. That in seeing his self-sacrifice in dying for what he believed in, that in opening up the way for the discovery of resurrection and new life, that in all these things, people would see and comprehend the face and will of God more clearly.

**“’Tis mercy all, immense and free,
For, O my God, it found out me!”**

God’s love is an unconditional love. It is immense and free. God is like the sower in the parable who is profligate in his throwing of the seed knowing not where it will land, but trusting that some of it will take root and grow. God’s mercy is for me, and that also means it is for you, and for all people; and when it lands, it takes root and germinates and pushes the small shoots of hope which have lain dormant for too long into the open air; we can no longer stay where we have been. Once we are touched by the reality and depth of Jesus’ life and ministry we can no longer sit back and accept the injustices of life – the war, the violence, the hate, the exclusion. We follow a path that leads us away from the places of familiarity and security and safety. A life following Christ is a life lived to reveal the love of Christ to others through compassion and campaigning, through simplicity, acceptance and anger so that together God’s people and God’s world may be set on a path to healing and wholeness.

Questions For Discussion and Reflection:

- How do you understand the incarnation of Jesus?
- What do we need to empty ourselves of in order to be able to express pure love?
- In what ways today is humanity a ‘helpless race’? How might the followers of Christ today need to bleed in order to transform that helplessness?
- In what ways has God’s love and mercy’ found out you’? How has this changed you?

A Prayer

Dear God in Heaven,

We give you thanks that you left your throne above to live among us.

We thank you that in Jesus, you have given us a pattern for living.

Empty us of all that gets in the way of our offering service to you.

Fill us with the goodness of your love, grace and mercy, that we may live to serve you, and walk the costly path of justice and peace.

As we seek to follow in the footsteps of the one who is both human and divine, remind us that we are made in that image, and that in Christ we are free to be the people God calls us to be. Amen.

Worship at Home – Sunday, 20th March 2022 (3rd Sunday in Lent)

This short act of worship has been prepared for you to use at home. We invite you to spend a few moments with God, knowing that other people across the Methodist Connexion are sharing this act of worship with you.

Opening Sentence

Sing praise to God, who is merciful and just.
Sing praise to God, whose love endures
forever.

**Hymn: StF638 Through all the changing
scenes of life**

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

<https://youtu.be/OVJxhpcj6o>

Through all the changing scenes of life,
in trouble and in joy,
the praises of my God shall still
my heart and tongue employ.

Of his deliverance I will boast,
till all that are distressed
from my example comfort take,
and charm their griefs to rest.

O magnify the Lord with me,
with me exalt his name;
when in distress to him I called,
he to my rescue came.

The hosts of God encamp around
the dwellings of the just;
deliverance he affords to all
who on his succour trust.

O make but trial of his love;
experience will decide
how blest are they, and only they,
who in his truth confide.

Fear him, you saints, and you will then
have nothing else to fear;
make you his service your delight,
your wants shall be his care.

*Nahum Tate (1652-1715) and Nicholas Brady (1659-
1726) Based on Psalm 34*

Let us pray together:

God, you welcome us as, with all your people,
we come to worship.

You welcome us each day, calling us out of
darkness into your marvellous light. You
rejoice in our vitality and excitement, and you
delight to see us reaching out to you,
responding to your love. Our hearts are full of
praise as we consider the work of your hands.
And we are moved to silence when we
consider the work of Jesus.

We praise you for all you have given through
Jesus. He has shepherded us and guided us.
He is our prophet, opening our eyes to the
truth about ourselves – and about the hope
we have in you. He is our King, leading us as
we battle it out with life, as we seek to be
faithful despite temptations, and the times
when we do not know what the right thing to
do is.

We confess that we do not always live in the
light of Christ. We should be generous and
welcoming, but we shut the doors of our
homes or our church to keep the cries of the
world away. Jesus calls us to live for others,
but sometimes we find that too costly. Yet,
Jesus has the last word – and Jesus says, your
sins are forgiven. Amen. Thanks be to God.

Today's Old Testament Reading: Isaiah 55:1-9

Today's Gospel Reading: Luke 13:1-9

Time to Reflect:

Why do we suffer? People used to call life
'this vale of tears', and you can understand
why. Life in was often hard and short. And for
many people, in this country and elsewhere, it
still is.

Why do we suffer? Part of the Biblical answer
seems to be – because we do. We're here

because we're here because we're here
because we're here.

Some people came to Jesus with a question - were the Galileans Pilate murdered in the temple worse sinners than all the other Galileans? Jesus reminds them of another incident as well - a tower that collapsed in Siloam, in Jerusalem, killing 18 people. Were those victims worse sinners than everybody else? Did they deserve it? Or the women in Haiti at a prayer meeting in a church which collapsed during the earthquake of January 2010? They were all killed. Were they worse sinners than everyone else who survived? Humans have always looked for patterns. We look for the pattern of a face, and we see it in the moon. Or we see the pattern of an England batting collapse after Joe Root is out. We look to a pattern of rewards and punishments. We expect justice. We expect the world to be fair. But it's not.

