

# Salford Methodist Circuit



**All that glistens isn't gold - 18th October 2020**  
**Jayne Allen & Rev Kim Ratcliffe**

Well Good morning everyone, to the Salford Methodist Circuit. It's lovely to be here with you. Jayne and I welcome you with open arms and warm hearts.

May the grace of God be among us,  
**May the grace of God be among us,**  
**and the peace of God be on our hearts.**  
**Amen.**

Let's come into God's presence as we sing Be Still For The Presence Of The Lord

## **Hymn: Be Still**

*Be still,  
for the presence of the Lord,  
the Holy One, is here;  
come bow before him now  
with reverence and fear:  
in him no sin is found -  
we stand on holy ground.  
Be still,  
for the presence of the Lord,  
the Holy One, is here.*

*Be still,  
for the glory of the Lord  
is shining all around;  
he burns with holy fire,  
with splendour he is crowned:  
how awesome is the sight -  
our radiant King of light!  
Be still,  
for the glory of the Lord  
is shining all around.*

*Be still,  
for the power of the Lord  
is moving in this place;  
he comes to cleanse and heal,  
to minister his grace:  
no work too hard for him -  
in faith receive from him.  
Be still,  
for the power of the Lord  
is moving in this place.*



## **Reading: Exodus 33 : 12 - 23**

*Moses said to the Lord, "See, you have said to me, 'Bring up this people'; but you have not let me know whom you will send with me. Yet you have said, 'I know you by name, and you have also found favour in my sight.' Now if I have found favour in your sight, show me your ways, so that I may know you and find favour in your sight. Consider too that this nation is your people." He said, "My presence will go with you, and I will give you rest." And he said to him, "If your presence will not go, do not carry us up from here. For how shall it be known that I have found favour in your sight, I and your people, unless you go with us? In this way, we shall be distinct, I and your people, from every people on the face of the earth." The Lord said to Moses, "I will do the very thing that you have asked; for you have found favour in my sight, and I know you by name." Moses said, "Show me your glory, I pray." And he said, "I will make all my goodness pass before you, and will proclaim before you the name, 'The Lord'; and I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy. But," he said, "you cannot see my face; for no one shall see me and live." And the Lord continued, "See, there is a place by me where you shall stand on the rock; and while my glory passes by I will put you in a cleft of the rock, and I will cover you with my hand until I have passed by; then I will take away my hand, and you shall see my back; but my face shall not be seen."*

## **Reading: Thessalonians 1 : 1 - 10**

*Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy,*

*To the church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ:*

*Grace to you and peace.*

*We always give thanks to God for all of you and mention you in our prayers, constantly remembering before our God and Father your work of faith and labour of love and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ. For we know, brothers and sisters beloved by God, that he has chosen you, because our message of the gospel came to you not in word only, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction; just as you know what kind of persons we proved to be among you for your sake. And you became imitators of us and of the Lord, for in spite of persecution you received the word with joy inspired by the Holy Spirit, so that you became an example to all the believers in Macedonia and in Achaia. For the word of the Lord has sounded forth from you not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but in every place your faith in God has become known, so that we have no need to speak about it. For the people of those regions<sup>[a]</sup> report about us what kind of welcome we had among you, and how you turned to God from idols, to serve a living and true God, and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead—Jesus, who rescues us from the wrath that is coming.*

**Let us pray:**

# Salford Methodist Circuit



As we turn our thoughts to God in prayer,  
let us give thanks that we can share in this worship together.  
Lord God, we thank you that in these moments of quiet,  
We can be still and feel your presence,  
Help us Lord to cast off the cares of our lives and this world so that we can  
reflect wholly on you.  
Let us give thanks now through our praise and prayers,  
For the witness of his son Jesus and the gift of the Holy Spirit  
To inspire and move through us.  
We confess to you now Lord that we are not perfect, we all have our faults.  
Holy Spirit may our confessions and grief for what we have done wrong, and  
what we have left undone, be taken from us.  
May our burdens be lifted from our hearts so once again we can feel your  
forgiveness for our sins.  
And know that we are loved, cherished and cared for by you Lord.  
Amen.

