



## Ripon and Lower Dales Methodist Circuit

with God, in the City, Towns, Villages, and Rural Areas

Praise the LORD!

Sing to the LORD a new song,

his praise in the assembly of the faithful.

Let Israel be glad in its Maker;

let the children of Zion rejoice in their King.

Let them praise his name with dancing,

making melody to him with tambourine and lyre.

For the LORD takes pleasure in his people.

Psalm 149:1-4

### HYMN: StF 83

Praise, my soul, the King of heaven;

To his feet your tribute bring.

Ransomed, healed, restored, forgiven,

Evermore his praises sing.

Alleluia, alleluia!

Praise the everlasting King!

Praise him for his grace and favour

To his people in distress.

Praise him, still the same as ever,

Slow to chide, and swift to bless.

Alleluia, alleluia!

Glorious in his faithfulness!

Fatherlike he tends and spares us;

Well our feeble frame he knows.

In his hand he gently bears us,

Rescues us from all our foes.

Alleluia, alleluia!

Widely yet his mercy flows!

Angels, help us to adore him;

You behold him face to face.

Sun and moon, bow down before him,

Dwellers all in time and space.

Alleluia, alleluia!

Praise with us the God of grace!

### PRAYER

Lord, we join in the words Praise, my soul, the King of heaven and we bow our heads in awe of all that you have been, are and will be. We think of the many ways we encounter you creator, father, brother, friend, comforter,

challenger, saviour, redeemer, and model for our lives. Lord, you who are Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, we worship you.

You who walks alongside us as we search for the wisdom of your word, as we journey day by day and week by week, as we rest in your presence, seek your guidance, and accept your invitation of hospitality, we worship you.

You who are the source of all things, present in everything, you who enables the seasons to turn as the world continues to turn, you who is all knowing and all loving, we worship you.

We worship you, as we sit and rest a while in your presence, as we seek to learn more of your nature, more of your glory and more of your love for us.

We come knowing that only through your selfless act of allowing Jesus to walk this earth, of his selfless nature in life, death and resurrection that enables our selfish natures to be restored. For all our actions that separate us from you we are sorry and ask your forgiveness.

Even when we were far off you came and time after time offer paths of restoration, may we who call on your name know your restorative love in this moment. May our offering of worship be fragrant to you, may we who worship you come before you and worship in spirit and truth. Amen

### THE LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father in heaven,  
hallowed be your name,  
your kingdom come,  
your will be done, on earth as in heaven.  
Give us today our daily bread.

Forgive us our sins  
as we forgive those who sin against us.

Save us from the time of trial  
and deliver us from evil.

For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours now and forever. Amen

## **HYMN: StF 274**

Jesus Christ, I think upon your sacrifice  
You became nothing, poured out to death  
Many times I've wondered at your gift of life  
And I'm in that place once again  
I'm in that place once again

And once again I look upon the cross where  
you died  
I'm humbled by your mercy and I'm broken  
inside  
Once again I thank you  
Once again I pour out my life  
Pour out our life's to you

Now you are exalted to the highest place  
King of the heavens, where one day I'll bow  
But for now I marvel at your saving grace  
And I'm full of praise once again  
Full of praise today  
I'm full of praise once again

And once again I look upon the cross where  
you died  
I'm humbled by your mercy and I'm broken  
inside  
Once again I thank you,  
Once again I pour out my life

Oh thank you for the cross  
Thank you for the cross  
Thank you for the cross, my friend

Yes, thank you for the cross  
Thank you for the cross  
Thank you for the cross, my friend!

## **PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION**

Gracious God,

you call us to love you with all our hearts and  
minds and souls, you challenge us to love our  
neighbours as ourselves, so, as we come to  
pray for the needs of others, we do so with  
love for all those people, places, and  
situations we bring before you now.

We pray for situations across the world where  
people have been displaced, lost homes,  
family members and find themselves in  
temporary shelters, lost and confused,  
isolated and hungry, for those who feel  
unloved, frightened, and vulnerable.

We pray for decision makers at all levels,  
governments, national and local  
organisations, relief agencies, churches, and  
community groups. We pray for negotiations,  
negotiators, peace makers and those taking  
sides. May your love permeate discussions  
and may your love win through enabling  
change.

We pray for our own families and friends, for  
those who know you and those who have yet  
to encounter you. May we bring your  
overwhelming love and peace into all our  
encounters.

We pray for our communities, and especially  
for the teenager who lost her family in the  
tragic road accident this last week. We pray  
for the neighbours amongst whom we live.  
We pray especially for those whose lives are  
diminished by bereavement, fear, illness,  
betrayal, or broken relationships, may they  
find strength in you, experience joy through  
relationship with you and realise their best  
selves in you.

We pray for our church community, that we  
may be a beacon amongst the communities  
where we worship, that our doors, our arms,  
and our hearts may be open to receive all  
those you call and who seek you.

We ask that you hear both these written  
prayers and our own prayers as we come to  
you with the situations that are on our hearts.

(take a moment to bring your own prayers for  
others)

We ask that you show us your mercy and  
grant us your salvation for we ask in and  
through Jesus, our Lord.

Amen

## **READING: Romans 13:8-14**

### **Love for One Another**

8 Owe no one anything, except to love one  
another; for the one who loves another has  
fulfilled the law. <sup>9</sup>The commandments, 'You

shall not commit adultery; You shall not murder; You shall not steal; You shall not covet'; and any other commandment, are summed up in this word, 'Love your neighbour as yourself.' <sup>10</sup>Love does no wrong to a neighbour; therefore, love is the fulfilling of the law.

