

**Bangor & Holyhead Methodist Circuit**  
**Sunday Worship Sheet 13th June 2021**

**Our worship for this week was written by Mrs Ellie Jones. You may wish to have your Bible to hand. Please note the hymns are now at the back of the sheet for ease of printing. CCLI 556292**

**Call to worship**

June 13th is Methodist Homes Sunday on which we celebrate all that MHA does for older people, in providing them with safe comfortable places to live and award-winning care in a Christian environment. **This service is about relieving isolation and bringing hope** Let us keep the staff and residents in our thoughts and in our prayers as we ask our Creator God to be with us now and to bless our worship. Amen.

**1<sup>st</sup> Hymn** 249 Singing the Faith  
"Kneels at the feet of his friends (Jesu, Jesu)"

**Prayers of praise and adoration**

God of all, creator of all the earth, and the millions of stars beyond, we worship and praise you for your loving presence with us always, in good times and bad. Your love is for all people everywhere. You know each of us by name and call us into communion with you and one another. You sent your son to live as one of us, to teach us just how much you love us. He willingly went to his death on the cross and was raised from the dead, so that we might live forever in the knowledge of his Father's grace and loving forgiveness. We praise and adore you, O Lord, for the beauty of the earth and the glory of creation and all you have done for us. Amen

**1<sup>st</sup> Reading** - Psalm 46:7-11

**Prayers of confession**

Lord God, we remember before you all the things we say and do which fall short of all that you call us to be. Forgive us that we all make excuses about not keeping in touch with people, family and friends and members of our churches. Forgetting that in reaching out to others we relieve our own sense of isolation. We confess the things that we haven't done, the phone calls, the texts, the cards, which would have helped others feel less lonely and more included. As we emerge from the various lockdowns we ask you to forgive us and to help us to build up a stronger sense of community which will draw people in from the margins into the warmth of our welcome and your love. Amen

**The Lord's Prayer**

Hear the word of the Lord. God loves us. His Son was willing to die to prove it, so our sins are forgiven. Alleluia! Thanks be to God, now and always. Amen

**2<sup>nd</sup> Hymn** 611 Singing the Faith  
 “Brother, sister, let me serve you,”

**2nd Reading** – Mark 5:1-20

### **Reflection**

Many people say that we have been living through two pandemics at the moment, the one being covid, the other loneliness. During the pandemic the problems of loneliness and isolation have become much worse and many more of us have had personal experience of feeling isolated and lonely. Meeting friends and family face to face and ordinary social activities stopped. We had to stay close to home and mix with others as little as possible.

However we have been lucky enough to have comfortable homes in which to live out this isolation, but the poor man in today’s reading from Mark’s Gospel had been shunned by the community he lived in. The mental illness he suffered from was so severe it made him violent and uncontrollable. He had broken out of chains that bound him and was left to wander among the tombs and over the hills, crying out in his distress. Today modern psychiatry might be able to diagnose what was wrong and be able to help, but at the time there was no such understanding and so it made sense to people to describe his behaviour as like that of someone filled with demonic forces.

The theme of today’s service is the bringing of hope to the lonely and relief to the isolated. And in this story we see Jesus put this into action. Jesus had crossed Galilee with the disciples late in the evening, seeking a place of peace in which to rest after teaching crowds of people all day. How frightening this screaming violent man must have seemed, coming out of the tombs in the caves near the lake. Yet Jesus did not shun him or shame him or try to chain him. He approached the man in kindness, in total contrast to the way his fellow villagers had treated him. Jesus wanted to help. He wanted to comfort the suffering man and relieve him of his loneliness and offer healing of his mental anguish.

This desperate man came to Christ in search of peace. And Christ healed him. He eased the man’s torment. He would not allow this man to suffer in isolation any longer.

What Jesus does is a model for all involved in pastoral care. He asks the man’s name and gives him identity. Clothes are found for him which give him dignity. Jesus spends time with him and offers support, and trusts that the community will also show him hospitality. Jesus is relieving the man’s loneliness and bringing hope. And we are called to do the same.

The pandemic has made the loneliness and isolation many people feel much more public. Perhaps not in the dramatically extreme way as that of the man among the tombs but many people have suffered, and not only the old – carers trying to be nurse and cook and cleaner to a family member with little help; single people working from home, parents home-schooling children of different ages at the same time, people struggling financially.....

Jesus calls us to take action when we see the effects of loneliness and isolation. As the staff of Methodist Homes for the Aged have had to do this year caring for residents of their care homes living in extreme isolation because of covid restrictions. MHA chaplains have been going into care homes wearing PPE, holding hands, praying, raising the spirits of residents who were alone. And just as residents were scared, so were the chaplains, so were the carers. But they did it anyway.

We have all been challenged by the loneliness and social isolation that we see around us. Our own churches have tried to adapt and keep in contact via email, and by providing Zoom or telephone or printed services like this one.

So let us support the work of MHA and let us reach out to each other, young and old, in friendship and in love, as Jesus reached out to the wild man in the tombs. May God guide and inspire us as we seek to share our hope in him and his love and peace with as many people as possible. Amen.

### **Prayers for others**

Dear Lord and creator of us all, in our prayers today we remember all those who suffer, whether from war or violence or racial hatred or injustice, or because of drought or floods or any issues caused by the climate crisis. We pray for those suffering from coronavirus both here and all over the world. We pray for all those waiting for treatment delayed because of the pandemic. We pray for all people in our communities who are lonely or isolated, especially for people living alone without loved ones to support them. On this MHA Sunday we think especially of the older men and women in our communities and what we can do to help and support them. We pray, today for the work of MHA and all it does to enrich the life experience of older people, including people living with dementia. We pray for the staff at MHA and all those who work to alleviate suffering in whatever form it takes, here in Wales and all over the world.

Now dear Lord **we pray now for those known to us** who are in need of your love and comfort today. (Pause.) Dear Lord, we pray that you will touch all these we have named to you with the assurance that your love and forgiveness is always there for us.

**Lastly a prayer for ourselves.** Dear Lord, strengthen us for the work you call us to do in nurturing our environment and each other. Help us to stand up for justice and equality, and fill us with the joy and peace you wish for us. We ask these prayers in the name of Jesus Christ your son and our saviour. **Amen.**

**3rd Hymn** 103 Singing the Faith (Hyfrydol)

“God is love, let heaven adore him”

Closing prayer

May God bless us all and give us courage to act and patience to listen to each other and a heart to help where we can. And may the grace of our lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with us all now and evermore. Amen

### Hymn 249

*Jesu, Jesu,  
fill us with your love,  
show us how to serve  
the neighbours we have from you.*  
Kneels at the feet of his friends,  
silently washes their feet,  
master who acts as a slave to them.

Neighbours are rich folk and poor,  
neighbours are black folk and white,  
neighbours are nearby and far away.

These are the ones we should serve,  
these are the ones we should love.  
All these are neighbours to us and you.

Kneel at the feet of our friends,  
silently washing their feet,  
this is the way we should live with you.

North Ghanaian song  
*adapted by Tom Colvin (1925–2000)*

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### Hymn 611

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.

Richard A. M. Gillard (*b.* 1953)

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### Hymn 103

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.

Timothy Rees (1874–1939) (*alt.*)

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