

**Bangor & Holyhead Methodist Circuit
Sunday Worship Sheet 18th July 2021**

Our Worship for Rural Mission Sunday was written by Ellie Jones, a Local Preacher and member

at St. John's, Bangor. You may wish to have your Bible to hand.

Call to worship

The celebration of Rural Mission Sunday started in 2016 as a way of giving thanks for rural churches, and the mission work of their communities. So we ask our Creator God to bless all rural churches and to be with us in our worship now and always. Amen.

1st Hymn 20 Singing the Faith

“Be still, for the presence of the Lord”

1. Prayer of praise and adoration

Loving God, we worship and adore you because we know that when we lay aside the worries and pressures and busyness of everyday living and still ourselves in your presence, we will recover our balance, and in you find peace and fulfilment. We worship and adore you because in this deep stillness, your loving arms are always there to hold and sustain us, no matter how tired and careworn we may be. Help us to take heart from knowing that we have continued to help sustain a Christian presence in our community even during all the lockdowns. Help us to remember the peace of treasured moments with friends and family, whether online, on the phone or in person and to see in them your renewing spirit and feel your closeness to us. We praise and adore you, Creator God. Amen.

Prayer of confession

Forgive us, Lord, when we turn away from the cries of others and offer no rest to those who are weary. Sometimes we are too full of our own concerns. Sometimes we forget that you are always there to help and sustain us, so that we may have the strength to reach out to help others in our turn. Forgive us, help us and heal us, so that we may play our part in helping to build up your kingdom in our communities and in the world of which they are a part. 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

2nd Hymn 659 Singing the Faith (To the familiar tune of Herongate)

“As dawn awakes another day,”

Reading – Mark 6 : 30-34, 53-56

Reflection - “As he went ashore, he saw a great crowd; and he had compassion for them.....”

These two short extracts from St Mark give us a snapshot of Jesus's ministry in Galilee. They show how tough life was for Jesus and his disciples. Jesus had just sent out the disciples for the first time to preach and heal the sick. They return worn out, in need of rest and relaxation. They need to be refreshed, so that they may return to this work again the next day, rejuvenated.

Jesus is concerned for them. He needs to encourage them, to lift their spirits. However, so great are the crowds that follow them everywhere, that Jesus has to try to take them off to a quiet place on their own so they at least can eat.

They try to cross lake Galilee to Gennesaret, but the crowd guesses what they are going to do and walk around the edge of the lake so quickly they are ready to meet Jesus and the disciples when they arrive.

What does Jesus do? He has compassion on the crowd who are so keen to find him. He feels they are like sheep without a shepherd.

So in answer to their need he widens his embrace to include not only the disciples who were so tired, but the whole crowd of people as well. A few years later he stretched out his arms on the cross in an embrace which included all people everywhere, then and for all time.

Jesus's compassion for the people flocking to him, his love for them, was what gave him the strength to live out his short life which he knew would end in a very painful death.

Mark tells us stories of miracles and wonders that Jesus performed, to emphasise how powerful Jesus is. Yet these are a sideline for Jesus. His main aim is to teach people, so that they will not only be healed physically and mentally but spiritually too. This is the gift he gave. And still gives. And gives out of his immense love for us.

But while Jesus and the disciples were so busy teaching and healing, Jesus knew how important rest and recuperation was. They needed some quiet times to reflect on what they were doing.

The same is true for us today. We as followers of Christ, as his disciples for the 21st century, also need to remember to look after ourselves. Especially now when we are returning slowly to the greater freedoms of our pre-lockdown lives.

Two thousand years after Christ first taught us, our world is very different, but there is still the same hunger for healing and the same miracle of compassion.

It is tempting to think that because of our enforced idleness of much of the last year and a half, we need to get up and get going like Jesus's first disciples, who were so anxious to do the work of teaching and healing he had called them to.

Yes, there is much to do. We need to build up our communities on a foundation of compassion and care for each other in these times of pandemic. We need to reach out to whatever need we find with an offer of a listening ear and whatever help we can give.

But it is equally important that we remember Jesus's care for his workers. He knew they needed to eat and rest. And that is true for us today too. Otherwise we may become dispirited or even suffer burnout. We need to be aware that Jesus took time to pray, to keep himself connected to the power source. So must we – make time to pray and to rest too.

The world is constantly changing. New challenges appear every day. Whether we belong to a small rural church, a larger urban one, or none at all, now it is our job to reach out to people to show them Christ's compassion. Amen

Prayers for others

Lord God, we pray for your compassion and healing in the villages of the world, for small vibrant communities, where people know each other and work together, even though they may be cut off, with few resources. We pray for your compassion and healing in the towns of the world, for places that act as centres for wider rural areas, to provide schools and supplies and medical services. We pray for your compassion and healing in the cities of the world, in all their parts - the successful multicultural centres of excellence or the overcrowded slums with inadequate infrastructure. We pray that no cry for help will go unheeded, no need go unmet, no child go unloved, and no tears go unnoticed. We ask these things in your name.

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 communities and each other. Help us to stand up for justice and equality, to take more care of our environment 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 685 Singing the Faith

"In Christ there is no east or west,"

Blessing in the Celtic tradition

At work or at rest, the peace of God the Creator be with you. God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit go with you on every side and at every turn, each day and each night, for all eternity. Amen

(Some material adapted from Arthur Rank Centre resources for Rural Mission Sunday and from Roots 2015)

Please feel free to pass on this service sheet via email, or perhaps print off a copy and pass it to

a friend or neighbour who might appreciate it. Thank you.

Hymn 20 Be Still

- 1 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.
- 2 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.
- 3 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)

Reproduced from *Singing the Faith* Electronic Words Edition, number 20
Words and Music: © 1986, Thankyou Music. Administered by worshiptogether.com Songs, excluding

UK & Europe, administered by Kingswaysongs, a division of David C Cook <tym@kingsway.co.uk> Used by permission.

Hymn 659 As dawn awakes

- 1 As dawn awakes another day,
the working sphere rolls into view,
and all attention centres on
the many tasks we have to do.
- 2 Distracted by demands of time,
and squeezed by pressures, deadlines,
needs,
there's scarcely any space or thought
for you from whom all life proceeds.
- 3 You challenge some to leave their nets
and follow unfamiliar ways,
but most are called to live their faith
in humdrum tasks of working days.

- 4 Affirm us, Lord, as we employ
our hands and minds in every place,
let worship flow through busyness,
responding to your love and grace.
- 5 Your patience is our endless hope,
your Spirit present to inspire,
the freedom to explore your truth,
your loving service our desire.

Clare Stainsby (b. 1959)

Reproduced from *Singing the Faith* Electronic Words Edition, number 659
Words: © Clare Stainsby

Hymn 685

In Christ there is no East or West

- 1 In Christ there is no east or west,
in him no south or north,
but one great fellowship of love
throughout the whole wide earth.
- 2 In him shall true hearts everywhere
their high communion find ;
his service is the golden cord
close-binding humankind.
- 3 Join hands then all the human race,
whate'er your nation be ;
all children of the living God
are surely kin to me.
- 4 In Christ now meet both east and west,
in him meet south and north ;
all Christlike souls are one in him,
throughout the whole wide earth.

John Oxenham, pseud. (1852–1941)

Reproduced from *Singing the Faith* Electronic Words Edition, number 685 .