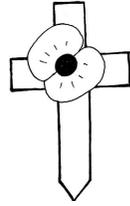


**Remembrance Sunday Circuit Service,  
8<sup>th</sup> November 2020, 10am  
Farnworth and Worsley Circuit**



**Call to Worship and Welcome:**

Let all who seek you, rejoice and be glad!  
Let all who love you, sing praise to your name!  
Let all who trust you appeal to your mercy!  
Let all who serve you receive of your strength!  
We come.

We come because we love you.

We come because we adore you.

We come because you are great.

But even more, we come because you love us.

We come because you consider us worthy and of great value.

And for that we thank you!

Welcome all of you, thank you for being here. And we thank everyone who has contributed to this service today. We sing that great hymn of adoration, Praise, my soul, the king of heaven”

**Hymn:**

Praise, my soul, the King of heaven;  
to his feet thy tribute bring.  
Ransomed, healed, restored, forgiven,  
who like thee his praise should sing?  
Praise him! Praise him!  
Praise the everlasting King!

Praise him for his grace and favour  
to his people in distress;  
praise him, still the same for ever,  
slow to chide, and swift to bless.  
Praise him! Praise him!  
Glorious in his faithfulness.

Father-like, he tends and spares us;  
well our feeble frame he knows;  
in his hands he gently bears us,  
rescues us from all our foes.  
Praise him! Praise him!  
Widely as his mercy flows.

Angels in the height, adore him;  
ye behold him face to face;  
sun and moon, bow down before him,  
dwellers all in time and space.  
Praise him! Praise him!  
Praise with us the God of grace!

Henry Francis Lyte (1793–1847)

**Prayers of Praise and Confession:**

Lord Jesus, you are glorious in Your Being and yet still approachable.  
Your radiant love, mercy and tender compassion for all your creation  
shines out of Your eyes.  
We gather here this morning to worship you and are in awe at the  
privilege.  
We look up at Your Face and the radiance of Your Presence is beyond  
our words.  
You are real and we know you are amongst us accepting our  
worship.

We come together as a congregation of believers before You this day.  
Expressing our love as we choose to begin this day by worshipping  
You and surrendering our own agendas.

Heavenly Father, as we pick up our crosses you fill our hearts with joy.

You've enthroned us in Your grace.

You've clothed us in Your beauty.

You crown us with honour and glory.

You give our feet a covering of peace.

You deserve more than we can offer.

This is why we come this morning saying Lord We are sorry when we get so carried away with the busyness of each day, never stopping to dwell in your love.

We are sorry when we allow the stresses and demands of work or family to erode and wear away our hope.

We are sorry when we get caught up in conflict and frustration, when we harbour resentment, instead of giving out forgiveness.

We are sorry when we seek to be fulfilled by food, drink or entertainment,

Yet fail to feast on your truth.

We are sorry when we desire the wrong things, blinded by the media, and forget to engage with the real treasures of love and justice.

Heavenly Father we ask for your mercy.

Forgive us and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Through Jesus Christ our Lord and saviour we pray.

**Amen.**

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

Our Father, who art in heaven,  
hallowed be Thy name;

Thy Kingdom come;

Thy will be done,

on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread.

And forgive us our trespasses,

as we forgive those who trespass against us.

And lead us not into temptation,  
but deliver us from evil.

For Thine is the Kingdom,

the power and the glory,

for ever and ever. **Amen.**

### **Hymn:**

Into the darkness of this world,  
into the shadows of the night;  
into this loveless place you came,  
lightened our burdens, eased our pain,  
and made these hearts your home.

Into the darkness once again —

O come, Lord Jesus, come.

*Come with your love  
to make us whole,  
come with your light to lead us on,  
driving the darkness far from our souls :  
O come, Lord Jesus, come.*

Into the longing of our souls,  
into these heavy hearts of stone,  
shine on us now your piercing light,  
order our lives and souls aright,  
by grace and love unknown,  
until in you our hearts unite —  
O come, Lord Jesus, come.

*Come with your love  
to make us whole,  
come with your light to lead us on,  
driving the darkness far from our souls:  
O come, Lord Jesus, come.*

O Holy Child, Emmanuel,  
hope of the ages, God with us,  
visit again this broken place,  
till all the earth declares your praise  
and your great mercies own.  
Now let your love be born in us,  
O come, Lord Jesus, come.