## **An Urgent Appeal**

<sup>11</sup> Besides this, you know what time it is, how it is now the moment for you to wake from sleep. For salvation is nearer to us now than when we became believers; <sup>12</sup>the night is far gone, the day is near. Let us then lay aside the works of darkness and put on the armour of light; <sup>13</sup>let us live honourably as in the day, not in revelling and drunkenness, not in debauchery and licentiousness, not in quarrelling and jealousy. <sup>14</sup>Instead, put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires.

## **REFLECTION**

When we read Paul's letter to the Romans, we encounter both a clear and a systematic demonstration of Christian doctrine. A letter written as Paul was unable to visit Rome himself, but which Biblical scholars suggest was delivered by Phoebe who we encounter in Romans 16:1-2. As an aside, if you enjoy reading, I enjoyed a lovely, fictional book, recently - Phoebe written by Paula Gooder. However, back to Romans, the letter begins by exploring condemnation due to all because of our rebellion against God. However, God, by grace, offers justification, by faith, through Jesus. By our response in recognising, and responding to, justification offered we receive restoration and are offered the opportunity to enter relationship with God.

But, as we read Romans, we learn that justification by faith doesn't stop with salvation; just as any relationship doesn't flourish without work. So, our relationship with God develops as we grow in faith, live our lives, and follow Him. As we reach the verses of today's lectionary in Romans, we are invited to consider one of the practical ways in which this growth is expressed, that is through love.

In Matthew we read Jesus' response to the question which is the greatest commandment "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind." This is the greatest and first commandment. And a second is like it: "You shall love your neighbour as yourself." On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.'

The upside-down, topsy turvy, message of the gospel is one of love. Love is the radical force that, through Jesus' resurrection, is 'unleashed' into the world, Tom Wright describes it as the day of the revolution. I like that terminology because love has the power to radically change, not just individuals but the world and that is the movement that we, through faith, are a part of.

Pauls words echo those of Jesus as he writes 'Love does no wrong to a neighbour; therefore, love is fulfilling of the law'. These words recall the parable of the good neighbour that Jesus shared reminding us that all who we encounter are our neighbours. We, who have encountered Christ, have the power to love and Paul reminds us, as we encounter others, our first commitment to them surely is love. As we read in verse eight, "Owe no man anything but to love one another."

As we read on Paul writes "The hour has come for you to wake up from your slumber, because our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed. The night is nearly over; the day is almost here." As Paul wrote to Rome it was to a church that was in its infancy, we live in a society where we lament over the decline in those who attend Church. Perhaps now, as then, it is time to wake up, time to get going, time to look around and actively seek out opportunities to love here in this place.

There has never been a promise that our walk with Jesus is going to be easy or straightforward, but we are promised that we are not alone as we read in Matthew 'remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.'

As we walk our path of faith Paul encourages us to put on the armour of light ... if we turn to Ephesians 6, following encouragement to live as children of light Paul goes on to encourage his readers to 'be strong in the Lord, and in his mighty power. To put on the full armour of God ... (to) fasten the belt of truth around your waist and put on the breastplate of righteousness. As shoes for your feet put on whatever will make you ready to proclaim the gospel of peace. With all of these, take the shield of faith, with which you will be able to quench all the flaming arrows of the evil one. Take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.'

There is so much packed into these verses and there is only time and space to scratch the surface but before I set this passage aside, I'd like to offer encouragement. Love encourages each of us to be the best versions of ourselves we can possibly be and to similarly encourage others to be the best version of themselves that they can be. CS Lewis is quoted saying we can be 'like an ignorant child who wants to go on making mud pies in a slum because he cannot imagine what is meant by the offer of a holiday at the sea. We are far too easily pleased.'

I pray that we may each experience the joy of encountering Jesus afresh daily, clothing ourselves with, and in, Him as we walk the path we are called to; that we may owe only a debt of love to one another and thereby fulfil the greatest commandment to love the Lord our God with all our heart, soul, and mind, and to love our neighbour as ourselves and in so doing become the best version of ourselves for Jesus.

And, in the words from The Message 'May, the amazing grace of the Master, Jesus Christ, the extravagant love of God, the intimate friendship of the Holy Spirit, be with us all. In the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Amen'

## **HYMN: H&P 186**

Tell out, my soul, the greatness of the Lord!  
Unnumbered blessings give my spirit voice;  
Tender to me the promise of His Word;  
In God my Savior shall my heart rejoice.

Tell out, my soul, the greatness of His name!  
Make known His might, the deeds His arm  
has done;  
His mercy sure, from age to age the same;  
His holy Name, the Lord, the mighty One.

Tell out, my soul, the greatness of His might!  
Powers and dominions lay their glory by;  
Proud hearts and stubborn wills are put to  
flight;  
The hungry fed, the humble lifted high.

Tell out, my soul, the glories of His Word!  
Firm is His promise, and His mercy sure.  
Tell out my soul, the greatness of the Lord  
To children's children and forevermore!

## **BLESSING**

Loving God, lead us out into the world,  
renewed in vigour, in hope, in faith and in  
purpose. Send us to live, to work but above  
all to flourish, for you.

May we journey these coming days in the  
shadow of your glory, may we live our best  
lives for you, and may we share the love we  
have received from you, with those we  
encounter, for you.

In the name of the Father, Son, and Holy  
Spirit

Amen