



The **Methodist** Church

Ripon and Lower Dales Methodist Circuit **Worship at Home – 11 July 2021** **Action for Children Sunday**

Welcome

It's been a challenging year for everyone, and we pray for happier and more hopeful times ahead. Sadly, this isn't the case for many of the vulnerable children and families Action for Children supports.

That's why – this Action for Children Sunday – the theme of our worship is **Peace Within, Peace Around**. We hope this gives you the chance to reflect on how we can create peace around us – in our communities – and within us, as we attempt to return to life as it was before.

Prayer

Mighty God, we adore you.

We thank you that we can come to you knowing that you care about each and every one of us and all our needs, however big or small.

You created the heavens and the earth.

You put stars into space and filled the mighty seas.

Your power and your greatness is all around us – from mountaintops to the intricacies of a tiny flower.

Thank you that your power is limitless.

We are so small in comparison, but you love us all the same.

We adore you, Creator God.

Loving God, we give you thanks and praise for your abundant mercy and grace that we receive.

Lord Jesus, we ask you to give us peace in our mind, body, soul, and spirit.

Help us to bring healing to this broken world, bringing peace and hope to families and children in these uncertain times through the work of Action for Children.

Give those who work for the charity the wisdom to make the right choices for those they help.

Bring peace to those who are overwhelmed by circumstances that are sometimes beyond their control. You are the Prince of Peace and we put our trust in you.

Powerful God, forgive us when we have not used our power to influence for good, but for our own purposes; when our actions have hurt and excluded others; when we have allowed greed, fear and pride to get in the way. God, forgive us.

Let our thoughts, our words and our actions glorify you and reveal your presence and purposes.

The Almighty and powerful God forgives your sins.

When you have put yourself before others, God forgives you and heals you, giving you grace and mercy and the comfort of the Holy Spirit. **Amen**

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father, which art in heaven,
Hallowed be thy Name.

Thy Kingdom come.

Thy will be done in earth,

As it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that 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 – StF 24

Come, now is the time to worship

Come, now is the time to give your heart

Come, just as you are to worship

Come, just as you are before your God, come

One day every tongue will confess You are God

One day every knee will bow

Still the greatest treasure remains

for those who gladly choose You now

Come, now is the time to worship...

John 14: 15-28 The gift of God's peace

¹⁵ "If you love me, keep my commands. ¹⁶ And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another advocate to help you and be with you forever— ¹⁷ the Spirit of truth. The world cannot

accept him because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be ¹⁸in you. ¹⁸I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. ¹⁹Before long, the world will not see me anymore, but you will see me. Because I live, you also will live.²⁰

On that day you will realize that I am in my Father, and you are in me, and I am in you. ²¹Whoever has my commands and keeps them is the one who loves me. The one who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love them and show myself to them.”

²²Then Judas (not Judas Iscariot) said, “But, Lord, why do you intend to show yourself to us and not to the world?”

²³Jesus replied, “Anyone who loves me will obey my teaching. My Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them. ²⁴Anyone who does not love me will not obey my teaching. These words you hear are not my own; they belong to the Father who sent me.

²⁵“All this I have spoken while still with you. ²⁶But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you. ²⁷Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.

²⁸“You heard me say, ‘I am going away and I am coming back to you.’ If you loved me, you would be glad that I am going to the Father, for the Father is greater than I.

Philippians 4: 1-9

Peace of God that passes all Understanding.

Therefore, my brothers and sisters, you whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, stand firm in the Lord in this way, dear friends! ²I plead with Euodia and I plead with Syntyche to be of the same mind in the Lord. ³Yes, and I ask you, my true companion, help these women since they have contended at my side in the cause of the gospel, along with Clement and the rest of my co-workers, whose names are in the book of life.

⁴Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! ⁵Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. ⁶Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and

petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. ⁷And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

⁸Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable— if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things. ⁹Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me—put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you.

Reflection by Revd. Gareth Baron

Peace, this word crops up a lot in everyday expression. ‘I just want some peace and quiet’, or sitting in a beauty spot you might say, ‘this is peaceful’ or maybe someone seeks ‘peace of mind’. Whilst this word peace does punctuate a lot of everyday living, does it refer to the peace which Jesus talks about or the peace which Paul speaks of in Philippians? I’d suggest it perhaps look towards that, but quite the same.

We have in Philippians a beautiful expression, ‘the peace of God, which transcends all understanding’ The peace of God far exceeds anything that we might find in the world. Jesus uses those words, ‘I do not give to you as the world gives.’ The peace that comes from knowing, following, and loving Jesus, exceeds anything that we might find in the world. What’s more, Jesus speaks about God living with and in us.

The theme ‘Peace Within and Peace Around’ as been given by Action for Children to help us reflect on how we can create peace around us, in our communities and within us as we look to life after a pandemic.

I would encourage anyone, anywhere and always to look to God. God is love and loves all people. I believe God longs for all his children to know peace in their hearts, in their lives and to live empowered by the peace of God, which transcends all understanding.

