

Salford Methodist Circuit



A Time For Words And A Time For Action – 9th May 2021
Rev Kim Ratcliffe – Christian Aid Week

Good morning and welcome to worship on 9th May 2021 in the Salford Methodist Circuit.

Today I'm using the Christian Aid materials for this service.

Our circuit fully support Christian Aid. Normally we would have various events including a Big Breakfast, Coffee Mornings, but this of course hasn't been possible this year. The service that Christian Aid have produced and we will use today for worship was written before the coronavirus pandemic and the restrictions that came along with that. Christian Aid have tried to adapt it to take this into account. We are invited also to adapt it as we wish and I thank Christian Aid for that.

Call to worship

O sing to the Lord

Sing to the Lord, all the Earth

Sing to the Lord, bless his name;

Tell of his salvation from day to day

Declare his glory among the nations

His marvelous works among all the peoples

For great is the Lord, and

Greatly to be praised.

Prayer of Approach

Come and Celebrate our common home

We gather with the family of humanity

With the mountains, islands and deserts,

We honour the glory of God in creation

With lakes, rivers and seas

We come to the source of living water

With the land, its soil and seeds and sustenance

We give thanks for God's generous provision.

With forests of great trees,

The lungs of the planets

We will sing with joy and clap our hands

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We join with the whole of creation,
Inspired by those who have gone before us
And the prophetic voices of today

**We dare to praise and pray
For another possible world.**

To the glory of God.

Amen

Hymn: God is Love: Let Heaven Adore Him. Thank you.

*God is Love: let heaven adore him;
God is Love: let earth rejoice;
let creation sing before him,
and exalt him with one voice.
He who laid the earth's foundation,
he who spread the heavens above
he who breathes through all creation,
he is Love, eternal Love.*

*God is Love: and he, enfolding
all the world in one embrace,
with unfailing grasp is holding
every child of every race.
And when human hearts are breaking
under sorrow's iron rod,
then they find that selfsame aching
deep within the heart of God.*

*God is Love: and though with blindness
sin afflicts each human soul,
God's eternal loving-kindness
holds and guides and keeps them whole.
Sin and death and hell shall never
o'er us final triumph gain;
God is Love, so Love for ever
o'er the universe must reign.*

Lord's Prayer

***Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.***

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***Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who sin against us.
Lead us not into temptation
but deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours
now and for ever.
Amen.***

Bible Reading: Psalm 96:11-13

*Let the heavens be glad,
And let the earth rejoice;
Let the sea roar, and all that fills it;
Let the field exult, and everything in it.
Then shall all the trees of the forest
Sing for joy before the Lord;
For he is coming,
For he is coming to judge the earth.
He will judge the world with righteousness,
And the peoples with his truth.*

Prayer

O God, the heavens are not glad,
The earth does not rejoice
Warming gases fill the atmosphere
Pollution turns clean air foul
Climate breakdown wreaks havoc.
The sea roars with the grief
Of all the plastic that fills it
Of the destruction of coral reef.
The fields exclaim despair
For delayed rains and prolonged drought
For species extinction on a daily basis.
No song of joy rings out from the trees of
The forest decimated by forest fires.
How long O God, how long
Until your justice comes for
All your creatures and the Earth?
In you we put our trust.
Amen.

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These words below are the words of a young person living at the sharp edge of climate change in the Philippines

"I am 19 year old Glory, from the Philippines. I live on a small island of Tabugan, Carles with my family. It's beautiful and peaceful, with fresh air, coral reefs, and fresh seafood. But it is changing. Living on an island is very challenging. I really feel the impact of climate change. My message for the world is that, we must act on the crisis of climate change. We need to be responsible. We should be concerned on protecting our surroundings because this has been created for us. We have the wisdom to know what is right and what is wrong."

We can't ignore the voices of our young people. Next year it will have been 30 years since Severn Cullis-Suzuki spoke at the 1992 Earth Summit. She spoke about the Eco condition of the world that was causing such a problem she spoke with passion. Then 20 years later she spoke with passion again about the Eco condition of the world. She spoke about "Intergenerational justice" and spoke about the most powerful tool we have is "intergenerational love" w need to work together.

As we look back at our progress, are we making any progress?. Severn was a mother of 2 boys who were aged 2 and 4 months in 2012 and she said that it would be too easy to be discouraged. But we all have a role to play in building a better world. People of every walk of life need to work together. History isn't made by those who stand silent it is made by those whose actions reflected in our intentions.

We have heard another young person, Greta Thunberg speak passionately too. In 2019 Greta told the leaders at the United Nations Conference for Climate Action in New York. "You have stolen my dreams and my childhood with your empty words," she also said, 'We are in the beginning of a mass extinction and all you can talk about is money and fairy tales of eternal economic growth - how dare you!'

We can't ignore what the young people in our families share with us as they learn about such things as recycling. We can't ignore them when they talk about the plants and the importance of bees to the planet. We can't ignore the fact that, as well as what they tell us in very simple words what they are learning in school, that they're actually bringing that learning home with them. They put it into action, "we need to put this into this bin". We hope for a better future but we need action to make the hopes we have into a good news reality for us and not only us, this includes our young people too. Good news is for all people, hope is for all people

Whether we are 100 or just beginning our life, we have a responsibility for one another and our planet. We are on this life journey together.



