



Heaton Moor United Church

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



Church Services

Sunday 20th September 10.45 Heaton Moor United Church
Rev Graham Adams
Duty 1 : Mark Field Duty 2: Sharon Heginbotham

Zoom Services and Meetings

Sunday 20th September Circuit Service 3.00pm service

The zoom log is

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

Meeting ID: 872 1224 6881 Password: 974333

Tuesday 22nd September at 7pm — World Week for Peace in Palestine Israel 2020

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84736444629?pwd=WVVvc2Z3QVl5bzk0bEkwMVdXNTMrQT09>

Meeting ID: 847 3644 4629 Passcode: 967267

Wednesday 23rd September Coffee and Prayer 11.00am

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

Meeting ID: 953 2754 1668 Password: 794265

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 "Hash" #

You should then be entered into the service.

Dear Heaton Moor United Church family,

May the peace of our God which passes all our understandings keep our hearts, minds and bodies in the love of Jesus Christ.

Hope you are all doing well and are coping with the 'rule of six' restrictions at the moment.

As you will know last Sunday, we have had our first service at our church building since lock down in March 2020, and it was strange worshipping with our masks on, with some social distancing seat allocations, with no real singing. However, we tried our best and thank you to all those that helped in trying to get things going. Each Sunday will be a new learning experience as there are new guidelines and restrictions coming each week. As was reiterated, for those who are not able to make it to the church building for worship due to the current given circumstances, we really understand it and our online circuit Zoom services will be continued in the near future. There are also other plans to improvise on the learnings from the online church during this lockdown and we'll keep you informed about it as and when we get there.

Our appeal to support local school in addressing holiday hunger is out and thank you for all those who are willing to support this programme.

Next week on Tuesday, the 22nd September at 7pm we have a midweek circuit Zoom service as we join to observe the World Week for Peace in Palestine Israel, and I encourage you to kindly join in this service. Mr. Rifat Kassis, co-author of Kairos Palestine will be speaking at this service from Palestine. The Zoom details are on our circuit website.

Herewith I am sending you the reflection for this Sunday and the worship resources for your personal meditation and prayer. Thanks to Graham Adams for penning a new lyric for this Sunday, which is theologically and missionally profound and I have used it in my reflection.

We had our staff meetings and Leadership team meetings during the week, and we have been collectively working on strengthening the witness of our church in our community, and we seek your prayers for our mission engagements.

May the Spirit of God guide and lead each of us in journeys of faith. Take good care and have a blessed week.

Thanking you,

With warm regards,

Raj

18th September 2020



Norma Summers would like to say thank you to all those that have ensured that a weekly newsletter and reflection has made its way to her. I would also like to say thanks to group of people that help to get them delivered.

It has been their pleasure to ensure we all stay connected either through email or snail mail !



Thank You so much to those that have donated to support me in my Ironman 70.3 Triathlon challenge for the Christie Hospital.

Due to Covid 19 the official event in Weymouth has been cancelled. I'm down but not out!

On Monday the 21st of September, I'm going to do the challenge anyway in the Lake District with a small group of friends.

We will start with a 1.2 mile swim in Coniston, followed by a 56 mile bike ride, and then run a half marathon around Coniston.

If you would like to sponsor me, please visit my JustGiving page

At: <https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/ian-shore-ironman70-3>

Alternatively, I can collect any cash donations in person.

Thank You again, it's such a worthy cause.

Ian

SHOEBOXES FOR ROMANIA .

If anyone is preparing a box .please have it ready by middle of OCTOBER .

I can pick it up if necessary.

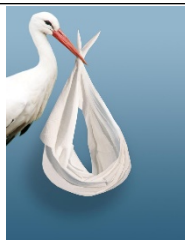
Anyone who's been knitting hats/scarves please let me have them.

Plus the usual toiletries. crayons and toys. Etc.

Donations will also be very acceptable.

Thank you.

Betty



Congratulations to George and Stacy on the birth of Clara Esme on the 18th September , this addition to the Shore family, will make Ian and Sharon, Grandparents for the first time and Alan and Carole Great Grandparents !



Fresh is a community group of volunteers that would like to eliminate holiday hunger in school children. By providing food packages during school holidays to children on free school meals & families on low incomes.

HMUC & HMMC Churches



Working together with FRESH to support a local school, support their families.

We are planning to collect food over the next 5 weeks. This food is for children, so no spam !! Things like crisps, pasta, sauces, jam, peanut butter, cereal, cereal bars & anything else you think a young person would like to eat.

There will be a car boot to fill on the following Saturdays, each church is doing alternate weeks.

19 th Sept	10.30-12.00	HMUC
26 th Sept	10.30-12.00	HMMC
3 rd Oct	10.30-12.00	HMUC
10 th Oct	10.30-12.00	HMMC
17 th Oct	10.30-12.00	HMUC

Volunteers Welcome

Please contact Sharon if you can help.

office@heatonmoorunitedchurch.org.uk



Cash donations are also welcome. Contact Sharon for details how to do this .

The International Day of Peace takes place on 21st September - as United Stockport Circuit we will be acknowledging this with a service on 22nd September with the theme Peace in Palestine Israel and the zoom link will be sent through the usual channels.

Achieving Peace is a fragile process, especially in regions still reeling from the impact of war and the aftermath of violence. Strategic agreements in the name of Peace are a long drawn out process leaving those affected feeling bitter and looking to an uncertain future.

All too often it is easy to think that as individuals we can't be a solution to the problems on the other side of the world, but Peace is much more than a political process it is an attitude that must be rooted in our hearts. If we stand in solidarity and come together as people of Faith through Prayer and common action we can make Peace a lived reality for people who currently live without it.

The theme from the World Council of Churches for the World Week of Peace 2020 is Creative Solidarity in Common Fragility and the bible reflection is on the passage Mark 2: 1-12. This passage tells the story of the paralyzed man who is convinced he will be healed should he chance to meet Jesus. Even though he is on the margins of society he has four friends who are in solidarity with him and together they think creatively to overcome the obstacles before them and end up lowering the paralyzed man through the roof to be healed and more importantly made whole by Jesus.

The phrase "think outside the box" has been around since the 1970's and is a metaphor used for thinking of new ideas. Now in 2020 I think we should have courage to get rid of the box entirely.

Let's start to see things in a way we've not seen before, without limiting ourselves with artificial boundaries and ask ourselves what can we do that we have not done before. How can we make this world a better place?

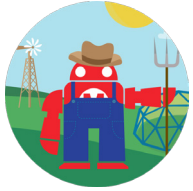
This is a big ask and is not something that will happen overnight, as a Church Community I am asking you to start by helping me create a Whirled Peace display. Our Whirled Peace display will be made up of homemade pin wheels on which you may write Prayers for Peace, Statements of Solidarity, things that make for Peace, other thoughts you may have or you can leave blank.

As you make your pin wheel perhaps watch or listen to news from Israel and Palestine and reflect on current developments. Alternatively think about recent news within the UK and the importance of a Peace within our own communities.

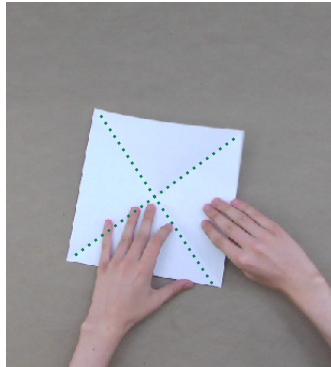
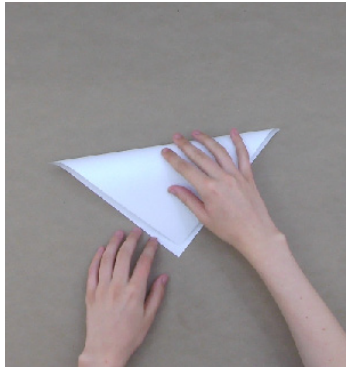
Instructions to make a pin wheel are attached or there are lots of other ways to make online. A straw can be used in place of a bamboo skewer and the points can be stuck down if you have no pins. Alternatively we have packs at the Church office you can collect. Once you have made your pin wheel there will be a box marked up at Church to leave them for us to display over the next two weeks.

As always any questions or comments please get in touch.

JoAnne



Origami Pinwheel



1. Make some folds.

Fold and unfold the square piece of paper in half diagonally so that it forms an X. » Unfold everything.