## **Hymn: My Jesus, My Saviour**

*My Jesus, my Saviour,  
Lord there is none like you.  
I want to praise  
the wonders of your mighty love.  
My comfort, my shelter,  
tower of refuge and strength,  
let every breath, all that I am,  
never cease to worship you.*

*Shout to the Lord all the earth, let us sing,  
power and majesty, praise to the King.  
Mountains bow down  
and the seas will roar  
at the sound of your name.  
I sing for joy at the work of your hands.  
Forever I'll love you, forever I'll stand.  
Nothing compares to the  
promise I have in you.*

## **Reading: Matthew 22 : 15 22**

*Then the Pharisees went and plotted to entrap him in what he said. So they sent their disciples to him, along with the Herodians, saying, "Teacher, we know that you are sincere, and teach the way of God in accordance with truth, and show deference to no one; for you do not regard people with partiality. Tell us, then, what you think. Is it lawful to pay taxes to the emperor, or not?" But Jesus, aware of their malice, said, "Why are you putting me to the test, you hypocrites? Show me the coin used for the tax." And they brought him a denarius. Then he said to them,*

# Salford Methodist Circuit



*"Whose head is this, and whose title?" They answered, "The emperor's." Then he said to them, "Give therefore to the emperor the things that are the emperor's, and to God the things that are God's." When they heard this, they were amazed; and they left him and went away.*

Thanks be to God for that word.

This reading led to an unusual conversation between Jayne Allen and Myself so let's hear what the conversation between us said.

**Kim:** Jayne, I'm just so happy to have this conversation with you. What's on my mind, Jayne, is I really think that you should stand for Prime Minister, I really do.

**Jayne:** I don't.

**Kim:** Do you not.

**Jayne:** No, I don't.

**Kim:** It's because you have such a lot of genuine qualities that the people need from a leader. People are looking for that, Jayne, and I think that they would get that from you, and can I explain why, the characters of your nature that I can see that would be good for this post?

**Jayne:** Ok, yes I'm intrigued...

**Kim:** Ok, Well I know you quite well now and have been your minister and I know Clare is your minister at the moment. I see you, you are compassionate, very compassionate, You understand what it means to be a part of the community, you are at the very heart of your family the very heart of it. You know what it's like to be in family. You have a natural gift of encouraging people and help them to believe in themselves to. You aren't afraid to speak out when you hear about injustice and I have heard you speaking out, you know, you're not afraid to speak your mind in a very nice way.

**Jayne:** Well that's good to hear.

**Kim:** You are such a loyal friend.

**Jayne:** I try

**Kim:** You really are, and thank you for that. You are committed, You would be willing to help anyone if you could and I know that you have done for many people in the past and you will continue to do that too. You also have that gift of bringing others along with you, you know people want to come with you on your journey. You are a committed Christian who shows your faith in our Lord by your actions as well as your words, I know that you preach the Gospel but you put that gospel into actions. In fact, I would say from how I know you that you spend a lot of time in prayer, looking only to God for your guidance despite the challenges that our society and our whole world faces in these troubled times. You, Jayne, are a perfect candidate for leading the people to a better place. Now, I'd like people to think about these questions now, as I say these to Jayne. If you do decide, Jayne, to ponder on these things and decide to offer yourself for this task, who are you going to take along with you to do the task and fulfil it? Who do you think God would send with you?

# Salford Methodist Circuit



**Jayne:** I think that's a very hard question to answer. Because the main person I'd take with me on this task would be God, because he would be the centre of it, he would be the person who I rely and depend on the most.

**Kim:** And from the words that Gordon read from Exodus this morning, Moses in Exodus said 'whom shall you send with me' you know, so you need to have other people coming with you.