*Come in your glory,  
take your place,  
Jesus, the Name above all names,  
we long to see you face to face,  
O come, Lord Jesus, come.*

Maggi Dawn (b.1959)

**Reading:** Psalm 78:1-7 (New Living Translation)

O my people, listen to my instructions.  
Open your ears to what I am saying,  
for I will speak to you in a parable.  
I will teach you hidden lessons from our past—  
stories we have heard and known,  
stories our ancestors handed down to us.  
We will not hide these truths from our children;  
we will tell the next generation  
about the glorious deeds of the LORD,  
about his power and his mighty wonders.  
For he issued his laws to Jacob;  
he gave his instructions to Israel.  
He commanded our ancestors  
to teach them to their children,  
so the next generation might know them—  
even the children not yet born—  
and they in turn will teach their own children.  
So each generation should set its hope anew on God,

not forgetting his glorious miracles  
and obeying his commands.

**Reading:** Matthew 25:1-13 (New Revised Standard Version)

‘Then the kingdom of heaven will be like this. Ten bridesmaids took their lamps and went to meet the bridegroom. Five of them were foolish, and five were wise. When the foolish took their lamps, they took no oil with them; but the wise took flasks of oil with their lamps. As the bridegroom was delayed, all of them became drowsy and slept. But at midnight there was a shout, “Look! Here is the bridegroom! Come out to meet him.” Then all those bridesmaids got up and trimmed their lamps. The foolish said to the wise, “Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.” But the wise replied, “No! there will not be enough for you and for us; you had better go to the dealers and buy some for yourselves.” And while they went to buy it, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went with him into the wedding banquet; and the door was shut. Later the other bridesmaids came also, saying, “Lord, lord, open to us.” But he replied, “Truly I tell you, I do not know you.” Keep awake therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour.

**Hymn:**

There's a light upon the mountains, and the day is at the spring,  
when our eyes shall see the beauty and the glory of the King;  
weary was our heart with waiting,  
and the night-watch seemed so long;  
but his triumph-day is breaking, and we hail it with a song.

There's a hush of expectation, and a quiet in the air;  
and the breath of God is moving in the fervent breath of prayer:  
for the suffering, dying Jesus is the Christ upon the throne,  
and the travail of our spirit is the travail of his own.

He is breaking down the barriers, he is casting up the way;  
he is calling for his angels to build up the gates of day;  
but his angels here are human, not the shining hosts above;  
for the drum-beats of his army are the heart-beats of our love.

Hark! We hear a distant music, and it comes with fuller swell;  
'tis the triumph-song of Jesus, of our King, Immanuel:  
Zion, go now forth to meet him; and, my soul, be swift to bring  
all your finest and your noblest for the triumph of our King!

Henry Burton (1840–1930)

**Reflection: Rev. Darren Garfield**

Remember, never forget, always remember.

Remembering is at the heart of our worship today, as it will be across the world. For it is a time when we remember the commitment, the loyalty, the love and the sacrifice of endless numbers of people who gave their lives for us. So we are encouraged always to remember, and never to forget.

But remembering is at the heart of our lives. Our memories inform our character and personality. Memory is central to who we are and what we do.

But memory also has a poignancy to it. We say, oh, do you remember those days before March 23<sup>rd</sup> before we were ordered to stay at home? Do you remember the time before that? It was the week before, when many of us spent a weekend in a hotel at St Anne's, eating together, playing games, singing songs, sitting next to each other, chatting, drawing, some people swimming in the local pool, just being together. It was great fun.

Those days seem far off now, for some no more than a distant memory; for some an experience they long for again. The longing to hug, to mix, to meet up with our family again; to go out, to party, to be spontaneous...the desire and longing just to live, to live as we want to live without being told what to do.

But our memories are rich and varied; they and will stay with us for all time. Memories of good times pre-March 23<sup>rd</sup>, with friends and family; memories of happy occasions, joyful events. It was fun, it was enjoyable, it was great!

But let's also hold on to the new memories that we have made during what we call lockdown. We recollect the support and love that we have given to each other in these past months; recalling the help that we have offered to those who are lonely; remembering those moments of solidarity, of clapping, of rainbows, of flames and symbols of hope and peace. The things we do, and our memories, our experiences, the stuff of life, make us who we are. And give us a sense of how we should live. Somehow those memories prepare us for the future.

