

# Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup> August 2020 – Morning Service

Rev Christine Watson

## Call to Worship

Shout for joy to the LORD, all the earth.

Worship the LORD with gladness;

Know that the LORD is God.

It is he who made us, and we are his  
we are his people, the sheep of his pasture.

Enter his gates with thanksgiving  
and his courts with praise;

give thanks to him and praise his name.

For the LORD is good and his love endures forever;  
his faithfulness continues through all generations. (Psalm 100)

## StF 470 Lord for the years

- 1) Lord, for the years your love has kept and guided,  
urged and inspired us, cheered us on our way,  
sought us and saved us, pardoned and provided:  
Lord of the years, we bring our thanks today.
- 2) Lord, for that word, the word of life which fires us,  
speaks to our hearts and sets our souls ablaze,  
teaches and trains, rebukes us and inspires us:  
Lord of the word, receive Your people's praise.
- 3) Lord, for our land in this our generation,  
spirits oppressed by pleasure, wealth and care:  
for young and old, for commonwealth and nation,  
Lord of our land, be pleased to hear our prayer.
- 4) Lord, for our world when we disown and doubt him,  
loveless in strength, and comfortless in pain,  
hungry and helpless, lost indeed without him:  
Lord of the world, we pray that Christ may reign.
- 5) Lord for ourselves; in living power remake us -  
self on the cross and Christ upon the throne,  
past put behind us, for the future take us:  
Lord of our lives, to live for Christ alone.

*Timothy Dudley-Smith (b.1926) ©*

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## Reading: Matthew 14: 13 - 21

### Jesus Feeds the Five Thousand

<sup>13</sup> When Jesus heard what had happened, he withdrew by boat privately to a solitary place. Hearing of this, the crowds followed him on foot from the towns. <sup>14</sup> When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, he had compassion on them and healed their sick.

<sup>15</sup> As evening approached, the disciples came to him and said, "This is a remote place, and it's already getting late. Send the crowds away, so they can go to the villages and buy themselves some food."

<sup>16</sup> Jesus replied, "They do not need to go away. You give them something to eat."

<sup>17</sup> "We have here only five loaves of bread and two fish," they answered.

<sup>18</sup> "Bring them here to me," he said. <sup>19</sup> And he directed the people to sit down on the grass. Taking the five loaves and the two fish and looking up to heaven, he gave thanks and broke the loaves. Then he gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the people. <sup>20</sup> They all ate and were satisfied, and the disciples picked up twelve basketfuls of broken pieces that were left over. <sup>21</sup> The number of those who ate was about five thousand men, besides women and children.

### Reflection

One of the first things that happened when Covid 19 struck was fear, fear of the unknown, fear of lockdown, fear of not being able to go out, fear of running out of the essentials. This fear could be seen in the initial queues outside of supermarkets and shops. At first the queue outside Sainsburys (other supermarkets are available) in Wolverhampton snaked around three sides of the large underground car park, there was a real fear of food and other essentials being scarce, which led to panic buying, which in turn led to shortages.

Our reading this morning contains two meals, one of plenty and one made from scarcity. The story comes immediately after the account of the beheading of John the Baptist.

John had been imprisoned by Herod Antipas, he had dared to question the relationship between Herod and Herodias, his sister in law.

Herod was at a feast celebrating his birthday, as part of the entertainment, Salome, daughter of Herodias, danced for the King. He was so thrilled with this that he made a rash promise to give her anything she wanted, the result, to Herod's dismay, was the beheading of John and his head on a platter. The first verses of John 14 suggest that Herod was haunted by these events, in his guilt he sees Jesus as John returned.

When Jesus hears what has happened to John, he tries to find a quiet place, perhaps to mourn, but the people hear where he is and follow him. He puts aside his feelings and has compassion on them.

There are two meals in this chapter, the birthday party and the feeding of the crowds. In the first story there is a tale of plenty, of food, of misery, of revenge and scheming. In the second tale, by contrast is a story of need, of compassion and of provision. The feeding of the crowds is motivated by compassion, the beheading of John is fuelled by vindictiveness.

Perhaps there is a parallel to be drawn here between the Kingdom of Herod and the Kingdom of God.

Jesus on seeing the crowds has compassion for them and this attitude rubs off on his disciples who come to him, concerned that it is growing late, asking him to send the crowds away to get food for themselves.

