

## Worshipping at Home. Week 24

### Monday 31<sup>st</sup> August: A Bank Holiday treat

I wonder what the weather will be like this Bank Holiday ...there is no guarantee of a warm sunny day with opportunity for a day out and a nice BBQ! The August Bank Holiday is often associated with festivals and carnivals, many of which are cancelled for this year. It can be seen as one day of rest and holiday before the beginning of Autumn and the new school year. Traditionally holidays were taken on Saint's days, holy days, but that is not so common any more. Bank Holidays, even this year when there are many restrictions in place, may still have a different feel to them ...a change, a pause. In past days, for many, it was a welcome break from going to work. What shall we do this bank holiday ...to make a change? Even a small thing can brighten our, or someone else's, day. Maybe choose one simple action that that is out of normal routine ...a treat for yourself, or something to share with someone else...

**Ephesians 2:10** *For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works which God prepared in advance for us to do.*

**Prayer:** Thank you, loving God, for today and for the chance to do something different. Amen.



### Tuesday 1<sup>st</sup> September: Glossop and Tameside Circuit. A new beginning

So today is officially the start of the **Glossop and Tameside Circuit**, the three Circuits of Ashton, Hyde and Denton and Glossop coming together. It is a journey that was first suggested over 2 years ago.

Much work has gone into the process of helping this to happen. It is a moment to pause, to give thanks for where we have come and to look forward with hope and confidence ...there is still much to do, much to work out, and much to plan for. There is all the necessary work we need to comply with ...but also there are the new opportunities that lie ahead ...in the end what will make this work, is the spirit in which we enter into this, the sense of the bigger picture of what we are about, our warm acceptance of each other, our listening and learning, our willingness to let go and take on, to acknowledge mistakes and work from there ...and to look and be attentive to how God is leading us on ...and bringing us to a place of new opportunities, renewed commitment and resolve to work and share in the good news of the kingdom of God, as known through Jesus.

**Acts 28:31** *Proclaiming the kingdom of God and teaching about the Lord Jesus Christ with all boldness and without hindrance.*

**Prayer:** Loving God, as we make this next step to become a new Circuit, may we do so with renewed commitment in our hearts to do your will and to work tirelessly in your service. Amen.



### Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup> September: The empty swimming pool

I still haven't got back to my daily swim. A few days ago, I walked past Glossop pool where I swim and saw that the pool was still empty of water, as it was having essential repairs. Hopefully it won't be too long before swimming begins again ...though I'm feeling a bit nervous. It makes me realise how easy it is to lose confidence in things we took for granted ...and I sure that is quite a common experience during Covid. The image of the empty pool also stayed with me ...it was as if everything that was needed for swimming was there ...apart from the one essential thing that was needed – the water. What is it in our lives that is most essential, that we can't carry on without it, and how often do we try and work on empty ...forgetting what is most needed to help us be as we should be?



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**Hebrews 12:2** *Let us keep our eyes fixed on Jesus, on whom our faith depends from beginning to end. He did not give up because of the cross! On the contrary, because of the joy that was waiting for him, he thought nothing of the disgrace of dying on the cross, and he is now seated at the right side of God's throne.*

**Prayer:** Loving God, help me to keep my eyes fixed on Jesus, help me realise when I may be running on empty. Thank you for those places I can go to be refreshed and renewed so I can run the race and do my part. Amen.

### Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> September: The slow lane – or out the comfort zone

On an early morning walk, when all was quiet and most sensible people were still sleeping, I met this rather proud Canada goose walking down the road. It was my companion for a while ...it gave the impression that the road was there for him/her and it wasn't in a hurry ...no doubt as the morning went on the traffic would have got busier and it would have had to get out of the way ...but, for these quiet moments, it took hold of the road and held its own. It reminded me that sometimes we live in the fast lane of life and think we have to achieve so much, but here was a gentle reminder to me ...it is OK to walk in the slow lane - time to catch up, enjoy the scenery, and just be. On the other hand, we can also say the goose was out of its comfort zone, it wasn't near its natural place of water and other geese, it was taking a risk walking down what is sometimes a busy road ...it might actually be feeling nervous. We can't always tell just from appearance...



In more ways than one there was a lot to learn from my early morning companion.

