

**FORTH VALLEY METHODIST CIRCUIT WEEKLY SERVICE
SUNDAY 15 NOVEMBER, 2020**



Opening sentences:

To you I lift up my eyes, O you who are enthroned in the heavens!
As the eyes of servants look to the hand of their master,
as the eyes of a maid to the hand of her mistress,
so our eyes look to the Lord our God, until he has mercy upon us.
(*Psalm 123.1–2*)

Hymn [All praise to our redeeming Lord](#) (StF 608):

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

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

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

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

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

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

Charles Wesley (1707-88)

Prayer of approach:

Eternal God, source of all blessing,
help us to worship you
with all our heart and mind and strength;
for you alone are God,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit,
for ever and ever. **Amen.**

Prayer of adoration:

You are worthy, O Lord our God,
to receive glory and honour and power,
because you created all things;
by your will they were created and have their being.
Let us praise and glorify him for ever.

You are worthy to receive the scroll and break its seals,
because you were sacrificed,
and by your blood you bought for God
people of every tribe and language, nation and race.
Let us praise and glorify him for ever.

You have made them a royal house of priests for our God,
and they shall reign on earth.
Praise and honour, glory and might,
to him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb for ever.
Let us praise and glorify him for ever. Amen.

Prayer of confession and declaration of forgiveness:

We pray using the lyrics from 'Almighty God, we come to make confession' (StF 419)

Read these words slowly and if you wish play the tune [Finlandia](#) as you read them:

Almighty God, we come to make confession,
for we have sinned in thought and word and deed.
We now repent in honesty and sorrow;
forgive us, Lord, and meet us in our need.

Forgiving God, I come to make confession
of all the harm and hurt that I have done;
of bitter words and many selfish actions,
forgive me, Lord, and make me like your son.

Forgiving God, I come to make confession
of all that I have failed to do this day;
of help withheld, concern and love restricted,
forgive me, Lord, and lead me in your way.

Redeeming God, we come to seek forgiveness,
for Jesus Christ has died to set us free.
Forgive the past and fill us with your Spirit
that we may live to serve you joyfully.

Christopher Ellis (b.1948)

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Grace and truth have come to us through Jesus Christ.
Hear then his word of grace to us:
Your sins are forgiven.
Amen. Thanks be to God.

Collect:

Eternal God,
from whom all thoughts of truth and peace proceed:
kindle, we pray, in every heart the true love of peace,
and guide with your pure and peaceable wisdom
those who take counsel for the nations of the earth;
that in justice and peace your kingdom may go forward,
till the earth is filled with the knowledge of your love;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

New Testament reading [1 Thessalonians 5.1-11](#)

Gospel reading [Matthew 25.14-30](#)

Please use your own Bible or click on the link to read from the New Revised Standard Version on the Bible Gateway website.

Reflection:

Michel Quoist's *Prayers of life* has a section entitled 'All of life would become prayer'. Matthew's parable looks at how we use the gifts we are given.

One person was blessed with the ability to evangelise.
She trained as a deacon,
went to work among drug addicts,
helped many to kick the habit
and brought a few to God.

Another was a good listener.
As well as being a persuasive talker
he trained in human relations work,
rose high in local government
and was able to persuade his political masters
of ways in which jobs could be created.
Over the years dozens of young people
were taken off benefits
and helped to start their own businesses.

Some failed but not a few succeeded,
making more jobs.

She inherited money and a head for figures
but wasn't bothered about other people
so just invested it and made herself a modest living.
She turned a deaf ear to the need for money
to support ministry
and to help the young people establish their businesses.
Her money was 'safe' in oil and gas – for the moment.

What sort of stewards are we of God's gifts? Some of us have boring jobs.
Peter Syson of ACAS tells of going to Ford of Detroit in the United States, where
he asked one worker:

'What are you making?'
'C429'.
'What's that?'
'I don't know.'
'What happens after it leaves you?'
'Don't know.'
'How long have you been making it?'
'Nine years.'

If we were given a talent to look after (around £500,000 in today's money) what
would we do? Probably not put it under the mattress – the equivalent of the
slave's hole in the ground. We might put it in the bank but just now we'd hardly
get any interest on it and the way things are going might end up being charged
for the privilege of having it looked after. We might invest it in stocks and
shares, but would you chance it at the moment? Or should we put it into
property? q

The slaves' options were more limited but might have involved moneylending or
trading. Whatever the answer we might well have sympathy for the slave with
one talent.

It's helpful that the money was called a talent because of course it is the other
sense of talent that matters to us and to Jesus in the story.

The master knew that some of his servants were better prepared to look after his interests and entrusted amounts accordingly but even the least of us have some talents we can use.

