

## Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> September 2020 WORSHIP AT HOME: Matthew 18.15-20

Welcome to our act of Worship

### Call to worship

Jesus said: <sup>20</sup>'For where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them.' (Matthew 18v20)

In the name of Jesus we have gathered here:  
**to rejoice with the Spirit who inspires us,**  
to worship the God who utterly loves us,  
**and to celebrate the Lord who still lives among us. Amen.**

HYMN Angel voices ever singing:...  
HP484, MP34, RS405, STF39  
(Some of the hymn books widely used in the Wiltshire United Area)

### Prayers of Praise

Glory be to you, Lord God, King of the universe  
Glory be to you, Lord God, dwelling in light and majesty;  
Glory be to you, Lord God, beyond our highest thoughts;  
Glory be to you, Lord God, giver of light and life;  
Glory be to you, Lord God, from the company of heaven who see you face to face;  
Glory be to you, Lord God, from your people on earth who have seen your salvation.  
Glory be to you, Lord God, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

### Prayer of Confession

God our Father, we turn from the noisy arena of life, with its trouble and anxiety, to you, the living God; and we confess we come into the shadow of your presence as those who are sick and in need of a physician, as those who are lonely and in need of a friend, as those who are sinners in need of a Saviour.

*(A moment of quiet reflection)*

Out of the depths of our hearts we cry to you; Lord God, hear our prayer.  
May your grace and peace come into our lives and lead us from a life of slavery and sin into a life of freedom and joy and love; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

HYMN *Let there be love shared among us*  
HP-, MP411, RS477, STF-

### Ministry of the Word of God

Lectionary Bible readings for RCL Proper 18 Year A  
Ezekiel 33.7-11; Psalm 119.33-40; Romans 13.8-14; **GOSPEL Matthew 18.15-20** with special focus

on verse <sup>20</sup>**'For where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them.'**

This is the Gospel of Christ.

**Praise to Christ our Lord.**

### Reflection

It's not often I write about football, but Marcus Rashford, Manchester United's forward gets my respect! You may have heard this week about his involvement in setting up a taskforce with major food brands, supermarkets, businesses, and charities to try and reduce child food poverty. You may also recall some months back how he wrote an open letter to MP's about the provision of free school meal vouchers for the summer.

Despite now earning eye-watering amounts of money Marcus Rashford has never forgotten his own childhood experiences of relying on free school meals and food banks whilst growing up in the community of Wythenshawe, Manchester. Aged 22 he has shown remarkable maturity and an amazing dedication to facilitate improvement.

Our Gospel reading speaks about the importance of community from a faith perspective. Apart from the last couple of verses it seems exceedingly focused on personal failings, perhaps to use a football theme, regularly calling "foul"! However, let us remember that we are invited to look intently into the mirror of Scripture and consider what we truly find!

To my mind this passage reverberates reconciliation – it is not so much about calling somebody "out" but calling them "in". It speaks of a faith community that cares passionately about the wellbeing of each other. And as the last verse demonstrates, if we are truly one in Christ, there we find the real presence of Jesus.

In the Church denomination I come from we have a phrase especially amongst clergy, "*watching over one another in love*", it is how we seek to support and encourage each other in our spiritual lives. In other words, seeking to care and nurture each other and where necessary have a quiet word when things might seem slightly awry.

Let us be honest confronting someone about an attitude, behaviour, action etc., is not easy, but let us reflect on the words of the theologian Michael Chan: *'Avoidance of confrontation is one of the most pervasive and predictable sins in modern Christianity. Somehow we've come to believe that words like "welcoming," "inclusive," "compassionate," and "loving" exclude confronting people for the various ways their sins invite destruction to themselves, their families, and their communities...'*

Last week's Gospel reading reminds how Jesus himself was prepared to tell even his closest followers when improvement was needed. As a faith community our calling is to be nothing short of "The Body of Christ", when faced with that realisation we should be acutely aware that there are areas in our personal and spiritual lives, as well as in the corporate life of the church, that need improvement!

We would do well to recall Christ's promise *'where two or three'* (or two hundred or three hundred, for that matter) *'gather in Jesus' name, he is there in the midst of them.'* This is a promise of the highest order. Incidentally, it is not just a promise that we will sense his presence, it is also a reminder that he will see and know the innermost truth of everyone's heart!

#### Prayer of Response

Day by day, day by day,  
O, dear Lord, three things I pray:  
to see thee more clearly, love thee more dearly,  
follow thee more nearly, day by day. **Amen.**  
*Attributed to Richard of Chichester*

HYMN: Community of Christ...  
*Shirley Erena Murray wrote this hymn for the Presbyterian Church of New Zealand 1995 General Assembly.*  
HP-, MP-, RS-, STF681  
OR Build Your Kingdom Here - Rend Collective  
Experiment (*lyrics and music on you-tube*)

*Little people may prefer* The Spirit lives to set us free, walk, walk in the light... MP 664

#### Our Prayers

Within our Church community we pray today for the congregation at Steeple Ashton as they re-commence services. We also pray for Rev Pam

Stranks as she commences ministry within the United Area, serving, Calne, Corsham and Bromham....

We pray for those who this day need our prayers: those we see around us... family and friends near and far...

Strangers and communities we will never meet or know, but whose peril we hear of and see on our television or computer screens...

Those whose life is ebbing away consumed by old age, frailty, illness especially Covid or neglect...

Those who grieve deeply for lives and loves lost...

Those who cause grief and chaos in society and who live seemingly with different values from ours, for them and their victims and their families...

Those who are forgotten, unnoticed, unloved, unmissed...