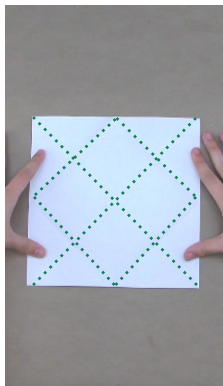
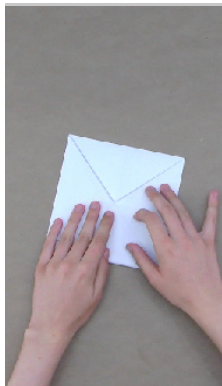
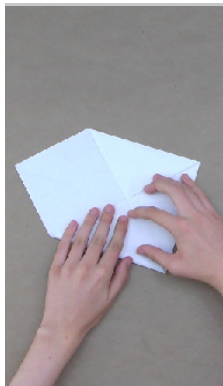
Supplies

Square piece of paper

Bamboo Skewer

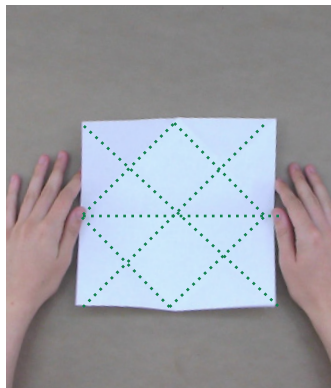
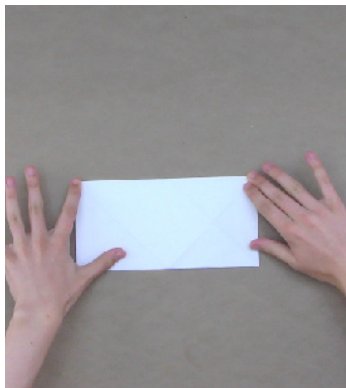
Cork

Pushpin



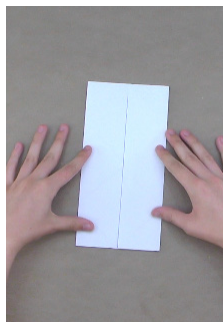
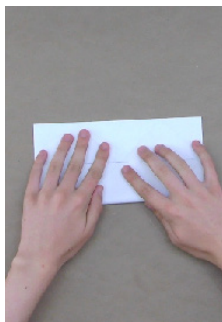
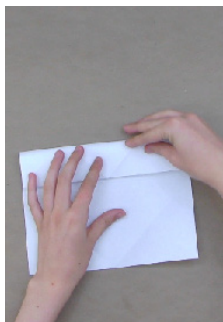
2. Make more folds!

Fold all four corners of the square to the center. » Unfold everything.



3. Make even more folds!

Fold the square in half (not diagonally). » Unfold everything. » Orient your square so that the line you just created is horizontal.

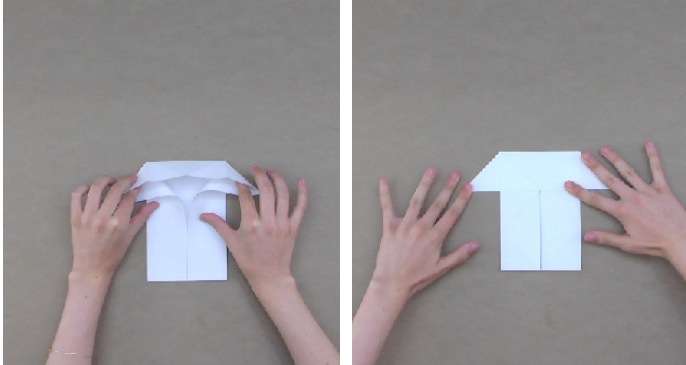


4. You guessed it... more folds.

Fold the top and bottom edges of the paper to the horizontal line. » Do not unfold this! » Rotate your paper so that it is oriented vertically.

