

Stokesley Methodist Church



Sunday 12th January 2020

10.30am Morning Worship led by Ken Hudson

6.00pm Evening Worship at Town Close
led by Ken Hudson

A Gathering Prayer from the Roots Resources

We gather, gracious God, as your people following in the way of your Son, and in the power of your Holy Spirit.

As we sing our praises, may we celebrate your faithfulness.

As we offer our prayers, may we be confident of your grace.

And as we offer our lives in your service, may we rejoice that we are your children for all eternity.

God of all the world, Jesus is your chosen Son, and we choose to follow him with our hearts and minds and spirits.

Jesus is your anointed one, and we acknowledge your anointing of our hearts and minds and spirits.

Jesus preached justice and remained faithful through all his trials, so, we pray for justice in our world with our hearts and minds and spirits.

In Jesus' name.

Amen

Lectionary Readings:

Isaiah 42 v1-9 (p727) The Servant of the Lord

Psalms 29 (p558) Worship the Lord in the splendour of his holiness

Acts 10 v34-43 (p1104) Peter at Cornelius' House

Matthew 3 v13-17 (p967) The Baptism of Jesus

The Anointed Time

This week our focus is on God's affirmation of his Son.

Jesus comes to the river Jordan and is baptized by John, who is reluctant because he thinks Jesus should baptize him. The Spirit descends on Jesus and a heavenly voice calls him God's beloved Son.

When you listen carefully to a piece of music the sound is harmonious – it can be soothing & melodious. It sounds beautiful. The notes blend and compliment each other. We could say the notes get along with each other. That kind of music makes us relax and feel peaceful.

That's if all the instruments play together, in time with each other!

However, when someone plays a wrong note or is out of rhythm, then the sound can be harsh & grating – it becomes an unpleasant noise.

How does it make you feel? Do you just want the noise to stop?

Perhaps that's how you feel when you see others argue or fight.

The Bible teaches us about peace. Listen to this passage: "You know the message God sent to the people of Israel, telling the good news of peace through Jesus Christ, who is Lord of all." (Acts 10:36)

Just as musical notes can be played in harmony and cause us to feel peaceful, so too can we learn to get along with others in a peaceful way. We can use our God-given talents and God-given love to work with each other and compliment each other.

The Bible tells us that God sent Jesus to bring a message of peace to everyone. If we all felt peaceful think of how that could change the world.

Have you ever seen something very important, or very beautiful; something you've never seen before? Have you ever had to convince someone that you really did see this wonderful thing?

In our Bible reading from Acts, Peter was visiting with Cornelius. In fact, Cornelius had invited some people to his home, to meet Peter, At Cornelius' home, Peter began to speak to the crowd of people who were waiting for him. He made it clear that Jesus came, not just for the people of his country, but for all the people of every country of the world. In one part of his message, Peter said, "He (Jesus) is Lord of all." Peter also said, "We are witnesses." (v39) He meant that he and the other apostles had seen Jesus - had seen him with their own eyes. He, and the other disciples, saw all the good things Jesus did when he was on earth. He and the other disciples knew that Jesus died; they had seen him. And the most important part, Peter said he and the other disciples ate and drank with Jesus after he rose from the dead. (v39-41) No one could have convinced Peter that he didn't know what he was talking about. Peter had seen Jesus living and helping people. He had seen Jesus dying on the cross. Peter had even seen and talked with Jesus after he rose from the dead. Peter stood up for what he saw. He said, "We are witnesses!"

Today, we have the Holy Bible. We can be glad that people like Peter, and some of the other followers of Jesus, told about Jesus in this very special book. They knew the truth because they had seen Jesus. They shared what they saw with us in the Bible.

Has anyone ever told you, "You have a nice smile." Or, "You did a good job of setting the table." Or, "You are a fast runner." Perhaps you did well on a school assignment and received an "A." Your teacher may have said to you, "Well done, good job." When a person lets you know they are pleased with something you have done, they are giving you a compliment. We all like to receive compliments and compliments from our parents or those we respect are particularly nice. Compliments give us a good feeling and make us feel as if our efforts are appreciated.

Do you every give compliments? It is something to think about. When your mum has cooked something especially delicious, it would probably make her feel special if you were to tell her what a good cook she is. If your dad reads to you before you go to bed, let him know that he is good reader and you appreciate being with him.

Your friends like to be complimented too. Do you have a friend who is generous about sharing things? Tell that friend what a kind person he or she is. I'll bet you can think of other people you could compliment. A compliment is a way of saying, "Thank you for being who you are." When Jesus was baptized by John, he received the best compliment that anyone could receive. Jesus was baptized in the river Jordan. He went up directly from the water: and behold, the heavens were opened to him. He saw the Spirit of God descending as a dove, and coming on him. Behold, a voice out of the heavens said, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased" (Matthew 3:16-17). Can you imagine being complimented by God in that way? Jesus came to earth to fulfil God's plan; to show us God's love and teach us about God's love. He was obedient and God's compliment was a way of saying "Thank you for being who you are. I am well pleased."

A Sending Out Prayer:

May God's extraordinary love find you in your ordinariness, that you may be sure of your path, confident of your calling, and blessed in all that you are and all that you do.

Amen.