



Highcliffe and Bransgore **Methodist Churches**

Sunday 4th October 2020, 10:30am, Harvest Festival

Prepared by Rev'd Phillip Dixon with contributions from Diana Middleditch, Winifred George and the Methodist charity All We Can.

Today we celebrate our Harvest Festival. We join together with "All You Can" the Methodist Relief and Development organisation that works around the world to bring God's love and compassion to those who need it most.

In these days of change and new beginnings we reject the words of despair, negativity and back-biting and instead we continue to sow seeds of hope, love and faith, trusting in a harvest of stronger disciples for Jesus Christ, a stronger church, equipped to share Your love with a needful and confused world.

Opening Prayer: Heavenly Father, as we join with others this morning, help us to remember that on this day when we give thanks for Your Harvest You are with us by the presence of Your unifying Holy Spirit. Open our hearts afresh this morning to receive your love; help us to hear You speaking to us. Fill our hearts with compassion for those in need, who struggle to have enough food to live on and strengthen us to act with justice and righteousness in Jesus' name and share all that You have generously provided us with. **Amen**

God, be merciful to us and bless us;
look on us with kindness,
so that the whole world may know your will;
so that all nations may know your salvation.



May the peoples praise you, O God;
may all the peoples praise you!

May the nations be glad and sing for joy,
because you judge the peoples with justice
and guide every nation on earth.

May the peoples praise you, O God;
may all the peoples praise you!

The land has produced its harvest;
God, our God, has blessed us.
God has blessed us;
may all people everywhere honour him.

Psalm 67 Good News Version

Hymn: StF 123 Come ye thankful people come Sing/read /pray/proclaim the words.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AyNifgg5tjw&feature=youtu.be&ab_channel=ChurchesTeamAllWeCan

Come, ye thankful people, come,
raise the song of harvest home;
all is safely gathered in,
ere the winter storms begin.
God our Maker doth provide
for our wants to be supplied;
come to God's own temple, come,
raise the song of harvest home.

All the world is God's own field,
fruit as praise to God we yield;
wheat and tares together sown
are to joy or sorrow grown;
first the blade and then the ear,
then the full corn shall appear;
Lord of harvest, grant that we
wholesome grain and pure may be.

For the Lord our God shall come,
and shall take the harvest home;
from the field shall in that day
all offenses purge away,
giving angels charge at last
in the fire the tares to cast;
but the fruitful ears to store
in the garner evermore.

Even so, Lord, quickly come,
bring thy final harvest home;
gather thou thy people in,
free from sorrow, free from sin,
there, forever purified,
in thy presence to abide;
come, with all thine angels, come,
raise the glorious harvest home.

Henry Alford (1810-1871) adapted by Compilers of Hymns for
Today's Church

Prayer of confession:

We confess our sin, and the sins of our
society, in the misuse of God's creation.

God our Father, we are sorry for the times
when we have used your gifts carelessly
and acted ungratefully.

Hear our prayer, and in your mercy:
forgive us and help us.

We enjoy the fruits of the harvest, but
sometimes forget that you have given
them to us. Father, in your mercy:
forgive us and help us.

We belong to a people who are full and
satisfied but ignore the cry of the hungry.
Father, in your mercy:
forgive us and help us.

We are thoughtless, and do not care
enough for the world you have made.
Father, in your mercy:
forgive us and help us.

We store up goods for ourselves alone, as
if there were no God and no heaven.
Father, in your mercy:
forgive us and help us. Amen

*A time of silence to hear what God may be
saying to us.*

The almighty and merciful Lord grant us
pardon and forgive us all of our sins, time
for the amendment of our lives and the
grace and strength of the Holy Spirit.

Amen Prayer of confession and absolution from Common
Worship. Services and prayers for the Church of England.

We pray together our 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.**

Hymn: StF 20 Be still for the presence of the Lord Sing/read /pray/proclaim the words. youtu.be/fUp8sNYYjx0

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.

David J Evans (b.1957)

A message and prayer for the work of All We Can:

Hello Everybody!

It is the time of Harvest, the time when as a Church Family we think especially of the work of All We Can, formerly known as the Methodist Relief and Development Fund. Particularly this year we think of their project for Harvest 'Change begins with a bicycle'.

