

**Circuit Service, Sunday 04<sup>th</sup> October 2020  
Farnworth and Worsley Circuit**



**Welcome:**

As we worship together, we recall all that God is and all that God has done for us. You are all more than welcome to this service and we pray that it will be a blessing to you. Thank you, Susan, for preaching today and to all those taking part.

**Call to Worship:**

We come to worship the Living God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, God who is with us every moment of every hour of every day. God who calls us to a life of praise and prayer. For God is worthy to receive our praise.  
Let us worship God together as we read, sing or say the hymn,  
From all that dwell below the skies.

**Hymn:**

From all that dwell below the skies  
let the Creator's praise arise:  
Alleluia! Alleluia!  
Let the Redeemer's name be sung,  
through every land, by every tongue:  
Alleluia! Alleluia!  
Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

Eternal are your mercies, Lord;  
eternal truth attends your word:  
Alleluia! Alleluia!  
Your praise shall sound from shore to shore,  
till suns shall rise and set no more :  
Alleluia! Alleluia!  
Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

Isaac Watts (1674–1748)

**Prayer of Praise:**

Almighty God,  
we stand in wonder at your indescribable love.  
You are our refuge and strength,  
compassionate and gracious,  
there is no one who can compare to you.  
Your creative power is both delicate and awesome.  
Your goodness is beyond all measure.  
We praise you for you open our hearts to love,  
your love, lavished on us,  
poured out for us in Jesus our Lord, crucified,  
risen and standing among us.  
We shout to you with cries of joy,  
and join with the psalmist in exclaiming,  
“I will sing to the Lord,  
because the Lord has been good to me.”  
We lift up your name and rejoice. **Amen**

**Prayer of Confession:**

Mighty Creator,  
you made us the pinnacle of your masterpiece  
to reflect your love, mercy and compassion.  
We bow our heads in sorrow  
for we have fallen far short of the potential we have as your children.  
We have failed to demonstrate your love

in our care for each other and for the world.  
We have not reflected your mercy and forgiveness  
in all our relationships.  
We have not always worshipped you in Spirit and truth.  
We are sorry. We seek your forgiveness. [*Silent prayer*]

Thank you that you forgive us,  
setting us free from sorrow and guilt.  
Lift us up that we might reflect more clearly  
your character in the lives that we live,  
for your glory. **Amen.**

#### **The Lord's Prayer:**

Our Father in heaven,  
hallowed be your Name,  
your kingdom come,  
your will be done,  
on earth as in heaven.  
Give us today our daily bread.  
Forgive us our sins  
as we forgive those who sin against us.  
Save us from the time of trial  
and deliver us from evil.  
For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours,  
now and for ever. **Amen.**

#### **Hymn:**

All heaven declares  
the glory of the risen Lord;  
who can compare  
with the beauty of the Lord?  
For ever he will be  
the Lamb upon the throne;  
I gladly bow the knee,  
and worship him alone.

I will proclaim  
the glory of the risen Lord,  
who once was slain  
to reconcile us to God.  
For ever you will be  
the Lamb upon the throne;  
I gladly bow the knee,  
and worship you alone.

Noël Richards (b.1955)  
and Tricia Richards (b.1960)

#### **Reading:** Psalm 19 (NIV)

The heavens declare the glory of God;  
the skies proclaim the work of his hands.

Day after day they pour forth speech;  
night after night they reveal knowledge.

They have no speech, they use no words;  
no sound is heard from them.

Yet their voice goes out into all the earth,  
their words to the ends of the world.  
In the heavens God has pitched a tent for the sun.

It is like a bridegroom coming out of his chamber,  
like a champion rejoicing to run his course.

It rises at one end of the heavens  
and makes its circuit to the other;  
nothing is deprived of its warmth.

The law of the Lord is perfect,  
refreshing the soul.  
The statutes of the Lord are trustworthy,  
making wise the simple.

The precepts of the Lord are right,  
giving joy to the heart.  
The commands of the Lord are radiant,  
giving light to the eyes.

The fear of the Lord is pure,  
enduring forever.  
The decrees of the Lord are firm,  
and all of them are righteous.

They are more precious than gold,  
than much pure gold;  
they are sweeter than honey,  
than honey from the honeycomb.

By them your servant is warned;  
in keeping them there is great reward.

