

Stokesley Methodist Church



Sunday 22nd July, 2018

Welcome to Worship

9.00am Communion led by Rev Andrew Robinson

10.30am Café Church led by Rev Andrew Robinson

6.00pm Town Close with Vanessa Johnson

A Gathering Prayer from the Roots Resources

The Church, the body of Christ, is built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets. Christ Jesus himself is the chief cornerstone. We are members together of this mighty and all-encompassing Church. We belong to God.

Come now to worship him.

‘But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.’

We are on a journey towards you, our God.

Thank you for Jesus, who has brought us close.

Thank you that, with him, there are ever more exciting journeys to travel, breaking down barriers, building up community.

Thank you that we do not travel alone,
for Jesus is always with us.

Amen.

Lectionary Readings:

2 Samuel 7 v1-14a God’s Promise to David

“And I will provide a place for my people Israel and will plant them so that they can have a home of their own and no longer be disturbed.”

Psalm 89 v20-37

“I have found David my servant; with my sacred oil I have anointed him. My hand will sustain him; surely my arm will strengthen him.”

Ephesians 2 v11-22 One in Christ

“But now in Christ Jesus you who were once far away have been brought near through the blood of Christ.”

Mark 6 v30-34, 53-56 Jesus Feeds the Five Thousand/Jesus Walks on Water

“... they were like sheep without a shepherd. So he began teaching them many things ... They ran throughout that whole region and carried the sick on mats to wherever they heard he was.”

Household of God

In the passage from Ephesians, Paul writes that Jesus breaks down the walls of division between people of different ethnic origins – he brings reconciliation and makes peace. Those who follow him are no longer strangers, but fellow members of the household of God. So this week we are thinking about how, in Christ, human divisions are broken down and a new community can be built. In the aftermath of the First World War, Quakers distributed food and clothing to the people of Poland. One of the relief workers suddenly contracted typhus and died within a day. The only cemeteries were Roman Catholic and by Church law only Catholics could be buried there. So, the man’s fellow workers buried their friend just outside the cemetery. The next morning, they

discovered that during the night the villagers had moved the fence so that the cemetery included their friend's grave.

Listen to Paul as he reminds the Christians of Ephesus that all the old fences of Jewish Law and Gentile practice have been broken down. They live in a new community in which every person is welcome without restriction. There are no second-class citizens, nor for that matter first-class ones.

Paul uses the language of 'household' to describe what's going on here (Ephesians 2v19). In the ancient world, the household was the basic building block of society. Everyone within it was joined by a bond of loyalty – the family at its centre, slaves, clients, everyone who looked to it for their living. Paul says that in Christ we have become part of God's household, and therefore we are united to one another. More than that, this household is open to any and all who have faith in Jesus. He is the capstone (better than cornerstone, as it refers to the piece of masonry that holds an arch together). In Christ each person is made a useful member of the new household. This household's life is marked by its loyalty to Jesus, through whom we have peace. The peace that Paul has in mind here is not the feeling of well-being that comes from having no anxieties, but the absence of hostility between all the people in the household.

We show compassion when we notice someone else's problems and take steps to help solve them.

The Bible is full of stories of Jesus' compassion – and this week's gospel lesson is a great example. It even uses that word to describe him.

Jesus has been performing miracles and word of his power has been spreading. In this week's story a large group has gathered hoping to be near him. The story explains that Jesus had

compassion for these people – he could tell right away that they needed his help – and he sets to work teaching them.

Mark presents Jesus as the long-awaited shepherd who would come to lead God's people to security and peace. Jesus sees those who come to him as 'sheep without a shepherd', and he comes upon them everywhere he goes. His response is to teach them and to heal them. Even when he tries to get away, so that he and his disciples can spend some time together, people flock to him and he does not turn them away because he is filled with compassion for them.

What chances might we have this week to be compassionate? How can we show compassion to those around us? After all it's just what Jesus would do. We know that many of our friends and neighbours have real problems in life. Grant us the strength and compassion not only to recognize their needs but also to help do something about them.

Sending Out Prayer

Jesus, bearer of peace, has brought us together.

Jesus, bearer of peace, sends us out into his world, to do his good will and live lives acceptable to him.

May the Lord be with us, wherever we find ourselves this week.

The peace of the Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Amen.