



Western Fells Methodist Circuit

**Service for
2 May 2021**

**by
David Hasson**

StF 443

Music [here](#)

Come, let us sing of a wonderful love,
tender and true;
out of the heart of the Father above,
streaming to me and to you:
wonderful love
dwells in the heart of the Father
above.

Jesus is seeking the wanderers yet;
why do they roam?
Love only waits to forgive and forget;
home, weary wanderer, home!
Wonderful love
dwells in the heart of the Father
above.

Jesus, the Saviour, this gospel to tell,
joyfully came;
came with the helpless and hopeless
to dwell,
sharing their sorrow and shame;
seeking the lost,
saving, redeeming at measureless
cost.

Come to my heart, O thou wonderful
love,
come and abide,
lifting my life, till it rises above
envy and falsehood and pride;
seeking to be
lowly and humble, a learner of thee.

Robert Walmsley (1831-1905)

Let us pray

Father God we thank you that the pandemic restrictions are beginning to be eased. It's good to be able to travel further and to see people walking the fells and footpaths, the harboursides and the beaches.

We thank you that there has been some good weather which has enabled people to be outside.

We praise you O God, that even during the isolation of the pandemic, you have been with us even though sometimes it has felt we were on our own. The bible tells us that you experience everything we do and that has been a comfort to us in these difficult times.

We rejoice that there is light at the end of the tunnel and we move forward in faith as you lead us. **Amen**

And now we have the Lord's Prayer modern version

Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your Name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins

as we forgive those who sin
against us.
Save us from the time of trial
and deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power and
the glory are yours,
now and for ever. Amen.

Reading John 15 : 1-8

"I am the true vine. My Father is the gardener. He cuts off every branch joined to me that does not bear fruit. He trims every branch that does bear fruit. Then it will bear even more fruit. You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you. Remain joined to me, just as I also remain joined to you. No branch can bear fruit by itself. It must remain joined to the vine. In the same way, you can't bear fruit unless you remain joined to me.

"I am the vine. You are the branches. If you remain joined to me, and I to you, you will bear a lot of fruit. You can't do anything without me. If you don't remain joined to me, you are like a branch that is thrown away and dries up. Branches like those are picked up. They are thrown into the fire and burned. If you remain joined to me and my words remain in you, ask for anything you wish. And it will be done for you. When you bear a lot of fruit, it brings glory to my Father. It shows that you are my disciples.

Thoughts

At Keswick Methodist, as many of you know, we have a car park. Understandably it is very popular and over time it has gradually become a bit of an eyesore. As property steward I have taken the opportunity during the pandemic to try and improve matters so that it looks better for our neighbours. A really mucky part has been swept so the muck doesn't wash into the drains, white lines have been repainted, posts have been strategically placed to prevent users hitting our neighbours fence on the lower side and wood edging has been placed along the top side to prevent the bank spreading onto the car park. Then there is the bank, a mass of brambles and weeds. What to do with it? When you're not a gardener you ask someone else. So, under the guidance of Sheila, a team has been beavering away.

Comments from visitors and neighbours have been very positive and appreciative of the work done to make the environment around the church better for us and our neighbours and users.

All of that is to inform you of my total and utter ignorance of anything horticultural. So I cringe when a story comes up of sowing, planting, pruning, fruiting etc. (Three of the churches in my first appointment were rural and made up of farming families.)

So it is with trepidation that I think about this passage in John's Gospel. Sheila is our gardener at Keswick and she seems to know all about planting and nurturing plants and gardens to get the best out of them (well almost all no doubt has some advice from others). The results will be brilliant. The writer of the Gospel is referring to God as the gardner but not meaning planting and nurturing plants but rather planting, or should I say pruning and nurturing people's lives. If we want to be fruitful in the way that God wishes us to be we need to allow him to take away that which holds us back and to allow him to nurture us.

That is why, in the first instance we need to have a close relationship with Jesus. The branch gets its nutrition through the vine and so we get our Christian nutrition through Jesus. So, as we come closer to the end of the pandemic restrictions, how is your relationship with Christ. Have you discovered that life is much better without your Sunday worship each week – I hope not. Have you found that YouTube and Zoom services, if you could access them, have been helpful but not quite the same and you feel a bit of a disconnection from Jesus. Similarly with the written services, helpful but not quite the same. Maybe you have found everything has served you quite well and you still feel as close to God as ever.

