

Circuit Written Service 14th June 2026 (MHA Sunday) by Revd Steph Jenner

Call to Worship – Psalm 100

Make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the earth.

Worship the Lord with gladness; come into his presence with singing.

Know that the Lord is God.

It is he that made us, and we are his; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture.

Enter his gates with thanksgiving, and his courts with praise.

Give thanks to him, bless his name.

For the Lord is good; his steadfast love endures for ever, and his faithfulness to all generations.

Hymn StF 1

All people that on earth do dwell,

sing to the Lord with cheerful voice:

him serve with mirth, his praise forth tell;

come ye before him and rejoice.

The Lord, ye know, is God indeed;

without our aid he did us make:

we are his folk, he doth us feed;

and for his sheep he doth us take.

O enter then his gates with praise;

approach with joy his courts unto;

praise, laud, and bless his name always,

for it is seemly so to do.

For why, the Lord our God is good;

his mercy is for ever sure;

his truth at all times firmly stood,

and shall from age to age endure.

To Father, Son and Holy Ghost,

the God who heaven and earth adore,

from earth and from the angel host

be praise and glory evermore.

William Kethe

Prayers of Praise and Confession

We thank and praise you today, our awesome God: Father, Son and Spirit; Creator, Redeemer and Sustainer, for the completeness you bring to our lives and our world. For the opportunities and experiences that are given to us, the possibilities offered to us.

We praise you that whatever we need, you are there, for solace and encouragement, for strength and truth, for love and compassion. And we thank you that you are always the same, unchanging and unending, from creation to the present day and beyond.

We praise you for the places we live and go, and people we encounter there, the amazingness of the natural world and all contained therein.

We could offer our joyful praise forever and it wouldn't be long enough, so we join our adoration with that of the saints past, in our local churches, circuit and pastorates, across the world, and carry them on for future generations.

But lest we get lost in praise and adoration and forget our human reality, we also bring our prayers of confession to you today.

So we confess, loving God, that we have not always done our best, have not taken responsibility for when our words and actions hurt and harm our sisters and brothers, deliberately or carelessly. And, as we reflect on those times, we are sorry and ask your forgiveness, knowing that provided we are sincere, and have asked forgiveness from those we have wronged and have forgiven ourselves, your forgiveness will follow, and we may start again on our Christian discipleship journey. We repent and turn back to God, Father, Son and Spirit, seeking to make right what is wrong. We are assured by your word, in the living form of Jesus Christ, who taught us to pray, saying:

Lord's Prayer – please pray whichever version in whatever language you prefer

Introduction

Today is designated as MHA (Methodist Homes for the Aged) Sunday, and while we remember those who are aging, as we all are, we will be using some of their prayers from the worship material produced for this year and thinking about their theme this year of loneliness and being alone as demonstrated by the line 'the second cup', perhaps the equivalent of going the extra mile.



Hymn StF 34

O worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness,
bow down before him, his glory proclaim;
with gold of obedience and incense of
lowliness,
kneel and adore him: the Lord is his name.

Low at his feet lay your burden of carefulness,
high on his heart he will bear it for you,
comfort your sorrows, and answer your
prayerfulness,
showing the pathway your feet should pursue.

Fear not to enter his courts in the slenderness
of the poor wealth you would count as your
own;
truth in its beauty, and love in its tenderness,
these are the offerings to bring to his throne.

These, though we bring them in trembling and
fearfulness,
he will accept for the name that is dear;
mornings of joy give for evenings of
tearfulness,
trust for our trembling, and hope for our fear.

O worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness,
bow down before him, his glory proclaim;
with gold of obedience and incense of
lowliness,
kneel and adore him: the Lord is his name.

John Samuel Bewley Monsell

Reading Matthew 10: 1 – 14

10 Then Jesus summoned his twelve disciples and gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to cure every disease and every sickness. These are the names of the twelve apostles: first, Simon, also known as Peter, and his brother Andrew; James son of Zebedee, and his brother John; Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas and Matthew the tax-collector; James son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus; Simon the Cananaean, and Judas Iscariot, the one who betrayed him.

These twelve Jesus sent out with the following instructions: 'Go nowhere among the Gentiles, and enter no town of the Samaritans, but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. As you go, proclaim the good news, "The kingdom of heaven has come near." Cure the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out demons. You received without payment; give without payment. Take no gold, or silver, or copper in your belts, no bag for your journey, or two tunics, or sandals, or a staff; for labourers deserve their food. Whatever town or village you enter, find out who in it is worthy, and stay there until you leave. As you enter the house, greet it. If the house is worthy, let your peace come upon it; but if it is not worthy, let your peace return to you. If anyone will not welcome you or listen to your words, shake off the dust from your feet as you leave that house or town.

