



Highcliffe and Bransgore Methodist Churches

Sunday 28th February 2021 Second Sunday of Lent
Mrs Christine Stuckey: "Encounters with Jesus – The
Wedding Guests" John 2: 1-12.

Lent is the season in which we focus our eyes and hearts explicitly on the cross of Christ. Our self-sacrifices serve no purpose unless, by laying aside our desires, we are able to fulfil our heart's deepest longing, for our lives to be in unity with His. In these weeks leading to Jerusalem, the crucifixion and the joyous fulfilment of resurrection we continue to use John's gospel to meet those who He met, people whose lives were changed forever by their encounter with Him – this week it is the wedding in Cana.

Opening words: In your unfailing love you will lead the people you have redeemed.
In your strength you will guide them to your holy dwelling.

Exodus 15:13 NIV(UK)

Opening Song Name of all majesty SoF 939

Sing/read/pray/proclaim words.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OUeNwAVMHEA&ab_channel=ChetValleyChurches

Name of all majesty,
fathomless mystery,
King of the ages
by angels adored;
power and authority,
splendour and dignity,
bow to his mastery,
Jesus is Lord!

Child of our destiny,
God from eternity,
love of the Father
on sinners outpoured;
see now what God has done
sending his only Son,
Christ the beloved One,
Jesus is Lord!



Saviour of Calvary,
costliest victory,
darkness defeated
and Eden restored;
born as a man to die,
nailed to a cross on high,
cold in the grave to lie,
Jesus is Lord!

Source of all sovereignty,
light, immortality,
life everlasting
and heaven assured;
so with the ransomed, we
praise him eternally,
Christ in his majesty,
Jesus is Lord! Timothy Dudley-Smith (b 1926)

Collect for the second Sunday of Lent:

Christ, Son of the living God who for a season laid aside the divine glory and learned obedience through suffering: teach each of us in all of our afflictions to raise our eyes to the place of mercy and to find in You peace and deliverance.

We make our prayer in your holy name. **Amen**
Methodist Worship Book

Prayer of Confession:

Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord. Acts 3:18.

God of all grace, we confess that we have too often elevated the things of this world above You. We have made idols of causes, possessions and people and used Your name for our own purposes or projects without seeking Your perfect will.

Lord, Forgive, Refresh and Renew us.

Creator God we have permitted our schedules to come first and have not taken the time to worship You. We have participated in systems that do not respect the life You give and the perfect world You created. We have yearned for, coveted and sometimes taken, that which is not ours and our pride has set us at odds with our brothers and sisters.

Lord, Forgive, Refresh and renew us.

Compassionate God, for the times when we have misrepresented You or have not gently yet resolutely contended for You. For the many ways that we fall short of your glory. Help us to learn to live together in unity according to Your teachings and ways.

Lord, Forgive, Refresh and renew us.

Through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Amen.

In the silence we listen to what God may be saying to us. We give thanks that Jesus came, suffered, died and rose again to offer us a new and redeemed life.

Thank you Lord for the assurance of Your forgiveness for sin and the refreshment that comes to us by accepting You, picking up our cross and following You. Help us by the power of Your Spirit, in this season of Lent, to follow You in everything that we do. In the name of Jesus Christ, our Saviour. **Amen.** Phillip Dixon/Faithward

Song: King of Kings

Sing/read /pray/ proclaim the words.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Of5lcFWiEp&ab_channel=HillsongWorship

In the darkness we were waiting
Without hope, without light
'Til from Heaven You came running
There was mercy in Your eyes
To fulfil the law and prophets
To a virgin came the word
From a throne of endless glory
To a cradle in the dirt.

*Praise the Father, praise the Son
Praise the Spirit, three in one
God of glory, Majesty
Praise forever to the King of Kings.*

To reveal the kingdom coming
And to reconcile the lost
To redeem the whole creation
You did not despise the cross
For even in your suffering
You saw to the other side
Knowing this was our salvation
Jesus for our sake you died.

Praise the Father...

And the morning that You rose
All of Heaven held its breath
'Til that stone was moved for good
For the Lamb had conquered death
And the dead rose from their tombs
And the angels stood in awe
For the souls of all who'd come
To the Father are restored.

