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ORDINARY 6C

13th February 2022

A short act of worship and daily devotions

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Centreing Prayers

God is everywhere
In this space and all spaces
In this time and all times
God is waiting to meet you and is ready to welcome you
Just as has been for all eternity

So be still.

Pause

Get ready to notice the spirit working
Through words on the page
Through sounds around you
Through familiar and unfamiliar smells
Through all that you see when you look up from what you are reading
Through the touch of your hands as you hold them together to pray.

So be still.

Pause

If you feel able speak aloud the following words:

God of all time and space I notice you here

I am ready

Amen.¹

Hymn:

504 STF – May the mind of Christ my Saviour - [YouTube](#)

You may now wish to say The Lord's Prayer in a version most familiar or comfortable to you.

Readings: [Jeremiah 17: 5-10](#); [Luke 6:17-26](#)

Responding to the reading

The Book of Psalms begins with these lines:

Happy are those
who do not follow the advice of the wicked,
or take the path that sinners tread,
or sit in the seat of scoffers;
but their delight is in the law of the Lord,
and on his law they meditate day and night.

¹ Opening / Centreing Prayers written by Jane Bingham

They are like trees
planted by streams of water,
which yield their fruit in its season,
and their leaves do not wither.

In all that they do, they prosper.

As a young child, I remember being fascinated by this image of the tree planted by streams of water, and the Psalm has remained with me ever since. I suppose I hoped never to be thirsty again, to be constantly refreshed, to bloom and blossom like a tree with a constant water supply.

Jeremiah in the lectionary passage for today is so clearly borrowing from Psalm 1, from that rich imagery of flourishing trees that litters the Old and New Testament. In a way, The Bible is a book about trees – with a few human stories interwoven. From the beginning in Genesis and the Tree of Life, next to the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil...right through to the Tree of Life in Revelation whose leaves are ‘for the healing of the nations’. Throughout, there are stories of trees: some of them cursed, some of them responsible for capturing fleeing rivals by the hair, and most of all the poetic references to the centerpiece of the New Testament – the cross on which Jesus was crucified – as ‘a tree’.

Here in this story of trees, we are presented with an opportunity to choose which kind of crop we would like to be: are we to be trees rooted and grounded in love, in rhythms of prayer and rich spirituality, able to share our goodness with the world and make it a better place. Or are we to be caught by the wind, following the latest fashion, unsure of who we are or how we are defined?

In Luke’s gospel, the Beatitudes are not just a series of blessings, there are also some ‘woes’, perhaps as a warning to those who are feeling smug or as a reminder that joining the Jesus movement is a radical and difficult act. It involves some self-sacrifice, it involves being able to let go of our selfish desires and the things that the world is ‘selling’ to us, it involves joining the counter-revolution.

But the invitation is to be like a well-watered garden, who could resist that?

It is my prayer for each of us that we can find a way to dig our roots into the boundless flow of God’s love, that we can drink so deeply of that love that our entire lives are transformed and renewed – we become the kind of trees people want to get shade beneath and bear fruit for all to come and enjoy.

Today, you are invited to root yourself in a community of prayer.

Perhaps you have heard of the Methodist Way of Life? It is a resource produced and supported by the Methodist Church to enable and equip us on our journey of discipleship. The Way of Life begins with a simple invitation and challenge, to pray daily – as far as we are able. Is that something you currently do? How could you enrich your prayer life?

In the days ahead, you might like to commit a certain part of the day to regular prayer, and use it in different ways to see what works for you. Perhaps you can use this resource and the prayer prompts below to help you?

Enter the community of prayer, and discover a richer connection with the divine, with yourself, and with the world around you.

Heavenly father, come and do something in us, then through us, that the systems of injustice might crumble and the world might come to see your love.

Amen.²

Blessing

Jesus is blessing you, if you dare to turn the 'normal' on its head. Jesus is blessing you, when you bring the counter culture, when you invite light into the darkness. Jesus is blessing each of you, by his grace.

I will go out in peace, and serve the Lord.

Amen.³

Prayers and Prayer Pointers for the Week

Monday 14th February

- Today is St Valentine's Day, which began as a Christian feast to honour the martyrs that went by the name of Valentine. Of course, since then, it has become a day for celebrating romantic love. Today, you might like your prayers to be for all the people who find this day difficult – perhaps including yourself...
- You could pray for all whose relationships are currently in a difficult position, or who don't feel safe in their own homes.
- You could pray for all who carry painful baggage from previous relationships that should have been loving but became toxic.
- You could pray for all who feel the pain of loneliness today.

Tuesday 15th February

- Prayer can be enriched by a connection to nature – sometimes even a physical connection with nature. If you are someone who regularly gardens or works on the land, then this won't feel strange to you, but if you don't have your own garden or don't regularly spend time in it, it might feel a little odd...
- At some point today, hold some soil in your hand. You might like to go outside and find somewhere where you can sit on or near the floor, or you may get a pot-plant and dig out a handful of the soil.
- Feel the earth between your fingers, let it run through your hands, allow your hands to feel the dirt.
- As you do so, pray this line from the Psalms: 'the earth is the Lord's and everything in it'. You might like to repeat the line over and over again.

Wednesday 16th February

- God of all grace, I am seeking to know more about you, use this day to show me something new. Open my eyes that I might see the wonder of your creation. Open my heart that I might feel the depth of relationship with my brothers and sisters in the world around me. Open my ears that I might hear

² Reflection written by Tim Baker

³ Additional prayers by Tim Baker

your still small voice, whispering to me in the quiet moments of today. Open my hands that I might do the work you are calling me to do.

- Show me. Show me. Show me. Amen.

Thursday 17th February

- On this day in 1867, the first ship passed through the Suez Canal and – of course – recently we have come to realise how important that feat of engineering is to many of the supply chains we rely on for our way of life.
- So today, we are giving thanks for all those involved in the ‘invisible’ jobs that make our society function and enable us to live in the relative comfort we enjoy, compared to many around the world.
- Whether it’s the hospital porters, the social workers, the delivery drivers, the mechanical engineers or the IT maintenance workers – and perhaps you can add your own job, or that of your friends, to this list.
- Thank you Lord, for those who don’t make the headlines, but do make our lives possible. Amen.

Friday 18th February

- On this Friday, let us take a moment to look back on the week just past. What is your ‘word of the week’? What one word might you use to sum up the week just gone, and how it was for you? Perhaps you can’t keep it to one word, but just use this space to reflect on all you’ve been through, all you have achieved, all you have learned.
- Thank you God, for this week. For its challenges and its blessings. Help me to keep an open mind as I head into the weekend and beyond, that I can continue to learn and grow as a disciple of you.
- In Jesus, name we pray. Amen.

Saturday 19th February

- Holy God, today I am thankful. I come in prayer, recognising and remembering this day that all I have received is grace, all is gift. I have received so much, and so often I take it for granted. Today, I come with a thankful heart, knowing how richly blessed I am, and seeking to offer gratitude.
- You might like to list the things you are grateful for – go on as long as you possibly can!
- Thank you God. Amen.