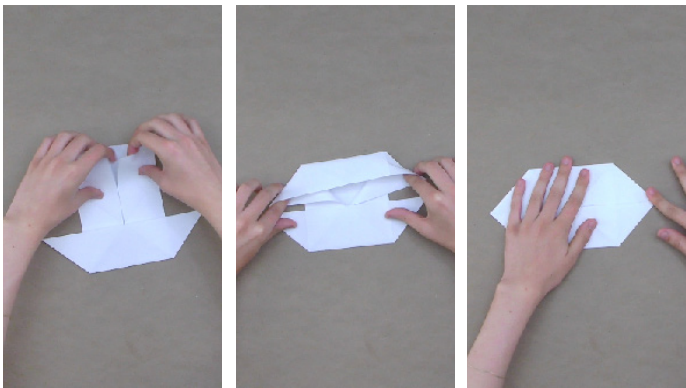


Origami Pinwheel, continued



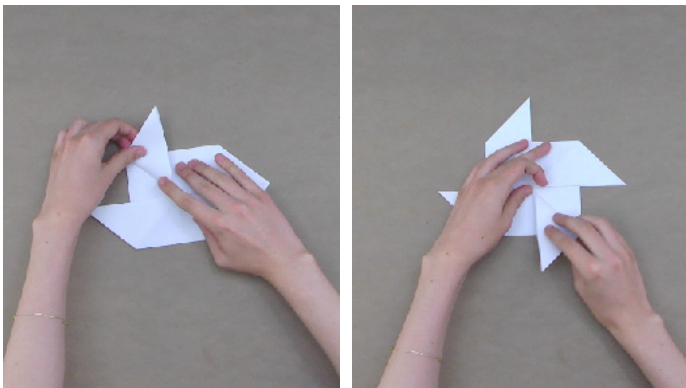
5. Almost done folding!

Grab the corners at the top that meet in the center and pull them down and out until they meet the horizontal center of the paper. » The folded paper should now resemble a house.



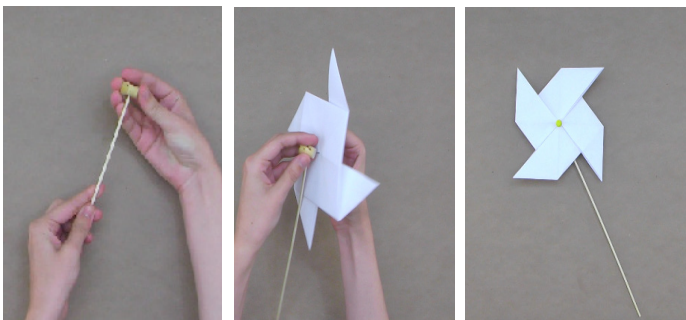
6. Repeat the previous step.

Rotate the paper upside down and repeat the same fold that you just made. » The folded paper should now resemble a hexagon.



7. Make the last folds!

Take the top left flap and fold it up towards the center. » Take the bottom right flap and fold it down towards the center.



8. Put it all together.

Push the pointed end of the bamboo skewer into the cork. » Center your pinwheel over the face of the cork and secure it by pushing the push pin through the center. Don't push it all the way in! » Wiggle the pinwheel just a little bit to enlarge the hole and give it more room to spin. » Test your new pinwheel by blowing on it.





United Stockport Circuit



JOIN US IN PRAYER FOR

**WORLD WEEK
FOR PEACE IN
PALESTINE
ISRAEL 2020**

7PM, TUESDAY

THE 22ND SEPTEMBER 2020

ON ZOOM

Theme: Creative Solidarity in Common Fragility

www.stockportcircuit.org.uk



The
United
Reformed
Church



The Methodist Church

United Stockport Circuit (Manchester and Stockport District)

A Message from the Superintendent Minister

September 17th 2020

Dear Friends,

As I write we are entering the traditional season of our Harvest Festivals. A time when we particularly give thanks to God for all God's gifts. Traditionally we give thanks for the gifts of the harvests of the farm and the field, but in the city and the suburbs it can sometimes seem as if we are very far removed from these processes – even if we are thankful for the food as it reaches our tables. And in this time of global pandemic we are aware of the impact which the virus has had on the food and farming sector with disruption across the supply chain, concerns over farm labour shortages, enormous price volatility, delays in payments, farmers' health and the wellbeing of the farming workforce. So Harvest this year takes on a slightly different feel and we are reminded, perhaps more acutely than ever, that Harvests are not always as fruitful as we would like and an important part of this season is the recognition that God works in our lives through the things which falter and fail, as well as through the things which are successful.

Harvest is also an opportunity to reflect upon other sorts of God-given gifts which might be more immediate and tangible for us. Things such as our health and accommodation, our families and our relative security; recognising that among us there are some who do not have these things. What about education and transport and employment? Artistry, sport and recreation? These too are things which we work hard to access and to achieve and which sometimes bear fruit yet sometimes are a source of great frustration and sadness for us. We are mindful of the many places in the world which are suffering most acutely the impact of climate change and the associated unstable weather patterns causing fires and floods and untold loss of life and property. We join our prayers with those of our sisters and brothers around the world as we seek answers, may not feel as if we are receiving them, but trust in God nonetheless to bring us through and to use our hands to be a source of blessing to those whose lives have been struck by things too terrible for us to imagine.