Whichever has been true for you we are getting to that time when communal worship can restart and getting nearer to the time when it can be back to what it was. In that coming back we, as the church, have a responsibility to look at what has happened and to consider how we enable people improve/maintain/strengthen their relationship with Christ. We cannot just go back to what we always did and we cannot just embrace YouTube or Zoom because different people have found different things helpful as God has sought to nurture them

It is not just about maintaining people's relationship with Jesus though. As the writer said, 'God prunes those branches (us) which don't bear fruit'. Fewer and fewer people appear to see the need to have a relationship with Jesus and yet, as Christians, we know how important that relationship is. In what ways in the future is the church going to demonstrate that a relationship with Christ is important. The simple answer is that we do what Jesus did. He cared about people. We have done that during the pandemic through telephone calls, pastoral letters, written services, seasonal gifts, practical help, volunteering at foodbanks etc and online services.

We've learned through the pandemic restrictions what it is like to be isolated from family and friends. We've learned what it is like to not be able to do that which we have usually done be that sports, fell walking socialising or whatever. Let us feed that into our thinking about where we go from here as churches and let us make sure that whatever we do we make sure that everyone knows that they are welcome and loved, not just by us as the church but also by Jesus. And as we do this make sure we keep close to Jesus who feeds us through his Spirit.

StF 608

Music [here](#)

All praise to our redeeming Lord,
who joins us by his grace,
and bids us, each to each restored,
together seek his face.

E'en now we think and speak the
same,
and cordially agree;
concentred all, through Jesu's
name,
in perfect harmony.

He bids us build each other up;
and, gathered into one,
to our high calling's glorious hope
we hand in hand go on.

We all partake the joy of one,
the common peace we feel,
a peace to sensual minds
unknown,
a joy unspeakable.

The gift which he on one bestows,
we all delight to prove;
the grace through every vessel
flows,
in purest streams of love.

And if our fellowship below
in Jesus be so sweet,
what heights of rapture shall we
know
when round his throne we meet!

Charles Wesley (1707-1788)

Let us pray

Let us remember those who have lost loved ones during the pandemic.

We pray for the churches which have re-opened and those who are making plans for re-opening. May they put in place procedures to keep them safe.

May those who cannot return to church still feel that they are a part of God's family and not forgotten.

Let us pray for the Royal Family, and especially the Queen, at this difficult time with all that is going on in their family.

Pray for all who are on the frontline of caring for people, carers, NHS workers, fire, ambulance and police services and mountain rescue.

We pray God's blessing on each one of us. **Amen**

StF 409

Music [here](#)

Let us build a house where love can dwell
and all can safely live,
a place where saints and children tell
how hearts learn to forgive.
Built of hopes and dreams and
visions,
rock of faith and vault of grace;
here the love of Christ shall end
divisions:

*All are welcome,
all are welcome,
all are welcome in this place.*

Let us build a house where prophets
speak,
and words are strong and true,
where all God's children dare to seek

to dream God's reign anew.
Here the cross shall stand as witness
and as symbol of God's grace;
here as one we claim the faith of
Jesus:

*All are welcome,
all are welcome,
all are welcome in this place.*

Let us build a house where love is
found
in water, wine and wheat:
a banquet hall on holy ground
where peace and justice meet.
Here the love of God, through Jesus,
is revealed in time and space;
as we share in Christ the feast that
frees us:

*All are welcome,
all are welcome,
all are welcome in this place.*

Let us build a house where hands will reach
beyond the wood and stone
to heal and strengthen, serve and teach,
and live the Word they've known.
Here the outcast and the stranger
bear the image of God's face;
let us bring an end to fear and danger:

*All are welcome,
all are welcome,
all are welcome in this place.*

Let us build a house where all are named,
their songs and visions heard
and loved and treasured, taught and claimed
as words within the Word.
Built of tears and cries and laughter,
prayers of faith and songs of grace,
let this house proclaim from floor to rafter:

*All are welcome,
all are welcome,
all are welcome in this place.*

Marty Haugen (b. 1950)

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Blessing.

And now may the blessing of God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, be with us all evermore. **Amen.**