



Highcliffe and Bransgore Methodist Churches

Sunday 27th September 2020, 10:30am, Revelation 22:1-7 "Creation Renewed"

Prepared by Deacon Glenda Sidding, Mr Ken Sidding and Miss Winifred George.

We come together to worship God with joy and hope that through the power of the Holy Spirit we can explore what it means to be a renewed creation. This week's worship has been written and prepared to bless you and help bring us closer together, as a physically separated fellowship, into the presence of God to worship Him in Spirit and Truth. We gather in separate places, some in our homes and others in chapel but united in love by the Holy Spirit for our Lord Jesus Christ. We encourage you to participate with us in whatever way you feel is right and proper to bring us all closer together, as a family of believers and followers of Jesus Christ.



Welcome to church this morning as we worship and praise God together.

Call to worship.

You are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special people, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. 1Peter 2v 9.

Song: In Christ alone StF351 Sing/read /pray/proclaim.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=16KYvflc2bE>

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.

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.

Keith Getty (b.1974) and Stuart Townend (b.1963)

Prayers of Adoration and Confession.

Almighty God our heavenly father, we come before you with joy to offer our thanks and praise for all the good gifts you bestow on us your children. We praise you for the beauty of your world that provides us with all that we need, to have abundant life. We glory in your creation that we see all around us and praise you that we see renewed life everywhere. We thank you that in your love for us you sent your son Jesus to be the Saviour of our world. Jesus shared our human life with all its joys and sorrows. Jesus saw possibilities in every person that he met knowing that lives could be turned around through trust in him. Jesus never turned anyone away; he brought comfort to those who were lost and alone and a future with hope. In his dying on a cross for us he took all our sin and shame upon himself and suffered the pain of death.

In a time of quiet let us confess to God our sins that separate us from him and from each other, being mindful that we live in a world that is broken by greed and selfishness.

We hear the words of grace: "Our sins are forgiven; thanks be to God".

Through God's love for us, Jesus was brought back to life from death through his resurrection. Our sins are forgiven, we are set free. We thank you God our Father for the renewed life we each receive. With the indwelling of your Holy Spirit, we pray that we may follow the pathways that you

place before us, to live in your world as faithful disciples today.

We ask these prayers through Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour. **Amen**

The Lord's Prayer.

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name,

your kingdom come, your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.

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.**

Prayer before the reading and Sermon.

Lord God as we come to hear your holy word read, and the sermon shared, we pray that our hearts and minds will be open to hear what you are saying to us today. **Amen**

Reading: Revelation 22 v 1-7 Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, as clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb down the middle of the great street of the city. On each side of the river stood the tree of life, bearing twelve crops of fruit, yielding its fruit every month. And the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations. No longer will there be any curse. The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in the city, and his servants will serve him. They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. There will be no more night.

They will not need the light of a lamp or the light of the sun, for the Lord God will

give them light. And they will reign for ever and ever.

The angel said to me, “These words are trustworthy and true. The Lord, the God who inspires the prophets, sent his angel to show his servants the things that must soon take place.”

“Look, I am coming soon! Blessed is the one who keeps the words of the prophecy written in this scroll.”

Creation Renewed. During the lockdown I have found myself watching a lot more television. One of my favourite programmes is “The Repair Shop”. People are invited to bring treasured possessions that are damaged and in a sorry state to be renewed by people with the expertise to bring them back to life. The request is that the origins of the treasured possession are left intact but that the beauty of the original creation is renewed. As I marvel at what is accomplished through the repair shop and their crafts people, there is for us a greater understanding of the word “Renewed”. The work of the creator is not destroyed but that which was damaged is renewed and given new life.

As these thoughts came to me, I was reminded that God is our creator. At this time of year, God’s creation is meeting autumnal days, fruit on the trees has ripened and is being harvested, conkers, acorns and leaves are falling and the beauty of our gardens is coming to an end. In a short while, all that has been vibrant and bursting with life and colour will be gone – not forgotten but waiting for the creator to bring renewal and new life next spring.