And the church of Christ was born
Then the Spirit lit the flame
Now this gospel truth of old
Shall not kneel, shall not faint
By His blood and in His name
In His freedom I am free
For the love of Jesus Christ
Who has resurrected me.

Praise the Father...

Geoff Bullock/Hillsong

World Day of Prayer:

Friday 5th March is the day set aside for the World Day of Prayer. This year the date to hold this service physically has been put back but it is intended to celebrate the World Day of Prayer later in the year in a very special way.

The origins of World Day of Prayer date back to the 19th century when Christian women in the USA and Canada initiated a variety of cooperative activities in support of women's involvement in mission, at home and abroad. It is from such roots as these that WDP has taken its present shape – a worldwide ecumenical movement undertaking "Informed Prayer and Prayerful Action." It is truly ecumenical and has a rich tradition of involving different nations to lead the event each year.

This year the archipelago of Vanuatu, comprising 80 islands within Oceania in the South Pacific has written the resources. Their theme verse is from Matthew 7 "Build on a firm foundation" and is very appropriate for these times. Some people will have turned to prayer for the first time because of the pandemic; or returned their thoughts to God in these difficult times. The connections that we all create through our prayers for one another is building a strong foundation for the days ahead. The World Day of Prayer is celebrated in 170 countries, linking different languages, cultures and economies through prayer for our hopes, cares and concerns for the whole world. Each service ends with the well-loved hymn, "The Day Thou Gavest Lord Is Ended" . As John Ellerton wrote in 1870:

*The voice of prayer is never silent,
Nor dies the strain of praise away.*

A Prayer for Vanuatu 2021

Holy God, Creator of the heavens and the earth and all that is in them. We join with the Christian women of Vanuatu in praise to you for fertile land and fresh air, for the sweet melody of the birds, for land animals and the mysterious creatures of the deep and for the sounds of children playing.

We thank you for the example of the Christian women of Vanuatu for their trust in you and for their fortitude as they struggle to provide food for their families and education for their children, things that we so often take for granted.

We pray that you will help us to listen more carefully to you and to your Word to build our homes and communities on its strong foundations and to work together towards a world where resources are used more sustainably; where mercy, justice and peace reign; and where all your creatures can live in safety and harmony. We pray in the name of Jesus

Amen. Contributed by Judith Allebon, prayer written by Elizabeth Burroughs www.wdp.org.uk

Our Lord's Prayer (the Christian family prayer):

Our Father in Heaven,
Hallowed be Your name.
Your Kingdom come,
Your will be done,
on earth as it is in Heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our sins,
as we forgive those who sin against us.
Lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For Yours is the Kingdom and the power
and the glory forever. **Amen.**

Prayer: Lord, prepare our hearts like fertile soil for the reading of Your Word. Help us to understand the meaning of what You are saying to us through this passage from John's gospel and the message You have given Christine in her preaching notes and the video. May Your Holy Spirit, who inspired these words, come to us now in power and truth. **Amen**

Scripture Reading: John 2: 1-12

On the third day a wedding took place at Cana in Galilee. Jesus' mother was there, ² and Jesus and his disciples had also been invited to the wedding. ³ When the wine was gone, Jesus' mother said to him, 'They have no more wine.'

⁴ ‘Woman, why do you involve me?’ Jesus replied. ‘My hour has not yet come.’

⁵ His mother said to the servants, ‘Do whatever he tells you.’

⁶ Nearby stood six stone water jars, the kind used by the Jews for ceremonial washing, each holding from eighty to a hundred and twenty litres.

⁷ Jesus said to the servants, ‘Fill the jars with water’; so they filled them to the brim.

⁸ Then he told them, ‘Now draw some out and take it to the master of the banquet.’

They did so, ⁹ and the master of the banquet tasted the water that had been turned into wine. He did not realise where it had come from, though the servants who had drawn the water knew. Then he called the bridegroom aside ¹⁰ and said, ‘Everyone brings out the choice wine first and then the cheaper wine after the guests have had too much to drink; but you have saved the best till now.’