A bicycle represents so much more than a mode of transport. It allows young people to travel safely to school to access education. It provides families with the means to travel to market to buy and sell produce. It provides transportation to access health care. A bicycle provides a way to break the cycle of poverty.

For Nawalat a young Ugandan girl a bicycle has halved her travel time to school. She now completes her daily chores and gets to school on time every day. Chemistry is her favourite subject and she hopes to become a nurse.

All We Can will be grateful for any financial support you can give to aid its Harvest Project; its response to humanitarian emergencies; its engagement in global education and its work in partnership with talented local organisations rooted in the World's poorest communities.

Let us pray:

Dear God our Father at this time of Harvest when we celebrate your bountiful gifts to us, we think of the areas of the world where many people live in poverty, where natural and man-made disasters have caused great need and suffering. We think of the charities which seek to alleviate distress and improve people's lives and especially of All We Can and their partner agencies. We ask your blessing on their work, on all their staff and on the people they seek to help. We ask this in the name of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. **Amen**

Contributed by Win George

Preparation for the reading and preaching of scripture:

Lord, prepare our hearts like fertile soil for the reading of your Word. Speak to us through the readings and the preaching of the word and enable us to be not just hearers, but doers of the Word which leads to life.

Old Testament Reading: Psalm 112

Praise the Lord.

Blessed are those who fear the Lord,
who find great delight in his commands.

Their children will be mighty in the land;
the generation of the upright will be blessed.

Wealth and riches are in their houses,
and their righteousness endures for ever.

Even in darkness light dawns for the upright,

for those who are gracious and
compassionate and righteous.

Good will come to those who are
generous and lend freely,

who conduct their affairs with justice.

Surely the righteous will never be shaken;
they will be remembered for ever.

They will have no fear of bad news;
their hearts are steadfast, trusting in
the Lord.

Their hearts are secure, they will have no
fear;

in the end they will look in triumph on
their foes.

They have freely scattered their gifts to
the poor,

their righteousness endures for ever;
their horn will be lifted high in honour.

The wicked will see and be vexed,
they will gnash their teeth and waste
away; the longings of the wicked will

come to nothing. New International Version - UK
(NIVUK)

Gospel Reading: John 6: 1-15

Some time after this, Jesus crossed to the far shore of the Sea of Galilee (that is, the Sea of Tiberias), ² and a great crowd of people followed him because they saw the signs he had performed by healing those who were ill. ³ Then Jesus went up on a mountainside and sat down with his disciples. ⁴ The Jewish Passover Festival was near.

⁵ When Jesus looked up and saw a great crowd coming towards him, he said to Philip, 'Where shall we buy bread for these people to eat?' ⁶ He asked this only to test him, for he already had in mind what he was going to do.

⁷ Philip answered him, 'It would take more than half a year's wages to buy enough bread for each one to have a bite!'

⁸ Another of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, spoke up, ⁹ 'Here is a boy with five small barley loaves and two small fish, but how far will they go among so many?'

¹⁰ Jesus said, 'Make the people sit down.' There was plenty of grass in that place, and they sat down (about five thousand men were there). ¹¹ Jesus then took the loaves, gave thanks, and distributed to those who were seated as much as they wanted. He did the same with the fish.

¹² When they had all had enough to eat, he said to his disciples, 'Gather the pieces that are left over. Let nothing be wasted.' ¹³ So they gathered them and filled twelve baskets with the pieces of the five barley loaves left over by those who had eaten.

¹⁴ After the people saw the sign Jesus performed, they began to say, 'Surely this is the Prophet who is to come into the world.' ¹⁵ Jesus, knowing that they intended to come and make him king by force, withdrew again to a mountain by himself. New International Version - UK (NIVUK)

A time to pause, read again, pray, and reflect.

Preaching notes: Nawalat, a young girl from Uganda, travels 10 km each way to school every day.

The journey is long, dangerous and prevents her from fulfilling her potential. For Nawalat, change begins with a bicycle. Suddenly there is an opportunity the ordinary can become extraordinary. Now she is able to travel the distance in half the time and is chasing her dream of becoming a nurse.