We have two apple trees in our garden, which we had high hopes of for a good harvest when we bought the house but last summer we had no apples from either tree. So, last January, we asked a tree expert to prune them. He pruned away all that hindered our trees from bearing fruit. This autumn we have had a wonderful harvest. The windfalls have been cut, cooked and frozen and the good apples stored for the coming winter. All this reminds me of Jesus talking to the disciples in John’s gospel.

We read from St John's Gospel chapter 15 v 1-8. “I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes so that it will be even more fruitful. You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you. Remain in me, as I also remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me.

“I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. If you do not remain in me, you are like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned. If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. This is to my Father’s glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.

This passage from John's gospel is part of Jesus teaching discourse to the disciples after the Last Supper. They were all seated around a table, Judas has left them to betray Jesus. This was Jesus last

opportunity to help his disciples glimpse what their future held.

Jesus uses the image of vines growing in a field. A common sight for them all. They would probably have watched or helped the farmer in the spring prune the vines. The branches that would not bear fruit later in the year were removed and burnt. So the image Jesus uses to illustrate what he wanted to say was not new, but helped his disciples understand what was needed to take them into the future. It was the imagery of God being a gardener and Jesus being a vine that was new. As a gardener, God cuts off every branch of the vine that will not bear fruit and these branches are then burned in a fire. Jesus then tells them that they must stay grafted into the vine, into himself, so that they remain in his love and care. Life ahead of them was going to be hard and if they were grafted into the vine, it would give the disciples strength and courage when life gets tough and they are tempted to give up and move away from the love and protection of the gardener, from God. Jesus needed the disciples to continue his work when he had left them to bear fruit. This would only happen if they were grafted into the spirit of Jesus.

As we look at these verses we are reminded that we are also God's creation. Unless we are grafted into Jesus we cannot be fruitful. We will not have the strength to be disciples, on our own, in today's world. There are too many temptations all around us that draw us away and lead us into sin. We become tarnished and broken and fall short of what God our creator asks of us. Where is our repair shop? We need the gardener to prune us from our shortcomings and sin. We are still God's creation and he

knows we can be renewed and bear much fruit.

From that Upper Room, where Jesus had shared with his disciples his inner most thoughts and concerns for his friends, he left to be flogged, tried and crucified. Many of his disciples ran away or denied knowing Jesus but they still remained in the vine, still remained grafted into Jesus. They needed to experience Jesus' death and their failures to fully understand what resurrection and new life meant, of what it was going to be like to bear fruit. Being pruned and then grafted into Jesus, they were open to be filled with the Holy Spirit. From the day of Pentecost onwards the disciples went to dangerous and hard places to spread the message that all God's creation can be renewed.

This passage from John's gospel lays the foundation for our passage from Revelation. John a servant of Jesus Christ was on the island of Patmos and he receives a revelation from an angel – a prophesy about the future. John writes down all that he experiences through the gift of the Holy Spirit sent to him by Jesus. Our verses come at the end of the book, which had been a reminder to the churches and all those who read John's words, that they must live with the future, the end time as their goal.

Chapter 22 describes how wonderful the end time, the new heaven, was going to be. The sin and strife of the world would be taken away. The very presence of God and Jesus would be there, sitting on a throne from which pure, life giving water would flow. This water was the water of life, the renewal of baptism giving life to all creation. The trees that bordered the river would bear good fruit every month,

no matter what season, and the leaves of these trees were for the healing of the nations. In the presence of God and the Lamb, all will be as it was at creation: pure and unblemished. We shall be in the presence of God. We shall see his face and walk in his light. We will be renewed as we were at our birth: a new creation. How do we get there, what will our journey be like, will we be accepted? With God as craftsman creator, all our brokenness and sin will be taken away and we will be renewed. Our lives will be grafted into Jesus. This will keep us faithful to our calling. Our journey will take us to places where we will be challenged by new people, who will ask about our faith and belief in God. How we answer depends on our renewal, our new life given to us through the Holy Spirit. Where is our ultimate journey taking us to? The places described by John in the book of Revelation? A place where we will find acceptance, forgiveness and where we are loved and free. A future, a time beyond our time, when we meet God face to face.

