



## North Kent Circuit Service - Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> June 2020

This short act of worship has been prepared for you to use whilst we are unable to use Methodist Church premises. If you are well enough why not spend a few moments with God, knowing that other people are sharing this act of worship with you.

### Opening Prayer

Lord, calm our thoughts as we come into your presence. Quench our thirst as we journey through the unbearable heat. Open our hearts to welcome you in and to receive the blessing of Jesus' love, through the power of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

### Hymn: Our God is a great big God (STF 61)

Sing/ Read /pray /proclaim the words or listen to it here

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eaXPXWBcE3I>

*Our God is a great big God  
Our God is a great big God  
Our God is a great big God  
and he holds us in his hands.*

He's higher than a skyscraper,  
and he's deeper than a submarine.  
He's wider than the universe,  
and beyond my wildest dreams.  
And he's known me and he's loved me  
since before the world began.  
How wonderful to be a part  
of God's amazing plan!

Let us pray together

Creator God, You are a great big God.  
You have known us and you have loved us.  
We praise you for the beauty of the world that  
you have made, for richness of texture, colour  
and form in nature, and for the caring  
communities around US.

Forgive us when we fail to be thankful for the  
good things in our life.

Forgive us when we fail to be kind to one  
another.

Forgive us when we fail to bear your image to  
love and be loved.

Merciful God, you are faithful and just. But  
you are also full of grace and mercy. Pardon us  
as we turn to you and repent. In and through  
Jesus, we now receive your forgiveness and  
your redeeming love. Amen.

**Today's Gospel Reading:** Matthew 10.40-42

### Time to Reflect

Today's short snippet from Matthew closes  
the block of Jesus' teaching on mission in  
Matthew's gospel. Giving the authority to  
preach God's Kingdom, to heal the sick and to  
cast out demons, the disciples are about to  
take the good news of Jesus' love into the  
wider world.

To wrap up his teaching, Jesus reminds them  
that as his followers, they are representing  
him and the one who sent him, God the  
Father. For those who receive and accept  
them, it would be as if they are welcoming  
Jesus himself into their homes.

I wonder, when someone knocks at your door  
now, what sort of a welcome will you offer? If  
the welcome is given on the basis that the one  
being received is a prophet or a righteous  
person according to the scripture, then the  
host might expect a reward. I wonder what  
kind of reward you might expect when you  
open the door?

The notion of welcome and hospitality in the  
Middle East is of high importance. The host-

guest relationship is conventional as it forms a substantial basis for support in the life of the whole community. Especially, since the weather is hot and people have to use water wells to obtain fresh water, so giving a cup of cold water to someone who knocks at your door is a very common thing. It would be like keeping a two meters distance these days!

This smallest act of charity is commonly practiced culturally regardless of one's status: prophet, righteous person or the little ones.

I believe the phrase "little ones" refers to all those disciples of Jesus who by themselves receiving the living water find themselves serving others. For each act of service is as though offered to God and will receive its reward.

Just as Jesus comes not to be served but to serve and to give His life as a ransom for many (Matt 20:28, Mark 10:45), so too are His disciple transformed to be part of the solution by serving others to witness Jesus' love and salvation to the wider world.

And all of God's servants will be rewarded, even a person who in the name of a disciple gives a cup of cold water to one of God's "little ones" - the smallest act of hospitality and courtesy possible. That being so, it creates a ripple effect of Jesus' love to restore this broken world in the most needed time.

Like the disciples, our lives should conform to the image of the Son Jesus and reflect his generous love to others. Let's give a cup of refreshing water to those who knock on your door and keep passing on this welcoming hospitality.

Take a time to sit quietly

**A time of prayer from** by Claire Hargreaves

*(Led by Trish Robb on the live-streaming service.)*

Let us pray for the church, for the world and for ourselves.

Loving God,

We pray for your guidance and wisdom as your church finds new ways of reaching out into the world with the good news of your generous love and forgiveness. Gift leaders with the innovation and inspiration that comes from your Holy Spirit so that your church may be more effective witnesses of your saving grace.

Lord Jesus, as the world continues to suffer the effects of the Coronavirus pandemic, we pray for compassion and fairness in sharing practical resources and medical expertise so that there might be healing and wholeness for all.

We pray that all those who have influence over the lives of others, might make decisions based on kindness and for the common good. We pray Holy Spirit that you infuse with love the hearts of those who use war as a weapon of power. Hear our prayers for an end to all conflict, and for recognition and support to be given to refugees and displaced people around the world.

Compassionate Christ, we pray for comfort and strength for those who are still isolated, for parents and children, for the elderly and those suffering long term illness. Lord, lift anxiety from those who are worried about the future, their jobs, businesses and their financial situation. May they know that they are not alone, that Jesus is always with them.

Holy Spirit we pray for ourselves, for our plans that have been changed, for the people we have lost and miss still, for our hopes and dreams for the future. Strengthen our faith, deepen our commitment to your ways and help us to better serve God and to see Jesus in everyone we meet.

Thank you Lord that you that your love never fails.

**The Lord's Prayer**  
*Our Father .....*

**Hymn: Beauty for Brokenness (STF 693) Listen to <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3kVHKuldZyw> or sing a verse of a hymn that comes to mind**

### **A prayer of blessing**

As you go in peace, May the love of God enfold you. May the power of God enable you. May the Kingdom of God delight you. May you be the agent of his power and love, wherever he sends you, and the blessing of God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit be with you and those whom you love, now and always. Amen.

All Hymns reproduced under CCLi 941812

### **Matthew 10.40-42**

Jesus says, 'Whoever welcomes you welcomes me, and whoever welcomes me welcomes the one who sent me.

Whoever welcomes a prophet in the name of a prophet will receive a prophet's reward;

and whoever welcomes a righteous person in the name of a righteous person will receive the reward of the righteous;

and whoever gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones in the name of a disciple—truly I tell you, none of these will lose their reward.'