

July 3rd 2022 – Morning Service

Jill Martin

Call to Worship

As we come together to worship, this service will be on the theme of God's justice: Liberation, Provision and Presence. We worship a God of Justice and, as Methodists and as Christians, are called to live out God's justice in the world, through, as the Prophet Micah puts it Micah 6: 8

"He has told you, O mortal, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness and to walk humbly with your God?"

The Methodist Church's Walking with Micah project is about that commitment: exploring what it means to be a justice-seeking church of justice seeking people.

StF 82 – O Lord My God

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| 1) O Lord my God! When I in awesome wonder
Consider all the works thy hand hath made,
I see the stars, I hear the mighty thunder,
Thy power throughout the universe displayed! | 3) And when I think that God His Son not sparing,
Sent Him to die -- I scarce can take it in.
That on the cross my burden gladly bearing,
He bled and died to take away my sin: |
| Ch) <i>Then sings my soul, My Saviour God, to Thee,
How great Thou art! How great Thou art!
Then sings my soul, My Saviour God, to Thee,
How great Thou art! How great Thou art!</i> | 4) When Christ shall come with shout of
acclamation
And take me home - what joy shall fill my heart!
Then shall I bow in humble adoration
And there proclaim, my God, how great Thou
art! |
| 2) When through the woods and forest glades I
wander
And hear the birds sing sweetly in the trees;
When I look down from lofty mountain
grandeur,
And hear the brook, and feel the gentle breeze; | |

Stuart K. Hine © 1953 The Stuart Hine Trust CCL No. 515642

A prayer of adoration

Lord God, before whom every knee shall bow and whom every tongue shall praise, we come to worship you.

There is no light in our lives or in the life of the world that does not come from you.

In your presence the morning stars first sang together and the peoples of God shouted for joy, and in your hand is the destiny of life.

You are the King and the Judge, but also our Saviour and friend.

We bring you our adoration and praise, imperfect though it is, and we ask that you accept our service of worship; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

A prayer of confession

Lord God, every good thing in our lives comes from you; and yet we confess with shame that we have not lived together as your children and shared the gifts that you have given us.

So often our lives have reflected not your glory but our own selfishness.

Forgive us, Lord, if we have loved only those who have loved us, if we have sought our own pleasure and disregarded the needs of our fellows,
Forgive us if we have been unkind in our judgements, quick to condemn and slow to forgive.
And forgive us if we have given into our worst and made it difficult for others to live up to their best.

Lord God if we have come into your presence bitter and cynical, send us out rejoicing and full of gratitude;
and make us men and women with pure and great hearts so that we might see our God. Amen

Collect

Almighty God,
your Son Jesus Christ came not to be served, but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many:
help us to love others as he loved us, and make us responsible citizens of earth, as in Christ we are made citizens of heaven;
for his sake. Amen

StF 424 – God forgave my sin in Jesus' name

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| 1) God forgave my sin in Jesus' name,
I've been born again in Jesus' name;
And in Jesus' name I come to you
To share His love as He told me to. | 2) All power is given in Jesus' name,
In earth and heaven in Jesus' name;
And in Jesus' name I come to you
To share His power as He told me to. |
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*Ch) He said: 'Freely, freely, you have received,
Freely, freely, give;
Go in My name and because you believe,
Others will know that I live.'*

Carol Owens CCL No. 515642

Reading: Micah 6: 1 - 8

God challenges Israel

Hear what the Lord says:
Rise, plead your case before the mountains, and let the hills hear your voice.
Hear, you mountains, the case of the Lord, and you enduring foundations of the earth,
for the Lord has a case against his people, and he will contend with Israel.

"O my people, what have I done to you? In what have I wearied you? Answer me!
For I brought you up from the land of Egypt and redeemed you from the house of slavery,
and I sent before you Moses, Aaron, and Miriam.
O my people, remember now what King Balak of Moab devised, what Balaam son of Beor answered him,
and what happened from Shittim to Gilgal, that you may know the saving acts of the Lord."

What God Requires

"With what shall I come before the Lord and bow myself before God on high?
Shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves a year old?
Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, with ten thousands of rivers of oil?
Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?"
He has told you, O mortal, what is good, and what does the Lord require of you
but to do justice and to love kindness and to walk humbly with your God?

