

# A month of Sundays – November 2021



Preston Ribble Circuit

Ministry Team

# **Giving your All**

## **7<sup>th</sup> November 2021**

### **Call to Worship:**

Let us open our hearts, our minds, and our eyes to see the generous gifts of God, and respond with praise and thanksgiving.

### **Hymn:**

Dear Lord and Father of mankind forgive our foolish ways;  
re clothe us in our rightful mind; in purer lives thy service find,  
in deeper reverence, praise

### **Prayers:**

Eternal God, you call us to this time and place, to still our minds and gather our thoughts, to see the immensity of your giving to us. You are the giver of life in all its fulness; the giver of gifts beyond compare, the giver of more than we can imagine or comprehend. We come before you now.

Father, Son and Holy Spirit, one in three and three in one, we adore you

for you are light in our darkness, you are the calm in our turmoil;

you are wealth in our poverty; the meaning in our pointlessness;

the hope in our despondency; the meaning in our being. For all of this and so much more we worship you. Amen.

Lord Jesus Christ, we come to you in sorrow for our selfishness, in regret for our greed, in despair over our blindness and deafness to the needs of those around us. We seek your forgiveness and your blessing to make us more generous, more giving, more able to see, and more willing to listen. Amen.

The Lords' Prayer

## **Reading:** Mark 12v38-44

### **Reflection:** (Rev Barbara Pettitt)

“This poor widow has put in more than all those who are contributing to the treasury.” Mark 12v43

‘Live simply that others can simply live’.

I wonder what that phrase means to you? Though there is some question about whether it was Mahatma Gandhi or Mother Teresa who first said it, there’s no doubt it has become a popular phrase.

Some people believe the wisdom of that advice may be the key to human survival on earth. That simple and that serious. We cannot expect to keep up this current lifestyle without serious consequences. But how do we teach ourselves to want less, buy less, use less?

In this story Jesus commends a poor widow who he perceives has given more than any other who gave that day. Simply because she put in all she had and the other put in out of their wealth. He also warned people about the teachers of the law who seek the best for themselves and make a show of themselves in the market places and take the best seats at the banquet. Presumably not concerned about God really just their own place in society.

The person Jesus commends is the poor widow. The one who would not be noticed, who had no real place in that time and culture. A lone woman considered totally unremarkable. And yet she does this most remarkable thing and gives all to the temple offering. Living simply, you might say. Living simply so that she could make her offering to God. That offering more important than what people thought of her, or her need for things.

The challenge for us is to consider how important God is to us. Where is he in our lives. Is he first or somewhere down the list or at the bottom? Are we like the teachers of the law, going about our business with no real concern about God and his kingdom? Or are we like the widow who gives all she has

and goes about God's business living simply as she feels called. You could say buying less, wanting less.

Energy prices are rising, the cost of living is getting higher, wages and pensions are not keeping pace. Shelves in supermarkets have less on them. Petrol is a luxury when there are no drivers to make deliveries. We live in a rapidly changing world where wanting and buying less could be a positive choice.

The widow is my hero because giving everything you have is more challenging than I can imagine, especially when I consider all I do have. Pray that God may give us all grace to learn to live more simply. Pray that God may give us all grace to be the widow and not the teachers of the law.

Amen.

### **Hymn:**

Take my life and let it be consecrated, Lord, to thee;  
take my moments and my days, let them flow in ceaseless  
praise.

Take my love; my Lord, I pour at thy feet its treasure store;  
take myself and I will be ever, only all for thee.

### **A sending out prayer:**

Generous God, make us generous. Make us generous in joy, and generous in love. Help us to remember what we have done today. Remind us, every day, that we need to share our love for you with others, that we need to give and live generously – For you are a generous God, our God. Be with us and all whom we love, this week and always. Amen.

# Remembrance Sunday

## 14<sup>th</sup> November 2021

### Call to worship      Matthew 5v9

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.

- 1 **Praise, my soul, the King of heaven ;**  
to his feet thy tribute bring.  
Ransomed, healed, restored, forgiven,  
who like thee his praise should sing ?  
Praise him! Praise him!  
Praise the everlasting King!
- 2 Praise him for his grace and favour  
to his people in distress ;  
praise him, still the same for ever,  
slow to chide, and swift to bless.  
Praise him! Praise him!  
Glorious in his faithfulness.
- 3 Father-like, he tends and spares us ;  
well our feeble frame he knows ;  
in his hands he gently bears us,  
rescues us from all our foes.  
Praise him! Praise him!  
Widely as his mercy flows.
- 4 Angels in the height, adore him ;  
ye behold him face to face ;  
sun and moon, bow down before him,  
dwellers all in time and space.  
Praise him! Praise him!  
Praise with us the God of grace!