**Joshua 1:9** *Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be frightened, and do not be dismayed, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go.*

**Prayer:** Loving God, help me to recognise when I need to go in the slow lane of life and help me to be brave enough, at the right time, to step out of my comfort zone. Amen.

### Friday 4<sup>th</sup> September: Getting the dates right

Sometimes, in preparing the worship at home material, because I do it a week in advance, it is easy to get mixed up as to which day and date I am thinking about. So, after doing this now for 6 months, it suddenly occurred to me that it would be simpler if I put the date by each day ...then I won't get mixed up about which day I am actually thinking about. I thought to myself – how could I have not thought of something so simple before!? Sometimes, the simple and most obvious thing to do stares us in the face and we still miss it ...we often think complicated, or that we need to do something that looks impressive and needs a lot of organising and work. Sometimes, a simple action that is there right in front of us can make all the difference. I like the idea of noticing what simple action can make a difference for the good.

**Psalms 19:7** *The law of the Lord is perfect, reviving the soul; the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple.*

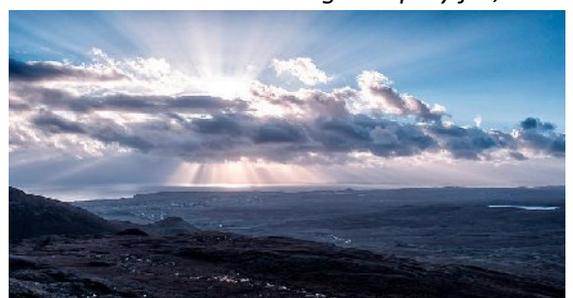
**Prayer:** Lord, help me to notice things that are there right in front of me that I can do, which can make a positive difference to myself or to others. Amen.

### Saturday 5<sup>th</sup> September: God in the everyday

How do we experience God ...and how do we talk about our experience of God, and the experience of faith? Understandably, articulating and talking about God and faith can be challenging, because often we are talking about things that we feel and sense deep within us ...and these are not easy to put into words. I like a quote, which I read recently, which said, "If we don't meet God in the everyday, we won't meet God at all." I wonder what you make of this quote, and how you find God in the everyday. Meeting God in the everyday can remind us that, as we talk about God, we don't need to use language set aside just for **God talk**; we can use everyday language and words to describe and make sense of what we are sensing and experiencing. Maybe the more we begin to talk about God in everyday language, the more our faith will become real and relevant to our everyday lives. Can you describe an everyday God experience you have had recently and share that with someone else?

**Romans 8:6** *In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us through wordless groans.*

**Prayer:** Loving God, help me to notice you in the everyday experiences of life, in the laughter and the tears, in the ordinary things and help me to be bold in speaking about them. Amen.



**Sunday Worship. 30<sup>th</sup> August 2020.**



**Looking to the new Methodist Year**

### **Gathering for Worship**

Loving God, many people are gathering for worship today in all kinds of different situations, from home comfort to magnificent cathedral; an outside gathering or local church.

We join in these songs of praise, in these offerings of worship, in this coming together, in this sharing with people of different language, culture, race and tradition. May our voices be blended with all those who bring their praise today. Amen.

All praise to our redeeming Lord,  
who joins us by his grace,  
and bids us, each to each restored,  
together seek his face.

E'en now we think and speak the same,  
and cordially agree;  
concentred all, through Jesus' name,  
in perfect harmony.

He bids us build each other up;  
and, gathered into one,  
to our high calling's glorious hope  
we hand in hand go on.

We all partake the joy of one,  
the common peace we feel,  
a peace to sensual minds unknown,  
a joy unspeakable.

The gift which he on one bestows,  
we all delight to prove;  
the grace through every vessel flows,  
in purest streams of love.

And if our fellowship below  
in Jesus be so sweet,  
what heights of rapture shall we know  
when round his throne we meet!

### **Opening prayers.**

We give thanks for all that holds us to each other; for our common sharing of faith; for the various gifts that we have; for the places we can go to, which help us in our life when we feel weak; for questions about faith, which help us to grow and fill us with wonder; and for all that gives us a deeper sense of purpose and meaning to our lives.