Reading: Luke 10: 1 – 11; 16 - 20

The Seventy Sent Out

After these things the Lord appointed seventy others also and sent them two by two before His face into every city and place where He Himself was about to go. Then He said to them, “The harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few; therefore, pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest. Go your way; behold, I send you out as lambs among wolves. Carry neither money bag, knapsack, nor sandals; and greet no one along the road. But whatever house you enter, first say, ‘Peace to this house.’ And if a son of peace is there, your peace will rest on it; if not, it will return to you. And remain in the same house, eating and drinking such things as they give, for the labourer is worthy of his wages. Do not go from house to house. Whatever city you enter, and they receive you, eat such things as are set before you. And heal the sick there, and say to them, ‘The kingdom of God has come near to you.’ But whatever city you enter, and they do not receive you, go out into its streets and say, ‘The very dust of your city which clings to [b]us we wipe off against you. Nevertheless, know this, that the kingdom of God has come near you.’

He who hears you hears Me, he who rejects you rejects Me, and he who rejects Me rejects Him who sent Me.”

The Seventy Return with Joy

Then the seventy returned with joy, saying, “Lord, even the demons are subject to us in Your name.”

And He said to them, “I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. Behold, I give you the authority to trample on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall by any means hurt you. Nevertheless do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rather rejoice because your names are written in heaven.”

Sermon

This portion of Micah takes the form of a court case, God against his people. There was plenty of religious activity going on in Judah at this time, but it had become mere ritual with no reality. Micah’s contemporary, Isaiah described the nation as sinful and sick from head to foot. Their worship no longer came from the heart, it had become nothing more than ‘trampling’ the courts of the Temple.

As the people were in denial of this, Micah pictured God summoning them to a courtroom to hear the case against them and to prepare their defence. The mountains were called to take part because they had witnessed everything that had happened, including the covenant agreement being sealed and then broken by idol worship at the pagan altars and high places built on their hilltops.

God began by reminding the people that he had never burdened them, but had only ever shown them patience, care, love and grace. He bought them out of Egypt, gave them leaders to guide them through the wilderness years, and his laws to live by, turned an attempt to curse them into a blessing, protected them and brought them across the River Jordan into the promised land. Rather than remembering these events and their significance, the people had soon forgotten them.

Micah pictured the people wondering aloud what they should bring to God. After all this time the people still didn’t seem to know what was pleasing to God. They thought that if they bought enough gifts and sacrifices to God He would accept them and forgive them. Their thinking had become so depraved and contaminated by the pagan nations around them they even believed that sacrificing their own children might work. Just as Amos had done in Israel, Micah reminded the people of Judah that God had already told them what he was looking for and it had nothing to do with rituals and sacrifices: “He has showed you, O man, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God”

There is a similarity in Luke’s account of sending out the apostles and the story of Moses in Deuteronomy. Moses sent out twelve men to scout out the land just as Jesus has recently done when he sent out the

twelve disciples. Seventy elders accompanied Moses to the mountain top where the spirit rested on them and they prophesied, Jesus sends out the seventy to offer peace and to proclaim the nearness of the Kingdom of God.

In Deuteronomy the elect were those who obeyed the law, Deuteronomy promised blessings to the faithful, and Israelites interpreted blessings in a materialistic way- health and wealth. The people of Jesus day believed that health and wealth validated their right standing with God and that poverty and illness indicated God's displeasure.

The commissioning of the seventy broadens Jesus' missionaries beyond the twelve chosen apostles who have already been sent out. Now with the commissioning of the seventy the message of good news is the responsibility of all disciples not just the chosen few. The seventy are to go in pairs to neighbouring towns in an aggressive outreach - think Jehovah witness. The mission is to reach Gentile communities. The talk of harvest shows there is a hurry about sharing the good news and gathering in people to hear and believe. The seventy returned with great joy, through the power of Jesus even the demons are subject to them. The world turned upside down, a new Covenant with God, sin forgiven, new life given.

Today we are the apostles told to share the love of God to all nations not just to the lovable but to make a point of sharing with those who may not be respectable because of their differences. We are living in a time of increased anxiety and poverty, people in the UK relying on Foodbanks to survive even though many have more than one job. People are finding daily living harder as inflation hits us all, there are stories of carers having to leave their clients as they can no longer afford to put fuel in their cars to get to appointments. We are being told through the news that refugees are not welcome and as a country we must all do our best to condemn them, even if it means basic human rights are broken. The division in our society grows as we watch those with wealth find greater reward whilst those with little criminalised. We are the church should we raise our voices against immoral and illegal practices

"He has showed you, O man, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God"