Henry Francis Lyte (1793–1847) Reproduced from *Singing the Faith* Electronic Words Edition, number 83.

## **Coventry Litany of Reconciliation-**

All have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God.

The hatred which divides nation from nation, race from race, class from class, Father, **forgive.**

The covetous desires of people and nations to possess what is not their own, Father, **forgive.**

The greed which exploits the work of human hands and lays waste the earth, Father, **forgive.**

Our envy of the welfare and happiness of others, **Father, forgive.**

Our indifference to the plight of the imprisoned, the homeless, the refugee, Father, **forgive.**

The lust which dishonours the bodies of men, women, and children, **Father, forgive.**

The pride which leads us to trust in ourselves and not in God, **Father, forgive.**

Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.

## **Reading – James 3 v13-18**

<sup>13</sup> Who is wise and understanding among you? Show by your good life that your works are done with gentleness born of wisdom. <sup>14</sup> But if you have bitter envy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not be boastful and false to the truth. <sup>15</sup> Such wisdom does not come down from above, but is earthly, unspiritual, devilish. <sup>16</sup> For where there is envy and selfish ambition, there will also be disorder and wickedness of every kind. <sup>17</sup> But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without a trace of partiality or hypocrisy. <sup>18</sup> And a harvest of righteousness is sown in peace for those who make peace.

## Reflection

On Remembrance Sunday it is good to remember and to give thanks for all those who sacrificed much that we might know peace and freedom today. We despise the idea of war and pray for peace, but do we seek peace in our own lives and in the places, we inhabit? Peace is more than just the absence of war or noise. We are called to be peace makers – to sow peaceably through our words and actions. Our Christian hope for the world is built on Jesus' example of reconciling us to God through his own sacrifice.

Reconciliation seeks more than just forgiveness; it seeks to restore relationship and build trust. This begins in our own homes and in our own hearts. I leave you this poem to reflect on.

### Peace Poem

If there is to be peace in the world  
    There must be peace in the nations.  
If there is to be peace in the nations,  
    There must be peace in the cities.  
If there is to be peace in the cities  
    There must be peace between neighbours.  
If there is to be peace between neighbours,  
    There must be peace in the home.  
If there is to be peace in the home,  
    There must be peace in the heart. **Amen**

#### **1 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 :  
*O 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.*

- 2 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 :

*Refrain*

- 3 Make me a channel of your peace.  
It is in pardoning that we are pardoned,  
in giving unto all that we receive,  
and in dying that we're born to eternal life.

Sebastian Temple (1928–1997) from the *Prayer of St Francis*

Reproduced from *Singing the Faith* Electronic Words Edition, number 707

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## **Prayers for others**

Almighty God, we pray for all those who continue to make sacrifices to keep peace, build relationships, trust, and love in the difficult places in our world.

For those who serve in the armed services, on our streets, in our communities and in the difficult places. Lord, give them your wisdom and strength.

For those who work to bring healing, in our hospitals, clinics and the safe spaces those who suffer can go. Lord, bring your healing and peace.

For those who help to build community, providing shelter for the homeless, food for the hungry and friendship to the lonely. Lord, sustain and strengthen them through your love. **AMEN**

## **Closing Prayer**

Almighty God,  
from whom all thoughts of truth and peace proceed:  
kindle, we pray, in the hearts of all, the true love of peace  
and guide with your pure and peaceable wisdom  
those who take counsel for the nations of the earth  
that in tranquillity your kingdom may go forward,  
till the earth is filled with the knowledge of your love;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

# 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> November 2021

## Call to worship

We come today to acknowledge Christ as King.  
His throne is a cross, and he reigns from high heaven.  
Beauty and holiness are the marks of his kingdom.  
He is the face of God revealed in human form.  
Let us keep our eyes fixed on him:  
King Jesus – the Way, the Truth and the Life.  
**Amen.**