Hymn: Brother Sister Let me serve you

*Brother, sister, let me serve you,
let me be as Christ to you;
pray that I may have the grace
to let you be my servant too.*

*We are pilgrims on a journey,
and companions on the road;
we are here to help each other
walk the mile and bear the load.*

*I will hold the Christ-light for you
in the night-time of your fear;
I will hold my hand out to you,
speak the peace you long to hear.*

*I will weep when you are weeping;
when you laugh I'll laugh with you;
I will share your joy and sorrow
till we've seen this journey through.*

*When we sing to God in heaven
we shall find such harmony,
born of all we've known together
of Christ's love and agony.*

*Brother, sister, let me serve you,
let me be as Christ to you;
pray that I may have the grace
to let you be my servant too.*

Bible Reading: John 15:9-17

"As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love. If you keep my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commands and remain in his love. I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete. My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends. You are my friends if you do what I command. I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you. You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you so that you might

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go and bear fruit—fruit that will last—and so that whatever you ask in my name the Father will give you. This is my command: Love each other.

Message

“Just as the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. ”

When someone is crying because of the hurt and the pain that they are experiencing what do we do? There are times when we have to go through pain. Pain is a part of life. We feel pain when we fall. My father-in-law fell the other day and ‘ouch’ his wound looked very very painful. I used the ‘home assembled’ first aid kit that he had to clean the wound and carefully dress it with what he had in his first aid box. I did my best with the tool kit that I had, but I knew that I could have done better, if I had had different dressings etc, but as a quick fix it had to do. By the next day, I took round some other things to put in his box. I love my father-in-law to bits and I couldn’t get him out of my mind that evening. Any of you would have done the same. I had literally been in the area at the time to be able to act there and then. I couldn’t and I wouldn’t have ignored the phone call. When someone is hurting you do your best with the experience or resources that you have available to you, even if that means simply holding a hand gently.

We continue to cry out because of the coronavirus pandemic and we cry with our sisters and brothers, men, women and children all around the world who are suffering.

We cannot ignore the Climate Crisis and we need to support Christian Aid to continue the valuable work that they are doing. With the right support not only people but the very land that we live on, the air that we breathe, the sea that surrounds us, the rivers, the lakes, the lochs, wildlife, birds, bees, butterflies, every living creature deserves to be treated with love and with care. We need water too. I want to show you this story of Florence.

Video - Florence - Christian Aid

The Climate Crisis has been to the point where the pain is so great that we need to continue to move forward together and make a difference by loving our world as God loves it. We need to make a difference and work together by doing small things that turn into large things when we do things together. We can hear the words from people all around the world. But how many words need to be said before the words sink in and mean something to us that actually makes us act.

If we believe the words from John Chapter 15 they shout out that we need to love one another. When you love someone, you want the very best for them, even if it means you have to make sacrifices. The biggest sacrifice that Christ made for us was His life so that WE could live and live life to the fullest and best that we could and can.



There is a word called 'agape', this is a sacrificial giving and expecting nothing at all in return. When we support Christian Aid they know what resources are needed for the situations people are facing, so we're actually helping them in that way by giving our gifts of finances. We are responding to their appeal, we are giving hope to people who we have never physically met. But we do know of them. Can we ignore them?

I would like to encourage you to look at the Christian Aid website if you can. There are so many personal stories from people who had been broken. Where the earth has been so dry that there appeared to be no hope. God gives us His love freely. Can we share our love with one another across the world and make a difference to the Climate Crisis we are in? I live in hope of a world existing in the future of the little child who has just been born at this very second in our time, and this second and this second. A child born in Bethlehem over 2000 years ago gives us the hope that we can love one another, and we CAN love one another by helping one another. As God so loved the world, let the world embrace us with its beauty, let its pain be healed. Beauty CAN be brought out of brokenness.

Amen.

Prayer

Great God, who makes the sun to rise and opens the heavens.
Hear the cry of the people
People who sow in hope for rain but reap only despair.
Hear the cry of the people,
People seeking shelter from the storm,
Their homes and hopes submerged.
Hear the cry of the people,
When creation is hitting back
With rage and resistance
Give us hope, grant us salvation,
Give us a new relationship with creation
With reverence to tend this gift from you
And say once again of the earth and all you created
"it is good."
Amen

Let us think prayerfully through the words of Beauty For Brokenness. We can make a difference.



Hymn: Beauty for Brokenness

*Beauty for brokenness,
hope for despair,
Lord, in your suffering world
this is our prayer.
Bread for the children,
justice, joy, peace,
sunrise to sunset,
your kingdom increase!*

*Shelter for fragile lives,
cures for their ills,
work for all people,
trade for their skills;
land for the dispossessed,
rights for the weak,
voices to plead the cause
of those who can't speak.*

*God of the poor,
friend of the weak,
give us compassion we pray:
melt our cold hearts,
let tears fall like rain;
come, change our love
from a spark to a flame.*

*Refuge from cruel wars,
havens from fear,
cities for sanctuary,
freedoms to share.
Peace to the killing-fields,
scorched earth to green,
Christ for the bitterness,
his cross for the pain.*

*Rest for the ravaged earth,
oceans and streams
plundered and poisoned -
our future, our dreams.
Lord, end our madness,
carelessness, greed;
make us content with
the things that we need.
God of the poor...*

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*from a spark to a flame.
Lighten our darkness,
breathe on this flame
until your justice burns
brightly again;
until the nations
learn of your ways,
seek your salvation
and bring you their praise.
God of the poor...*

Let us bless each other with these words:

**May God bless us with wonder at creations glory.
May God bless us with fury at creations spoiling.
May God bless us with courage at this critical hour.
And may the blessing of God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit,
Rest upon us and on all creation,
This day and for the future to come.
Amen.**

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God Is Love - Timothy Rees

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Beauty For Brokenness - Graham Kendrick

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