

Haverhill Methodist Church – Worship at Home
Mothering Sunday 14th March 2021 – Lent 4

Welcome Message – Revd. Peter Goodhall

Mothering Sunday is now commercialised, but it didn't start that way. When many people worked long hours as servants in large houses, on farms or in factories, Mothering Sunday was the one day in the year when they were allowed to visit their parents. Sometimes they took a special gift, like a Simnel cake, to say thank you for all their mothers had done for them. They also went with their families to the 'Mother Church' to thank God. Mothering Sunday is a time to thank God for mothers and others who show God's love. But Mothering Sunday can prove difficult for those whose mothers have died, whose relationships with their mothers are broken or strained, those who would like to be mothers but can't be, and those whose children have died. Plus, through lockdown, many are forced apart from their mothers today. God is especially near these ones today.

Hymn/Song

Prayer of thanksgiving

Strong yet gentle God, hear our prayer of gratitude for all mothers. We give thanks not only for the mother figures in our own lives, but for the work and witness of women and men in parenting roles, in all times and in all places, as we acknowledge the importance of their contribution to the fullness of life that is your will for each and every one of us. In Jesus' name we pray. **Amen.**

Bible Readings

Philippians Chapter 4 verses 4-7

Mark Chapter 1 verses 35-39

Prayer of Confession

Heavenly Father, parent of us all, we know we don't always treat each other as you want us to. There are times when we insist on getting our own way despite what others feel.

Sometimes we increase the tension when we ought to seek peace, or say things which hurt others. We are sorry. Lord God, have mercy on us, have mercy upon our families, forgive us we pray and help us to be more loving. God has loved us, sending his Son Jesus to show us the true meaning of forgiveness and to heal our broken hearts. Thanks be to God. **Amen.**

Hymn/Song

Sermon

Today's sermon is given by the Chair of the East Anglia Methodist District, Reverend Julian Pursehouse. It is entitled 'The gift of prayer in the season of Lent'.

Sermon points:

1.) The season of Lent is a Season of the Heart - a season in which to give due diligence to prayer, reflection and spiritual discipline. This is of course mirrored in the personal experience of Jesus who spends 40 days in the wilderness - this is a period of testing, prayer and reflection.

2.) The recent District day of Prayer and Reflection was a wonderful success with probably somewhere in the region of 200 people engaging with various types of prayer throughout the day. This indicates that there is a tremendous appetite for prayer.

3.) In Mark 1:35-39 - we learn that there is a regular pattern in the life of Jesus which was to withdraw to a place of solitude to pray - to seek communion with the living God.

4.) There are two discernible benefits from a life of consistent, diligent prayer - solitude & refreshment / discernment & guidance.

5.) Reflect upon the importance of prayerful communion with God as the Church emerges from the conditions of lock down. We will need great wisdom and guidance as we discover what it is the Church is being to be and do in a post pandemic world.

Hymn/Song

Prayers of Intercession

As children of a loving God who always listens to our cries, let us pray to our Father in heaven.

God of love, **hear our prayer.**

Loving God, you have given us the right to be called children of God. Help us to show your love in our homes that they may be places of love, security and truth.

God of love, **hear our prayer.**

Loving God, Jesus, your Son, was born into the family of Mary and Joseph; bless all parents and all who care for children; strengthen those families living under stress and may your love be known where no human love is found.

God of love, **hear our prayer.**

Loving God, we thank you for the family of the Church.

We pray that all may find in her their true home; that the lonely, the marginalized, the rejected may be welcomed and loved in the name of Jesus. We name those in our hearts today...

God of love, **hear our prayer.**

Loving God, as we see the brokenness of our world we pray for healing among the nations; for food where there is hunger; for freedom where there is oppression; for joy where there is pain; that your love may bring peace to all your children.

God of love, **hear our prayer.**

We ask these prayers in the name of Jesus Christ our Saviour.

Amen.

Unite your prayers with the whole church as you pray

The Lord's Prayer. 'Our Father...'

Hymn/Song

The Blessing

We offer our lives and our gifts to the Lord.

May the Lord who brought us to birth by his Spirit strengthen us for the Christian life.

May the Lord who provides for all our needs sustain us day by day.

May the Lord whose steadfast love is constant as a mother's care send us out to live and work for others. **Amen.**

Coffee Time Conversation

- What are your feelings on this Mothering Sunday?
- Where and when do you make space to pray?
- What reasons do you have to 'rejoice in the Lord' today?

Suggested Hymns and Songs

More Traditional Music:

Now thank we all our God
Jesus good above all other
For the beauty of the earth

More Contemporary Music:

Give thanks to the Lord our God and King
Father God I wonder
Grace that will lead us home

Keep social distancing. Keep safe. Keep communicating.
God bless you and keep you until we meet again.
My prayers are with you.
With love,
Peter