God guide and empower us to serve you. Amen

StF 687 – One human family

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| 1) One human family God has made,
And all for each to care.
One world, to be the home of all,
With all its wealth to share.
One Christ, to manifest on earth
Love's ultimate design.
One Church to know the mystery
Of broken bread and wine. | 3) And are we brave enough to join
With that great company -
The cost not less than all we have
And are or hope to be -
The bitter cup of human sin
To drink with him who died,
And take his love outside the wall
To all the crucified? |
| 2) One race, one world - yet torn apart,
We spurn the way of love.
But still ahead, the Christ leads on
And calls his Church to move
From love of power to power of love,
To give the word to all -
To trust the love that conquered death,
Outside the city wall. | 4) Claim him who claims us for his own,
To share his pain and grief,
To bear the scars that stamp us his -
The hallmark of belief.
As partners of the living Christ,
Who risk the path he trod,
With wondering love we find we share
The timeless joy of God. |

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come;
thy will be done; on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation;
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the
glory for ever and ever. **Amen.**

Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name, your kingdom come,
your will be done, on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who sin against us.
Save us from the time of trial
and deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are
yours now and for ever. **Amen.**

Prayer of Thanksgiving

God our Father, we thank you for creating our world and sending your Son to redeem us from our sin, by the way he lived and died to demonstrate the glorious power of love.
By his resurrection and ascension, he has conquered sin and death.
By sending your Holy Spirit on the Church, you empower us to live as Christ's disciples and to serve you in the Church and in the world.
We thank you, Father, that you have called us together to build the city of God.
In this great task may no one in our fellowship feel useless or unloved, lonely or unwanted.
Grant us a vision of your world as it might be, a world of justice, brotherhood and peace, founded not on force but on love.
Lord, hear the prayers of our hearts as we pledge out time and our energy and our thought to make this world what you intend it to be.
Send your Spirit into the dark places of the world, our nation and our lives, carrying faith to the doubting, hope to the fearful and strength to the weak.
Fill our lives with your love and help us to pass on that love to others.
So let your kingdom come and your will be done on earth as it is in heaven,
For the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

Prayer of Intercession

We pray for those who long for freedom and justice.
For those suffering from oppression and those in abusive relationships
For those fleeing persecution and those with no safe place to live
For those whose lives are ruled by fear and the daily routine of war and violence
And we pray for all who work for justice in your world.
In our prayers and in our lives may we always seek your justice
O God you have shown us what is good and what you require
To do justice, love kindness and walk humbly with you.

We pray for those who live in need.
For those for whom poverty and unemployment is a daily struggle
For men, women and children who are homeless
For those suffering the effects of climate change
And we pray for all those offering support in our communities.
In our prayers and in our lives may we always seek your justice
O God you have shown us what is good and what you require
To do justice, love kindness and walk humbly with you.

We pray for those who are lonely.
 For those feeling neglected and alone
 For those who are ill and those who struggle with mental health issues
 For those who are bereaved
 And we pray for all who stand alongside others
In our prayers and in our lives may we always seek your justice
 O God you have shown us what is good and what you require
To do justice, love kindness and walk humbly with you.
 Amen

StF 409 – Let us build a house

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| <p>1) Let us build a house where love can dwell
 And all can safely live,
 A place where saints and children tell
 How hearts learn to forgive.
 Built of hopes and dreams and visions,
 Rock of faith and vault of grace;
 Here the love of Christ shall end divisions:
 <i>All are welcome,</i>
 <i>All are welcome,</i>
 <i>All are welcome in this place.</i></p> | <p>4) Let us build a house where hands will reach
 Beyond the wood and stone
 To heal and strengthen, serve and teach,
 And live the Word they've known.
 Here the outcast and the stranger
 Bear the image of God's face;
 Let us bring an end to fear and danger:</p> |
| <p>2) Let us build a house where prophets speak,
 And words are strong and true,
 Where all God's children dare to seek
 To dream God's reign anew.
 Here the cross shall stand as witness
 And as symbol of God's grace;
 Here as one we claim the faith of Jesus:</p> | <p>5) Let us build a house where all are named,
 Their songs and visions heard
 And loved and treasured, taught and claimed
 As words within the Word.
 Built of tears and cries and laughter,
 Prayers of faith and songs of grace,
 Let this house proclaim from floor to rafter:</p> |
| <p>3) Let us build a house where love is found
 In water, wine and wheat:
 A banquet hall on holy ground
 Where peace and justice meet.
 Here the love of God, through Jesus,
 Is revealed in time and space;
 As we share in Christ the feast that frees us:</p> | |

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Dismissal and Blessing

May the God of freedom inspire us to do justice,
 Set us free to love others with kindness
 And lead us by the spirit to walk humbly with God
 And the blessing of God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit remain with us all evermore
 Amen.