**Jayne:** It's a hard one, int'it.

**Kim:** Really hard

**Jayne:** It is. I'd have to take a minister, for guidance, so Kim, pack your bags, you're coming with me. I'd have to take some friends with me as well, but maybe Jenny, my closest friend, and my other friends. And I'd better take Gordon because he'd sulk if I left him at home.

**Kim:** Yea, definitely.

**Jayne:** And I think I'd have to take our Spike as well, even though he is a nuisance.

**Kim:** He's not, he's lovely.

**Jayne:** Not when he wants to play in the middle of the night, he's not. But I think you're wrong, Kim. I think you should do this, I think that you should stand for Prime Minister. I really do.

**Kim:** Why do you think that?

**Jayne:** You always seem cool, calm and collected and I just think that you don't seem flustered, and even when you're under pressure you don't show it, you're just you, with your cheerful smile. You are very organised. You really are very organised, Kim, you have a place for everything and everything in its place.

**Kim (in her messy office):** Look at the mess of this place, I can't start another thing until I've actually completed this. Oh my goodness

**Jayne:** Kim, You know how to prioritise. Look at your church councils' agenda, you know exactly what should be in the agenda and when. You always put your family first

**Kim (in the kitchen with family):** So sorry that youse were making tea, I was supposed to make tea, but I've now got a meeting tonight so I need to get off to the meeting, I'm really, really sorry. And I meant to tell you, tomorrow and the next day here's also, I've got to be in the office so I' sorry, I've just not got the time. And Also while I'm Zooming in the office could you please ensure that Millie does not bark, I mean the last time she did it she was just too loud and it just distracted me. Right, ok, I might see youse at the weekend. Thanks , Bye.

**Jayne:** You always look smart and that goes a long way when people are looking for someone to guide them. You know that God has called you to ministry of Word and Sacrament, you answered that call, and that's a hard call to answer, and have always followed His guidance without hesitation. So Kim, who are you going to invite to go with you on this new direction in life?

**Kim:** Well, there's so many people that I could take on this new direction if I chose to go in the direction. That's such a big ask - it's such a big task let alone an ask. And I wonder who I would invite to go along with me on this task. I would invite you, of course Jayne.

**Jayne:** That's very kind.

# Salford Methodist Circuit



**Kim:** And I would invite those who have been an inspiration to me in my life journey. But those that I can trust, it's got to be people I can trust.

**Jayne:** That's important.

**Kim:** I think there could be some questions for all of us to have a wee think about, don't you?

**Jayne:** Definitely.

**Kim:** So here's a question for everybody; which one of these candidates would you like to invite to lead you? Is it the case of tossing a coin and seeing which side the coin lands on? Amen

**Jayne: Amen**

## Sermon

In Exodus, again we meet Moses in a position that he knows that he can't go any further without asking God's help. Moses says to God, "If your presence will not go, do not carry us up from here". Moses may have felt comfortable in that place that he was 'parked up' in. Moses has obviously thought seriously about the next step he has to take in his life and the lives of the people. So far the thought of getting to the promised land that glistened in his thoughts of the future for him and the people he was taking with him. But he isn't prepared to make that next step without the genuine offer from God to be with him - and them. So he wasn't expecting to simply be with him, but the people he was invited by God to lead to this promised land.

Even although he knows that God has called him, Moses has to figure things out in his own mind. You can see his wee brain whirling round and round and round. He needs to prove to the people by his actions and proof of his communication with God that God has given approval of him to be a genuine candidate to see them through to the end of the task. As we know in our lives, all that we see glistening isn't always gold, when we reach there, to that point. They say there is a pot of gold at the end of a rainbow, but I've never found one. "How shall it be known I have favour," Moses says, 'unless you go with us'? He asks God.

The people in the time of Moses were looking for the genuine article. Someone who they could rely on first of all by being open and honest as to why they should follow this human being, not only themselves as individuals but their families too, their community and their race. The people needed to put their trust in him as well as God; and oh my, did they put him to the test! They certainly did. But wasn't that what Moses did to God too? Moses put God to the test.

