**Worship Sheet for 1 November 2020 by Miss Vivien Almond of Eaton Ford Methodist Church**

Call to Worship

Psalm 34 : 1 – 3

I will praise the Lord at all times, I will constantly speak his praises. I will boast only in the Lord, let all who are helpless take part. Come let us tell of the Lord’s goodness.

What a wonderful way to start any act of Worship, constantly praising God, always telling of His amazing goodness. Knowing that wherever we are following this that we are in connection with God, and millions of Christians around the world all wanting to PRAISE God. King of all.

Hymn: From Singing the Faith 56 – King of Glory, King of Peace.

Prayers

Lord God, we will praise you in all things, we will glorify your name, we thank you that even though we maybe separated by circumstances we are gathered together through your Love for us. Lord please forgive us when we turn away from You, forgive us when we do or say what we shouldn’t or when we don’t do or say what we should, Lord in this time of great uncertainty and rapid change we can so easily get carried away on the wave of panic, Lord we are truly sorry that we worry instead of praying, we try in our own strengths, instead of relying on Yours…………………… Lord we thank You for Your promise, that when we turn and seek forgiveness You forgive us, You wipe the slate clean, help us in that knowledge Lord to try harder to walk in Your way, listen to Your directions and lookout for Your guidance. Lord we offer our prayers through our ever loving, everlasting Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen

Reading – Matthew 5 : 1 – 12 (The Beatitudes)

Reading – 1 John 3 : 1 – 3

Vision – Do you know what the vision for Action For Children is?............... Any child who needs help – gets help. What about Methodist Homes (MHA)?.................. Enable people to live later lives well. Two charities looking after people from the opposite ends of the age spectrum, but both with a vision of making lives better for those they serve.

When we read the Beatitudes we glimpse a vision of where true happiness lies, a vision that Jesus lived whilst on earth, He mourned his friends and those who turned away, was merciful to sinners, He was pure in heart, He was meek towards children, disabled, the abused, He was a Peacemaker, and His life touched the others at some point during His time on earth.

Yet to the world many of these seem like weaknesses, I have heard people say, when a friend or colleague has lost someone close “For goodness sake they died over a year ago now (even from some 6 weeks ago), why can’t they just get over it”. Mourning is different for everyone, and loss can come in all shapes and sizes. Jesus knew this and promised comfort for all time, being gentle. In these days of high powered, fast living it is seen as being a wimp and turning the other cheek (meekness) is seen as being a coward.

These very same people, are those that Jesus speaks about persecuting those who live their lives for Him. Being Christlike is not the easy option in life, being Christlike gives no guarantees of life being smooth and without trials and tribulations, what it does promise is keys to the Kingdom of Heaven, comfort in difficult times, righteousness, to see God and above all to be called Children of God.

What does it mean to be a Child of God? Well 1 John 3 verse 1 tells us “See how very much our Father loves us, for He calls us His children”. Being a child of God opens us up to unconditional Love. For many it is very difficult to believe that they can be given love that doesn’t have strings attached, maybe nothing they ever did, growing up, was quite good enough, a B in an exam would have been an A if you’d tried harder, maybe you didn’t wear fashionable clothes, or listen to modern music. During Covid 19 domestic abuse has increased tenfold at least, and one in six children are abused by a family member, close friend or professional including Priests, doctors and teachers. So even thinking about love can be fearful, believing in unconditional love can be almost impossible. Yet that is the promise that lies in wait for those who accept the Holy Spirit into their lives and let Jesus be our guide and allow God to be our Heavenly Father. We know from the Gospels that Jesus understands our fears. He suffered at the hands of those who should have showed him unlimited love, was persecuted, abused and eventually killed by the very ones He came to save! Yet he still turned the other cheek. “Father forgive them”, He said from the cross. We need to hold the Beatitudes as our vision, as our guide and as our road of life. For John tells us that whilst we don’t know what we will be like when Christ appears. He reassures us that we will be like Him and urges those with this expectation to remain pure just as Jesus was pure. Then we can journey towards the date we will meet God Face to Face, as we hear in the reading from Revelations.

Hymn: From Singing The Faith 244 – Blest are the Pure in Heart

Reading – Revelations – 7 : 9 – 17

This tells us of John’s vision of God’s children coming face to face with Him. Never being homeless, going hungry or thirsty, never in need of comforting, just rejoicing in eternal salvation. Many scholars believe that all the people in white robes are saints, hence this reading being in the lectionary for today (All Saints Day), but John Wesley preached that Saints included all the Children of God, and looking again at the reading it does talk about ‘a vast crowd too great to count, from every nation, tribe and people and language’. I like to believe that the people in white robes where not just those who the church approves to become saints but truly all the children of God being brought into the promised eternal Kingdom. Amen

Prayers of intercession

Lord God we thank you that we can become your children. We thank you for the people who have influenced us on our journey of faith, those who have opened us up to hear your word, those who prayed for us through times of toil and tribulation, those who have rejoiced with us but most of all for those you send to be gently by our side.

Lord of Love we thank you

Lord God we pray that the Love and peace that only you can give will take over from hate and war. We pray for all who have injury in their minds, that they may see the light of your love, gentleness and justice and become people of Christ. We pray for those who mock, persecute and kill in the name of faith show them truth and your saving grace.

Lord of Love we thank you

Lord God we pray for all those we love, and those we struggle to love, that you will take care of them, love and support them and uphold them so they may come closer to you.

Lord of Love we thank you

Lord we pray for all who are sick or suffering, whether it be mind, body or spirit, place your loving and comforting arms around them, grant them healing and peace.

Lord of Love we thank you

Lord we pray for those we knew, loved or cared for who have left this world behind to take the final journey to your eternal Kingdom, welcome them and cherish them as you cherish those left behind

Lord God of Love we thank you

Lord we ask you to accept these prayers and the prayers of our hearts through our ever loving, everlasting Lord Jesus Christ. Amen

Hymn: from Singing The Faith – 503 – Love divine, all Loves excelling

Blessing

May this eternal truth be always on our hearts,
That the God who breathed this world into being,
Placed stars into the heavens and designed a butterfly's wing. Is the God who entrusted his life
to the care of ordinary people, became vulnerable that we might know how strong is the power of Love.
A mystery so deep it is impossible to grasp.

May this love enfold us all and help us to keep our eyes upon God, our ears upon Jesus and our mind on the Holy Spirit. Amen