

Welshpool & Bro Hafren Methodist Circuit

Home Worship Sheet – 26th July

This short act of worship has been prepared and written for you by Rev Marian Jones.

Today, as Welshpool Methodist Church reopens for public worship, we are aware of those of you who, as yet, are not able to join the gathered community. You are the people of God where you are, and we join together to worship. Today's service reflects as closely as possible, the service that will be held in the church building.

Call to Worship

Seek the Lord and his strength;

Seek his presence continually.

He is the Lord our God

He is mindful of his covenant for ever.

Psalm 105: 4,7a,9a

Hymn: The Kingdom of God is justice and joy.

To listen to this hymn in a new tab: press Shift and Ctrl together and click [here](#). Close the tab after the hymn.

- 1 The kingdom of God is justice and joy,
for Jesus restores what sin would destroy;
God's power and glory in Jesus we know,
and here and hereafter the kingdom shall grow.**
- 2 The kingdom of God is mercy and grace,
the captives are freed, the sinners find place,
the outcast are welcomed God's banquet to share,
and hope is awakened instead of despair.**

**3 The kingdom of God is challenge and choice,
believe the good news, repent and rejoice!
His love for us sinners brought Christ to his cross,
our crisis of judgement for gain or for loss.**

**4 God's kingdom is come, the gift and the goal,
in Jesus begun, in heaven made whole;
the heirs of the kingdom shall answer his call,
and all things cry glory to God all in all!**

Bryn Rees (1911–1983)
Words: © Alexander Scott

Opening Prayer

**Gracious God,
you are our host and our guest.
We, your church, gather today
in different places
knowing that you are with us.
Send your Spirit
to blow through our worship
as a breeze blows
through the open windows and doors
of our homes and our church building.
We pray in the name of Jesus. Amen**

Prayer of Confession:

**Lord God,

trusting in your mercy and forgiveness,
with the whole church I confess my sin:**

Keep a short silence

**For those times when I have lost sight of your love,
despairing for myself and the world**

Lord, have mercy.

**For those times when I have taken for granted
the gifts you have given to me
and put my own concerns before the needs of your world.**

Christ, have mercy.

**For those times when I have chosen to ignore injustice,
and neglected those in need.**

Lord, have mercy.

**God, who hears my confession, loves me still and, through Christ,
offers healing and a new beginning.**

So I hear Christ's gracious words spoken to me:

"Your sins are forgiven."

Amen. Thanks be to God.

Prayer for the day:

**Loving God, you built your church,
the body of Christ, as living stones.**

**As we draw together to worship you today,
remind us that we are your church in every place.**

**Unite us in your Son, and enable us, by the power of your Spirit,
to witness in your world.**

Amen.

The Gospel Reading, Matthew:13 1-2, 31-33

To listen to this reading, by David Suchet from BibleGateway in a new tab press **Shift** and **Ctrl** together and click [here](#). Close the tab after the reading.

That same day Jesus went out of the house and sat by the lake. Such large crowds gathered round him that he got into a boat and sat in it, while all the people stood on the shore.

He told them another parable: 'The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, which a man took and planted in his field. Though it is the smallest of all seeds, yet when it grows, it is the largest of garden plants and becomes a tree, so that the birds come and perch in its branches.'

He told them still another parable: 'The kingdom of heaven is like yeast that a woman took and mixed into about thirty kilograms of flour until it worked all through the dough.'

New International Version



Reflection

Just outside Capernaum, the town where Jesus made his home, on the northern shore of the Sea of Galilee is a bay called 'Sower's Bay' or 'The Bay of Parables' and it's a natural amphitheatre.

Matthew says that Jesus came out of the house and sat beside the lake. Because of the crowd, he got into a boat – sound carries really well over water – and he painted some word pictures.

When I was in school, I grew mustard and cress on damp blotting paper. It's not that sort of mustard seed that Jesus is talking about. In a church in Leeds, we had a major building scheme and someone had thrown some Japanese knotweed into the graveyard. It's invasive, grows quickly and is incredibly difficult (and expensive) to get rid of. Mustard seeds, if they're not treated early, can be a problem too and there are shrubs growing around the Bay of Parables. 'The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed' . . . Is Jesus suggesting that, once God's kingdom takes root, it gets everywhere? That it's really quite difficult to get rid of? That it grows and grows beyond all expectation? That it has a life of its own? The kingdom of heaven is about God's reign; here now in part, yet still to come.

Lockdown has been strange. In the early weeks, flour was unobtainable. Then flour came onto the supermarket shelves and all the yeast disappeared. Everyone was having a go at baking bread. Because I couldn't get any yeast, I decided on sourdough and began my 'starter' – the instructions said that I'd need a big jar: I had quite a large Kilner jar; flour and water. Leaving the top off the jar meant that the yeast spores in the air would act on the flour and water mixture and begin the fermentation process. The theory is that each day for six days, some of the mixture is removed and more flour and water added. It bubbles away, gets stretchy, frothy and grows then, on the seventh day some of it can be added to flour and salt and the bread dough can be made. I went into the kitchen on the morning of day five and discovered the starter trying to escape! It had bubbled over, down the side of the jar and was making its way to the edge of the worktop. The people of Israel leaving Egypt had no time to wait for this process so they had flatbreads, unleavened bread; no neat and tidy dried yeast for them, or even fresh yeast from the bakery in town! Did Jesus watch his

mother baking? Did he help to knead the dough? Watch it rise? 'The kingdom of heaven is like yeast that a woman took . . .' I didn't get as far as making a sourdough loaf. I can imagine the smell of that freshly baked bread, breaking into the loaf, still warm: no trace then of that sourdough starter, bubbly, yeasty. Yet without it the dough wouldn't rise. The yeast permeates the whole loaf, its effects are obvious.