What has this to do with Matthew? We are reaching the end of this Christian year, with Advent on the horizon, and several of our bible readings speak about eschatology. Escha-what? You might ask. Eschatology, the theology of final events, the end times, and specifically the return of Jesus. But it is so much more than how the world will end, or what will happen in the future. The reading focusses on Jesus responding to the disciples' question, so when will the last days come? And he tells this story about ten bridesmaids getting ready to go to a wedding. Just imagine them, making their way to the bride's home, all ready to light up the path for the bridegroom. They're all excited. All of them carrying lamps. Five of them being weighed down by the oil they are also carrying to light the lamps; the other five freely skipping along, almost without a care in the world. They can skip along quickly because they're not carrying any caskets of oil. They are just light and free. They all get into the bride's house and wait for the bridegroom to arrive.

They don't know when it will be; it might be today it might be tomorrow, who knows. But they're prepared to wait. And then a noise, getting louder and louder, because, yes, the bridegroom is on his way, and the noise gets bigger and bigger. Those bridesmaids carrying the oil excitedly light their lamps, so the bridegroom knows

which way to go. They're full of joy! Now look at the five other bridesmaids, who don't have any oil; you can sense the rising panic. What are they going to do? How are they going to see their way ahead? Why didn't they think? Why didn't they bring some oil with them? What have they done? So they stand outside in the dark, with empty lamps but heavy hearts, full of regret and shame.

Let's not be too harsh though, because they set out with all the right intentions assuming, quite understandably, that they would be given some oil when they got to their destination. No one told them otherwise. How were they to know? I wasn't their fault!

It's a pretty tough story and you can't help but feel sorry for half of the bridesmaids. Told in black and white, with the starkness of the challenge and choice that Jesus points to. Harsh, because surely the other five bridesmaids could have shared their oil. Why was the bridegroom so mean, not to let them in? And yet it's also a story about choice. Those who had the oil were being responsible, knowing there just wasn't enough for everyone. Those who had the oil were being responsible, trying to help the other bridesmaids learn a valuable lesson in getting your priorities right, in doing the right thing, in being prepared.

And finally we get to the nub of the matter. Be prepared! Make good choices. Be ready. I confess, depending on my mood, I feel empathy for both sets of bridesmaids. But what I can grasp is the importance of being ready, prepared, energised to make good choices. To do the right thing. Five were ready. Five were not. It's as stark as that.

I'm reminded of Matthew chapter 7, which is towards the end of the Sermon on the Mount. Jesus talks about bearing good fruit, of doing the right thing, of not just talking the talk, but walking it as well. He says, 'Not everyone who says to me, "Lord, Lord", will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only one who does the will of my Father in heaven.'

He says, 'Everyone then who hears these words of mine and acts on them will be like a wise person.' At one point he says about those

who say Lord, Lord...and do all the right things, he says, 'I never knew you.' You can't get more serious than that!

Eduard Schweitzer said this, 'When Jesus calls on his disciples to keep watch, he is calling on them to take the reality of God so seriously that they can come to terms with its sudden appearance at any moment within their own lives, precisely because they know that this reality will one day come unboundedly in the Kingdom of God.'

In other words, the message that reaches over the centuries is this: seize the day! Make every moment count. Don't let go of the past, don't write it off. But let your memories shape you. Henri Nouwen wrote, 'If we are to be truly ready for a new task in the service of God, our entire past, gathered into the spaciousness of a converted heart, must become the source of energy that moves us towards the future.'

Move towards that future. Actively love God and love others, not just once, not just on a Sunday, not just sometimes, but always. Always. Every moment, look for ways of living out your faith. For every moment is a chance to make a difference. Don't let your faith be passive, something that happens to you. Don't be a spectator, but be a willing participant in the mission of God. Don't just be in the audience; be on the stage, sing out, play, be and do what God has called you to. Don't be scared. Be ready, be prepared.

More than anything, hold on to hope. As we mark Remembrance Sunday, reflecting on lives lost, and the horror of war we are so tempted to give in to despair. What does the future hold? Why do bad things continue to happen? What is the point? We haven't got all the answers. All we can do is hold on to hope. The God of Psalm 78 is the God of today, who says, listen, be ready, be prepared to learn...set your hope anew on God. Never forget God's glorious miracles. But keep on being obedient. Keep on hoping. That is the antidote to despair. Hope in God. Not in some vague sense of optimism. But hope in God.

May the God of hope fill us with hope and peace and love, always.

Thanks be to God. Amen.

**Hymn:**

God of justice, Saviour to all,  
came to rescue the weak and the poor;  
chose to serve and not be served.  
Jesus, you have called us.  
Freely we've received, now freely we will give.