In the new United Stockport Circuit we are beginning a process of discernment which we hope will lead to a greater and fuller understanding of the things which God is calling us to grow here in this part of Greater Manchester. What gifts are going unused, where do we need to be placing our energy, what sort of ministries do we need and how can we sustain them, who could we be working with in order to realise our vision? I cannot believe that I have already been here for a year – it seems like just yesterday that I was making the big move from London to the mysterious North! It has proved to be a wonderful move for me (and it's not so mysterious after all!) and I intend to use the time that we have together over the next few years to work with you to begin planting some seeds and continuing to tend to some others which have already been sown, so that we can be clear about the direction we are heading in, clear about our mission and clear about the things which need to happen in order to realise an ongoing harvest of love, justice, compassion, grace and hospitality. For these are the fruits of the Spirit which people in the world today are longing to taste.

In pursuit of this commitment to being an outward looking Circuit, it has been agreed to establish three Task Groups to support and enable our public engagement with issues of justice and peace. The Task Groups will have the following remits, (i) Communications, Social Media, and

Campaigns, (ii) becoming an ecologically and environmentally sustainable Circuit and (iii) being a church of the margins (e.g. work with the elderly/those living with dementia, those experiencing exclusion (e.g. homeless, refugees, LGBT+, BAME community) and work with children, younger people, and those of working age)

It is not intended to over prescribe what the task groups will do but rather to encourage a range of things including fun events, fund raising, worship, training, education, information sharing and campaigning. In order to make the task groups a success we need people to join them! If you are interested in being a part of one of the task groups, please come along to find out more on **Tuesday 29th September 7pm on Zoom**. We are especially interested to hear from people who have not been involved before in leadership in the church. You can join using the Zoom meeting ID: 889 4926 5421 and Passcode: 264866. Or just speak to me about it.

We may have to face some difficult choices as we move forward, and there may be some things which are beyond our control, but I have such deep faith that if we can work and pull together, less concerned about our own individual places in God's Kingdom and more focussed on revealing that Kingdom of grace to those who are searching for it, then we will see growth in the widest sense of the word and our Harvest will be plentiful!.

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

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

As local lockdown restrictions have been lifted, perhaps people who have access to the internet could think of inviting those with no such access to their homes, to watch the service together, but socially distanced.

Sunday 20th and 27th September 3pm

Login details as usual as follows:

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

Meeting ID: 872 1224 6881 Password: 974333

Circuit Prayer

Even though some churches will be re-opening for worship, let's continue to say this prayer together when we can. This way we stay connected in a very really and tangible way. 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 Church

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

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, through 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.

Are we as a Church listening to the cries of “Because no one has hired us”?

Reflecting on Matthew 20:1-16

The UK unemployment rate has risen to its highest levels for two years, the ONS figures show this week. The unemployment rate grew to 4.1% in the three months to July 2020, compared with 3.9% previously. The report also said that it were the young people between the age group of 16 to 24, the Generation Z, are the ones who have been hardly hit, suffering the biggest drop in employment compared with other age groups. How do we as faith communities understand and relate these figures of unemployment with our faith and spirituality? Church Action for Tax Justice has been involved in encouraging Christians and all faith organisations to promote tax justice and have been exploring the relationships between faith, taxation, equality and public service. As local churches we are called to join with them in ensuring a national living wage for all people and fight exclusion and discrimination at work places.

The lectionary reading this week is a call for us to think and reflect about the Kingdom of God economics vis-à-vis global capitalistic economic models. The parable of the labourers in the vineyard as found in Matthew 20: 1-16 narrates about the land owner who hires workers at 6 am in the morning, at 9am in the morning, at noon, at 3pm in the afternoon and at 5pm in the evening. Those that were strongly built, who were well-experienced and had a very promising CV were employed in the very first round of interview. Those that were less qualified, but who had some other strengths were later employed at the next hour, those that had even lesser qualifications, but probably had some other skills were later employed by the employer to work in his vineyard. In verse 6 we see the studious land-owner goes into the market place even at five in the evening to see some people standing around to seek some work for the day. He then asks them, ‘why are standing here idle all day?’ and in verse 7, they replied, ‘because no one has hired us.’

Why is no one hiring these people? What could have been the reasons for their not being employed? Probably these people standing at 5 pm are the ones who are not able to compete with the competitive world around them. For those in the higher class and of dominant caste in the society defines what merit is and thereby determine the norms for merit, describing these people still standing at 5pm as incapable to work or so. Probably these people who are still standing eagerly to be employed even at 5pm could have been people with disabilities and people who are mentally challenged, for no one wants to employ them because of their disabilities, for all those abled-bodies were preferred and given work in the earlier hours of the day. Probably these people still standing eagerly to be employed even at 5pm could have been women, for no one wants to employ them because of their being branded by the patriarchal society with their gendered stereo-types and prejudices as less-capable to work. Probably these people still standing eagerly to be employed even at 5pm could have been people from Dalits & Tribal communities, for they do not have the same nurture as the others have in their upbringing, and are denied chances of employment in many cases. Probably these people standing even at 5pm to be employed could have been refugees and asylum seekers, who do not have the needed documentation for their right to remain in that country. Probably these people standing even at 5pm to be employed could have been the migrants who do not have sufficient points under the new points based system to be employed, or could have been the ones who are not fluent in this new foreign language in a foreign land.

The writer of the parable in verse 7 even brands these people standing at 5pm as 'idle', implying the rest of them who were employed earlier seem to be smart and meritorious.

In such a context, the land owner shifts the locale from that of the convention, which in short is 'survival of the fittest' and exercises justice by not only employing these people who are still standing at 5pm but also by giving equal wages to all of those that have started to work from the first hour till the last hour, making it a matter of eye soar to those that came early. Economic justice is ensured based on equity and equality. In the Kingdom of God, the divine chooses to have a preferential option to those that have been excluded and discriminated, and brings them into God's fold granting grace and love to them.

In our times today, where the mantra of globalisation is sheer profit without any importance to human worth, where forces like patriarchy, caste, class, race, fundamentalism, etc rule as principalities and powers preferring those with so called capabilities and employing them at early hours, the parable calls us to shift our locales to those that are still standing at 5pm to be employed and recognised. In the changing landscapes of the church and society, the calling for all of us is to shift our focus to those that are standing at the 5pm eager to be employed, for no one hires them because of the stigma and discrimination they face. May this reading therefore call on us to look and locate God among those that are waiting still at 5pm, and recognise the worth of life that has been equally granted by God to all. Unless we shift our locale to those friends and communities on the margins and make them the epicentre of our missioning, our faith may not have its savour and relevance. Shall we therefore raise up to the occasion of affirming life in all its fullness among those that are being pushed to the margins by the forces of class, race, caste, gender etc. and strive to break down these cruel forces, for God stands among those that are still waiting at 5pm to be employed and to receive equal wages like others.

As churches we are called to ensure real national living wage to all people and call on the employers to accountability in promoting it. Modern slavery in UK take on many forms where people are trafficked and are pushed into forced labour where they are under paid and exploited. As a church we are called to raise our voice in such situations and address modern slavery in our times at our locations. The church today needs to stand with those that are still standing at 5pm waiting to be employed. In the context of many people losing their jobs due to this pandemic, with the redundancies of jobs on the high, we as a church have a role to stand by them and be with them.

Allow me to conclude with some new lyrics written by my friend Graham Adams, who teaches mission studies at the Northern College, Luther King House in Manchester on this text of Matthew 20:1-16 to the tune of 'Tell out my soul' which very well captures the essence of this parable. He has just written them and will be using it at church this Sunday. The lyrics are theologically and missionally very profound, and I want to share them here for our further reflection and meditation:

*Go live the news! God never shuts us down,
but bears our protests ('let us turn around!');
and then gives signs that help us move ahead –*

in flakes of hope which are our heavenly bread.

*Go live the news! God beckons us to play
the vineyard game designed the kingdom's way:
where first and last shall wear each other's shoes –
a new economy we might not choose.*

*Go live the news! God active in the past
will help us live within this world re-cast,
but not all change is how things have to be –
so listen now for cries, 'We're still not free!'*

*Go live the news! God hears creation's pain
and works till justice, peace and freedom reign:
each flake of hope will feed us as we go –
the future's strange but see God's vineyard grow!*

May the Spirit lead and guide us in recognising the divine among those that are still standing till 5pm in our societies, and may we as a church be with them, stand with them, listen to them, learn from them and support them. Amen.

