

## **Bangor & Holyhead Methodist Circuit**

### **Sunday Worship Sheet 7<sup>th</sup> July 2024**

**Our worship for this week was written by Jean Ware. 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 licence 556292**

**Call to worship:** There is a response in this prayer, which you may like to make your own by reflecting on each verse or saying the response out loud.

People of God, let us walk in God's ways; let us sing of God's love; let us shout for God's justice.

**I am ready to walk, sing and shout for God's kingdom.**

People of God, let us get ready to listen to all God wants to say; get ready to change our minds and our hearts; get ready to move with God in the world.

**I am ready to listen, change and move with God.**

People of God, let us listen for God's voice; listen for God's guidance; listen to what God is saying to us today.

**I am ready to listen and to follow with all my heart. Amen.**

**Hymn 107 I sing the almighty power of God** A recording of this hymn can be found at this link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=abr1xDbjC78>

### **Prayers of Adoration and Confession**

We come to celebrate that love which has made us all. We celebrate the love that lies at the heart of the universe, filling it with energy and life. We celebrate the love that runs through all human history, battling with human foolishness and enmity to bring goodness to birth. We celebrate the love that is present in our own lives, guiding us and pulling us forward into new experiences and new joys. In the ordinariness of life, you are there. In the dreams and visions that inspire us, you speak to us. In the disappointments that come to us often, you save us from despair. God of our past, our present and our future, although we cannot be together as we worship, may we be conscious that we are not alone. Make yourself known to us afresh.

Amen.

God, as we celebrate your love for us and everything you have made, we know that we have failed to love others as we should. We have dismissed others as not worth knowing because of where they come from or who they are. We have thought that we knew all about someone, when all we saw was their background. We have known that we are not worthy of your love, and believed you could not love us, when all the time you were longing for us to come to you. God, forgive us and help us to live lives which are more loving. Amen

### **Assurance of forgiveness**

Living God, you choose to save, not to judge, to forgive, not to condemn, to turn towards, not away, to show us your nature and not to hide. You allow us to know you, to love you and to serve you –and we are truly thankful. Amen.

## **Reading Mark 6 verses 1-6**

### **Reflection**

As I write this, campaigning for the general election is in full swing; by the time you read it, we will know who is to govern us for the next 4 or 5 years. One of the least pleasant parts of the election campaign has been how politicians from every party have sought to undermine their opponents' case, not by pointing to the flaws in their policies or the ideas which underlie them, but by focusing on some aspect of their personal life, some past mistake, or other way in which they can pour scorn on the individual, and denigrate them. Something of the same sort of thing seems to be going on in our reading from Mark's gospel, where, having first been eager to see and hear the man they've heard heals the sick and can even bring dead people back to life, so that the synagogue is crowded with people, those same people turn against Jesus. They begin to say to one another- isn't this the guy who was the local carpenter? Isn't this Mary's son? Who does he think he is- presuming to teach us! They had presumably come initially hoping to see Jesus perform miracles, as he had elsewhere, but whatever he had said as he taught them, they took offence – indeed the Greek says they were scandalised. Mark doesn't say what it was that offended them, but Jesus had already offended plenty of other people by his apparently casual attitude to the law, by eating with those who were regarded as unclean, by welcoming outcasts, and above all by presuming to tell people that their sins were forgiven. So they are not ready to listen to the good news that Jesus comes to bring. Indeed earlier, Mark talks of Jesus giving the people his message in parables "as far as they were able to receive it." And perhaps that's the clue to that rather odd statement about Jesus not being able to do any miracles in Nazareth. The people of his hometown reject him, they refuse to believe that he is sent by God to announce the Good News of the Kingdom. And so, at least at this moment, they turn their backs on it. We know from later in the gospels that not all those who originally rejected Jesus, continued to do so. Members of his own family, who Mark has earlier told us, tried to stop Jesus preaching and teaching, because they thought that he must be out of his mind, became leaders in the early church. This isn't the only time either, that Jesus firmly rejected the temptation to use miracles as 'magic tricks' to coerce belief. God will not dragoon us into the kingdom.

There are also some important questions here for us- do we sometimes close our minds to God's message, because it comes from such an unlikely source- perhaps from someone we have written off- even if just subconsciously? Who are the prophets we refuse to listen to because we think we know all about them, and are sure prophets aren't people like them. For example, do we refuse to heed warnings about climate change when they come in a form or from a source we find alien? The people in that synagogue at Nazareth found the gospel scandalous – perhaps it was Jesus' proclamation of God's unimaginable love for all people, God's desire to welcome all to a kingdom that's not maintained by armies and might, but by love and sacrifice that scandalised them. The gospel, with its offer of

reconciliation, its declaration that what family you come from, what race, or anything else about you is entirely unimportant, God made you and loves you and longs for you to show the same love to others is still scandalous-

In Jesus God did a surprising thing- indeed, surprising is too tame a word to describe the incarnation. God is a God of surprises, and we need to be constantly asking ourselves what new thing God is doing among us, what new prophet is speaking God's words to us now.

