



The Central Norfolk Methodist Circuit



Sunday 24th August 2025: 21st Sunday in Ordinary Time

Theme for today is "Rules, Rules Rules"

Prepared by Pippa Cook

Opening Words

Open our eyes, Lord, to see the beauty of the world around us, especially in those whom we think are wrong.

Hymn STF 116 Sing for God's glory <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4koSoT7QcE4&t=16s>

Sing for God's glory that colours
the dawn of creation,
racing across the sky, trailing
bright clouds of elation;
sun of delight succeeds the velvet of night,
warming the earth's exultation.

Sing for God's power that shatters
the chains that would bind us,
searing the darkness of fear and despair
that could blind us,
touching our shame with love that will not lay
blame,
reaching out gently to find us.

Sing for God's justice disturbing
each easy illusion,
tearing down tyrants and putting
our pride to confusion;
lifeblood of right, resisting evil and slight,
offering freedom's transfusion.

Sing for God's saints who have travelled
faith's journey before us,
who in our weariness give us their hope
to restore us;
in them we see the new creation to be,
spirit of love made flesh for us.

Prayer

We give thanks to you, Lord, for all the blessings that we receive, especially for those we take for granted. Forgive us for the times when we take our food, our shelter, our safety, our friends and our family for granted. Help us to know ourselves forgiven, and give us a sense of the needs of others. Open our hearts and minds to care, and in caring, to know that we are doing your will. Amen

Reading Luke 13 vv 10 - 17

Hymn STF 707 Make me a channel of your peace <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lkgDdlpB4EA>

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's 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's despair in life, let me bring hope
where there is darkness, only light
and where there's sadness, ever joy.

*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.
It is in pardoning that we are pardoned
in giving to all men that we receive
and in dying that we're born to eternal life.

Reflection

Jesus was living in a time when the rules of the religion ruled peoples' lives. The Romans were the occupying force, but the religious ruled the people, and as long as peace reigned and taxes were paid, the Romans didn't take much notice of the locals. One of the over-riding principles of Jewish law was that no work was done on the Sabbath. God's instruction in the Ten Commandments was that the Sabbath, or seventh day, should be kept holy and used as a day of rest, and throughout the Old Testament, ignoring this instruction brought dire consequences, even to death by stoning.

By the time of Jesus, the Pharisees, experts in the law, and Sadducees, who based their living on the Torah, the first five books of the Old Testament, had added their interpretation of what keeping the Sabbath holy meant. It had become very restrictive and perhaps caused more fear and anxiety than the rest that God had intended. Not for the first time, not for the last time, and possibly on many more occasions than are recorded, Jesus heals on the Sabbath. He is very publicly admonished as all the congregation is told that they have six days to do their work and, if they want healing, the Sabbath is not the day to ask for it!

Jesus retaliates, calling those who criticise him hypocrites. They know they would save one of their own animals if it was in trouble on the Sabbath, and this woman is a descendant of Abraham, just as they are.

- How quick are we to complain when others don't see our Holy Day as important as we do?
- How can we make sure that we keep our Holy Day Holy (or wholly) for God?
- How strict are we in making sure that we take our rest on one day in seven even when it cannot be a Sunday?

A time of prayer From the Methodist Worship Book

Let us offer our prayer with all God's people through Jesus Christ our Lord who ever lives to pray for us.

We pray for the needs of the world ...

We pray for the Church ...

We pray for all in trouble or distress ...

We pray for all who make a new beginning today ...

God of compassion and mercy, listen to our prayer.

May what we ask in Jesus Christ your Son be according to His word, who said, 'Ask, and you will receive, Seek, and you will find, Knock, and the door will be opened to you.' To you, merciful God, through your Son, in the lifegiving Spirit, Be glory and praise for ever. **Amen**

The Lord's Prayer Our Father ...

Hymn: STF 678 Come, all who look to Christ today https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-t_hBcMtYrA

Come, all who look to Christ today,
stretch out your hands, enlarge your mind,
together share his living way
where all who humbly seek will find.

Come, all who will from every place;
find her new powers of unity,
accept the Spirit's strong embrace
which binds us in community

Come, young and old of every Church,
bring all your treasures of prayer,
join the dynamic Spirit's search
to press beyond the truths we share.

Bring your traditions' richest store,
your hymns and rites and cherished creeds;
explore your visions, pray for more,
since God delights to meet fresh needs.

Come, trust in God and live in peace,
anticipate that final light
when strife and bigotry shall cease,
and faith be lost in praise and sight.

From the Prayer Handbook, Day24

Be fruitful within us, O God and fill our words with your love, our lives with your glory, and our labour with your blessing.

Ann Gilbert, Cornish Methodist preacher (c. 1735-1790)