Rev. Dr. Raj Bharath Patta,
18th September 2020

Sunday 20th September 2020

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

Loving God I know that you are with me in every moment of my life but as I set this special time aside, I pray that I might feel your presence. *[Pause]*.

I pray that you would send your Holy Spirit, that in the stillness I might hear your Word and be joined in fellowship with sisters and brothers who gather in your name this day.

Amen.

Hymn: Only By Grace Can We Enter (StF 565)

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

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hv72Q23llp0>

Only by grace can we enter,
only by grace can we stand;
not by our human endeavour,
but by the blood of the Lamb.
Into your presence you call us,
you call us to come.
Into your presence you draw us,
and now by your grace we come,
now by your grace we come.

Lord, if you mark our transgressions,
who would stand?
Thanks to your grace we are cleansed
by the blood of the Lamb.
Lord, if you mark our transgressions,
who would stand?
Thanks to your grace we are cleansed
by the blood of the Lamb.

Only by grace can we enter ...

Gerrit Gustafson

Let us pray together

Gracious God, I praise you for who you are. For you are the Lord, the giver and sustainer of life whose nature is love. I thank you that even when I rebel against you, your unquenchable love seeks me out. I thank you that in Jesus, you made the first move and have rescued me. I pray that as your Word ministers to me, I might so open my heart to your grace that it might fill me, transform me and overflow into all my relationships and dealings with the world. Amen.

Today's Reading from the Old Testament

Exodus 16: 2-15

Today's Gospel Reading:

Matthew 20: 1-16

Time to Reflect

All Christians talk about grace but it seems to me that as Methodists we talk about grace a lot! This unearned, love of God in Jesus Christ freely offered to all people is both the foundation and heart of our worship, the sacraments and our new life in Christ. It is this grace that is expressed in God's saving action toward us and nothing of our faith can ever be outside a response to God's grace.

In turning to Matthew 20 we reach Jesus' parable of the Labourers in the Vineyard. The New Testament scholar Charles B. Cousar suggests that the best response a preacher can make to this text is to simply get out of the way of this challenging, perhaps even annoying picture of God's grace. Why

annoying? This story is told to Jesus' disciples who have as Peter says "...left everything and followed [Jesus]" (Mt 11:27). It is to these that Jesus tells his story of workers who queue for their wage after a whole day toiling in the scorching sun. We can imagine their eyes popping when the latecomers receive a full day's wage for but one hour's work. If they have stumbled upon such generosity, what then will be *their* reward? Imagine then the knot in their stomachs as they receive nothing but the exact same coin as their colleagues who had hardly broken sweat. What employer would be so foolish as to alienate such faithful workers?

This then is Jesus' answer to his faithful follower's enquiry about their reward. Confronted by the reality of God's grace all legalistic religion, all bargaining with God finds its end. The reward is the work itself for it is carried out in the presence of the master.

As we are confronted by this grace, so it poses a question. Is it enough for us to know that we labour in the presence and purpose of the God who loves us? As our story stands on the threshold of Holy Week in Matthew 21, are we content that we shall gather with last minute arrivals so that even a thief, in the last minutes of his life, finds a gracious promise of paradise?

In our frustration, may we recall with humility, the grace first shown to us.

Grace and peace.

A time of prayer

Loving God,

I pray that the world might know your grace. As I begin to inhabit a "new normal", I pray for wisdom for the leaders of the world that powerful nations might respond with that self-giving generosity that you bring to the world.

On this peace Sunday, I pray for all those who respond to your love by making the first move to call an end to conflict. I pray for those caught up

in conflict, those who flinch at the sound of explosives or gunshot.

I pray for those slowly returning to collective worship as some places of worship reopen and for those who feel excluded from that worship.

I ask your blessing on those close to me that even in these distanced times that you would give me the opportunity to reflect that grace first shown to me.

I ask these prayers in the only way that I can; in the power of your Holy Spirit and in the name, grace and character of my Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Amen.

Peace Sunday

<https://www.methodist.org.uk/our-faith/worship/singing-the-faith-plus/seasons-and-themes/special-sundays/peace-sunday/>

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father

Hymn: "What Shall I do my God to love...?" (StF 436)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RTM3OcP5V00>

or sing a verse of a hymn that comes to mind

What shall I do my God to love,
my loving God to praise?
The length, and breadth, and height to prove,
and depth of sovereign grace?