¹¹ What Jesus did here in Cana of Galilee was the first of the signs through which he revealed his glory; and his disciples believed in him.

¹² After this he went down to Capernaum with his mother and brothers and his disciples. There they stayed for a few days.

New International Version UK edition

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

Preaching Notes: *these notes are a supplement to the weekly video which can be viewed on our YouTube channel.*

This miracle of Jesus only appears in John’s gospel; there is no reference to it in either Matthew Mark or Luke. The opening chapters of the Gospel are all about the water and new life. In chapter 1 we have Jesus’ baptism; then the water turned into wine; then Nicodemus born of water and Spirit; the Samaritan woman experiencing living water and the man healed at the Pool of Bethzatha. Each of these accounts are about Spirit and transformation.

John calls the miracles of Jesus “signs”. They point beyond themselves to Jesus and his significance. A faith based on miracles is not enough. Signs and miracles prompt us to ask the question, “who are you, Jesus?”

Jesus has just called the first disciples to follow him. You would think that he would have taken them away somewhere and given them spiritual and intellectual guidance about their important role. Instead of giving them a study day or getting them to prepare for their new way of life he takes them to a magnificent celebration, a wedding feast in Cana of Galilee! That’s where they begin their journey of faith!

All is going well. The guests are dancing and revelling in the occasion. Jesus and the disciples are enjoying themselves when there is a catastrophe. The wine runs out. The host would be horrified, this would reflect badly on him and would make it seem as if he stinted on generosity. Wedding guests in the East are expected to be well fed and supplied with wine to drink. A wedding celebration could last for up to a week! Often, if people were poor, it would mean scrimping and saving for years to provide for a daughter’s wedding. It would be a disgrace and the talk of the town if there was insufficient food and drink for all the guests. With Mary’s intervention involving Jesus, there will be no recriminations on the host.

I have always puzzled over the hard response of Jesus to Mary. The use of the word ‘Woman’ seems very abrupt to us but apparently the use of ‘woman’ in Greek culture was one of regard, almost equivalent to ‘my lady’. The only other time Jesus addresses her in this manner is when he is on the cross, when he says, ‘Woman, behold your son’ (19.26) handing her into John’s care. Mary Magdalene is similarly addressed in the garden on resurrection day (20.13).

It must have been a bit of a shock to Mary when Jesus at first seems unwilling to get involved in the problem. But then it’s as if behind his apparent reluctance to act she can detect the possibility of positive action. Some commentators

have interpreted the response of Jesus by saying that now he has started his ministry, he has to have a different relationship with his Mother. No longer will she be the controlling influence in his life. Now Jesus is answerable only to God his Father. It's hard for any mother to realise her child has grown up and becoming independent. I remember when Martin, my eldest son went to university. It was hard to see him go and I missed him terribly. But I realised he needed to fly the nest and develop his own life. Then comes the possibility of a new adult relationship.

Jesus tells the servants to fill 6 huge stone jars with water jars used for ritual purification which would hold over 100 litres.

For the Jews, seven is the perfect number. Six is therefore imperfect. The stone jars, we are told, are for 'Jewish rites of purification'. The whole of chapter 2, which also includes the cleansing of the temple, is saying that the old religion of the Jews is far from perfect. It is a religion which is watered down. It needs sorting out. It has no vitality. It does not have the Spirit's power to transform.

The steward's response is to say to the bridegroom 'you have kept the good wine until now'. Just a few verses before which conclude chapter one Nathaniel is told 'you will see greater things than these'. 'You ain't seen nothing yet!'

This passage is saying 'the process of transformation has started, join in the celebration.' When we encounter Jesus there is always more to receive from him. He gives us more than enough. In this case 120 gallons of Spirit!

There is no end to his grace or of the blessings he wishes to bestow on us. Jesus changes what is ordinary into something full of life and exuberance. As Charles Wesley writes,

*'Still for more on Thee we call.
Though who fillest all in all.'*

Amen.

Written by Local Preacher Christine Stuckey.

Repentance is more than just saying "sorry."

The Pilgrims Progress has had a profound influence on many Christians over the years. The following excerpt relates to the issue of repentance. The means of "turning back" to God.

