



The Central Norfolk Methodist Circuit



Sunday 10th August 2025: 19th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Theme for today is "Proper preparation"

Prepared by Mr Glyn Constantine

Opening Words

Gracious God, we come to you in this time of worship. Move in our midst, open our hearts, reveal your nature to us, we pray.

Hymn: STF 351 In Christ alone

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m_063OI38RQ&list=RDm_063OI38RQ&start_radio=1

In Christ alone, my hope is found
He is my light, my strength, my song
This Cornerstone, this solid ground
Firm through the fiercest drought and storm
What heights of love, what depths of peace
When fears are stilled, when strivings cease
My Comforter, my All in All
Here in the love of Christ I stand

In Christ alone, who took on flesh
Fullness of God in helpless babe
This gift of love and righteousness
Scorned by the ones He came to save
'Til on that cross as Jesus died
The wrath of God was satisfied
For every sin on Him was laid
Here in the death of Christ I live, I live

There in the ground His body lay
Light of the world by darkness slain
Then bursting forth in glorious Day
Up from the grave He rose again
And as He stands in victory
Sin's curse has lost its grip on me
For I am His and He is mine
Bought with the precious blood of Christ

No guilt in life, no fear in death
This is the power of Christ in me
From life's first cry to final breath
Jesus commands my destiny
No power of hell, no scheme of man
Can ever pluck me from His hand
Till He returns or calls me home
Here in the power of Christ I'll stand

Opening Prayers:

Faithful God, let us give thanks unto the Lord for you are good.

You wrote our story of faith into existence.

Why do we turn to empty rituals, to empty promises and to empty lives?

When we have you to help, cast our eyes to fulfilment to love-filled promises.

To fuller lives.

When in the prosperity of your almighty kingdom our lives are meaningful.

You wrap your heart around what is broken and hopeless and give promise of hope in the fullest in your almighty Kingdom.

Help us to see the impact of what putting our trust in you will do when we turn away from empty rituals.

We thank you for your undying love.

For giving us a new chance each day to live our lives in your image as is our purpose.

God, we pray for a genuine unwavering faith and obedience to you over the emptiness of the rituals that tempt us in our everyday lives.

Let us give thanks unto the Lord for God is good.

Let us walk and follow in faith alone as we have seen others do so before us.

You are our breaker of chains, rescuer, righteous seeker, promise keeper.

In our weakness you make us strong.

The finisher of our story of faith.

We open our hearts and put our trust in you.

Amen.

Today's Readings: Hosea 11: 1-3, 8-16 Luke 12: 32-40

Reflection:

As doctors and surgeons, my team and I trained and prepared for any emergency that might suddenly occur. Things could go wrong when you least expected it and when there was no time to look at the books or search for equipment. Similarly, as a pilot, if a problem suddenly arises then I have to be ready to calmly and automatically deal with the problem, be it mechanical or weather related.

In both cases, you cannot predict the timing, so being prepared and 'on the ball' is of the essence to prevent a disaster.

Our Luke reading, chapter 12 32-40, finishes off last week's passage about worry and possessions, encourages us to get our priorities right and echoes down the years. "For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also". I need to stop from time to time and ask myself what my "treasure" is. What takes priority? God's Kingdom or money, security, possessions, family, friends, time...the list goes on.

The rest of the passage concentrates on the theme of being prepared, and of course putting God's Kingdom first in our lives is part of that. Two short stories about servants being ready for the master's return and a thief in the night reinforce the point. The church of Luke's day was expecting the imminent return of Christ. We are still waiting but have a hope, both if he returns today or when we die. In old language are we "ready to meet our maker, strong in our faith in Jesus and the assurance he gives. That hope comes from faith.

The other reading from Hebrews is a small part of a famous passage about faith. Verse 1 tells us "faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see" It is that faith in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus, and his promises, that sustain us through all the difficulties we face in life.

After explaining about Abraham and his descendants, Hebrews in verse 13 continues "All these people were still living by faith when they died. They did not receive the things promised; they only saw them and welcomed them from a distance, admitting that they were foreigners and strangers on earth"

We may not see the return of Christ for ourselves, but one absolute certainty is that we all will see him face to face one day. Are we living by faith, prepared and in the hope and assurance that comes from that?

A time of prayer

Generous God,

You love to prepare space for us, to welcome us at the banqueting table, to feed us and sustain us with your presence and promises.

And so, we come with our prayers for others and for your world. Even where to start with our stumbling words can make us anxious or overwhelmed, who will we leave out, who are we not even aware of, who have we overlooked or forgotten? And yet, the words of Jesus are so often, do not be afraid and peace be with you.

So let us let go of our fear, receive your peace and come to you in confidence knowing you are always ready to listen.

We pray for all who are caught up in regimes and wars where your precious children live in fear of their lives, who have left places of safety to seek sanctuary and those who are hungry, thirsty and in need of medical aid or supplies.

Show us in our praying and our living to co-work with you to bring about your Kingdom of justice, love and peace.

In giving thanks for the beauty of the created world, we lament our exploitation of the earth. We pray for those who are most vulnerable to the effects of increased droughts and floods, whose homes and communities are at risk and whose livelihoods are fragile. Show us in our praying and our living to co-work with you to bring about your Kingdom of justice, love and peace.

We pray for your church, across the world and for our own church community. We pray that we would follow Jesus so closely and to trust him so completely, that we would listen and be guided by him, in order to devote our lives to serve God – loving others as we love ourselves.

Show us in our praying and our living to co-work with you to bring about your Kingdom of justice, love and peace.

We pray for those we love and care for, we remember especially those who are ill or frail at home or in hospital, we pray for those who are anxious and fearful for today or tomorrow, for those who are living with loss and navigating grief.

Show us in our praying and our living to co-work with you to bring about your Kingdom of justice, love and peace.

And we pray for ourselves, for all the week ahead will hold for us. May we know your love and peace that we may live our discipleship in the strength of Christ and in the power of the life-giving Holy Spirit.

Amen.

The Lord's Prayer *Our Father ...*

Hymn: StF 548 Blessed Assurance

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H1VMHEMOMZY&list=RDH1VMHEMOMZY&start_radio=1

Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine;
Oh, what a foretaste of glory divine!
Heir of salvation, purchase of God,
Born of His Spirit, washed in His blood.

Perfect submission, perfect delight,
Visions of rapture now burst on my sight;
Angels descending, bring from above
Echoes of mercy, whispers of love.

*This is my story, this is my song,
Praising my Savior all the day long.
This is my story, this is my song,
Praising my Savior all the day long.*

Perfect submission, all is at rest,
I in my Savior am happy and blest;
Watching and waiting, looking above,
Filled with His goodness, lost in His love.

A prayer of blessing:

May you go to find the light shining in the darkness,
May you go to find love overcoming hatred,
May you go to find life shining through everywhere,
And may you come to see what is yours to do, in Christ's name we pray,

Amen.