Reflection

Jesus has just told his disciples “The harvest is plentiful, but the labourers are few;’ and thus he is sending them out to do the work that he has been doing – preaching the good news and curing ‘every disease and every sickness’ to the harassed and helpless crowds.

Now it’s one thing to watch a competent, charismatic person be amazing, but it’s another thing entirely to try and replicate that for yourself, especially when you are given firm instructions about what you don’t need like money, or extras, or even a staff to help on the way. And then you are asked to do the near impossible “Cure the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out demons”. But the first thing they are asked to do is to go to their own people and tell them the Good News that the Kingdom of God is near. Now this one, while daunting, is manageable.

But, to my mind, What Jesus is saying is – go as yourself, you are enough. Whether they, or we believe it. We all know what we are capable of, we are aware, I hope, of our gifts and skills, as well as the stuff we’re not so good at, but we all have enough. We do not need to pretend to be something we are not, because pretence falls apart too easily; we do not need to boast of our capabilities, because they sometimes fail. We need to be honest about ourselves, and then we can be honest with others. We don’t need slick tricks, we must give of ourselves, who and what we are, and if that means we can heal, fantastic, if it means we can tame unwelcomed spirits, wonderful, and if it means we can leave someone better than we found them just by taking time, listening sympathetically, and staying for that extra cup of tea or coffee so that nobody thinks they are a nuisance or a waste of our time, then that is something we can all turn our hands to.

Some will not want it, they will see it as interference, leave them your peace, but be open to when they may need something. And, of course, we need help ourselves, so we should never be afraid to ask or accept it from others. We lead by example. We also know that our gifts and skills are complementary and together we can be all things to all people, if we are open and willing to explore and collaborate, so we have to watch out for those doing too much for others, and who may be suffering in themselves because of it.

We bring our time and talents to Jesus and ask him to send us to where he needs us to go, to the people who will benefit from what we can do and be with them. So my prayer for us all today is to find the community that benefits and uplifts all of us and all find our role within it. Amen.

Hymn StF 699

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.

Chorus

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.

Chorus

Prayers of Thanksgiving and Intercession (from MHA)

Creator God, we pray for all those throughout the world who feel abandoned, isolated and lonely. We ask that community may be built up in all places, that people might reach out to those that are alone and welcome them in. We look to the example set by Jesus, and ask that people of faith in all places might work together to draw all people into fellowship, putting your love into practice.

Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer

We pray for the church, here and throughout the world, giving thanks for our church family and the fellowship it gives. Help us to see those in our midst who feel alone, and to reach out to them. Help us to make your church ever more closely resemble your kingdom.

Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer

We pray for all those that are unwell at this time, at home or in hospital, and for those that care for them. We hold before you too, those whose earthly life is drawing to its close, that they may know your peace and may be surrounded by love.

Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer

We pray for those whose loneliness is rooted in bereavement, that your promise of comfort to those who mourn may be fulfilled. May their happy memories in time outweigh their grief, and may they find hope in you. We call to mind those that we have loved and see no longer, giving thanks for all they gave to our lives.

Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer

Almighty God, as we pray for fellowship and friendship for all who feel alone, inspire us anew to play our part in driving loneliness from our communities. Help us to speak out against those structures and systems that increase isolation and reduce connection. Nudge us to see those times and places where we can reach out to someone who would otherwise be alone and help us always to be mindful of those who we might fail to see.

Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer

We offer these prayers through our friend and Saviour, Jesus Christ, Amen

Hymn StF 17

With gladness we worship, rejoice as we sing,
free hearts and free voices how blessed to
bring;
the old, thankful story shall scale thine abode,
thou King of all glory, most bountiful God.

They right would we give thee – true homage
thy due,
and honour eternal, the universe through,
with all thy creation, earth, heaven and sea,
in one acclamation we celebrate thee.

Renewed by thy Spirit, redeemed by thy Son,
thy children revere thee for all thou hast done.
O Father! Returning to love and to light,
thy children are yearning to praise thee aright.

We join with the angels, and so there is given
from earth alleluia, in answer to heaven.
Amen! Be thou glorious below and above,
redeeming, victorious, and infinite Love!

George Rawson

Blessing (from MHA)

May God walk with you on your life's journey,
and send you friends to share with along the way,
and the blessing of God Almighty,
the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit
be with you all, evermore. Amen

