

THE BRIDE VALLEY CHURCHES:

Telephone Service for Sunday 13 August 2023 – 10th Sunday after Trinity

The service can be accessed by phone on Sunday morning on **01308 293062**.

Welcome to this act of worship for the Bride Valley Benefice for the 10th Sunday after Trinity, which has been put together by Liz Howlett and draws on liturgy from the Corrymeela Community. Corrymeela has worked behind the scenes in Northern Ireland for over 50 years, bringing people from different communities together to deepen understanding and enable reconciliation.

We begin our day alone, **honouring this life, with all its potentials and possibilities.**

We begin our day with trust, **knowing we are created for loving encounter.**

We begin our day with hope, **knowing the day can hold love, kindness, forgiveness and justice.**

Hymn: New every morning is the love

1 New every morning is the love
our waking and uprising prove;
through sleep and darkness safely brought,
restored to life and power and thought.

2 New mercies, each returning day,
hover around us while we pray;
new perils past, new sins forgiven,
new thoughts of God, new hopes of heaven.

3 If on our daily course our mind
be set to hallow all we find,
new treasures still, of countless price,

God will provide for sacrifice.

4 The trivial round, the common task,
will furnish all we need to ask,
room to deny ourselves, a road
to bring us daily nearer God.

5 Only, O Lord, in thy dear love
fit us for perfect rest above;
and help us, this and every day,
to live more nearly as we pray.

John Keble (1792-1866) Public Domain

Confession and Absolution

Lord Jesus, you raise us to new life. Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy.

Lord Jesus, you forgive us our sins. Christ, have mercy. Christ, have mercy.

Lord Jesus, you feed us with the living bread. Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy.

May the God of love bring us back to himself, forgive us our sins, and assure us of his eternal love in Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Prayer

We recall our day yesterday, may we learn, may we love, may we live on.

We make room for the unexpected, may we find wisdom and life in the unexpected.

Help us to embrace possibility, respond graciously to disappointment and hold tenderly those we encounter. Help us be fully present to the day.

The Collect

Lord of heaven and earth, as Jesus taught his disciples to be persistent in prayer, give us patience and courage never to lose hope, but always to bring our prayers before you; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

First Reading: Genesis 37: 1-4; 12-28

Jacob lived in the land where his father had stayed, the land of Canaan.

This is the account of Jacob's family line.

Joseph, a young man of seventeen, was tending the flocks with his brothers, the sons of Bilhah and the sons of Zilpah, his father's wives, and he brought their father a bad report about them.

Now Israel loved Joseph more than any of his other sons, because he had been born to him in his old age; and he made an ornate robe for him. When his brothers saw that their father loved him more than any of them, they hated him and could not speak a kind word to him.

Now his brothers had gone to graze their father's flocks near Shechem, and Israel said to Joseph, "As you know, your brothers are grazing the flocks near Shechem. Come, I am going to send you to them."

"Very well," he replied.

So he said to him, "Go and see if all is well with your brothers and with the flocks, and bring word back to me." Then he sent him off from the Valley of Hebron.

When Joseph arrived at Shechem, a man found him wandering around in the fields and asked him, "What are you looking for?"

He replied, "I'm looking for my brothers. Can you tell me where they are grazing their flocks?"

"They have moved on from here," the man answered. "I heard them say, 'Let's go to Dothan.'"

So Joseph went after his brothers and found them near Dothan. But they saw him in the distance, and before he reached them, they plotted to kill him.

"Here comes that dreamer!" they said to each other. "Come now, let's kill him and throw him into one of these cisterns and say that a ferocious animal devoured him. Then we'll see what comes of his dreams."

When Reuben heard this, he tried to rescue him from their hands. "Let's not take his life," he said. "Don't shed any blood. Throw him into this cistern here in the wilderness, but don't lay a hand on him." Reuben said this to rescue him from them and take him back to his father.

So when Joseph came to his brothers, they stripped him of his robe—the ornate robe he was wearing— and they took him and threw him into the cistern. The cistern was empty; there was no water in it.

As they sat down to eat their meal, they looked up and saw a caravan of Ishmaelites coming from Gilead. Their camels were loaded with spices, balm and myrrh, and they were on their way to take them down to Egypt.

Judah said to his brothers, "What will we gain if we kill our brother and cover up his blood? Come, let's sell him to the Ishmaelites and not lay our hands on him; after all, he is our brother, our own flesh and blood." His brothers agreed.

So when the Midianite merchants came by, his brothers pulled Joseph up out of the cistern and sold him for twenty shekels of silver to the Ishmaelites, who took him to Egypt.