## Prayer

God of mystery and magnificence, we see you as our king.  
We read of visions of your throne, flaming and ethereal.  
You are beyond our imagining,  
beyond our dreams and visions and wildest hopes.  
You are in us and with us and among us.  
You are all we could imagine and wish for and more.  
You are our God, our king of all creation.  
**Amen.**

O Lord our mighty God,  
we have heard but not always listened to you:  
with sorrow and sadness, we confess our sin.  
We have seen need and closed our eyes to it:  
with sorrow and sadness, we confess our sin.  
We have closed our ears to cries for help:  
with sorrow and sadness, we confess our sin.  
We have known your truth and yet followed lies  
and falsehoods:  
with sorrow and sadness, we confess our sin.  
**Amen.**

The Lord God says:  
be assured your sins are forgiven,  
your slate is wiped clean.  
Listen to the word of God and know its truth.  
**Amen.**

Lord's Prayer

## **Reading**

John 18:33-37

## **Reflection** Carolyn Hothersall

I'm sure you'll have seen fields of sheep with their lambs in the spring time, and maybe, like me, you wondered how the lambs and their mothers seem so easily to be able to seek out each other when they become separated. To us, all their bleating sounds are so similar that we can't distinguish one from another. But then I thought about how we find each other in a crowd. It's not too difficult really. And it's not just that we use our vision too. Most of us can recognize a person's voice when we're speaking to them on the phone. Of course, there are those who have a particular skill of being able to mimic someone else, but even so, there are slight nuances which aren't quite captured accurately and it's not too difficult to recognize the true person.

Jesus says that those who belong to him, who seek to follow the truth, listen to his voice. We will only be able to do that if we can recognise his voice in a world of competing voices. This isn't something that will happen overnight. But it can and will happen if we work at it; if we listen to his voice often enough that we begin to know its cadences, its rhythms and patterns. We do that primarily through engaging with Scripture.

Four Gospels give us four windows into the things Jesus said and did. The Old Testament gives us, among other things, a

picture of what the Messiah would be like. Through reading the Bible we learn to recognise Jesus' voice – or God's voice, if you prefer. But it is not only by reading; personal reading of Scripture is a relatively modern phenomenon. Hearing it, learning and retelling its stories, talking about it, wrestling with it together – these are the ways that God's people learn to hear God's voice and listen to his truth.

In answer to Pilate's repeated questions about whether or not he was a king, Jesus said: 'For this I was born, and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone who belongs to the truth listens to my voice.'

## **Prayer**

We recognize we are often caught up in so much busyness that we don't always make time to meet you in simplicity and stillness. We make space for our prayers for your world. Thinking about the news which has filled our headlines, we pray for those people we have seen on our screens or read about this week, and we hold them in your love.

We know so many who are struggling with health, big decisions, crises or major changes in life. We know you care for them more deeply than we do, but we show our concern as we name them before you in quiet trust.

There are many things which we have on our minds, things we may not have shared with anyone else. But you understand us and want only the best for us. We pray to you in the honesty of our hearts.

We ask that you will take each of our prayers and answer them in your own time and in your own way, giving us expectant and trustful hearts.

**Amen**

# Blessing

Christ our King,  
as we go from this place,  
assure us of your presence with us –  
for we belong to you.  
Help us to look for truth in all places,  
to seek and listen to your voice,  
and to use your power to serve.  
Bring heaven to earth and reign in our lives.  
We pray in your name, Jesus Christ.  
**Amen.**

## Sunday 28th November 2021 1st Sunday of Advent

**Hymn:** “Longing for Light we wait in Darkness”: STF 706

### Call to worship:

Holy Lord, Be with us as we gather in your name to celebrate in prayer during today our first Sunday in Advent. May we look forward to this season of Advent as a time to reflect on the year that has passed and pray for those whose faith may have been weakened or, challenged in the course of the year. Lord, hear our prayer and fill us with hope and expectation in our hearts as we bring the Gospel of good news to others. Strengthen us in your love and wisdom and may we find space during Advent to spend even more time with you in prayer and discernment in preparation for your coming this Christmas.  
Amen.

### Opening Prayers

Father, let your hope arise in our hearts! Lift our eyes up to see that you alone are where our hope comes from. Help us to

shake off the anxiety, discouragements, and distractions that have filled this year.

May we pause to remember that we have hope in you.

You know the end of our stories, and we give thanks because you have promised that it will be a victorious ending. Give us the grace we need to wrap up this year joyfully.

