

Call to Worship

O we of mustard seeds and wheat, we of little faith and great, we come. We come to the Living Waters, to the Sun of love and light. We will drink of your ways, O GOD, and we will sow your seeds.

O, all who are of the world, come and see what GOD has grown. We come to worship you. We stand in the sunshine of your living word. We prosper in your paths, O GOD, as the lilies of your field.

Based on Psalm 29

Prayers

Loving God, we seek to follow your desire, and walk in your ways, to observe your commandment by loving God, loving self, loving others. Bless, O God, this land and all the lands of the earth. Fill the minds and hearts with your divine wisdom. As your servants may we labor for Your purposes, building, gardening, watering, reconciling, growing and seeking your peace. May we work together: Sister and brother, brother and sister, siblings in Christ. Loving God, we seek to follow your desire and walk in your ways, by observing your commandments to Love God, love self, love others. **Amen.**

Prayer of Confession:

Give us, O God, a vision of your glory, that we may worship you in spirit and in truth, and offer the praise of glad and thankful hearts; through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Let us call to mind our sins. A period of Silence follows

Lord Jesus, you came into the world to save sinners: **Lord, have mercy.**

We have brought sorrow and hurt to you, to others and to ourselves: **Christ, have mercy.**

You give yourself to heal and renew us, and to bring us strength: **Lord, have mercy.**

Know that your sins are forgiven through Jesus Christ, our Saviour, and rejoice in his goodness and grace. **Amen. Thanks be to God.**

Readings:

1 Corinthians 3: 1 – 9: -

Brothers and sisters, I could not address you as people who live by the Spirit but as people who are still worldly—mere infants in Christ. 2 I gave you milk, not solid food, for you were not yet ready for it. Indeed, you are still not ready. 3 You are still worldly. For since there is jealousy and quarreling among you, are you not worldly? Are you not acting like mere humans? 4 For when one says, "I follow Paul," and another, "I follow Apollos," are you not mere human beings? 5 What, after all, is Apollos? And what is Paul? Only servants, through whom you came to believe—as the Lord has assigned to each his task. 6 I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God has been making it grow. 7 So neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but only God, who makes things grow. 8 The one who plants and the one who waters have one purpose, and they will each be rewarded according to their own labor. 9 For we are co-workers in God's service; you are God's field, God's building.

Matthew 5: 21 – 37: -

21 "You have heard that it was said to the people long ago, 'You shall not murder,[a] and anyone who murders will be subject to judgment.' 22 But I tell you that anyone who is angry with a brother or sister[b][c] will be subject to judgment. Again, anyone who says to a brother or sister, 'Raca,'[d] is answerable to the

court. And anyone who says, 'You fool!' will be in danger of the fire of hell.²³ "Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother or sister has something against you, ²⁴ leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to them; then come and offer your gift. ²⁵ "Settle matters quickly with your adversary who is taking you to court. Do it while you are still together on the way, or your adversary may hand you over to the judge, and the judge may hand you over to the officer, and you may be thrown into prison. ²⁶ Truly I tell you, you will not get out until you have paid the last penny. ²⁷ "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall not commit adultery.'^[e] ²⁸ But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart. ²⁹ If your right eye causes you to stumble, gouge it out and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to be thrown into hell. ³⁰ And if your right hand causes you to stumble, cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to go into hell. ³¹ "It has been said, 'Anyone who divorces his wife must give her a certificate of divorce.'^[f] ³² But I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, makes her the victim of adultery, and anyone who marries a divorced woman commits adultery. ³³ "Again, you have heard that it was said to the people long ago, 'Do not break your oath, but fulfill to the Lord the vows you have made.'³⁴ But I tell you, do not swear an oath at all: either by heaven, for it is God's throne; ³⁵ or by the earth, for it is his footstool; or by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the Great King. ³⁶ And do not swear by your head, for you cannot make even one hair white or black. ³⁷ All you need to say is simply 'Yes' or 'No'; anything beyond this comes from the evil one.

Hymn: - STF 242 – A new commandment, I give unto you

1 A new commandment I give unto you: that you love one another as I have loved you, that you love one another as I have loved you. By this the world shall know that you are my disciples, if you have love one for another. By this the world shall know that you are my disciples, if you have love one for another.

Anonymous
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Sermon

Martin Luther once said "When I think of God, I think of a man hanging on a tree". I wonder when you think of God – what image comes to mind? What's your picture of God?

Wesley, on his death bed made the profound statement that: "the Best of all, God is with us". At the heart of our gospel reading this morning sits our relationship to and the presence of God on our journey of discipleship, as individuals, but also as a community of faith. "We are God's servants working together".

So, we're in the middle of the lectionary series of the Sermon on the mount, from Matthew's Gospel. This week Jesus turns his attention onto the disciples. His band of trusted followers. Indeed on us here today. The message to the disciples is that they are not learning and growing, for their own sakes, or their own action and glory. But – together, they grow in understanding of God's Law of Love, for the sake of the community around them, for the sake of the communities around us here today in Dorset South and West Circuit, for the sake of the kingdom.