Knowing the peace of God does not mean we don’t experience troubles in life, the past fifteen months as proven that. And whilst it’s been a

challenging year for everyone, I can not help to feel children and young people have been affected greatly too. With landmark school moments missed, alongside growing up without peers, relatives, and other helpful developmental supportive relationships.

For many children and young people, these relationships and parts of life will return, with happier times ahead. Sadly, this is not going to be the case for many others who are vulnerable, and I thank God for the work of Action for Children.

We can support this valuable and important work in many of the usual ways, and you might feel able to support Action for Children with fundraising. We can also seek to be the kind of people who create and promote peace around us. We can do this in all the places we find ourselves. In his teaching, Jesus said, 'Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.' So may we seek to be peacemakers, living lives shaped by the peace of God being spoken into our hearts. And may we strive to see all children and families able to live, grow and thrive in a world loved by God and served by his children. Amen.

Hymn – StF 702

I will speak out for those who have no voices;
I will stand up for the rights of all the oppressed;
I will speak truth and justice;
I'll defend the poor and the needy;
I will lift up the weak in Jesus' name.

I will speak out for those who have no choices;
I will cry out for those who live without love;
I will show God's compassion
to the crushed and broken in spirit;
I will lift up the weak in Jesus' name.

Coral's story – one of many inspiring stories from Action for Children.

Coral is a single mum who lives in Northumberland with her six children, Ben, 16, Alisha, 14, Hannah, 13, Jack, 11, Bethany, seven and Ava, four. She first got help from Action for Children when Jack was diagnosed with autism.

"I was really struggling caring for Jack," Coral explains. "But Louise, our support worker, was brilliant. She was there for us through the diagnosis, and it was a massive help." The family was just about managing before coronavirus hit. But when the first lockdown was announced, everything became so much more difficult. "When the schools closed, it was really hard having Jack and the other kids at home all of the time," Coral says. "Jack can be disruptive and it affected the others. I found it hard to do things like shopping, too. I had to take all six kids with me."

The pandemic also had a big impact on Coral's mental health. "I've had depression for a number of years, and the loss of freedom being stuck in the house was difficult. Mentally, I couldn't imagine what the kids were going through, either. I was so worried they'd become isolated." The family's Action for Children support worker, Louise, was there for Coral and the children throughout lockdown. "She asked the kids what would help and they told her they needed a new laptop because Hannah's was broken," Coral explains. "Louise said she would look into it and then, one day, we had a delivery from her – the kids were so happy!" "It was absolutely huge for all the family. It meant we could keep on top of the schoolwork. It helps us plan our days and provides the structure we've been missing out on."

Louise also helped Coral to find Jack a place in school. She says: "Louise didn't give up until we finally got a place for him. Jack has been going to school for a couple of days each week and I can't begin to tell you the difference it's made to the family." "I want to say a huge thank you to everyone at Action for Children. Thank you for believing in us and not giving up – we feel so valued."

Hymn – StF 707

Make me a channel of your peace

Where there is hatred let me bring your love

Where there is injury, your pardon Lord

And where there is doubt true faith in You

Oh, Master grant that I may never seek

So much to be consoled as to console

To be understood as to understand

To be loved as to love with all my soul

Make me a channel of your peace

Where there is despair in life let me bring hope

Where there is darkness only light

And where there's sadness ever joy

Chorus

Make me a channel of your peace

It is in pardoning that we are pardoned

It is in giving to all men that we receive

And in dying that we are born to eternal life

Prayer

Ever-present God, we thank you that you are active in our world, declaring your love for all people through the work of Action for Children.

We earnestly hold before you today all those children and families that need to be supported – those surrounded by the horrors of abuse, neglect, violence, poverty, exploitation and other peace shattering circumstances.

Every child and family member are precious to you and so we humbly ask for the work of the charity to continue to make a real difference in their lives. May they be blessed with all the things that will allow them to live and flourish as you intended, secure in the knowledge that they are loved and treasured.

We also hold before you the leaders, staff, volunteers and supporters of Action for Children. May every one of them continue to recognise the promptings of your Spirit as You guide them along the right paths to provide the life-giving support that is needed.

To struggle against the challenging circumstances of our time can be frightening, heart-breaking and energy-sapping – physically, emotionally and mentally – not only for the children and their families in need but also for those people in Action for Children who come into contact with them.

And so, we pray fervently that all involved may be instilled with your strength and your peace.

Lord of Peace, give them peace at all times and in every way, and may they know the hope that is possible through following Jesus. **Amen.**

Hymn

Peace is flowing like a river,
flowing out from you and me,
flowing out into the desert,
setting all the captives free.

Joy is flowing like a river,
flowing out from you and me,
flowing out into the desert,
setting all the captives free.

Love is flowing like a river,
flowing out from you and me,
flowing out into the desert,
setting all the captives free.

Hope is flowing like a river,
flowing out from you and me,
flowing out into the desert,
setting all the captives free.

A Blessing

We say these words, knowing God hears us saying them together whilst gathered in different places.

**The love of the Father enfold us,
the wisdom of the Son enlighten us,
the fire of the Spirit enflame us;
and the blessing of God, the Three in One,
be upon us and abide with us now
and for ever. Amen.**