Your sovereign grace to all extends,
immense and unconfined;
from age to age it never ends;
enfolds all humankind.

Throughout the world its breadth is known,
wide as infinity;
so wide it never passed by one,
or it had passed by me.

My trespass was grown up to heaven;

but, far above the skies,
in Christ abundantly forgiven,
I see your mercies rise.

The depth of all-redeeming love
what angel tongue can tell?
O may I to the utmost prove
the gift unspeakable!

Come quickly, gracious Lord, and take
possession of your own;
my longing heart vouchsafe to make
your everlasting throne.

Charles Wesley (1707-1788)

A prayer of blessing

God to enfold you,
Christ to uphold you,
Spirit to keep you in heaven's sight ;
so may God grace you,
heal and embrace you,
lead you through darkness
into the light.

John L. Bell (b. 1949)
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Exodus 16: 2-15

²The whole congregation of the Israelites
complained against Moses and Aaron in the
wilderness. ³The Israelites said to them, 'If only we
had died by the hand of the LORD in the land of
Egypt, when we sat by the fleshpots and ate our fill
of bread; for you have brought us out into this
wilderness to kill this whole assembly with
hunger.'

⁴Then the LORD said to Moses, 'I am going to rain
bread from heaven for you, and each day the
people shall go out and gather enough for that
day. In that way I will test them, whether they will
follow my instruction or not. ⁵On the sixth day,
when they prepare what they bring in, it will be
twice as much as they gather on other days.' ⁶So
Moses and Aaron said to all the Israelites, 'In the

evening you shall know that it was the LORD who
brought you out of the land of Egypt, ⁷and in the
morning you shall see the glory of the LORD,
because he has heard your complaining against
the LORD. For what are we, that you complain
against us?' ⁸And Moses said, 'When
the LORD gives you meat to eat in the evening and
your fill of bread in the morning, because
the LORD has heard the complaining that you utter
against him—what are we? Your complaining is
not against us but against the LORD.'

⁹Then Moses said to Aaron, 'Say to the whole
congregation of the Israelites, "Draw near to
the LORD, for he has heard your
complaining." ' ¹⁰And as Aaron spoke to the whole
congregation of the Israelites, they looked towards
the wilderness, and the glory of the LORD appeared
in the cloud. ¹¹The LORD spoke to Moses and
said, ¹²'I have heard the complaining of the
Israelites; say to them, "At twilight you shall eat
meat, and in the morning you shall have your fill of
bread; then you shall know that I am the LORD your
God." '

¹³In the evening quails came up and covered the
camp; and in the morning there was a layer of dew
around the camp. ¹⁴When the layer of dew lifted,
there on the surface of the wilderness was a fine
flaky substance, as fine as frost on the
ground. ¹⁵When the Israelites saw it, they said to
one another, 'What is it?' For they did not know
what it was. Moses said to them, 'It is the bread
that the LORD has given you to eat.'

Matthew 20: 1-16

'For the kingdom of heaven is like a landowner
who went out early in the morning to hire
labourers for his vineyard. ²After agreeing with the
labourers for the usual daily wage, he sent them
into his vineyard. ³When he went out about nine
o'clock, he saw others standing idle in the market-
place; ⁴and he said to them, "You also go into the
vineyard, and I will pay you whatever is right." So
they went. ⁵When he went out again about noon
and about three o'clock, he did the same. ⁶And
about five o'clock he went out and found others
standing around; and he said to them, "Why are
you standing here idle all day?" ⁷They said to him,
"Because no one has hired us." He said to them,
"You also go into the vineyard." ⁸When evening
came, the owner of the vineyard said to his
manager, "Call the labourers and give them their
pay, beginning with the last and then going to the

first.”⁹ When those hired about five o’clock came, each of them received the usual daily wage.¹⁰ Now when the first came, they thought they would receive more; but each of them also received the usual daily wage.¹¹ And when they received it, they grumbled against the landowner,¹² saying, “These last worked only one hour, and you have made them equal to us who have borne the burden of the day and the scorching heat.”¹³ But he replied to one of them, “Friend, I am doing you no wrong; did you not agree with me for the usual daily wage?”¹⁴ Take what belongs to you and go; I choose to give to this last the same as I give to you.¹⁵ Am I not allowed to do what I choose with what belongs to me? Or are you envious because I am generous?”¹⁶ So the last will be first, and the first will be last.’