But who can discern their own errors?  
Forgive my hidden faults.

Keep your servant also from willful sins;  
may they not rule over me.  
Then I will be blameless,  
innocent of great transgression.

May these words of my mouth and this meditation of my heart  
be pleasing in your sight,  
Lord, my Rock and my Redeemer.

**Reading:** Exodus 20: 1-4, 7-9, 12-20 (NRSV)

Then God spoke all these words:

I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt,  
out of the house of slavery; you shall have no other gods before me.

You shall not make for yourself an idol, whether in the form of  
anything that is in heaven above, or that is on the earth beneath, or  
that is in the water under the earth.

You shall not make wrongful use of the name of the Lord your God,  
for the Lord will not acquit anyone who misuses his name.

Remember the Sabbath day, and keep it holy. For six days you shall  
labour and do all your work.

Honour your father and your mother, so that your days may be long  
in the land that the Lord your God is giving you.

You shall not murder.

You shall not commit adultery.

You shall not steal.

You shall not bear false witness against your neighbour.

You shall not covet your neighbour's house; you shall not covet your  
neighbour's wife, or male or female slave, or ox, or donkey, or  
anything that belongs to your neighbour.

When all the people witnessed the thunder and lightning, the sound  
of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking, they were afraid and  
trembled and stood at a distance, and said to Moses, 'You speak to  
us, and we will listen; but do not let God speak to us, or we will die.'  
Moses said to the people, 'Do not be afraid; for God has come only  
to test you and to put the fear of him upon you so that you do not  
sin.'

**Reflection: Susan Coucill**

As I reflected on the reading from Exodus 20 I was thinking about Rules and Regulations, especially in these difficult times of the Covid 19 virus which has spread throughout our country and of course many other countries throughout our world. However, even without the threat of this virus, as a society we are all bound by rules of one kind or another. It's a part of life.

Last week when having a clear out of some of my books I found an old Highway code book which I'd used and studied hard before taking my driving test 25 years ago. The Highway Code is full of rules and regulations. Traffic signals, Stop signs, Give way signs, and many other really important rules and instructions which I hope have helped me to become a safe and considerate driver but like most drivers I have to admit I haven't looked at the Highway code for a very long time. I do however take careful note of road signs especially when motorway driving. If I didn't, goodness knows where I would end my journey!

This reminded me of a journey up the M6 with my cousin Jean many years ago when she was so busy listening to my Mum (who incidentally did not drive) giving instructions from the passenger seat that she followed the M55 and we nearly ended up in Blackpool instead of Morecambe. Cousin Jean was not following the road signs as Mum was distracting her. Thankfully after a bit of a detour we arrived safely at our destination. I didn't tell my sister why we were late for a few weeks.

At the moment there are lots of signs in our towns telling us to keep 2 metres apart. We are now commanded by our Government to wear face coverings in public places to help keep us safe from the virus and almost weekly there are more rules that we have to abide by. It is really hard for many of us especially when we can't meet our loved ones.

But thinking of Moses and the ten Commandments I wonder if today we really look at these often enough, for they are really good instructions for the way we run our lives.

For most of us, as Christians, the Ten commandments represent a central core of morality "the basics that God requires" but for the Israelites in the desert the commandments represented far more ....nothing less than a major breakthrough. Nations around them lived in constant fear of their gods' unpredictability for who could tell what would anger or please them?

But now God himself Creator of the universe is giving the Israelites a binding treaty signed in his own hand, They will always know exactly where they stand and what God requires from them.

God holds before them prosperity, abundant crops, immunity from health problems and God wanted a nation like no other, a model society centred around a commitment to Him.

In a world that appeared committed to idolatry God chose Moses who was an ordinary man with limited resources in very difficult circumstances, against insurmountable odds to receive His message and give it to the people whom he was leading to freedom. God had to assemble His people in unity before He entrusted them with the truths that would define their existence. He reminded them that He had brought them out of the land of Egypt and of His love and care.

In the verses 18 to 20 the people were afraid when they heard thunder and a trumpet blast and saw the smoking mountain. They were assured by Moses speaking to them but thought if God spoke they would perish. Moses offered reassurance that God had come to test them and ensure they would obey Him and not sin, however the people were not convinced and stood a distance away and Moses then approached the smoking mountain to hear more of what God had to say.