We give thanks for the possibilities of new friendships, fresh ways of being Church, and new possibilities. Most of all we know, loving God, of your steadfast love, your amazing grace, and your constant mercy. For all these blessings ,and many more ,we offer to you our grateful hearts. **Amen.**

### **Reading: Luke 4:16-21**

<sup>16</sup> And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up. And as was his custom, he went to the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and he stood up to read. <sup>17</sup> And the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written, <sup>18</sup> "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, <sup>19</sup> to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour." <sup>20</sup> And he rolled up the scroll and gave it back to the attendant and sat down. And the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. <sup>21</sup> And he began to say to them, "Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing."

## Reflection

On September 1st we begin a new Methodist Year. This also marks the beginning of the New Circuit – **Glossop and Tameside**. We know, significantly, people will be going back to school and college this week – all under the restrictions of Covid. We realise how much things have changed for us over these last few months and we mark these things in a very different way from how we might once have imagined. I am still amazed how we have adapted to doing things differently, how much we have learnt and maybe how we have also grown spiritually. At the beginning of the new Methodist year we are reminded that we belong to the wider “connexion” of the Methodist Church and what it means for us to have this wider sense of belonging, sharing and growing. I have, in recent times, been interested in the word connexion – especially since we have been worshipping at home a lot more. Is there a greater “**connexion**” between our faith and our homelife ...what has worshipping at home taught us? So, we come to the beginning of the new Methodist Year, and the new Circuit. Our situation may change, and the way we do things changes and has to adapt and meet the needs of the present situation but we hold onto the core of our faith, and look to be guided by, and motivated by, the message of Jesus; the message of the kingdom of God – hope, justice and peace. In these changing times, may we be guided by these eternal values.



## Prayers

We pray for all those returning to school or college this week, for staff and pupils. We pray that each may feel safe, valued and cared for. We remember Rosehill Methodist Primary School and other schools in the Circuit where we have close contacts.

We pray for the Methodist Church at this time, especially for new Glossop and Tameside Circuit, that we may work together and look to how we can extend the work of the kingdom of God. We pray for Rev Rob Balfour and family as he settles into the new Circuit.

Let us pray for each other, that we may encourage and support one another, and serve others in the best way we can.

We pray for all on the edge, who feel isolated and disconnected to anyone or anything that is life-giving and nurturing.

We remember those who grieve, and who feel the days ahead are hard. We pray for any who suffer injustice and for those who work to bring a greater sense of peace and hope for all.

We commend ourselves, loving God, into your ways that we may be guided by you in all things. Amen.

## The Lord's Prayer

1. O thou who camest from above  
the pure celestial fire to impart,  
kindle a flame of sacred love  
on the mean altar of my heart!
2. There let it for thy glory burn  
with inextinguishable blaze,  
and trembling to its source return  
in humble prayer and fervent praise.
3. Jesus, confirm my heart's desire  
to work, and speak, and think for thee;  
still let me guard the holy fire,  
and still stir up thy gift in me—
4. Ready for all thy perfect will,  
my acts of faith and love repeat,  
till death thy endless mercies seal,  
and make the sacrifice complete.

## Blessing

May the Lord bless you and keep you and make his face to shine upon you, may the Lord lift up the light of his countenance upon you and give you peace. Amen.

After service coffee and refreshments ...conversation and time to connect with friends and family.



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Dear Friends,

As we close this connexional year ...we look to some changes ahead. From next week this letter will also come out from both myself and David Hardman as we begin to share the co-Superintendency of the new Circuit.

During September many churches will begin to re-open for Sunday worship and maybe then gradually for other activities. We recognise the huge amount of work that has been put into this process of preparing the churches and the ongoing work that will continue during this time.

For Sunday services, for the time being, we will continue with the zoom services. With the new Circuit, we will offer all the services on zoom Circuit-wide. So people, if they want, can choose which service they would like to be part of. At the moment, that would mean there would be two morning services to choose from, a 2pm, 5pm and then the contemporary worship on a Sunday evening at 7.30pm. Worshipping at Home material will continue.

We are praying for Rob Balfour and his family, Katie, James and Mathew as they settle into the new Circuit. We think of James and Matthew who will be starting a new school. The service to mark the new Circuit and Rob's welcome service will take place on September 4<sup>th</sup>, live streamed from Mossley Methodist. A few reps from the Circuit and Rob's churches will be present at Mossley, and the service can also be watched online. Details for this will be sent out. It is very much hoped that as many people as possible will be able to join in this. In all this we pray for each other and for God's guidance, strength and blessing for the way head.

Please contact me if there is anything at all,

with peace,

Hazel.