We invite your Spirit into this beautiful Advent season. Renew our sense of holy anticipation! Let us be those who are waiting eagerly for Jesus to come again.

More than anything, we ask that you be glorified in this season of expectation. Amen.

### **Lighting of the Advent wreath candle:**

#### **Prayer:**

Lord Jesus, as we light our Advent candle today, let your light shine stronger in our lives and may those who are experiencing darkness right now be filled with your love and comfort. We pray that we too will be bearers of your light, banishing the gloom and darkness and being a source of encouragement to those in need. Amen.

God of hope, who brought love into this world, be the love that dwells between us.

God of hope, who brought peace into this world, be the peace that dwells between us.

God of hope, who brought joy into this world, be the joy that dwells between us and particularly this Advent time. Amen

**Hymn:** Christmas is coming the Church is Glad to Sing: STF  
166

**Bible reading:** Psalm 25: 1-10

**Bible reading:** Luke 1:26-38

**Reflection: (*Simon Skidmore*):**

Advent looks back in order to look forward! The celebration of the first coming of Christ in the stable at Bethlehem has meaning and purpose because of hope and expectation of His second coming on the clouds of glory. Christmas is not sterile memorial of a thing past and gone, but effectual preparation for what is to come.

Advent causes us to change our attitudes to our lives, which are set in a proper perspective, seen from their end. We are no longer preparing for promotion or success or achievement as ends in themselves but humbly waiting on the Lord.

The great symbol of Advent is the increase of light. Candles are lit in ever greater number in growing expectation of the End. Advent is an extended meditation on the mystery of time.

One of the things which I have enjoyed most of all during previous seasons of Advent is going along to a cathedral to take part in the evening service, "From Darkness to Light." As the service develops more and more candles are increasing lit across the cathedral space lifting the gloom and darkness. The first hymn of the From Darkness to light Service is normally performed by a young chorister who sings

*"This is the truth sent from above,  
The truth of God, the God of love:  
Therefore don't turn me from your door,  
But hearken all, both rich and poor."*

The opening words of this hymn a quick reminder too that our God is a God of love and a God that calls each and every one of us, both rich and poor. It's also a reminder of the experience that Mary and Joseph encountered on entering Jerusalem when there was no room at the inn.

What can we do to make sure the doors are not closed to strangers this Advent? Our God is a God of the margins who was born in a stable. How can we be present at those margins but being even more open to God and others?

**Hymn:** A New commandment I give unto you: STF 242

## **Prayers:**

Lord Jesus, we reach out to you in prayer today on the first Sunday of Advent to ask you to bless each and everyone one of us gathered together today in your name. We pray that over the next four weeks we spend real time in prayer, preparation and carrying our service to others. We pray for our church community here in Preston-Ribble Circuit that we become even more a church that develops in love, faith, worship, and action. Lord hear our prayer.

**Amen.**

**Lord God hear our prayer.**

Lord Jesus, we pray for people during this time who have faced a challenging year because of difficult circumstances either at home or in work or another aspect of this lives where they have faced upset, distress and fear. We pray that you will give them hope and strength and that during Advent they will come closer to you and be renewed and refreshed in faith. Lord hear our prayer. **Amen**

**Lord God hear our prayer.**

Lord of Mercy, we pray for all those who volunteer their time in different roles in service of you within our churches across the Preston-Ribble Circuit. We pray that they will experience an opportunity for renewal and will be blessed this Advent as they continue to be an example to others. **Amen**

**Lord God hear our prayer.**

Lord Jesus, You are the light of the world, and you said that anyone who believes in you will never die. Master of both the light and the darkness, send your Holy Spirit upon us today our communities. Help us to make space and time for you in worship and prayer during this season of Advent. Help us to prepare in the right way for your coming at Christmas and bless the hands of those helping others in our church, our schools,

those who may be ill and those who feel lost and abandoned.  
Lord hear our prayer. **Amen**

## **Blessing:**

God of light and hope look upon us with love and fill us with the spirit of Jesus this Advent season, that we may love you and serve you in your kingdom. Protect us during this week and keep us watchful in prayer as we wait your coming again this Christmas. Lord God you are the light of the world and in the days and weeks ahead be bearers of that light to others. In Jesus name, Amen.

**Hymn:** Lo, He comes with clouds descending: STF 177