But look at the response of Jesus, he says that the disciples are to give them something to eat. How often do we ask God to do or resolve a situation only to find that we become the answer to our own prayer? To find that we are asked to do something about the situation.

The disciples gather together their meagre resources of five loaves and two fish and give them to Jesus. See what happens! He takes the loaves and fish gives thanks, breaks the bread and gives to the disciples who then distribute to the crowds who are well fed and there are leftovers. God is always generous

Some see this meal as a forerunner of the Eucharistic meal, the Holy Communion. The people are seated in an orderly fashion, the bread is prayed over, broken and distributed, everyday things are used and made special, bread and fish.

From the meagre provisions the disciples can muster Jesus feeds 5,000 + and there are leftovers. Jesus asks us to give him our meagre resources, either as a Church or individually and to see what happens. See what miracles Jesus can perform with our meagre resources

Perhaps we don't feel we have much to offer but Jesus can take whatever that is and do wonders and miracles with it.

Perhaps looking at the numbers this morning we feel as a church we have little left to offer, perhaps as individuals we feel tired, weary, disheartened but I say to you gather your resources and give them to Jesus and see what can happen, wonders and miracles will ensue!

### **StF 476 One more step along the world I go**

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|---|---|
| 1) One more step along the world I go,<br>One more step along the world I go;<br>From the old things to the new<br>Keep me travelling along with you:       | 3) As I travel through the bad and good,<br>Keep me travelling the way I should;<br>Where I see no way to go<br>You'll be telling me the way, I know: |
| Ch) And it's from the old I travel to the new;<br>Keep me travelling along with you.  | 4) Give me courage when the world is rough,<br>Keep me loving though the world is tough;<br>Leap and sing in all I do,                                |
| 2) Round the corners of the world I turn,<br>More and more about the world I learn;<br>All the new things that I see<br>You'll be looking at along with me: | 5) You are older than the world can be,<br>You are younger than the life in me;<br>Ever old and ever new,<br>Keep me travelling along with you:       |

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### **Prayers of Thanksgiving and Intercession**

Lord God of compassion and boundless blessings,  
we are full of amazement  
that you care so greatly for the needs of your people.

We worship and adore you for your generosity,  
your love, and your power.

And so Lord, today, we pray for people who have little or nothing:  
for those who feel trapped in their situation,  
and can't see the bigger picture,  
or even any tiny glimmer of light.

We pray for people who are hungry:  
for parents who struggle to feed their children, and themselves.  
We thank you for the work of food banks,  
and pray that they would have the resources  
to continue to meet so many needs.  
We pray that you would give us an appreciation of our food:  
the work that goes into producing and distributing it.  
Teach us not to be wasteful,  
but to preserve and pass on the goodness of your earth. **Amen**

## StF 92 Think of a world without any flowers

- 1) Think of a world without any flowers,  
Think of a world without any trees,  
Think of a sky without any sunshine,  
Think of the air without any breeze;  
*We thank you, Lord, for the flowers and trees  
and sunshine;*  
*We thank you, Lord, and praise your holy  
name.*
- 2) Think of a world without any poetry,  
Think of a book without any words,  
Think of a song without any music,  
Think of a hymn without any verse;  
*We thank you, Lord for poetry and music;*  
*We thank you, Lord, and praise your holy  
name.*
- 3) Think of a world without any science,  
Think of a journey with nothing to explore,  
Think of a quest without any mystery,  
Nothing to seek and nothing left in store;  
*We thank you, Lord, for miracles of science;*  
*We thank you, Lord, and praise your holy  
name.*
- 4) Think of a world without any people,  
Think of a street with no one living there,  
Think of a town without any houses,  
No one to love and nobody to care;  
*We thank you, Lord, for families and  
friendships;*  
*We thank you, Lord, and praise your holy  
name.*
- 5) Think of a world without any worship,  
Think of a God without his holy Son,  
Think of a cross without resurrection,  
Only a grave and not a victory won;  
*We thank you, Lord, for showing us our  
Saviour;*  
*We thank you, Lord, and praise your holy  
name.*
- 6) Thanks to our Lord for being here among us,  
Thanks be to him for sharing all we do,  
Thanks for our Church and all the love we find  
here,  
Thanks for this place and all its promise true;  
*We thank you, Lord, for life in all its richness;*  
*We thank you, Lord, and praise your holy  
name.*