Lord God, in your abundance of mercy, hear these and all our prayers.

**Amen.**

#### The Lord's Prayer

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...  
HP785, MP-, RS-, STF658

#### Blessing

May you who are strong  
go out into the world with gentleness,  
and you who are weak  
go on your way with new strength.

May you who are confident by nature  
walk now with humility,  
and you who are anxious  
step out with more certainty.  
and the blessing of Almighty God, the Three-in-  
One be with you, and all whom you love, now and  
ever more **Amen.**

Rev David Coppard Superintendent @ Wiltshire  
United Area  
Bank Chaplain @ Musgrove Park Hospital, Taunton

***Our churches may not all be open, but the Church is  
active and alive.***

*This service is offered to any and all, with love  
and prayers.*

**Matthew 18.15-20 Reproving Another Who Sins**  
**15 'If another member of the church sins against  
you, go and point out the fault when the two of  
you are alone. If the member listens to you, you  
have regained that one. <sup>16</sup>But if you are not  
listened to, take one or two others along with  
you, so that every word may be confirmed by the  
evidence of two or three witnesses. <sup>17</sup>If the  
member refuses to listen to them, tell it to the  
church; and if the offender refuses to listen even  
to the church, let such a one be to you as a  
Gentile and a tax-collector. <sup>18</sup>Truly I tell you,  
whatever you bind on earth will be bound in  
heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be  
loosed in heaven. <sup>19</sup>Again, truly I tell you, if two  
of you agree on earth about anything you ask, it  
will be done for you by my Father in heaven. <sup>20</sup>For  
where two or three are gathered in my name, I  
am there among them.'**

#### **Storytelling the Gospel for little people**

Ask the children to copy your actions as you tell  
the story:

Jesus was talking to his friends.

He said, 'If anyone does anything that makes you  
feel sad (*make sad face*)

ask them to stop. (*hold up hand*)

If they don't listen (*cup ear with hand*)

then ask some other people to come and talk to  
them (*beckon to someone else*)

and make things right again.' (*shake hands*)

Jesus said that this helps make the church work:

'If two or three people come together to share my  
love (*hold hands around circle*)

then I will be there.' (*place candle in centre*)

#### **Angel voices ever singing**

round Thy throne of light,  
angel harps, forever ringing,  
rest not day nor night;  
thousands only live to bless Thee  
and confess thee Lord of might.

#### **T Angel voices**

Thou who art beyond the farthest  
mortal eye can scan,  
can it be that Thou regardest  
sinful woman, man?  
Can we feel that Thou art near us  
and wilt hear us? Yea, we can.

Yea, we know Thy love rejoices  
o'er each work of Thine;  
Thou didst ears and hands and voices  
for Thy praise combine;  
craftsman's art and music's measure  
for Thy pleasure didst design.

In thy house, great God, today we offer  
of Thine own to Thee;  
and for Thine acceptance proffer,  
all unworthily,  
hearts and minds and hands and voices  
in our choicest melody.

Honour, glory, might, and merit  
Thine shall ever be,  
Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,  
blessed Trinity:  
of the best that Thou hast given  
earth and heaven render Thee.

#### **Let there be love shared among us T Same**

Let there be love in our eyes  
May now Your love sweep this nation.  
Cause us oh Lord to arise  
Give us a fresh understanding  
Of brotherly love that is real,  
Let there be love shared among us,  
Let there be love---

#### **Community of Christ,**

#### **T Leoni**

who make the Cross your own,  
live out your creed and risk your life  
for God alone:  
the God who wears your face,  
to whom all worlds belong,  
whose children are of every race  
and every song.

Community of Christ,  
look past the Church's door  
and see the refugee, the hungry,  
and the poor.  
Take hands with the oppressed,  
the jobless in your street,  
take towel and water, that you wash  
your neighbour's feet.

Community of Christ,  
through whom the word must sound --  
cry out for justice and for peace  
the whole world round:  
disarm the powers that war  
and all that can destroy,  
turn bombs to bread, and tears of anguish  
into joy.

When menace melts away,  
so shall God's will be done,  
the climate of the world be peace  
and Christ its Sun;  
our currency be love  
and kindness our law,  
our food and faith be shared as one  
forevermore.

*Shirley Erena Murray wrote this hymn for the  
Presbyterian Church of New Zealand 1995 General  
Assembly.*

**The Spirit lives to set us free, T Walk in the Light**

Walk, walk in the light.

He binds us all in unity,

Walk, walk in the light.

*Walk in the light,*

*Walk in the light,*

*Walk in the light,*

*Walk in the light of the Lord.*

Jesus promised life to all,  
Walk, walk in the light.  
The dead were wakened by his call,  
Walk, walk in the light.

He died in pain on Calvary,  
Walk, walk in the light.  
To save the lost like you and me,  
Walk, walk in the light.

We know his death was not the end,  
Walk, walk in the light.

He gave his Spirit to be our friend,  
Walk, walk in the light.

The Spirit lives in you and me,  
Walk, walk in the light;  
His light will shine for all to see,  
Walk, walk in the light.

**A charge to keep I have, T Cambridge**

A God to glorify,  
A never-dying soul to save,  
And fit it for the sky.

To serve the present age,  
My calling to fulfill:  
Oh, may it all my pow'rs engage  
To do my Master's will!

Arm me with jealous care,  
As in Thy sight to live;  
And O Thy servant, Lord, prepare  
A strict account to give!

Help me to watch and pray,  
And on Thyself rely,  
Assured, if I my trust betray,  
I shall forever die.

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