In the book of Job, Job suffers terribly. Job's three friends keep telling him that he must have done something to deserve his suffering. But Job declares his innocence. It's an idea that continues into the present day - that bad things are God's punishment. It's almost as if we want a world where you can look at suffering and say, 'they deserve it'. Though, if that were the case, would we have the courage to say, 'we deserve it'?

But Jesus is clear - do not look at things in that way. Suffering happens - it's the way of the world. Sometimes suffering is inflicted by others - by Pilate killing pilgrims, or someone attacking worshippers at a mosque with assault weapons. Sometimes by accident - a tower collapsing, or a cyclone wreaking devastation, or cancer cutting short a life. Jesus says very clearly, not their sin. Not your sin. There may well be blame, we've all done stupid things that have brought down a pile of brick on our heads. But it still isn't God's judgement. And there are plenty of examples of people 'getting away with it'. But (there's always a 'but'). But what Jesus does say, very clearly, is, turn to God. Turn to God - repent, in other words.

If the idea of turning to God makes us uneasy - and it should - remember the second part of the gospel reading. The landowner wants

to rip out the fig tree, but Jesus has the gardener give the fig tree one more go - and he's going to give it every chance, by digging around it and giving it some proper manure. The tree will bear fruit. We will bear fruit. And what fruit will we bear? The fruits of the spirit - love, joy peace patience kindness goodness, faithfulness and self-control. So:
1) Don't judge. Things happen in life - and to assume they are God's judgement is wrong.
2) Give people a break, including yourself. The gardener does so in Luke, giving the tree another chance and taking responsibility for it.

3) Remember that we bear fruit - the fruits of the spirit. Allow the Holy Spirit to work in our lives.

Take a time to sit quietly.

A time of prayer

Jesus, our friend, hear our prayers for the church and the world. Today, the prayer handbook asks us to pray for Christians in China and Hong Kong. Within this country, we pray for churches and people of the Newcastle upon Tyne district. As we walk together through Lent, may we all grow in grace and love for you and our neighbours. Jesus, our shepherd, we pray for those who suffer. However suffering comes, we pray that people will find the care and support they need to stand firm and come through. We pray for ourselves, that we may be a light to those who are in the dark and a comfort to those who need strength.

Jesus, our prophet, we pray for those who give us hope. We pray especially for those who, like the gardener, give us a second chance. We pray for social worker and probation officers. We thank you for their graciousness and vision. We pray that we may be slow to condemn and quick to see the image of God within everyone.

Jesus, our life, we pray that you will fill us with hope, strengthen us by faith and direct us by love, so that we may play our part in your Kingdom of justice, love, life and hope. Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father

Hymn: Listen to Tender Saviour, by Nick and Anita Haigh.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JhGi3npNIYY>

or sing a verse of a hymn that comes to mind

A prayer of blessing

May the Jesus who suffered bless you with strength. May the Jesus who rose from the dead bless you with hope. May the Jesus who endured the cross bless you with joy. Amen.

Original Materials by Richard Parkes
Hymns reproduced under CCLI 238802.
Local Churches please insert CCLI 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.

For more worship resources see

[The Bible \(methodist.org.uk\)](http://The Bible (methodist.org.uk))

[Singing the Faith Plus \(methodist.org.uk\)](http://Singing the Faith Plus (methodist.org.uk))

Readings:

Isaiah 55:1-9

Ho, everyone who thirsts,
come to the waters;
and you that have no money,
come, buy and eat!
Come, buy wine and milk
without money and without price.
Why do you spend your money for that which is
not bread,
and your labour for that which does not satisfy?
Listen carefully to me, and eat what is good,
and delight yourselves in rich food.
Incline your ear, and come to me;
listen, so that you may live.

I will make with you an everlasting covenant,
my steadfast, sure love for David.
See, I made him a witness to the peoples,
a leader and commander for the peoples.
See, you shall call nations that you do not know,
and nations that do not know you shall run to
you,
because of the Lord your God, the Holy One of
Israel,
for he has glorified you.

Seek the Lord while he may be found,
call upon him while he is near;
let the wicked forsake their way,
and the unrighteous their thoughts;
let them return to the Lord, that he may have

mercy on them,
and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.
For my thoughts are not your thoughts,
nor are your ways my ways, says the Lord.
For as the heavens are higher than the earth,
so are my ways higher than your ways
and my thoughts than your thoughts.

Luke 13:1-9

At that very time there were some present who told him about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. He asked them, 'Do you think that because these Galileans suffered in this way they were worse sinners than all other Galileans? No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all perish as they did. Or those eighteen who were killed when the tower of Siloam fell on them—do you think that they were worse offenders than all the others living in Jerusalem? No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all perish just as they did.' Then he told this parable: 'A man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard; and he came looking for fruit on it and found none. So he said to the gardener, "See here! For three years I have come looking for fruit on this fig tree, and still I find none. Cut it down! Why should it be wasting the soil?" He replied, "Sir, let it alone for one more year, until I dig round it and put manure on it. If it bears fruit next year, well and good; but if not, you can cut it down.'