Gospel Reading: Matthew 14: 22 - 33

Immediately Jesus made the disciples get into the boat and go on ahead of him to the other side, while he dismissed the crowd. After he had dismissed them, he went up on a mountainside by himself to pray. Later that night, he was there alone, and the boat was already a considerable distance from land, buffeted by the waves because the wind was against it.

Shortly before dawn Jesus went out to them, walking on the lake. When the disciples saw him walking on the lake, they were terrified. "It's a ghost," they said, and cried out in fear.

But Jesus immediately said to them: "Take courage! It is I. Don't be afraid."

"Lord, if it's you," Peter replied, "tell me to come to you on the water."

"Come," he said.

Then Peter got down out of the boat, walked on the water, and came toward Jesus. But when he saw the wind, he was afraid and, beginning to sink, cried out, "Lord, save me!"

Immediately Jesus reached out his hand and caught him. "You of little faith," he said, "why did you doubt?"

And when they climbed into the boat, the wind died down. Then those who were in the boat worshipped him, saying, "Truly you are the Son of God."

Reflection

I wonder what strikes you about our Old Testament reading from Genesis this morning. One of the things that jumps out for me is a warning about the corrosive nature of favouritism in families. It also brought to mind a memory from my early childhood which makes me smile – most children have a strong sense of fairness – and my little sister and I decided one day when dad was putting us to bed that we should tell him that he couldn't love me more than my sister, nor could he love my sister more than me. I think he was a bit nonplussed! I wonder now where our declaration came from, but I think we could say what we did because neither of us felt that one was loved more than the other. Something for which I am very grateful now.

In the story of Jacob and his twelve sons, we have a salutary lesson in how not to be a parent, with Jacob favouring his young son over against all the others, giving him a special robe to wear to demonstrate this favouritism. Jacob seems to be completely unaware of the impact of his feelings and actions on the rest of the family, or, he doesn't care what impact he is having. The resentment of the older children grows – what is happening isn't fair – and resentment turns to jealousy and jealousy to anger and all of these emotions unchecked boil over into hatred – not just of their little squirt of a brother, but also of their father. One son, Reuben, attempts to defuse the situation and hopes to rescue his little brother after he has been thrown into the pit, but he is not around when the traders come by and the other siblings fatefully decide to sell Joseph to

them and then make out to their father that a wild animal killed him. I cannot begin to imagine how it feels to pretend to your father that your brother is dead – and he believes you – the devastation that lie would cause the foolish old man.

We can see this story as a warning of what can happen in families in extreme circumstances. It can also be seen as a reflection of what can happen between different groups of humans. Years later, hundreds of years later, when these stories of Jacob and Joseph would have been told amongst the Israelites living in Canaan, the different tribes of Israel saw themselves as descended from these sons of Jacob. This story of one family in crisis would have been understood also as a wider story of what happens when relationships break down between one tribe and another. So as I was reading this passage, another thing which came to my mind was the Corrymeela Community and their work of reconciliation in Northern Ireland. They have been working behind the scenes for over 50 years now, bringing people together from different communities in that place – Catholic and Protestant, clergy and lay and people of different genders. (Today's phone service draws on some prayers created by someone who is a member of Corrymeela and was once their leader.) One of the things I have learned about Corrymeela is their belief that it is really important to bring people who are in conflict with one another together and to acknowledge that peace will never be nurtured into being if the differences and conflicts between people are ignored or stamped on. Thinking again about Jacob and his sons from this perspective – if only someone could have got them together, before everything escalated horribly, so that the sons could tell their dad how much it hurt them when he favoured Joseph. And Jacob could have had space to tell them what was going on for him, as well as hopefully listening to their hurt and realising he needed to change his attitudes and behaviour towards his family.

The bible story of Jacob and his sons begins as a painful account of extreme family breakdown, which seems in today's passage to have ended with evil triumphing over good, with the awful decision of the older brothers to sell their younger brother into slavery. But as many of us know, this turns out to be an extraordinary story of God's grace and forgiveness. It is because Joseph ends up in Egypt and, after many trials and tribulations, becomes the Pharaoh's right hand man, that he is in a position to save his father and his brothers and their families from starvation. As Joseph says himself to his brothers when they meet again in Egypt, God used the terrible thing they did to him for good purposes. I would say that this is one of the key threads that runs through the whole of the Bible and is seen most clearly in Jesus Christ's life, death and resurrection – we may, we will make mistakes in our lives; we will make bad decisions that hurt us and other people but through Christ, God is able to bring good out of bad situations. This is not to downplay the pain or to suggest that God makes bad things happen to bring good out them. This is saying, – God's goodness is stronger than evil; God's love is stronger than hate.