The Ten Commandments define the life God wants us to have with Him and with each other. Every aspect of our lives should show that we belong to God and these Commandments are minimum standards for a just society and how we are to live our lives. These rules will never change or become out of date. God made His commandments because He loves us. He knows that as humans it will be almost impossible for us to obey them perfectly His commandments but as Christians we are secure in the knowledge that God forgives us when we falter and then our relationship with Him is restored.

In the book of Exodus the phrase 'I am the Lord your God' appears many times and this emphasises God's authority and His relationship with His people. We love God by putting him first and God does not want us to worship other Gods or idols.

The Egyptians were quite comfortable, making idols and paintings of their gods although they didn't believe the idols were gods themselves but that through them they could tell the gods what they wanted. The idols were a means for the rich and powerful to control their gods. The people's thoughts were, "If you paid then you were blessed."

But God did not want the Israelites to worship Him this way and loved his people too much to let them worship a lie. He told them firstly, "Worship no God but me"

As for the Commandment telling us not to take God's name in vain I must say that when I hear people using the blessed name of God or Jesus Christ to make a point that is not spiritual I feel all sorts of emotions. Anger, sadness, frustration. I have been known to challenge people when hearing God's name used like this then having to walk away before I say more than I should!

God told His people to observe the Sabbath...a day of rest dedicated to Him. No work to be carried out but in these days and times we can't always keep a day of rest. Some people are forced to work on this day. Our hospitals would be in dire straits if all the staff refused to work on Saturdays and Sundays especially in the present climate. Our Emergency services are needed 24 hours a day 7 days a week. Sundays for many Christians starts with worship in their churches. As a child I remember my Mum and Granny would not do housework on Sundays. Of course they had to cook or we would have gone hungry. Sunday lunch was special and still is today.

No supermarkets in the 50s when I was growing up, shops were closed on Sundays. If you forgot something on Saturday you had to do without or ask your neighbour for help.

Speaking of Mums and Grandmas the 4<sup>th</sup> Commandment tells us that we should honour our parents I think this also means having respect for not just parents but for each other as human beings and we sometimes fall down with this one. The remaining Commandments deal with the way humans treat each other.

Thou shall not kill not only deals with murder which is truly abhorrent but also violence of any kind.

God also reminds us of faithfulness in marriage and relationships.

We are told not to steal. Not just theft but fraud and many other issues around taking that which does not belong to us.

Further Commandments speak about our neighbours. That means anybody really. We should not listen to or engage in gossip about anyone. It is harmful and hurtful and there may be lies and betrayal involved and there are always consequences.

We should not be envious of what other people have. Many people appear to be more and more materialistic these days. It often begins with quite young children who want to be like their peers with the designer clothes and trainers and pressurise their parents to purchase these when often parents do not have the money to do this. Envy often continues in to adulthood too. We've all heard the phrase "Keeping up with the Jones's"

The theologian John Calvin said that the Ten Commandments serve three purposes for Christians:

Firstly in showing us how we are supposed to live before God and with our neighbours the Commandments expose our sinfulness and need of God's grace. Secondly the Commandments remind the community that sin is never just individual but also corporate social and institutional and thirdly these ten Commandments play a positive role of lighting the path and show us how to live as people who have been saved by God through Jesus Christ.

I pray that we may strive to walk in God's way through the power of the Holy Spirit  
Amen.

**Hymn:**

From the breaking of the dawn  
to the setting of the sun,  
I will stand on every promise of your word.  
Words of power, strong to save,  
that will never pass away;  
I will stand on every promise of your word.  
For your covenant is sure,  
and on this I am secure:  
I can stand on every promise of your word.

When I stumble and I sin,  
condemnation pressing in,  
I will stand on every promise of your word.  
You are faithful to forgive,  
that in freedom I might live,  
so I stand on every promise of your word.  
Guilt to innocence restored;  
you remember sins no more.  
So I'll stand on every promise of your word.

When I'm faced with anguished choice  
I will listen for your voice,  
and I'll stand on every promise of your word.  
Through this dark and troubled land,  
you will guide me with your hand  
as I stand on every promise of your word.  
And you've promised to complete  
every work begun in me,  
so I'll stand on every promise of your word.