Where have you seen, do you see, signs of the kingdom of heaven? Of God's reign?

As you've been confined to your home, watching or listening to news bulletins, have you recognised signs of the kingdom of heaven? Have you watched people who, without a doubt, were living by kingdom values?

Perhaps you have seen signs of the kingdom in unexpected places and unlikely people.

Take time to recall those people and places. How have they affected you?

Remember and give thanks.

Praying for others and for ourselves:

In peace let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For the life and unity of the Church, that we may worship God in spirit and in truth, let us pray to the Lord:

Lord, have mercy.

For the whole company of God's people, worshipping together and alone,

For those whom we know who are finding this time particularly difficult, let us pray to the Lord:

Lord, have mercy.

For the governments of the nations that they may seek justice and peace for all people, let us pray to the Lord:

Lord, have mercy.

For our own country and local community, for those who have worked to ensure our wellbeing throughout these past months, let us pray to the Lord:

Lord, have mercy.

For the sick, for the afflicted and for prisoners, and for those who mourn, let us pray to the Lord:

Lord, have mercy.

For ourselves that we may truly serve him who called us out of darkness into his marvellous light, let us pray to the Lord:

Lord, have mercy.

That, with all who have served God and are now at rest, we, too, may enter into the fullness of unending joy, let us pray to the Lord:

Lord, have mercy.

Almighty God,

to whom our needs are known before we ask, help us to ask only what accords with your will; and those good things which we dare not or in our blindness cannot ask, grant us for the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen

The Peace:

Our Lord Jesus Christ said:

**'I leave you peace,
my peace I give to you.'**

**The peace of the Lord
be always with you.**

We pray for those in need of peace

The Thanksgiving:

**In the beginning of all that is,
you, our God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, three in one,
formed a diverse and complex creation.
You created us in your image,
one part of the story of your love for all that you have made.**

**Through the teachers and prophets of old,
matriarchs and patriarchs,
the story of your love was told, offered, and written.
Your people have not always understood the story,
or lived as those who know that they are loved.**

**We have turned away from the truth,
ignoring you, damaging the earth and hurting our neighbours.
You continued to love us and so, at great cost,
you sent Jesus Christ into the world,
to teach us again what it means to live in your way.**

**Through Christ's life, death and resurrection,
we can know for ourselves the story of love, faith and salvation.
Through your gift of the Holy Spirit, sent in your Son's name, you
continue to lead us into truth and give us power to tell your story
throughout the world.**

**And so, with all the saints and angels
of heaven, we join in the ancient song:**

**Holy, holy, holy Lord,
God of power and might,
heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest.
Blessèd is he who comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest.**

**Holy God, we praise you that on the night before he died,
Jesus took bread and gave you thanks.**

He broke it and gave it to his friends saying,

**'Take this and eat it. This is my body, given for you.
Do this in remembrance of me.'**

**After supper, Jesus took the cup of wine,
gave thanks and gave it to his friends saying,**

**'Drink from it, all of you.
This is my blood of the new covenant,
poured out for all people for the forgiveness of sins.
Do this in remembrance of me'.**

**And so, God of love,
we remember that Jesus died
and rose again
to make all things new.
Through his offering for us all,
we offer our whole life to you in thanks
and praise.**

**O Lord Jesus Christ, since I cannot now receive You in bread and
wine, I humbly pray that You would come spiritually to my soul.**

Silence may be kept

**Come, Lord Jesus, come and cleanse me,
heal me, strengthen me
and unite me to Yourself,
now and for evermore. Amen.**

As our Saviour taught his disciples, we pray:

**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: A charge to keep I have.

To listen to the tune in a new tab: press Shift and Ctrl together and click [here](#). Close the tab after the hymn.

- 1 A charge to keep I have:
a God to glorify;
a never-dying soul to save,
and fit it for the sky;**

- 2 To serve this present age,
my calling to fulfil;
O may it all my pow'rs engage
to do my Master's will!**

- 3 Arm me with watchful care,
as in Thy sight to live;
and now Thy servant, Lord, prepare
a strict account to give!**

**4 Help me to watch and pray,
And still on Thee rely,
O let me not my trust betray,
But press to realms on high.**

Charles Wesley (1707–1788)

The Blessing

**The God of love, who calls us,
guide me/us this day and always:
may his love enfold me/us,
may his peace empower me/us,
and his strength uphold me/us,
and the blessing of God,
the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit,
be upon me/us, now and always.
Amen.**