What does this have to do with Harvest, Bicycles and food don't really go together but there is a link. A bicycle can change a person's life, give them more opportunities, and consequently enable them to provide food and shelter for themselves and their loved ones.

God provides so much and we as God's people need to share what we have be it money, food, talents or skills

Last week we found out about Glenda and Ken's apple trees. One year the two trees did not produce one apple but the next year, a bumper crop – so what was the difference – skills, knowledge from a Knowing how to prune the tree.

Our reading today from John is titled The Feeding of the Five Thousand. The central message is about thinking of others. Thinking of what others need.

There are times in your life when you just want to be on your own. Left in peace with your own thoughts and worries, it might be after the death of a loved one, losing a job, moving from a home you loved. You just want to be still but your quiet space is then invaded by lots of people, that quiet hillside is covered in cheerful hikers. This would probably make you feel a bit fed up even annoyed. Jesus was in that very situation he was looking for peace and quiet he had just lost his cousin John and thought he would slip away somewhere, but the crowds discovered him. Unlike you and I he does not try to avoid the crowds he doesn't try and send them away. Jesus turns his own feelings into love for those in need. Nawalat needs a bicycle, on this hill the crowd needed feeding. There are thousands of them how on earth can that be achieved?? When the disciples come up with ideas of how to provide for the needs of the people Jesus is delighted but as he often does Jesus turns this around and tells them if they really care for the people then feed them. Not the answer the disciples were expecting. They thought the crowds should go and get their own food and not hang around getting hungry here, miles from anywhere. So now they are faced with an impossible task, they protest, but I can't do that, I haven't the ability. All I have is.....

We often feel what we have is totally inadequate but with God's blessing we can achieve so much.

As on that hillside Jesus takes what we offer no matter how small and gives it back for us to pass it on to everyone else. Jesus takes what we offer, gives it back to us to give to those who need it. It is part

of genuine Christian service, at whatever level. God has done amazing things with the bits and pieces we dug out of our meagre resources to offer to him. Within Matthew's story there is much going on. Perhaps the twelve baskets left over resemble the twelve tribes of Israel that may point to Jesus intention to restore God's people. Perhaps the feeding of the people fits in with Jesus as the new Moses and God providing manna from heaven to the Israelites when they were in the desert. I am sure Matthew was well aware of the links.

To recap,
In this story, Jesus shows us how extraordinary things can happen. A small boy is brought before Jesus who has five small loaves and two small fish, plenty for a small boy's lunch but not the gathered crowd. Jesus uses this ordinary boy and his ordinary lunch to do something extraordinary. Not only does he provide enough food for the gathered crowd but he also has an abundance of leftovers. Today we walk in the footsteps of this young boy. We have brought our gifts of food to Jesus to be used in our local food bank. We have brought ordinary tins, and packets of food which will do an extraordinary amount of good. It is in Jesus Christ that the ordinary will be made extraordinary. God takes ordinary people and uses them for extraordinary things.

So, when we look at something as every day and ordinary as a bike we can look at it through the lens of Jesus. How much more is this bike capable of? What can it do for the one who it belongs to? For Nawalat, the young girl in Uganda, this ordinary bike will allow her to pursue her

dream of becoming a nurse. It will allow her family to gain some financial security. It will have an extraordinary impact on her life.

Change begins with a bicycle for Nawalat. Change begins for us when we bring our offering to God and our willingness to give him ourselves.

What ordinary gift are you bringing today which will be made extraordinary?

Diana Middleditch

Prayers of Intercession: *Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.*

(Philippians 4:6-7 NIV)

Lord we bring You the hungry of the world, that Your earth's abundant resources can be shared fairly with all and that selfishness, waste and greed will be overcome. We pray for every hungry child, that they will be fed and for that abundance which You have blessed us with, to share them with agencies such as All We Can who can be ones who do the essential work in places such as Uganda and with children such as Nawalat.

We pray that those regimes who do not care for their people and instead spend money on weapons or follies of their own arrogance will be brought low and face justice. Bring justice Lord, bless the relief workers and help us to be well informed about these matters

Lord for our own country and our own area, children and families are facing financial hardship which result in choices being made about eating or paying bills,

help us Lord to act decisively and lovingly to serve them.

