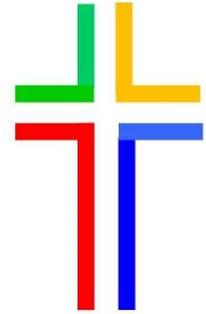


Week St Mary Methodist Church – Sunday 22 March Mothering Sunday



It's a strange time with no worship or activities at the Chapel. Life will feel very different in all sorts of ways over the weeks to come.

As a way of keeping in touch and affirming that we have a loving God who cares for us all, whether we can physically meet or not, we hope to offer this weekly worship resource. Please feel free to ask for additional copies if you have friends or neighbours who would like it.

PRAYER

Thank-you, Lord,
That whenever and however we come
into Your presence,
It's like coming home to a place where we
are welcome.
To be with You is to be surrounded by
love;
To be loved and accepted for who we are,

And not judged by what we look like on
the outside.
Help us as we worship you in our homes in
these difficult times
To show that accepting kind of love
To those around us,
So that we, Your church,
May worship You as one family in Jesus.
Amen

READING FOR TODAY

John 19:25-27

25 Near the cross of Jesus stood his mother, his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. 26 When Jesus saw his mother there, and the disciple whom he loved standing near by, he said to her, 'Woman, here is your son,' 27 and to the disciple, 'Here is your mother.' From that time on, this disciple took her into his home.

THOUGHT FOR TODAY

Here is Mary at the foot of the cross and she is virtually alone because the crowds have turned against Jesus. One of his number betrayed him, the one who boasted he would defend him to the end denied him and the remainder of his disciples (bar one) have run away. And so at the foot of the cross is his mum, the beloved disciple and a small group of women. It is hard to imagine the pain that Mary was bearing, but she was there. Isn't that what mothers do? A mum might have a son who is over 6 foot, really strong and fit and perhaps having taken up karate and progressed up the belts and being more than capable of looking after himself. Yet mum, all of 5ft 3in., doesn't really believe he is safe out at night unless she is with him! And from time to time we are reminded of the ultimate calling of motherhood - to lay down your life for your child. You see – once a mum always a mum, no matter what, no matter the sacrifice. That's why the flowers that may be given on Mothering Sunday are just a small token in return.

What should our response be today? We all owe our mothers a massive debt of gratitude, for they bore and nurtured us before we could care for ourselves. So today is a day for thinking about our mums and thanking God for them and if you are fortunate enough to have your mother still around, making sure that she is aware of your gratitude. For some, the person who acted as mother may not be their natural mother and may not even be female - but an expression of gratitude is still valid. We should show the same gratitude for the heavenly one

who cares and nurtures us all. This passage shows us how to respond and it is all tied up with how we treat others: showing compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience (all motherly virtues) towards others: forgiving them when they hurt us; reflecting God's love to all others regardless of status, wealth, colour, race, creed or sexuality. Paul talks about living in peace with others and offering worship and prayers to God. In short, we can show our gratitude for the love shown by our mothers and our God, by demonstrating that kind of love to those around us

PRAYER FOR MOTHERS

We remember especially those whose children have been born with illnesses or problems.

We pray for worried parents whose babies are sick in hospital or at home.

Help them to know that You care about them and their children.

We think of Mary watching Jesus dying on the cross.

We pray for mothers who have lost children, whether when they were little or fully grown.

We know that You understand the pain of loss.

Put Your loving arms around parents who grieve and comfort them.

We call to mind our own memories, of our mothers, or of those who cared for us like a mother,

Or we remember times with children.

For many of us, these will be happy memories.

Others may have memories that are more difficult.

Whichever they may be, let us offer them to God now, entrusting them into His hands.

Gracious God, You love us like a parent; Show us how to share Your love with those around us.

Amen.

HYMN

Lord of all hopefulness, Lord of all joy, whose trust, ever childlike, no cares could destroy:

Be there at our waking, and give us, we pray

your bliss in our hearts, Lord, at the break of the day.

Lord of all eagerness, Lord of all faith, whose strong hands were skilled at the plane and the lathe:

Be there at our labours, and give us, we pray, your strength in our hearts, Lord, at the noon of the day.

Lord of all kindness, Lord of all grace, your hands swift to welcome, your arms to embrace:

Be there at our homing, and give us, we pray, your love in our hearts, Lord, at the eve of the day.

Lord of all gentleness, Lord of all calm, whose voice is contentment, whose presence is balm:

Be there at our sleeping, and give us, we pray, your peace in our hearts, Lord, at the end of the day.

ON A LIGHTER NOTE.....

A Sunday School teacher asked the children just as she finished her lesson, "And why is it necessary to be quiet in church?" Little Johnny replied, "Because people are sleeping."

GIVING

Although we are not meeting, buildings still need upkeep, salaries paid and the work of God carries on, so please save up your weekly offerings for a grand reopening or give to Len earlier.

BLESSING

May the love of the Father fill our hearts; And may the grace of the Holy Spirit bind us together in love in our families and communities.

And may the blessing of God be with you, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen.