

Haverhill Methodist Church – Worship at Home
Sunday 21st February 2021 – Lent 1

Welcome Message – Revd. Peter Goodhall

This is the day that the Lord has made, we will rejoice and be glad in it. The Lord calls us to worship. Our home becomes God's house. Today we welcome our friend from Clare Baptist Church Vivien Sargeant who brings us God's word.

'You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honour and power, for you created all things, and by your will they existed and were created'. (Revelation Chapter 4 verse 11)

Hymn/Song

Prayer of adoration

Lord Jesus Christ, king of all creation, alpha and omega, the beginning and end of all things, we worship you.
When the universe began, spiralling outward, the newborn stars reflected your glory, for you are the beginning of all things.
When this planet cooled, the glittering oceans, and snow-capped peaks, reflected your glory, for you are the beginning of all things.
When you walked along the shores of Lake Galilee and healed broken hearts and gave outcasts self-respect, your kingdom came near. When you were betrayed, mocked, beaten, crucified, you revealed the kingdom of the servant king – a kingdom not of this world. And when, beyond all our imagining, there shall be a new heaven, and a new earth, and tears and death shall be no more, all people will see, all people will know that you are the Everlasting King. Lord Jesus Christ, king of all creation, alpha and omega, the beginning and end of all things, we worship you. **Amen.**

Prayer of Confession

Creation tells us of God's presence.
It must be honoured and allowed to rest.
Jesus speaks of his body as God's temple,
broken then restored to wholeness.

Forgive us when we abuse our bodies and do not honour them;
when we feel bad about the way we look or what we are able to do;
when we push ourselves too hard or rest too much.

Help us to celebrate our bodies created and honoured by God.

Hold us in our brokenness and restore us to wholeness.

Amen.

Bible Reading

Colossians chapter 1 verses 15-23

Reconciled – A reflection on Colossians Chapter 1 verses 15-20

He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation;
God with flesh on, dressed in our clothes, walking, talking, weeping,
laughing, eating, drinking, working, resting.

For in him and through him all things in heaven and on earth were
created, things visible and invisible; this physical world, the spiritual,
emotional and psychological, people, places, planets and
personalities. He himself is before all things, and in him all things
hold together; he is the divine bond, the mediator, the prince of
peace, the architect, holding the universe, holding people, holding
the future. He is the head of the body, the church; this ragged
collection of believers, this dysfunctional family, this holy temple,
you and I, struggling to get along, holding his treasure in these
stumbling bodies, these jars of clay. He is the beginning, the
firstborn from the dead, so that he might have first place in
everything; crucified, dead and buried, the ultimate sacrifice,
resurrected and breathing new life into his followers.

For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell;
the compassion, the beauty, the strength, the creativity and good
humour, he is the foundation and the finish, everything that was and
will be.

And through him God was pleased to reconcile to himself all things,
whether on earth or in heaven; the cosmos and the countries, the
universe and the individual, the people and the planets, reconciled
to himself by the peace made through the blood of the cross of
Christ. © Dave Hopwood/engageworship.org Used with permission

Hymn/Song

Sermon by Vivien Sargeant Christ the Creator

It seems a very long time ago that I planned for a journey, any journey, anywhere and I can't wait until I am able to do it again. The thought that I will at the end of that journey be able to see grandchildren and family, to sit and admire different scenery, to breathe seaside air.

As we begin to prepare for Easter, we plan and begin our journey through Lent. A time to give up, sacrifice something that you enjoy. A lot of people give up chocolate or biscuits or crisps, usually because they think it will be good for them rather than having anything to do with preparing their mind, body and soul for Easter. The Christian practice is that we use these next few weeks for reflecting and thinking of what God sacrificed for us and the cost of that to our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. In doing so we draw nearer to Him, grieving in the loss but rejoicing in the hope of the resurrection.

Paul wrote the letter to the Colossians because he had been visited while he was in jail by a leader of the church there. He had never personally visited the church, nor knew much about the fellowship. The whole letter was written with one theme in mind to show that Christ is both the Creator of all things and the Redeemer of all things. It is thought that the passage we have read there are quotations of a poem or hymn from Jewish tradition.

So our journey though Lent began on Ash Wednesday and today we are looking at those words in verse 15.... Christ the firstborn over all creation. Paul then moves on to talk in verse 18 about Christ as the Head of the Church and also Christ the firstborn from among the dead.

Christ as the Creator

We are reminded of John Ch. 1 in the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and immediately our thoughts go to Genesis Ch1. Christ was there before the world was created, he was part of the creation of the world. He was not created as man was created. Christ sustains, preserves all things, He has and is and will always be supreme. So we begin our journey though Lent remembering Christ the Alpha and Omega of all things, the Creator Although He is invisible, His works are visible in the things he has created. Whether that is in nature, relationships, miracles or ourselves.

Remember who you were before Christ came into your life.

Remember the beauty, wonder and magnitude of everything around us and rejoice in it. Remember the times when in the past and even now that you have had that phone call which has encouraged you, that action that has happened just at the right time. No other person or power has any influence over Him, His power is adequate for all things. We, as the people He created can, if we choose, benefit from what He has done in the past, is doing now and what He will do in the future. Nothing can be added or taken away, Christ holds all things.

Christ as the Head of the church

We use, in every day our senses to guide and instruct and as those senses inform our brain which interpret those messages.

Our reaction depends on our feelings, our understanding, our thoughts. As such we understand pain, anger, joy, strength, wisdom and love. We use the material things of this world to instruct and guide our steps. As such our own thoughts, perception and purpose are a result of what we see, feel, do and think. A body does not survive without its head, it is central to all we do, say and are.

Paul in this letter acknowledges that Christ the Creator of all things is also the centre of our own individual Christian life as well as the centre of both global and local fellowship. As such we need to learn, to listen and to do what Christ, the head of the Christian body tells us. Sometimes, I know, we say our heart rules over our head's.

From my experience that is not always the best way to go, listening to our head's is often harder, sometimes extremely difficult to follow. As we journey through Lent, dare we passionately seek to listen to the Head, Jesus Christ or are we going to roam around still trying to work ourselves what our senses are saying. The closer we walk with Christ, the more we become like His image and the more others will see Christ in us. The more we will show the Father's love for all mankind.

Christ as the Creator of the new creation

Paul goes on to talk about the Christ as the first born among the dead. Christ's death and resurrection enables us to become a new creature. Still made in the image of God as Adam was, but we have been given another chance. The journey Christ was prepared to take for us from Christ's birth to His resurrection shows there are no limits or lengths that He is prepared to go to show His love to you and me. Jesus was and is the perfect manifestation of God, he shows us what we could and should be like.

Christ's death assures us of a glorious life over death, though Him we will be raised as He was raised.

Death no longer has a hold on us. Christ the firstborn to be raised and live forever more. What about Lazarus you may say, but he still had to die didn't He? So Christ the Creator by His death and resurrection has shown and offered us eternity. Verse 19 reads that Christ had the fullness of God in Him, that through him all things are reconciled in heaven and earth, making peace. So we see again the picture of Christ as the Creator, all powerful. The Sustainer and Provider of all things. His resurrection gives each one of us that wonderful promise of eternal life, where peace flows and tears no longer exist.

Salvation was costly to God, our redemption cost. As with Adam we can choose the journey we take. We can reject and turn away and just buy bunnies and chocolate eggs for Easter or we can choose to look again at the sacrifice God made by giving us His son, the firstborn of Creation who offers us eternity through his death and resurrection. Whose desire is for us to become like the image of God, to be part of His body, to know the invisible God in the things we do and say. The choice is yours. I wonder what your journey during this time of Lent will look like? I pray that it will be one that sees Christ as the Creator of all things, the Head of the Body of the Church and who offers wonderful promises that at times seem beyond our comprehension. May you go in peace, love and joy in the knowledge of who Christ is.

Hymn/Song

Prayers of Intercession

Gracious God, you hold the whole world in your hands.

We hold before you in prayer our world, with many issues in the news. We pray for those whose lives have been changed by Coronavirus. We pray for healing where there is sickness, provision where there is poverty, employment where there is redundancy and reassurance where there is fear. We pray for our NHS and key workers, volunteers and all tasked with the vaccine deployment. We pray for our Prime Minister and all members of parliament. Christ is before all things, and in him all things hold together. We hold up our world in need.

Gracious God, you hold those we love.

We hold before you in prayer those whom we want to pray for this day: the ones we love, the names you know, the people known to us in our hearts...

Christ is before all things, and in him all things hold together.

We hold up our world in need.

Gracious God, you hold our church.

We hold before you in prayer our needs and the needs of our fellowship in this place...

Christ is before all things, and in him all things hold together.

We hold up our world in need.

Gracious God who holds all Creation, hold now our prayers.

However you may answer these prayers, may the outcome be that we love you more, understand your purpose better, and believe in you with greater confidence. Teach us to have hope in you, that we might not despair, but share your love and grace with all of your Creation. In the name of Jesus, our loving Saviour, we pray. **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.

God around us, refresh us for the days ahead.

God among us, invigorate us for the tasks ahead.

God within us, nurture us for the growing ahead.

God all-encompassing, renew us for the life ahead.

Amen.

Coffee Time Conversation

- What signs of creation are you thankful for today?
- Give thanks that Jesus Christ holds your life together.
- How will you listen to Christ, your Head, this Lent?

Suggested Hymns and Songs

More Traditional Music:

Jesus is Lord creation's voice proclaims it
Crown him with many crowns
How great thou art

More Contemporary Music:

My Jesus, my saviour
He's got the whole world in his hands
Who paints the skies into glorious day?

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