

Worship at Home service Sunday 10th September 2023 with Revd Ian Forsyth

A call to worship:

Come before the Lord and listen.

Do not be afraid, but do not be cowardly either.

Let us seek God's grace to be faithful and firm
in search of truth and unity – for that is our calling. **Amen**

StF 254 Seek ye first the Kingdom of God.

Seek ye first the Kingdom of God, And His righteousness,
And all these things, Shall be added unto you,
Allelu, alleluia.

Ask, and it shall be given unto you. Seek and ye shall find.
Knock and it shall be opened unto you.
Allelu, alleluia.

Man shall not live by bread alone, But by every word
That proceeds from the mouth of God.
Allelu, alleluia.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9LMQfOp9w8k>

Bible readings

Ezekiel 33.7-11; Psalm 119.33-40; Romans 13.8-14; Matthew 18.15-20

Prayer of confession

God of truth and integrity, we ask your forgiveness for the times when we
avoid conflict to preserve popularity and to avoid being challenged or
criticised.

Free us from fear and enable us to do conflict well.

We are sorry when we don't listen to those around us when they
challenge our actions, our words, our complacency.

Free us from pride and enable us to do conflict well.

We are sorry when, as a church, we collude with that which is wrong and
compromise when we should convict or speak out.

Free us from falsehood and enable us to do conflict well.

We ask this in Jesus' name. **Amen.**

Prayers of thanksgiving

Father, we thank you that we can always trust in you, for you make provision for our faults and failings, and send us all the help and encouragement we need.

Thank you for Jesus and his earthly life among his disciples, from that we learn so much.

Thank you that we can always have confidence in Jesus, leaning on his teaching and promises.

We praise you for who he is, and for who we are and will become in your plans for us. Lead us onward, heavenly Father. **Amen.**

Prayers of intercession

Eternal, ever-living God, we pray for those who this day need our prayers: those we see around us...

those we have left at home...

family and friends near and far...

strangers and communities we will never meet or know, but whose peril we hear of and see on our screens...

those whose life is ebbing away consumed by old age, frailty, illness or neglect...

those who grieve deeply for lives and loves lost...

those who cause grief and chaos in society

and who live seemingly with different values from ours, for them and their victims and their families...

those who are forgotten, unnoticed, unloved, unmissed...

Lord God, in your abundance of mercy, hear these and all our prayers.

Amen

Time to reflect:

When and how do we learn the lessons in life? We often learn lessons in the classroom through our class teachers when we are at school. I can still remember being taught about contours in Geography lesson with Miss Seagar, who insisted we coloured in maps. Later this helped me when I did the Duke of Edinburgh's award, especially when it came to compass and map skills, finding my way around the Lake District.

I can still recall looking through the mist from Helvellyn and not being able to see Striding Edge!

Another school activity I remember was being taught how to play chess during our lunchtime chess club by Mr Weston a maths teacher.

As we look at Psalm 119, the longest one written by David, in verses 33 - 35 it says, 'Teach me O Lord, to follow your decrees, then I will keep them to the end. Give me understanding, and I will keep your Law and obey it with all my heart. Direct me in the path of your commands for there I will find delight'.

Just recently I had a conversation with someone, who said to me they wanted to read the Bible as they were exploring what was next for them in their Faith journey. Following this I was thrilled to hear a Bible study in this person's worshipping community will be formed this autumn, meeting once a month and there will be an opportunity for others to join and begin to read the Bible and pray together.

A part of the Methodist Way of life is Worship and it says: As far as we are able, with God's help: we will pray daily. We will worship with others regularly. We will look and listen for God in Scripture, and the world. As we reflect on David's words, I am reminded of a verse from 119 in verse 11 that says, 'I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you'.

Dallas Willard a Christian philosopher comments 'If I had to choose between all the disciplines of the spiritual life, I would choose Bible memorisation, because it is a fundamental way of filling our minds with what it needs.'

I have two challenges for you, when was the last time you memorised scripture? The second challenge is for all of us in Northampton Methodist Church to consider our four Missional priorities that are below.

Develop, support, and encourage work with children and families.

Making disciples of Jesus and deepening discipleship.

Develop, support, and encourage ongoing work with older people.

Strengthening the ecumenical witness in the local community.

In the light of our desire asking God to guide and lead us through his Word, what is the church going to look like in five years' time and beyond? How much will we have learnt together? And how will we have journeyed with each other along the path He has set before us?

I finish today with Psalm 119 verse 105, 'Your Word is a lamp to my feet and light to my path'.

StF 495 – Dear Lord and Father of mankind.

Dear Lord and Father of mankind, Forgive our foolish ways! Re-clothe us
in our rightful mind,
In purer lives Thy service find,
In deeper reverence, praise.

2 In simple trust like theirs who heard,
Beside the Syrian sea, The gracious calling of the Lord, Let us, like them,
without a word
Rise up and follow Thee.

3 O Sabbath rest by Galilee! O calm of hills above, Where Jesus knelt to
share with Thee
The silence of eternity, Interpreted by love.

4 With that deep hush subduing all
Our words and works that drown
The tender whisper of Thy call,
As noiseless let Thy blessing fall
As fell Thy manna down.

5 Drop Thy still dews of quietness,
Till all our strivings cease;
Take from our souls the strain and stress,
And let our ordered lives confess
The beauty of Thy peace.

6 Breathe through the heats of our desire
Thy coolness and Thy balm;
Let sense be dumb, let flesh retire;
Speak through the earthquake, wind, and fire,
O still, small voice of calm!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WqOnjmr9Ah0>

A sending out prayer:

God of peace, we pray for peace throughout the world. Send us out as
peacemakers, people who help to set things right where there is
disagreement, who try to resolve conflict. Show us the way of peace in
our own lives, and in our homes and places of learning, in our streets and
throughout our community. In Jesus' name. **Amen.**