Desmond Tutu put it this way: Victory is Ours; Goodness is stronger than evil; Love is stronger than hate; Light is stronger than darkness; Life is stronger than death; Victory is ours through Him who loves us. Amen.

Hymn : All my hope on God is founded

1 All my hope on God is founded;
he doth still my trust renew.

Me through change and chance he guideth,
only good and only true.

God unknown, he alone
calls my heart to be his own.

2 Human pride and earthly glory,
sword and crown betray his trust;
what with care and toil he buildeth,
tower and temple, fall to dust.
But God's power, hour by hour,
is my temple and my tower.

3 God's great goodness ay endureth,
deep his wisdom, passing thought:
splendour, light, and life attend him,

Meine Hoffnung stehet feste Joachim Neander (1650-1680) Paraphrased Robert Bridges (1844-1930)

CCLI Licence 2370586

beauty springeth out of night.

Evermore, from his store
new-born worlds rise and adore.

4 Daily doth the almighty giver
bounteous gifts on us bestow;
his desire our soul delighteth,
pleasure leads us where we go.
Love doth stand at his hand;
joy doth wait on his command.

5 Still from man to God eternal
sacrifice of praise be done,
high above all praises praising
for the gift of Christ his Son.
Christ doth call one and all:
ye who follow shall not fall.

Let us pray: Jesus, the light and life of the world **in your mercy, hear us.**

Jesus, light of the world, bring light and peace and good news to the whole world... We pray for the leaders of the nations and especially today for those who must make difficult decisions and take action for the protection and welfare of their people. May they be filled with your spirit of wisdom, humility and service. Jesus, the light and life of the world **in your mercy, hear us.**

Jesus, bread of life, give food to the hungry... we pray for all those who serve in food banks in our country and those who need to use them to feed themselves and their families. We pray for farmers and all those who work on and with the land. We give thanks for the earth and every good thing which feeds and nourishes us. Jesus, the light and life of the world **in your mercy, hear us.**

Jesus, our way, our truth, our life,

be with us as we and others journey through life, following you in the way... we pray for the church in this place, in the Bride Valley, and around the world. We pray too for Jane, as she begins a new stage in her journey with you. Open our eyes and our hearts and help us to learn, to grow and to change in the warmth of your light. Jesus, the light and life of the world **in your mercy, hear us.**

Jesus, Good Shepherd who gave your life for the sheep, recover the straggler, bind up the injured, strengthen the sick – [include names here] and lead all the flock to new pastures.

Jesus, the light and life of the world **in your mercy, hear us.**

Jesus, the resurrection and the life, we give thanks for all who have lived and followed you whom we see no more ... Raise us with them to eternal life. Jesus, the light and life of the world **in your mercy, hear us. Amen.**

The Lord's Prayer: As our Saviour taught us, so we pray

Our Father, who art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name; Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory for ever and ever. Amen

Prayer for Courage

Courage comes from the heart and we are always welcomed by God, the heart of all being.

We bear witness to our faith, knowing that we are called to live lives of courage, love and reconciliation in the ordinary and extraordinary moments of each day. We bear witness too to our failures and our complicity in the fractures of our world.

May we be courageous today. May we learn today. May we love today. Amen.

Blessing

May God give to you and to all peoples God's comfort and peace and light and joy, in this world and the next; and the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, be among you and remain with you now and always. **Amen.**

Hymn: Tell out, my soul

1 Tell out, my soul, the greatness of the Lord!

Unnumbered blessings, give my spirit voice;
tender to me the promise of his word;
in God my Saviour shall my heart rejoice.

2 Tell out, my soul, the greatness of his Name!

Make known his might, the deeds his arm has done;
his mercy sure, from age to age the same;
his holy Name, the Lord, the Mighty One.

3 Tell out, my soul, the greatness of his might!

Powers and dominions lay their glory by.
Proud hearts and stubborn wills are put to flight,
the hungry fed, the humble lifted high.

4 Tell out, my soul, the glories of his word!

Firm is his promise, and his mercy sure.
Tell out, my soul, the greatness of the Lord
to children's children and for evermore!

Timothy Dudley-Smith (born 1926) from Luke 1 vs46-55 © administered by Oxford University Press in Europe CCLI Licence 2370586

Common Worship: Services and Prayers for the Church of England, is copyright The Archbishop's Council (2000).

Padraig O Tuama, *Daily Prayer with the Corrymeela Community* (Canterbury Press 2018). The Corrymeela Community was founded over 50 years ago and is Northern Ireland's longest established peace and reconciliation organisation. It has been bringing fractured communities together and resourcing others in the work of healing conflict through its residential programmes, its community visits and its lectionary resource, <https://www.spiritualityofconflict.com/>