

Worship sheet for Sunday 25th July 2021
Compiled by Vivien Almond of Eaton Ford Methodist Church,
St Neots



May you experience the love of Christ, though it is too great to understand fully. Then you will be made complete with all the fulness of life and power that comes from God
(Eph 3 : 19)

Hymn No 718 (StF) – We lay our broken world in sorrow www.youtube.com/watch?v=xzWn1Uva-6U

Prayers

Lord we thank you that you have brought us to this point in our journey of life, we thank you that no matter how difficult the road has been, you have been there with us, Lord we thank you for the sun rise and sun set that gives us the cycle and consistency to living, that we can know that as we sleep others are awake and now we wake others sleep and throughout all your servants are worshiping you. Lord as we worship wherever we may be, help us to remember that we are joined through the thread of your love to all your servants. Amen

Lord enable us to praise you as we ought, a praise that can never reach to the depths of your love for us, but a praise, nevertheless, heartfelt and given freely because we want to. Amen

Lord open our minds and hearts to truly hear what it is you are saying to us through the words on this page, enable us to reflect on the readings in a way that is honest and willing, that one day all in this world will show the love offered through your love for us and earth will become as your Kingdom.

We offer our prayers through our ever loving, everlasting Lord Jesus Christ

Psalm 14 : 2 - 7

Hymn No 723 (StF) – Who can sound the depths of sorrow www.youtube.com/watch?v=mYfoKpbGko8

Reading – 2 Samuel 11 : 1 - 15

This reading is set for this Sunday as the 'Continuous reading, however there is also alternative reading given in the lectionary that fits the other readings. It would be easy to take that option and not use the reading from Samuel, but in the world we live in today, we need not to shy away from these difficult passages, or make excuses for David's behaviour. I am not going to try to do this. I teach Safeguarding in the Methodist Church, both Foundation and Advanced, these have been updated over the last couple of years to bring them in line with the truth about society and the fact that the Church is no exception. There have been many stories in the papers on the news telling us just how far the Church has 'Got it wrong' in the past, the recent Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse(IICSA) has shown that very clearly.

When I read this passage these wrongs came into my mind, and the things that happened in this reading resonate with things that have been going on in this country and in the Church for centuries.

David as King should have been leading his men into battle, this was a time for wars, the seeds had been set, the harvest had been gathered in and it was the time for Kings to go to war, it didn't matter who the war was against, it was just the time to do it. Yet we are told that David sent his men off.

This left him time to be idle, no-one around except women and children, David had several wives at this point in his journey of life, but that's obviously not enough for him. He's had his afternoon nap (as his men fight), then he wanders around aimlessly, being the King's house, it would have been the tallest in the area, so David can look over and watch whoever he wants to, he spots Bathsheba, he finds out who she is, and, even though he now knows she is married, he sends for her and he 'sleeps' with her.

In her private garden Bathsheba, was carrying out the law by having a ritual wash to clean the dirtiness of having had her period (Man has made these rules, even though God has ordained this to be the way children are conceived), she is going about her business in a walled courtyard, not aware that she was being watched by the King.

The King is in the position of power, Bathsheba is just a servant, in all the years I have been a Church goer and heard sermons on this story, no-one has ever labelled it what it is, rape, Bathsheba had no choice in the matter and afterwards she was sent back home.

Many girls and women (and some boys and men) have been subject to this kind of behaviour for centuries, even millennium, and those who could have made changes have sat back, people haven't been believed, even more they have been condemned, ostracized for speaking out, many have gone on to take their own life because life has been made so difficult for them.

Abuse of any kind can have lasting affect on the persons health and wellbeing, childhood abuse, especially sexual, can severely affect a child's development and lead to huge difficulties in adulthood, this is compounded when the abuser is someone in a position of power and trust,:- parent, doctor, member of the clergy or congregation, or, as in David's case, a leader (Royalty/politician), this leads to confusion, who can they trust, then comes the element of secrecy:- 'don't tell', 'this is our secret' 'you're very special'

In this passage David goes further, when Bathsheba sends a note to say she was pregnant, David's response is to send for her husband to come back for a break, he tried his best to get Uriah to sleep with his wife and then he can put it on Uriah's shoulders, however, Uriah is a 'good' leader of men, he won't accept comforts whilst his men are sleeping on the ground, eating meagre rations and fighting. David then does the ultimate and ensures that Uriah won't be coming home by ensuring he was in the centre of the battle, almost sure to get killed, which he does.

