

Sunday May 15th 2022: Fifth Sunday of Easter and Christian Aid Week

For use by the Central Norfolk Circuit at 10.30 am or other suitable time.



Psalm set for today: Psalm 148

Hymn StF 99 H&P 329

All creatures of our God and King / lift up your voice and with us sing, alleluia, alleluia!
O burning sun with golden beam / and silver moon with softer gleam:
O praise him, O praise him, alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!



O rushing wind that is so strong / and clouds that sail in heaven along, O praise him, alleluia!
O rising morn, in praise rejoice / and lights of evening, find a voice:

Dear mother earth, who day by day / unfolds rich blessings on our way, O praise him, alleluia!
The flowers and fruits that bloom and grow / let them his glory also show:

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:

St Francis of Assisi (1182 – 1226) translated by William Henry Draper (1855 – 1933)

Gospel Reading set for today: John 13 v 31 – 35

To think about

Read the first section of John 13 so you know where today's passage comes in the story of Holy Week. Then find one word, phrase or sentence in the reading that you find difficult or challenging. And one word, phrase or sentence that you like and want to remember.

Message from a Circuit friend

What an amazing collection of writing is the book of Psalms. It covers so many emotions and different elements. About a third of the Psalms are laments but whatever difficult times the writers were going through they still praised God. Perhaps that in itself challenges us? So, what does it mean to praise God? Biblical words that could be seen as synonyms are 'bless', 'exalt', 'glorify'. Therefore, by praising God we give attention to his glory. In many ways the book of Psalms is the focal point of praise in the bible. There are, of course, many instances throughout the Bible, including many Old Testament passages, where people are praising God, but praise is exemplified in a very real way in the Book of Psalms. The whole book builds up gradually, leading up to the last 5 psalms that talk of all creatures, and all the heavens, praising God. We are called to praise God in all that we are and all that we do. Sometimes that can be difficult but, I believe, we have been given the psalms to help us, and inspire us. They were written to show us how to praise God through everything. Amazingly the more we praise God, the more we glorify God, the more we are led to serve and love God. I find it significant that in the Gospel reading for today, the verses tell of Jesus being glorified through God and with God. This immediately precedes the instruction to love one another. This is to all people, Jews and Gentiles. It tells us that Jesus modelled how to love and that we should follow that example. This shows that praising God is directly linked with giving glory to God and that is also linked with loving one another. Conversely, when we love one another we are praising God in action.

Jen Woodfin (Deacon and Minister in the Central Norfolk Methodist Circuit)

Hymn StF 242 MP 22

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 x 2

From John 13 v 34 – 35

Before prayers of Intercession – special information about the Nationality and Borders Act 2022

Many people, including the leaders of numerous charities and faith groups, campaigned against this legislation before it became law – but were unable to prevent it. The Methodists, Baptists and leaders of the United Reformed Church put out a statement on 28th April. The full thing can be read on the Methodist Church website but this is the opening paragraph:

We lament the passing of the (N and B) Bill into law. Compelled by the Biblical call to welcome the stranger, our denominations were outspoken in our criticism of the Bill, arguing that it would unjustly remove the rights and threaten the dignity of people who are in need of our nation's care and protection.

When Rev Sonia, President of Conference, was visiting us last week (see information in red below) she told us about the participation of herself, and the Vice-President, in this important campaign. It has been a significant part of their work on behalf of the Methodist Church in recent weeks.



A Christian Aid lament for refugees

God, our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble,
how long must those suffering in conflict wait for rescue?
How long must children separated from their families long for comfort?
How long must young people be denied a better future?
How long must those with psychological scars live with trauma?
How long must families risk perilous journeys at the hands of merciless traffickers?
How long must the internally displaced people of the world be forgotten?
How long will countries with plenty refuse sanctuary for the few?
How long, O God, must you wait for your children to be welcomed, shown kindness and care?
O Lord of hosts protect them, God of Jacob be their refuge. Amen.

Information about Christian Aid Week May 15th – 22nd

This year's campaign, and worship material, focusses on the situation in Zimbabwe. There is full information on the Christian Aid website as well as stories about particular people.

Please pray for Christian Aid, for the people they help all over the world, and for all those in this country who will be campaigning and fundraising this week.

Offer to God your offertory for the week, and say the Lord's Prayer...

Hymn StF 720 H&P 412 (Use the tune for StF 470 'Lord for the years')

We turn to you, O God of every nation / giver of good and origin of life;
your love is at the heart of all creation / your hurt is people's pain in war and death.
We turn to you, that we may be forgiven / for crucifying Christ on earth again;
we know that we have never wholly striven / to share with all the promise of your reign.
On all who rise on earth for right relations / we pray the light of love from hour to hour.
Grant wisdom to the leaders of the nations / the gift of carefulness to those in power.
Teach us, good Lord, to serve the need of others / help us to give and not to count the cost.
Unite us all to live as sisters, brothers / defeat our Babel with your Pentecost!

Fred Kaan (1929 - 2009) CCL no. 5365402

May the blessing of God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit be with us, and all those we love, this day and always, Amen.

Circuit News: The President of the Methodist Conference made a flying visit to our Circuit on Friday May 6th. She had asked to visit pioneering projects in the East Anglia District so we were invited to take Rev Sonia Hicks to the Hive at Great Cressingham, and the Re-planting Rural projects in Blakeney and Walsingham. She was given lunch by a small team at Swaffham. There are photos of the day on our website www.centralnorfolkmethodistcircuit.org.uk/photos.