*We must go,  
live to feed the hungry,  
stand beside the broken,  
we must go.  
Stepping forward,  
keep us from just singing,  
move us into action,  
we must go.*

To act justly every day,  
loving mercy in every way,  
walking humbly before you, God.  
You have shown us what you require.  
Freely we've received, now freely we will give.

*Refrain (sung twice)*

Fill us up and send us out,  
fill us up and send us out,  
fill us up and send us out, Lord.  
Fill us up and send us out,  
fill us up and send us out,  
fill us up and send us out, Lord.

*Refrain*

Tim Hughes

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

Lord God, thank you for your word.

May we listen and learn from the parables and stories of the past  
and be ever ready.

In these uncertain times may we value moments spent in your  
presence.

Touched by your warmth, kindle our hearts, fire our spirits and  
change the spark to a flame,

On this Remembrance Sunday we remember

Those who sacrificed their lives, and those suffering from the  
aftermath of war.

We pray for all involved with the armed forces  
And those who experience today, the horror of war.....

Peoples divided against each other,

Victims of injustice and oppression living in fear,

And those striving for a new freedom and hope,

In a world where life seems fragile and transient,

Help us to remember the importance of peace in our lives.

Lord, you have promised that a time will come in your kingdom  
when there will be

No more war or injustice

Sickness or suffering -

Peace.....

We look at the incredible colours in this beautiful world you have  
created

And we are mindful of the affects on it of global health,  
environmental and financial issues.\_

Teach us Lord what it means to live in today's complex and troubled  
world.

Wherever there is darkness, shine your love and light.

We pray for all affected by the world wide Corona Virus.

All who are working tirelessly to care for the sick and those trialling vaccines.

Give courage and wisdom to those with great responsibilities,  
All involved in making tough decisions to ensure everyone's safety and well being.

We pray for a working together for the good of all

May those who have plenty be challenged to respond to those who have little.

Teach us never to lose sight of all that you are able to do, and all that you are already doing.

Until the day your will is done and all things are made new.

There are many who need prayer across our circuit and district

In hospitals, at home, in care homes ....

Affected by COVID 19, coping with long-term illness, awaiting results, further treatment,  
an operation, recovering from surgery, an accident.....

We think of our ministers and chaplains ...

Our families, friends, neighbours ....

We pause a moment to name those on our hearts .....

Lord you know each person on our hearts by name, each one special and precious to you

You understand each need and share in the sorrows and the joys and celebrations.

Bring your healing touch, comfort, strength, hope

Where the effects of illness, abuse, discrimination

And deep concerns about cutbacks, unemployment, and rising debt are all too real.

We pray for ourselves

Calm any anxious fears and hold us close.

Guide, challenge, surround and protect us each day.

Enfold us in your peace

We know that life will not be without its difficulties and pain,

But thank you for the assurance that whatever we may face,

In all the ups and downs you are alongside us.

Nothing can ever separate us from your love.

When we feel uncertain of what lies ahead

Let us remember the Methodist Presidential theme

"The best of all God is with us"

**Amen**

**Offering:**

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

God of all goodness and grace,

receive the gifts we offer;

and grant that our whole life,

may give you glory and praise;

through Christ our Lord.

**Amen**

**Hymn:**

Make me a channel of your peace.

Where there is hatred, let me bring your love;

where there is injury, your pardon, Lord;

and where there's doubt, true faith in you:

*O Master, grant that I may never seek*

*so much to be consoled as to console;*

*to be understood as to understand;*

*to be loved, as to love with all my soul.*

Make me a channel of your peace.  
Where there's despair in life, let me bring hope;  
where there is darkness, only light;  
and where there's sadness, ever joy:

*O Master, grant that I may never seek  
so much to be consoled as to console;  
to be understood as to understand;  
to be loved, as to love with all my soul.*

Make me a channel of your peace.  
It is in pardoning that we are pardoned,  
in giving unto all that we receive,  
and in dying that we're born to eternal life.

Sebastian Temple (1928–1997)  
from the Prayer of St Francis

#### **Blessing:**

Living Lord, help us to be peacemakers.  
Help us to be bridgebuilders.  
Help us, always and every day, to be used for you in the healing of  
the world. Amen.

And now the blessing of God almighty,  
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,  
be among you and remain with you always.

**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.

#### **Dial-in information:**

**Sunday, 8<sup>th</sup> November 2020 from 11:45 AM**

**Telephone Number: 0333 011 0616**

**Access code: 623 5908**

Please note the call asks you to press the '£' 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.



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Content is updated weekly on Thursday afternoon

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