"Then he took him by the hand and led him into a very large parlour that was full of dust, because never swept; the which after he had reviewed a little while, the Interpreter called for a man to sweep. Now when he began to sweep, the dust began so abundantly to fly about, that Christian had almost therewith been choked. Then said the Interpreter to a Damsel that stood by, bring hither Water, and sprinkle the room; the which when she had done, it was swept and cleansed with pleasure. Then said Christian, "What means this?" The Interpreter answered, "This parlour is the heart of a man that was never sanctified by the sweet Grace of the Gospel: The dust is his Original Sin, and inward Corruptions that have defiled the whole man. He that began to sweep at first, is the Law; but she that brought Water, and did sprinkle it, is the Gospel. Now, whereas you saw that so soon as the first began to sweep, the dust did fly about, that the room by him could not be cleansed, but that you were almost choked therewith; this is to show you, that the Law, instead of cleansing the heart (by its working) from Sin, does revive, put strength into, and increase it in the soul, even as it does discover and forbid it, for it does not give Power to subdue. Again, as you saw the Damsel sprinkle the room with Water, upon which it was cleansed with pleasure; this is to show you, that when the Gospel comes in, the sweet and precious influences thereof to the heart, then, I say, even as you saw the Damsel lay the dust by sprinkling the floor with Water, so is Sin vanquished and subdued, and the soul made clean, through the Faith of it, and consequently fit for the King of Glory to inhabit." John Bunyan, contributed by Phillip Dixon.

For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast (Ephesians 2:8-9).

Prayers of Intercession:

Lord God now, quietly and reverently, as we gather together in worship and think about the theme, 'Encounters with you, Jesus' grant that we may fully meet you for the first time or renew and strengthen our commitment to walk with and love and serve you.

Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer.

We are reminded that you are with us in times of celebration and of sorrow by your presence at the wedding feast and by your concern for Mary and Martha at the death of their brother Lazarus. May our birthdays and anniversary celebrations, although celebrated on a smaller scale, still be times of joy and gladness.

But most of all we humbly ask that you wrap your loving arms around all, those known to us and those known only to you, who grieve the loss from this earthly life of family and friends who have died in recent days and months.

Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer.

At Nazareth you worked as a carpenter and we ask your blessing on all those who have worked ceaselessly in the medical and social care professions to care for the elderly and the sick in mind and body.

Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer.

Guard, protect and hold Lord all those in all the other sectors of the economy who are working to provide goods and services for their communities.

Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer.

Lord, you know how difficult life has been for everyone in recent months and we give thanks for the care and concern for others which has been demonstrated by so many. We ask that your love and care may encompass those who are struggling, financially, mentally or physically.

Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer.

We bring to you now the worries, concerns and prayers for others and ourselves which lie on our hearts and minds at this time.

Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer.

We acknowledge our need for and our commitment to you in the words of Annie Sherwood Hawks (StF 467).

I need thee every hour; teach me thy will, and thy rich promises in me fulfil: I need thee, O I need thee, every hour I need thee; O bless me now, my Saviour; I come to thee. Amen Contributed by Win George.

Closing Song: O for a thousand tongues StF 364

Sing/read or proclaim the words.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X-dEfvz6Vms&ab_channel=mkariobangi

O for a thousand tongues to sing
my great Redeemer's praise,
the glories of my God and King,
the triumphs of his grace!

My gracious Master and my God,
assist me to proclaim,
to spread thro' all the earth abroad
the honours of your name.

Jesus! the name that charms our fears,
that bids our sorrows cease,
'tis music in the sinner's ears,
'tis life and health and peace.

He breaks the power of cancelled sin,
he sets the prisoner free;
his blood can make the foulest clean;
his blood availed for me.

To God all glory, praise, and love
be now and ever given
by saints below and saints above,
the Church in earth and heaven. Charles Wesley

Benediction:

May Christ give us the grace to grow in holiness, to deny ourselves, take up our cross, and follow Him closer; today and always. And the blessing of God Almighty, Father, Son, and Spirit be amongst us, and remain with us always. Let us go forth into this week in the name of Christ. **Amen.**

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.