

Worship at Home service Sunday 1st September 2024 with Revd Ian Forsyth

A call to worship:

Let us give thanks for God's Holy Word. For the Word of God in Scripture: **Thanks be to God.** For the Word of God within us: **Thanks be to God.** For the Word of God among us: **Thanks be to God. Amen.**

A gathering prayer

As we gather, may what we read be treasured in our hearts and inspire us to share God's Word in our lives, so that we may turn the written word into action in the world.

Amen.

When I Needed a Neighbour StF 256

When I needed a neighbour, were you there, were you there?

When I needed a neighbour, were you there?

And the creed and the colour and the name won't matter, were you there?

I was hungry and thirsty, were you there, were you there?

I was hungry and thirsty, were you there?

Chorus

I was cold, I was naked, were you there, were you there?

I was cold, I was naked, were you there?

Chorus

When I needed a shelter, were you there, were you there?

When I needed a shelter were you there?

Chorus

When I needed a healer, were you there, were you there?

When I needed a healer, were you there?

Chorus

Wherever you travel, I'll be there, I'll be there.

Wherever you travel, I'll be there.

And the creed and the colour

And the name won't matter,

I'll be there.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=grnEc0vhtyo>

Bible readings Psalm 15; James 1.17-27

Reflection:

This Sunday is the first Sunday of the month and the start of a new Connectional year. Revd Helen Cameron, the previous Chair of the Northampton Methodist District, is the Methodist Church President for this Connectional year.

The theme for this year is 'Praise and Protest'.

In Mary's song of praise, the 'Magnificat' (Luke 1:46-55), she thanks God for the child Jesus, who will announce God's kingdom which "brings down the powerful from their thrones and lifts up the lowly." To engage in God's mission and be part of that transformation, we believe the Methodist Church is called to become an increasingly evangelistic, inclusive and justice-seeking Church.

Following the prophet Isaiah's call, echoing through the ages to us and reflected in Mary's prayer, the 2024/2025 *Prayer Handbook* will focus on how the Church can 'learn to do right; seek justice and defend the oppressed' (Isaiah 1:17a, NIV).

At the beginning of a connectional year, it is good to reflect on the previous year, thinking of what went well and what needs to have more input, to have an impact in our Church communities in Northampton Methodist Church. I have been reminded of a chorus I sang when I was young which says, 'Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness and all these things will be added unto you. As we worship God in our buildings, we focus on Almighty God together and wherever we live in Northampton, we live and serve God in our local communities.

The key verse for us today is from James 1 verse 22 which says, 'Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says'. Are we a listening and doing people? Our faith is like a pair of scissors, for the scissors to perform their purpose, both blades need to work together when used. In the Church communities, listening and doing are the two blades that should work together as we have a desire to bless people, both inside and outside the church. Working ecumenically is vital as we build relationships and listen to one another, so that we see His Kingdom come here on earth, as it is in heaven.

In a circuit service on 31st December 2023. I asked us to consider praying for one minute a day, at a time suitable to yourselves, for example, 10:24 am in the morning. Praying together in Churches has historically proven to be what unites people in mission. Someone once said to me, 'a church that prays together stays together'. I am often asked by others what they can pray for me; my answer is patience. Psalm 34 v 11 says, 'Come my children listen to me. I will teach you the fear of the Lord'. In August, following the Southport stabbing incident, and the death of three children, Revd Helen Cameron sent out a prayer,

which I will end with today.

God of love, we pray for your Spirit of peace to move in our communities, that those who are targets of hate might be safe and that people of good will might work together in love and respect. We pray for your Spirit of healing, that those who grieve, might be comforted and those who are injured might be made well. We pray for your Spirit of hope, that those who despair might see a way ahead and those who live in fear might find sanctuary and freedom. Soften the hearts of those motivated by hate and help us all to love our neighbours as those made in your image. In Christ's name. Amen

Prayers of intercession

Loving God, we thank you for the many blessings that we have – homes, food, clothing, modern appliances, public amenities, opportunities for education, access to healthcare, and so much more.

Loving God, **hear our prayer for the 'have-nots' of this world.**

We pray for those with no homes, living as refugees, or living rough on the streets.
Loving God, **hear our prayer for the 'have-nots' of this world.**

We pray for those living in adequate housing, the shacks and the huts of shanty towns, or in bed and breakfast accommodation because there is nowhere else for them to go.
Loving God, **hear our prayer for the 'have-nots' of this world.**

We pray for those who have no food, their crops having failed, their economies burdened by debt, or their labours not fairly rewarded.
Loving God, **hear our prayer for the 'have-nots' of this world.**

We pray for those who have no fresh water, daily facing the threat of disease and the nightmare of drought, and for those who have not resources, condemned to a life of poverty with no prospect of respite, no opportunity to help themselves. Loving God, **hear our prayer for the 'have-nots' of this world.**

We pray for those who have no access to education, to the health service or welfare system, no one to turn to for help and support.
Loving God, **hear our prayer for the 'have-nots' of this world.**

Loving God, in the context of this world of ours we are the 'haves', those who have been fortunate, who enjoy plenty. Stir our hearts to respond to the 'have-nots'. Help us to be ready to say no to ourselves so that we may say yes to them; to sacrifice a little so that they may receive much.
Loving God, **hear our prayer for the 'have-nots' of this world. Amen.**

All creatures of our God and King StF 99

All creatures of our God and King,
lift up your voice and with us sing,
"Alleluia! Alleluia!"

Thou burning sun with golden beam,
thou silver moon with softer gleam,
O praise Him, O praise Him!
alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!

2 Thou rushing wind that art so strong,
ye clouds that sail in heav'n along,
O praise Him! Alleluia!
Thou rising morn, in praise rejoice,
ye lights of ev'ning, find a voice,
Chorus

3 And all ye men of tender heart,
forgiving others, take your part,
O sing ye! Alleluia!
Ye who long pain and sorrow bear,
praise God and on Him cast your care;
Chorus

4 Let all things their Creator bless,
and worship Him in humbleness;
O praise Him! Alleluia!
Praise, praise the Father, praise the Son,
and praise the Spirit, Three in One;
Chorus

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MUZD0hgtSgE>

A sending out prayer:

Go! The service is ended, but our service in the world begins. May God strengthen and encourage us as we go, to live lives of gratitude, spilling over into loving responses of joyful caring. **Amen.**