**Hymn 660 Called by Christ to be disciples** A recording of Frodsham Methodist Church singing this to the tune Abbot's Leigh can be found at this link:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5f10N6umzc>

(Abbot's Leigh is the tune you may well know to Lord your church on earth is seeking)

### **Prayers for others and for ourselves**

God of justice and mercy, we bring our prayers to you at a time of change in our country. We have a new government, barely in post. We pray for all those who have been elected to parliament this past week. May they keep constantly in mind that they have been elected to serve their fellow human beings. Help them to resist the temptation to use the power they now have for their own advantage, or the benefit of others who are like them. Enable them by your spirit to seek the good of all people and of this earth that you have given us to look after. God of justice and mercy, we pray for all those recently elected to other parliaments, for the members of the European Parliament, that they may work together for peace and stability. We pray for those elected to the Parliament of India that they may seek unity and peace.

God of peace, we pray for all those suffering from the effects of war; for refugees, running from place to place and finding that nowhere is safe. We pray for those who believe that their security relies on dominating and oppressing others; open their eyes to see that true peace will come when all are respected, all feel safe.

God, who is no respecter of persons, we pray for all those who find themselves on the margins, for those who are written off because of their background, or past mistakes. Teach us to learn to look with your eyes, and see the person you love that we may learn to love them too.

God of unity we pray for the church that all Christians may learn to work together for your kingdom, and so reveal something of you to the world.

God of love, we pray for ourselves; help us to be confident in your love, and radiate that love to others. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

### **The Lord's prayer**

**Hymn 666 Master speak! Thy servant heareth** A recording of this hymn can be found at this link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=raPJHiezEhw>

**Final Prayer:** God, as we go about our daily lives, make us alert to hear your word whoever speaks it; make us conscious of the promptings of your Spirit and willing always to be surprised by you. Amen.

### Hymn 107

- 1 I sing the almighty power of God,  
that made the mountains rise,  
that spread the flowing seas abroad,  
and built the lofty skies.
- 2 I sing the wisdom that ordained  
the sun to rule the day ;  
the moon shines full at his command,  
and all the stars obey.
- 3 I sing the goodness of the Lord,  
that filled the earth with food ;  
he formed the creatures with his word,  
and then pronounced them good.
- 4 Lord, how your wonders are displayed  
where'er I turn mine eye,  
if I survey the ground I tread,  
or gaze upon the sky !
- 5 God's hand is my perpetual guard,  
he guides me with his eye ;  
why should I then forget the Lord,  
whose love is ever nigh ?

Isaac Watts (1674–1748)

### Hymn 660

- 1 Called by Christ to be disciples  
every day in every place,  
we are not to hide as hermits  
but to spread the way of grace ;  
citizens of heaven's kingdom,  
though this world is where we live,  
as we serve a faithful Master,  
faithful service may we give.
- 2 Richly varied are our pathways,  
many callings we pursue :  
may we use our gifts and talents  
always, Lord, to honour you ;  
so in government or commerce,  
college, hospice, farm or home,  
whether volunteers or earning,  
may we see your kingdom come.
- 3 Hard decisions may confront us,  
urging us to compromise ;  
still obedience is our watchword —  
make us strong and make us wise !  
Secular is turned to sacred,  
made a precious offering,  
as our daily lives are fashioned  
in submission to our King.

Martin Leckebusch (b. 1962)

### Hymn 666 1 Master, speak ! Thy servant heareth,

- waiting for thy gracious word,  
longing for thy voice that cheereth ;  
Master, let it now be heard.  
I am listening, Lord, for thee ;  
what hast thou to say to me ?
- 2 Speak to me by name, O Master,  
let me know it is to me ;  
speak, that I may follow faster,  
with a step more firm and free,  
where the Shepherd leads the flock  
in the shadow of the rock.
- 3 Master, speak ! Though least and lowest,  
let me not unheard depart ;  
Master, speak ! For O thou knowest  
all the yearning of my heart,  
knowest all its truest need ;  
speak, and make me blest indeed.
- 4 Master, speak : and make me ready,  
when thy voice is truly heard,  
with obedience glad and steady  
still to follow every word.  
I am listening, Lord, for thee ;  
Master, speak ! O speak to me !

Frances Ridley Havergal (1836–1879)

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