Our prayer is that as we are repaired and pruned, we find renewal and all that separates us from God disappears as we walk into a future with joy and love. This can only come from knowing Jesus Christ as our Lord and Saviour of our lives.

Amen. Deacon Glenda Sidding

Song: I am a new creation StF 553

Sing/read /pray/proclaim.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UI04yBONzhs&ab_channel=Squirrel24

I am a new creation,
No more in condemnation,
Here in the Grace of God I stand.
My heart is overflowing,

My love just keeps on growing,
Here in the Grace of God I stand.

*And I will Praise You, Lord,
yes I will Praise You, Lord,
and I will sing of all that You have done.
A Joy that knows no limit,
a lightness in my spirit
Here in the Grace of God I stand.*

Dave Billborough (b.1965)

Prayers of Intercession: Lord God we come to you now in a time of quiet and reflection, bringing our whole selves, our minds, our hearts, our bodies quietly into your presence, trusting and committing every part of us and all of this world's happenings to you. For your Word says in Romans Chapter 8 verse 28 – 'We know that God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to his purposes for them.'

Almighty God, Creator of all the world, we come humbly before you now as your children, created and loved by you. We are conscious that often we have not been good stewards of your earth, of the oceans, the land, the air and the wonderful diversity of plant and animal life. We are aware of the death in April and May of many elephants in Botswana due to bacteria in their drinking water, resulting from very high temperatures and of forest fires in Australia and California causing devastation to plants, animals and human lives. Also this year a larger number of tropical storms have already flooded many areas of the world.

At this time of economic disruption be with all the workers of the Charities and Aid Agencies who seek to increase public awareness of world issues/events and to bring assistance in times of difficulty.

Repair and Renew us O Lord – That we may serve you with all our hearts and souls.

In recent months, as individuals and as a nation, we have had the opportunity to re-evaluate our lifestyles, to consider our priorities and we pray that from this period of our lives we will emerge a stronger, more caring for others, for justice, for peace and for the world around us. ***Repair and renew us O Lord – That we may serve you with all our hearts and souls.***

We pray for the sick, lonely, housebound and bereaved.

Lord, be with all those who mourn loved ones and grant them your peace. Be with all those who need your healing touch today; surround them with your love.

Bless the work of staff in hospitals, clinics, the hospice movement and care homes, as they seek to ease the pain and anxiety caused by loneliness and sickness.

We pray too for those of our fellowship who are, at this time, housebound, in hospital or awaiting operations. Grant them your blessing. ***Repair and renew us O Lord – That we may serve you with all our hearts and souls.***

We pray for the church families of Highcliffe and Bransgore.

Lord, you said “I am the vine, you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit.”

May we be rich in the fruit of your Holy Spirit - love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. May we be true witnesses for you to all we meet through our speaking, our actions, and

our giving of ourselves and of our resources, of all that we are. ***Repair and renew us O Lord – That we may serve you with all our hearts and souls.***

We ask these our prayer in and through our Lord Jesus Christ and Saviour. **Amen.**

Winifred George

Song: All I once held dear StF 489

Sing/read or proclaim the words.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sotCi7StOfA&ab_channel=GrahamKendrickMusic

All I once held dear, built my life upon,
All this world reveres, and wars to own,
All I once thought gain I have counted
loss;

Spent and worthless now, compared to
this.

Knowing You, Jesus,

Knowing You, there is no greater thing.

You're my all You're the best,

You're my joy, my righteousness,

And I love You, Lord.

Now my heart's desire is to know You
more,

To be found in You and known as Yours.

To possess by faith what I could not earn,

All surpassing gift of righteousness.

Oh, to know the power of Your risen life,
And to know You in Your sufferings.

To become like You in Your death, my
Lord,

So with You to live and never die.

Graham Kendrick (b.1950)

Blessing: May God richly bless you as you journey with joy. Know the peace of Jesus as you travel in hope. May you find strength through the power of the Holy Spirit, now and for ever, **Amen**

Deacon Glenda Sidding

YouTube links are external resources and are provided to help you engage with the songs. Singing the Faith and Hymns and Psalms resources are provided under license: CCLI 178182