Perhaps this year has made us all recognise the value of people we didn't realise were so important – the phrase 'key workers' was not in common use before March but now we value far more many of the routine jobs like shelf fillers and the underpaid skills of care workers.

This year some of us have lost jobs or been furloughed. But we all can use the gifts God gives us somehow because gifts are for offering back to God. The value of talking to isolated people and offering shopping help has come to the fore.

In the parable the property remained the master's. Gifts we are given are according to our abilities: 'to all those who have, more will be given'.

Use the gifts we have, and more are given, sufficient for the task. God will provide.

So, we can offer all of life to God and all of life would become prayer.

Affirmation of faith:

Let us confess the faith of the church.

**We believe in God the Father,
who made the world.**

**We believe in Jesus Christ, his Son,
who redeemed humankind.**

**We believe in the Holy Spirit,
who gives life to the people of God.**

Hymn [Teach me, my God and King](#) (StF 668)

Teach me, my God and King,
in all things thee to see,
and what I do in anything,
to do it as for thee.

For those who look on glass
on it may stay the eye;
or if it pleases, through it pass,
and then the heaven espy.

All may of thee partake:
nothing can be so mean,
which with this tincture, 'For thy sake'
will not grow bright and clean.

A servant with this clause
makes drudgery divine:
who sweeps a room as for thy laws,
makes that and the action fine.

This is the famous stone
that turneth all to gold;
for that which God doth touch and own
cannot for less be told.

George Herbert (1593-1633)

– words slightly updated from the traditional ones on the recording

Prayer of thanksgiving:

We praise you, God our Father,
for the world which you created and for our place in it.
You have given us life that we may love and serve you;
and though we have resisted your purpose and misused your gift,
you have not left us in our sin,
but have sent us your son Jesus Christ to be our saviour.
We thank you that for us he became man,
died on the cross, rose from the dead, and ascended into heaven;
there he reigns in glory, and there he prays for us;
and we believe that he will be our judge.
We thank you that you have sent your Holy Spirit
to bring us to a new life in Christ
and give us freedom to call you Father.
Therefore with all the church on earth and in heaven,
we give you our thanks and praise.

We dedicate ourselves to you;
strengthen us by your Holy Spirit to do your will,
and bring us with all people to your kingdom,
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Intercessions:

Let us offer our prayer
with all God's people
through Jesus Christ our Lord
who ever lives to pray for us.

We pray for the needs of the world.
We think of the things that spoil your world:
the pollution of air and water and land;
waste, warfare, cruelty to animal and humankind.
May we work to put things right.
In your mercy **hear our prayer.**

We pray for the church.
In these times it sometimes seems hard to be church
but in others the church has blossomed and changed in wonderful ways
We pray for church leaders and for ourselves
in this dispersed congregation.
We remember today those who are prevented from worshipping
in countries where it is dangerous to express your faith.
May we see ourselves as part of the church on earth and in heaven.
In your mercy **hear our prayer.**

We pray for all in trouble or distress.
We think of those known to us
and ask that you will show us how to respond and care.
In your mercy **hear our prayer.**

We remember those who have died
especially those who have accompanied us on our Christian journey
and commend them to God.
In your mercy **hear our prayer.**

Silent prayer

God of compassion and mercy,
listen to our prayer.
May what we ask in Jesus Christ your Son
be done according to his word, who said,
'Ask, and you will receive,
seek, and you will find,
knock, and the door will be opened to you.'
To you, merciful God,
through your Son,
in the lifegiving Spirit,
be glory and praise for ever. **Amen.**

Prayer of dedication:

Lord God, giver of all good,
who entrusted the earth to us to till it and to care for it,
and made the sun and the rain to serve our needs:
give to us also grace this day to work faithfully for your glory,
and for our neighbours' good. **Amen.**

The Lord's prayer

We say together the prayer that Jesus gave us:

**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 [Take this moment, sign, and space](#) (StF 513)

Take this moment, sign, and space;
take my friends around;
here among us make the place
where your love is found.

Take the time to call my name,
take the time to mend
who I am and what I've been,
all I've failed to tend.

Take the tiredness of my days,
take my past regret,
letting your forgiveness touch
all I can't forget.

Take the little child in me,
scared of growing old;
help me here to find my worth
made in Christ's own mould.

Take my talents, take my skills,
take what's yet to be;
let my life be yours, and yet,
let it still be me.

John Bell (b.1949) and Graham Maule (1958-2019)

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Blessing

Whatever you do, in word or deed,
do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus
and the blessing of God,
the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit,
be among us and remain with us always. **Amen.**
(Col 3.17)

Sending out

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

In the name of Christ. Amen.

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With thanks to David Andrews for preparing this week's order of service.