In Matthew it's all about taxes. Or so we are led to believe initially. But here we have again people going behind Jesus' back; they were being one thing to Jesus' face maybe seeming genuine to others in his and their presence. Jesus knew that they weren't being truthful in their approach and questions set for him by the Pharisees. These were people who today we, who know the fuller story,

# Salford Methodist Circuit



may be tempted to say, "just give it a rest, give him a break." Had Jesus not proved time and time again that they could trust Him? Surely he did. We may even say to those who were setting yet another trap for Jesus, for Him, "have we not tried and tried and tried to put Jesus down, have we not tried to deter Him from the task He says He is here to do? Can we not just simply believe that he may be the genuine Messiah, can you Not simply trust, using your own common sense and own minds to see a person as we have experienced them?"

Today there are people who are very good at questioning, questioning, questioning; setting people up to fail for their own benefit, not always for others. Just as there were people who almost made a career out of setting Jesus up to fail. Setting traps for Jesus.

They might as well have simply tossed a coin and whichever side of the coin it landed on, if it didn't suit them would then say "why not toss it again, let's keep trying, the best out of 10, eh?"

Who did Jesus look to? Did He need to have his head on a coin to be an influential leader who people would want to follow? Of course, He didn't! In Chapter 34 of Exodus, Moses was invited by God to go up the mountain. God made a new Covenant, the Ten Commandments, which Moses then brought down the mountain but only after he "was there with the Lord forty days and forty nights, in verse 28. Does that remind you of anything? After that time Moses had spent with God he shone! His face was glowing! Not a false glow that we can be promised with a fake tan – been there, done that – but the most precious glow that only, ONLY, being in the God's presence can make that happen to us; that special glow that we can have, having Jesus in our lives. Jesus never ever lost his 'glow', even he glistened even brighter the more challenges that he faced in His life. He shone through because He spent time in God's presence, he took himself away to be in God's company, he encouraged others to begin a relationship with God, those who did, didn't earn gold for following Jesus; Jesus' ways but they glistened far more than a bar of gold could ever shine. It wouldn't be gold that would make them shine, it would be following Jesus's ways.

In Thessalonians we hear:

*We always give thanks to God for all of you and mention you in our prayers, constantly remembering before our God and Father your work of faith and labour of love and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ. For we know, brothers and sisters beloved by God, that he has chosen you, because our message of the gospel came to you not in word only, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction; just as you know what kind of persons we proved to be among you for your sake. And you became imitators of us and of the Lord, for in spite of persecution you received the word with joy inspired by the Holy Spirit, so that you became an example to all believers.*

# Salford Methodist Circuit



These words from Thessalonians are words of friendship, they are words of encouragement from ordinary people to ordinary people. Yes, they were called by God, but they are still ordinary people like you and I. The people who have written all of the books in the Bible were called by God for the task they were called for. They have been called not to pump up their own chests, not to lead the people down the wrong path in life by telling lies and instilling untrust in them. Not to lead their communities, even, down the wrong path. Not to make following that person and this person, the be all and end all of their lives but to point people to God. The people who we meet and choose to be on their life journey with, the people who God has placed into our lives for whatever reason, the people who are within our communities, the people who we believe in and want to encourage in their walk of life to whatever they feel called to. We must never take over our lives so much that we place them above God, we can't place things within our lives, and place them, or make choices and place these choices about God, and what God has us to. We think of God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit, all three persons working in our lives. I met Jayne through her relationship with God and she met me through my relationship with God. There were many things we could have encouraged each other to go for leadership in but we are happy being where we are, where God has called us to be at this moment in time in our lives. We may be able to wear a rosette with 'Vote for Jayne' or 'Vote for Kim' but we wouldn't do that. Why? Because we already have made a decision in our lives to follow Jesus - not voting for Jesus but to follow him and to encourage others to follow Jesus, not matter where you stand within the community, within your families, within the world. It is in Christ alone that our hope today is found – our hope doesn't lie in the bar of gold that glistens brightly in the distance – our hope is found in Jesus, and it is in the Grace of Christ that we stand today. Amen.