If you read on into the next chapter you would discover that God was not pleased with David and there are consequences.

The Church today, and this country is beginning to acknowledge that abuse happens and the abused is not to blame, however it has a long way to go, only a very tiny amount of rape or abuse cases get to court and those that do very rarely lead to a conviction so there aren't full consequences here on earth, the burden of proof can be impossible and sadly it is only in Scotland where a Not Proven verdict can be brought in, so the rest have to cope with a not guilty verdict .

The Methodist Church carried out a Past Cases review between 2015 – 2018 and out of that they concluded firstly that the Church had got it wrong, secondly it hadn't been and still wasn't a safe place and thirdly that the only way forward was to listen to the voices of those who have been there, I belong to a group called The Survivors Advisory Group, brought together by the Safeguarding lead at Connexion, to advise on policies, training and many other parts of Church life. We now sit on committees, giving advice and ensuring that firstly the Church acknowledges that there are consequences to it's actions and secondly that in time safeguarding in the Church will be a way of life and God's Will can truly be carried out, then God may be able to look down and not use the words expressed in the Psalm.

Prayer of confession – responsive

God our maker, mysterious and unseen yet closer than breathing, the still and loving centre of our lives. Forgive us if our hearts are not still enough to hear you, or our lives too busy to respond to your promptings. Speak Lord: **we are listening**
God our defender, you love us with a love that never fails. Forgive us when we have failed to express in our dealings with others, in our unbelief of things we hear, and especially when we don't act in the way you call us to act with others.

Speak Lord: **we are listening**

God our friend, you seek out each one of us and offer your comfort. Forgive us when we have disappointed, criticised or undermined those you love. You see the potential in each person, yet sometimes we limit others' gifts and deny them the right to find freedom. Speak Lord: **we are listening**

Renewing God, you are in all our growing and offer the promise of forgiveness and new life.

Help us to accept your love and work with you to bring in your Kingdom. Thank you God for your unfailing love Amen

Hymn No 613(StF) – God how Can we forgive when bonds of love are torn

www.youtube.com/watch?v=zuBTuh4CsyE

Reading – John 6 : 16 – 21

This passage from John shows to us that God never forsakes us, for those reading this who have seen the other side of the rainbow, the darkness, the despair, the loneliness, those who have been in that place like me where faith is rocked to it's core, hold on, it is people who have made the mistakes not God, He is holding out His hand, He is walking to the place you are at and He's waiting.

Since humanity first sinned mankind has had freewill, some choose the good road to journey on, some choose the bad road to journey on, God doesn't force either He just has a hearts desire for all to journey on the good one, and earth to reflect heaven, until that day there will be those amongst us, even in our congregations, who choose to be wolves dressed in lambs clothing.

Have courage and remember as Paul wrote in Roman's 8 :38 – 39 Nothing can ever separate us from the Love of God Amen

Hymn No 693 (StF) – Beauty for brokenness www.youtube.com/watch?v=3kVHKuldZyw

Intercession -I'm leaving this for you, spend some time reflecting how easy it is to 'get it wrong', how hard it is for those without a voice, and those who are close to losing their faith because of other's actions. Pray your prayer for all these situations and close with the original version of the Lord's prayer or this alternative version – The survivors Lord's Prayer:- O Lord you reside in glory, we glorify you and thank you for the knowledge of eternal life. Lord we long for the day when all people on earth do your will, We ask you to feed us on your love, grant us peace in our hearts when we find it difficult to forgive, help us to find the way to live in freedom, doing your will through Grace. For you are the God of love, peace and joy. Your Kingdom is the only place of true safety. Amen (Vivien Almond)

Hymn No 103 (StF) – God is love: let earth adore him www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qnysjgmsl2s or www.youtube.com/watch?v=SqqBu1VVHqM

(Eph 3: 20 - 21) Now all glory to God, who is able, through his mighty power at work within us, to accomplish infinitely more than we might ask or think. 21 Glory to him in the church and in Christ Jesus through all generations forever and ever! Amen.