We pray for our Government, local and national leaders and those with influence to exercise Godly wisdom and integrity as they make difficult decisions about safeguarding health and the economy.

Bless the young people who are away from home at university for the first time in very challenging situations, feeling isolation or loneliness, surround them Lord with Your peace and help them to make good decisions amongst the newness of their study, the new environment and people they are living in and negative talk of their future opportunities being limited.

We pray for our Health Service as they work hard to arrange operations for new joints or for cancer or other essential treatments whilst preparing for any upsurge in virus cases.

Loving and merciful God, we bring to you those who we know are suffering the pain of illness, those awaiting operations and those recovering from surgery. Be with them Lord in their times of trouble and pain and give them your peace.

For those of our fellowship who are caring and supporting family members who are sick, surround them with Your love Lord and give them the strength to preserve and provide encouragement particularly during times of frustration and tiredness.

For our family members who do not know You yet Lord; brothers, sisters, wives, husbands, children, parents, we bring them all to You in name and ask that You soften their hearts and put believers in their path who they will listen to and who will tell them the truth of Your love and

desire for them to know You as their Saviour.

We pray for the unity of believers in You Lord, may we be truly all one through the power of Your Holy Spirit in love and harmony.

We bring these prayers in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. **Amen**

Hymn: StF 82 How great Thou art.

Sing/read /pray/proclaim the words.

youtu.be/V64dK_OO_m8

O Lord my God, when I in awesome wonder
Consider all the worlds Thy hands have made
I see the stars, I hear the rolling thunder
Thy power throughout the universe displayed.

Then sings my soul, my Saviour God, to Thee

How great Thou art, how great Thou art

Then sings my soul, my Saviour God, to Thee

How great Thou art, how great Thou art!

When through the woods, and forest glades I wander
And hear the birds sing sweetly in the trees
When I look down, from lofty mountain grandeur
And see the brook, and feel the gentle breeze.

Then sings my soul, my Saviour God, to Thee

How great Thou art, how great Thou art

Then sings my soul, my Saviour God, to

Thee

How great Thou art, how great Thou art!

And when I think, that God, His Son not sparing

Sent Him to die, I scarce can take it in

That on the Cross, my burden gladly bearing

He bled and died to take away my sin

Then sings my soul, my Saviour God, to Thee

How great Thou art, how great Thou art

Then sings my soul, my Saviour God, to Thee

How great Thou art, how great Thou art!

When Christ shall come, with shout of acclamation

And take me home, what joy shall fill my heart

Then I shall bow, in humble adoration

And then proclaim: "My God, how great Thou art!"

Then sings my soul, my Saviour God, to Thee

How great Thou art, how great Thou art

Then sings my soul, my Saviour God, to Thee

How great Thou art, how great Thou art!

Stuart K. Hine (1899-1989) vv. 12,2,4 based on O store Gud 1885 by Carl Gustaf Boberg (1859-1940)

Blessing:

Filled to the brim with the goodness of God, the nourishment of Jesus Christ, the Bread of Life, and the power of the Holy Spirit.

Go now in peace to serve God in all that you think, do and say and share all that God has given you. May God's peace always be with you now and always.

Amen. Contributed by Nancy Townley ministrymatters.com

Giving to All We Can: Online:

All We Can has served the most marginalised on earth for the last eight decades – since a group of Methodists answered the call of refugees in Europe, in the 1930s. Our story is about the inherent value and potential in all people. Whether children fleeing tyranny; communities facing extreme poverty, or families hit by disaster, we answer through partnering with local innovators, projects and churches to unleash potential.

We work with the very poorest communities, and have developed a reputation for doing development differently: pioneering sustainable, locally-owned solutions in response to John Wesley's call to, 'Do all the good you can, by all the means you can, in all the ways you can, in all the places you can, at all the times you can, to all the people you can, as long as ever you can.'

You can contact one of our friendly Supporter Care team by calling 020 7467 5132 or emailing info@allwecan.org.uk.

If you wish, you can choose to donate over the phone or post cheques to All We Can, 25 Marylebone Road, London, NW1 5JR, UK.



Until we meet again, God bless. Phillip
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phillip.dixon@methodist.org.uk 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