## **Hymn: In Christ Alone**

*In Christ alone my hope is found,  
he is my light, my strength, my song;  
this Cornerstone, this solid Ground,  
firm through the fiercest drought and storm.  
What heights of love, what depths of peace,  
when fears are stilled, when strivings cease!  
My Comforter, my All in All,  
here in the love of Christ I stand.*

*In Christ alone! - who took on flesh,  
fullness of God in helpless babe!  
This gift of love and righteousness,  
scorned by the ones he came to save:  
till on that cross as Jesus died,  
the wrath of God was satisfied  
for every sin on him was laid;  
here in the death of Christ I live.*

# Salford Methodist Circuit



*There in the ground his body lay,  
light of the world by darkness slain:  
then bursting forth in glorious Day  
up from the grave he rose again!  
And as he stands in victory,  
sin's curse has lost its grip on me,  
for I am his and he is mine -  
bought with the precious blood of Christ.*

*No guilt in life, no fear in death,  
this is the power of Christ in me;  
from life's first cry to final breath,  
Jesus commands my destiny.  
No power of hell, no scheme of man,  
can ever pluck me from his hand;  
till he returns or calls me home,  
here in the power of Christ I'll stand!*

We're going to share our prayers of intercession now and our response this morning is when I say "Let us remember" the response is "**Here in the love of God we stand.**" So let us pray

As we stand together in the love of Christ, we now pray for the world God created.

Holy God we ask that you give us the courage to tell out your truth without fear, and to work for your kingdom with joy.

We thank you for the love and support of our brothers and sisters in Christ. And the richness this gives us in our varied lives.

May we focus wholly upon you Lord and move away from unnecessary divisions. Let us remember

**Here in the love of Christ we stand.**

As our world faces the Covid virus, we pray for the recovery of those who are fighting this virus, we give you thanks for all the medical staff and carers who are risking their own lives to care for others.

We remember those around the world working hard in the fields of sciences and research to find a cure and vaccine.

Let us remember

**Here in the love of Christ we stand.**

We pray for all the governments of our world, that they work for the good of their people and countries. That they make the right decisions for all, not just the chosen few.

We pray for peace in your world and an end to all conflicts.

# Salford Methodist Circuit



We think of the hard work done by the aid agencies such as the Red Cross, UNICEF, Save the Children to name a few who work with those displaced by war, or are suffering because of famine or natural disasters.

Let us remember

**Here in the love of Christ we stand.**

We pray for all your people Lord; we live in a world rich in diversity with so many different cultures. We pray for all those affected by illness visible or unseen. You know Lord what ails them and we ask for your loving arms to enfold them in your love.

We remember those who have died and those who have been left to mourn their passing. Grant them the comfort of your peace Lord.

Let us remember

**Here in the love of Christ we stand.**

Holy God, we give you thanks for the love you pour out to everyone one of us each moment of each day,

So, let us all remember

**Here in the love of Christ we stand.**

**Amen.**

## **Lord's Prayer**

*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.*

Our next hymn is Mayenziwe 'ntando yakho., which is a South African tune, and it's based on the words of the Lord's Prayer and the English meaning for these words are "Your will be done on earth, O Lord."

## **Hymn: Mayenziwe**

*Mayenziwe 'ntando yakho.  
Mayenziwe 'ntando yakho.  
Mayenziwe 'ntando yakho.  
Mayenziwe 'ntando yakho.*

# Salford Methodist Circuit



*Mayenziwe 'ntando yakho.*

We're now going to have our blessing, and like a few weeks ago, or a few months ago, the blessing was 'Go Peaceful' and that is what I, and Jayne, offer to you today after this service, to go peaceful in trouble times, but keep Christ at the head of your lives, in Jesu's name. Amen.

Be Still - David J. Evans

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My Jesus, My Saviour - Darlene ZschechDarlene Zschech

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In Christ Alone - Keith Getty and Stuart Townend

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Mayenziwe - Xhosa (South African) Text

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