Circuit Weekly Service Calendar – Week Commencing: Sunday 25th July 2021

Day	Time	Service Type	Location	Details
Sunday	9.00am	In Presence	Alconbury	Rev James Bamber (HC)
	10.00am	In Presence	Brampton	Colin Webber
	10.30am	In Presence	Eaton Ford	Rev James Bamber
	10.30am	In Presence	Ramsey	Rev Nick Witham

Day	Time	Zoom	Location	Details
Sunday	09.45am	Online Live	Zoom Hilton	Local Team https://zoom.us/j/92378310002 Meeting ID: 923 7831 0002 - Passcode: 010817
	10.00am	Online Live	Zoom Huntingdon	Sue Kinder https://zoom.us/j/83236199279 Meeting ID: 832 3619 9279 Passcode: 453363
	10.30am	Online Live	Zoom St. Ives	Leonore Charlton https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85934086914 Meeting ID: 859 3408 6914 Passcode: 199615
	7.00pm		Zoom Circuit St. Ives	Rev Nick Witham https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85934086914 Meeting ID: 859 3408 6914 Passcode: 199615
	Anytime	Telephone	01480 597118	Devotional Message – updated each Sunday
Monday to Friday	08.30am	Online Live	Zoom Morning Prayers	https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86258109837
Wednesday	2.00pm	Online Live	Zoom Berkley Street	Afternoon Tea - Margaret Wilson https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89206584600 Meeting ID: 892 0658 4600 - Password: 500135
Wednesday	7.30pm		Zoom Sawtry	Evening Fellowship https://zoom.us/j/172859764 Meeting ID: 172 859 764
Thursday	7.00pm		Zoom praise	Sing along - all welcome – Margaret Wilson https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85653152565 Meeting ID: 856 5315 2565 - Password: 387173
Friday	7.00pm		Zoom – Lectio Divina Telephone	Rev Sue Baker-Maher https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82995322148 Meeting ID: 829 9532 2148 0131 460 1196; 0203 051 2874; 0203 481 5237; 0203 481 5240
Any Day	Any Time	Online	YouTube direct or via link on Huntingdon Facebook	Pause for Thought with Rev James on his YouTube channel New editions added each weekend.

Notices

From the Circuit Leadership Team - Covid-19 guidance beyond July 19th Based on Connexional guidance we recommend the following:

- 1) Within worship, larger meetings and while moving around the building the continued wearing of face coverings until the end of September at least is strongly encouraged alongside ensuring our buildings are well ventilated. Discretion will need to be shown in respect of church meetings and smaller gatherings;
 - 2) A distance of at least 'two chairs' between each 'bubble' is maintained and people's preferences are respected. Handshaking and/or hugging is to be deterred;
 - 3) Keeping a register/or QR code system, continuing hand sanitising and asking people who feel unwell to not attend;
 - 4) The continued facilitating of creative acts of worship being attentive to the length of service, number of hymns, and ways of dedicating the offering without passing around a plate. Thought needs to be given to how people access any hymns sung e.g. bringing their own hymn book;
 - 5) There will continue to be at least one opportunity per Sunday for people to access worship via Zoom and/or other remote means;
 - 6) If refreshments are offered can they be served to people instead of people queuing at serveries etc. Perhaps during the summer drinks/chat could be shared in outside spaces where possible.
 - 7) Covid-19 risk assessments ought still to be in place and updated accordingly for worship and internal groups. External lettings should continue to present their Risk Assessments for examination.
- Thanks and Blessings, James.

Circuit service on Sunday, 25th July, 2021

Please note that St Ives are hosting the circuit service on Sunday, 25th July, 2021, so please use the St Ives link for the circuit service this week.

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85934086914>

Meeting ID: 859 3408 6914

Passcode: 199615

A Scam Warning

There is a scam e-mail going around claiming to be from Ministers. It is asking to provide money/vouchers. Please DO NOT respond. This is a scam, please just delete.