Nothing we do as followers of Christ is an autonomous action. Everything we do and say has an effect on those around us, and important an effect on the community we are called to serve around this circuit. Have you ever made choices or taken decisions without thinking of how it affects those around us in the community of faith? When we only buy perfectly straight, very clean, Carrots from the supermarket. Have we thought of the farmer left with a pile of Wonky Carrots, which rot, wasted away, because they can't be sold?

Wesley coined the phrase – “We must watch over one another in Love”, because from this challenging text we are reminded that we are shaped by our actions, and of the actions of those around us. And indeed others are shaped by us. It is all well and good, knowing the Ten Commandments – if we don’t live them out, they are worthless, but if we do live authentically as a Christian community, in love, then the kingdom is grown. So we can watch over our farmers in Love, by buying Wonky Carrots and Veg – blessing them by the harvest being sold, but also authentically sharing that Gospel truth that God’s love is for ALL – even wonky Carrots. “We are Gods servants working together”.

Sometimes as leaders of our community we can make choices or take decisions as if no one is watching, no one cares or that it won’t make any difference to the lives of those in the community. But they do have impact, on us all. In a world that is sceptical about faith – when we get those decisions wrong, or we don’t think of impact, people directly link that to GOD not loving them, so why would they walk through the doors to hear about a God who doesn’t love them? When we start thinking and understanding that our actions not only reveal who we are, but also the communities of which we are a part. We begin to feel the weight of what it means to be a member of Christian community—and we should.

Remember Luther’s image of God – “A man hanging on a Tree”. The real power of this text is that in all of the responsibility of being in community, of watching over one another in love, is that being in community means that we are not alone, God is with us, we are together with each other. The disciples needed to hear this truth reiterated to them. I think we need to hear that truth told over and over again today. “The Best of all – GOD IS WITH US”. “We are Gods servants working together ”

Our world favours and rewards: Individualism, autonomy, and independence. Therefore, the message that Jesus Projects, the necessity of connectedness, community, and dependence - is not that popular in our world today, as it wasn’t in Jesus’ time either. But this passage was a sermon that was willing to tell the truth about ourselves, about discipleship, about God, and about what is really at stake – WHY? Because Jesus is Emmanuel. God With us.

When we remember that God is with us, not just that God is with me, we begin to realize we are not simply members of community but shapers of community and are shaped by community, all of which tells a critical theological truth: our God is a God of community. Of Hope, Of Peace and above all of LOVE. A Love poured out on the Cross, FOR ALL. “We are Gods servants working together ”

Finally then, how does this all relate to us here? The Methodist church, is taking to heart the theme of the 2020/21 president Revd Barbara Glasson: “My Story, Our Story, God’s Story”. This is a challenge and call, to tell people about your faith in God. To Tell people about our Faith Communities here in our circuit. And to tell people about the wonderful, endless love of God, given to us in Jesus Christ, our Lord and Saviour.

Our Reading from Paul’s Letter to the Corinthians, talks about Gardening. Community Gardening. A community garden’s success is proportionate to the willingness of people in the community investing time, energy, and resources into making and maintaining the Garden. From tilling the Soil, Planting seeds, Pulling Weeds, Fertilizing, To Harvesting the Fruit and Vegetable and flowers. Paul says that the Church Should work in the same way. “I planted, Apollos Waters, and God gave growth.”

But we are not in this task alone. God is with us. But we do have to get involved. The Church Community, like a Community Garden, only bears fruit / vegetable or flowers, as a result of the community getting stuck in and involved. Hear the Good News! We act best not from fearful conformity, but from compassionate concern and perfect love. Together, as a community of faith, because the best truth we have to share is this, God is with us. Amen.

Prayers of Intercession:

In faith let us pray to God our Father, in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ, and in the power of the Holy Spirit. God of love, we pray for the life of your Church throughout the world . . . Renew all who worship in this place that we may be a living fellowship in your Spirit and serve our neighbourhood. Your kingdom come. **Your will be done.**

God of mercy, we pray for the life of the world . . . and for those who exercise power . . . Show us how to live as members of the human family; to reject the ways of war; to bear each other's burdens and to work together for justice and peace. Your kingdom come. **Your will be done.**

God of compassion, we pray for those who are ill or anxious at home or in hospital . . . Draw near with your saving love and bring healing and hope. Your kingdom come. **Your will be done.**

God of glory, we rejoice in the communion of saints; we remember all who have faithfully lived and all who have died in Christian hope, especially we Pray for George "Andy" Andrews . . . Help us to follow their example and bring us with them into the fullness of your eternal joy. Your kingdom come. **Your will be done.**

Merciful God, you have prepared for those who love you such good things as pass our understanding; pour into our hearts such love towards you that we, loving you above all things, may obtain your promises, which exceed all that we can desire; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

The Lord's Prayer:

As Jesus taught his disciples we pray together, saying:

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.**

Blessing

Our worship has not ended, it has only just begun. For God is with us, every moment, of every day.
Go then, and offer the worship he desires, to do justice, to love kindness, And to walk humbly with him.

The Blessing of God Almighty, Father, Son and Holy Spirit,
Be with you, with those you love, and those you are called to love, now, in the name of Christ. **Amen.**