Hope that lifts me from despair;  
love that casts out every fear  
as I stand on every promise of your word.  
Not forsaken, not alone,  
for the Comforter has come,  
and I stand on every promise of your word.  
Grace sufficient, grace for me,  
grace for all who will believe.  
We will stand on every promise of your word.

Keith Getty (b.1974) and Stuart Townend (b.1963)

### **Prayers for others and for the world:**

Lord, you have called us to know you,  
You have called us to love you,  
You have called us to serve you.  
Make us worthy of our calling.  
May we proclaim your power and your peace.  
May we rejoice in your light and in your love;  
through Christ the living Lord. Amen.

We pray for the church that is under persecution,  
the church at work in dangerous places.  
We pray for churches that have lost their vision;  
for all who seek to bring the light of Christ to others,  
that we all may grow in holiness and in outreach.  
That we may know Christ **and the power of his resurrection.**

We pray for all who are struggling for survival.  
We pray for those whose lives have collapsed around them.  
We remember those who have lost loved ones, possessions, homes  
or work this week,  
All who have been robbed or stripped of their dignity,  
Those sleeping on the streets of our cities,  
All who have lost hope or will power  
That we may know Christ **and the power of his resurrection.**

We pray for all who are brought low by disease or sickness,  
For those who have been taken into care this week,  
For all who are terminally ill.  
We pray for the hospice movement  
and for all who care for the dying.  
We remember all who have lost loved ones this week.  
We pray that we may be strong in our faith to the last.  
That we may know Christ **and the power of his resurrection.**

We pray for all who have died in faith,  
Who know Christ and the power of the resurrection,  
For all who now share in the victory over the grave  
especially.....

May we live as those who believe and trust in the communion of  
saints, the forgiveness of sins, and the resurrection to the life  
everlasting.  
That we may know Christ **and the power of his resurrection.**

May we now continue in worship and in our lives in the days ahead  
journeying in the glory, peace and grace of God,  
Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen.

### **Offering:**

*(For those who are setting aside their offering each week this prayer  
may be said:)*

Bless the offering we bring, Lord God, and bless us too,  
that our money and our whole lives might be for you;  
that your will be done and your Kingdom come,  
even through us.  
In Jesus' name.

**Amen**

### **Hymn:**

Jesus is Lord! Creation's voice proclaims it,  
for by his power each tree and flower was planned and made.  
Jesus is Lord! The universe declares it;  
sun, moon and stars in heaven cry: Jesus is Lord!

*Jesus is Lord! Jesus is Lord!  
Praise him with alleluias, for Jesus is Lord!*

Jesus is Lord! Yet from his throne eternal  
in flesh he came to die in pain on Calvary's tree.  
Jesus is Lord! From him all life proceeding —  
yet gave his life a ransom, thus setting us free.

*Jesus is Lord! Jesus is Lord!*

*Praise him with alleluias, for Jesus is Lord!*

Jesus is Lord! O'er sin the mighty conqueror,  
from death he rose; and all his foes shall own his name.  
Jesus is Lord! God sends his Holy Spirit  
to show by works of power that Jesus is Lord.

*Jesus is Lord! Jesus is Lord! ...*

David John Mansell (b.1936)

**Blessing:**

As you move on, as you look to the future,  
God bless you.  
As you think of your life, as you lay down the past,  
God bless you.  
As you live your life, with all the potential of this present moment,  
God bless you.

And may the God of all life give you hope and peace and joy,  
today and forever more. Amen

**After Service Telephone Chat:**

If you are not able to join the online Zoom After Service Coffee and Chat, this option offers an opportunity to join Rev. Sarah Knebel and others around the circuit for a chat on the telephone.

You can use either a landline or a mobile phone to join the call. To join the call you dial the telephone number below as you would any telephone number and then you will be asked to type in the access code on your telephone/mobile phone keypad. You will also be asked to say your name before joining the conversation. Dependent on your telephone contract/calling plan this call may be charged at local rate. (This telephone call is provided by a company called Free Conference)

**Dial-in information:**

**Sunday, 4<sup>th</sup> October 2020 from 11:45 AM**

**Telephone Number: 0333 011 0616**

**Access code: 623 5908**

Please note the call asks you to press the 'E' key after entering the access code. You do not need to do this. You can either press the '#' key, or just wait, and you will be connected to the telephone chat.