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ORDINARY 11B

16th June 2024

A short act of worship and daily devotions

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Opening Prayers

Living, loving God, you have brought me here, and here I am to worship.
For a moment, I have turned aside from the busyness and business of the day, to come and meet with you.

As I sing, as I worship, as I pray and listen, talk and reflect, give and learn,
Come here into this space, please Lord – by your grace, inspire me – by your Spirit,
Challenge me – with your love.

As I worship, show me how to go from here to play my part in forming a better, safer, kinder, more Christ-like world.

Creator and Sustainer, you have brought me here, and here I am to worship.
I know though, O Lord, that I have often fallen short of your glory,
I have been distracted by the things of this world and drawn away from your calling on my life.

Come to me now, O God, by your grace, and forgive me for all my shortcomings. *[Pause]*.

Even as I repent and say sorry, I know you have already forgiven me, and for that I am truly grateful.

Thank you Lord, for this time to worship you and gather in your name,
Thank you that by your Spirit, I am connected with all those worshipping, all around the world, on this Lord's day.

I have come here, come Lord Jesus. Amen.

You may now wish to say the Lord's Prayer in a version or translation with which you are familiar

Readings: Mark 4:26-34 – [Click for reading](#)

Reflections on the reading

The Methodist President and vice President of Conference (2023-2024) this year have a theme of 'Hidden Treasure' Inspired, by Isaiah 45:3:

"I will give you the treasures of darkness and riches hidden in secret places, so that you may know that it is I the Lord, the God of Israel, who call you by your name."

President Revd Gill Newton said this: "But note the treasures are stored in darkness, and the riches are hidden in secret places – that must mean these treasures are all around us! God isn't trying to hide treasures from us, instead God is hiding them for us!"

So what hidden treasure do we find here in these parables?

In the Parable of the Growing Seed, Jesus describes the kingdom of God as a seed planted in the ground. Despite its hidden growth, the seed transforms into a mature plant, yielding a bountiful harvest. Our acts of love, kindness, and sharing the good news of the gospel all plant seeds that might take some time to show signs of growth. However, do not estimate the power your selfless acts of love have on those around you, whether it be for a moment, a season or a lifetime.

What does this parable teach us about the nature of God's kingdom and its growth process?

The Parable of the Mustard Seed: Jesus compares the kingdom of God to a mustard seed, the smallest of all seeds. Despite its small size, the mustard seed grows into a large tree, providing bird shelter.

What significance does the mustard seed's transformation hold for our understanding of God's kingdom and our role within it?

How can we actively seek to understand the mysteries of God's kingdom in our lives today?

As we reflect on Jesus' parables, let us be encouraged by the profound truths they reveal about the kingdom of God. Despite its humble beginnings and mysterious growth, God's kingdom is powerful and transformative. May we cultivate faith, trust in God's timing, embrace humility, and seek understanding as we participate in God's love story for all the world.

Responding in music

255 STF – The kingdom of God is justice and joy - [YouTube](#)

345 STF – And can it be that I should gain? - [YouTube](#)

Responding in prayer

Creator God,

I long for the day when all nations will bow before you and every family will find sustenance and satisfaction. Today, I pray for leaders worldwide burdened with caring for their people; grant them wisdom and boldness to pursue justice and peace. In particular, Lord, hear my prayer for places ravaged by violence, war, and terrorism.

Be still and pray about the stories you've read in the news, the stories that need the light of God's love shining into them.

Lord, in your mercy: hear my prayer.

Loving God,

I bring before you the struggles of our loved ones, the challenges faced by those in difficult circumstances, the suffering of the sick and lonely. May they find comfort in your boundless mercy, knowing you are ever-present in their trials.

Be still and pray about the people in your life, family and community, pray that God's love shines through each of those situations.

Lord, in your mercy: hear my prayer.

Amen.

Blessing

Go from this place and this moment full to overflowing with God's grace offered to you through story and song.

May you share that grace so that others might learn how special it is.

May you embody God's radical grace and strive to make the world a better place.

May you play your part, until all are wrapped in the love of God and are able to flourish and grow, until the Kingdom of God is realised as She would want it to be.

Amen.

Prayers and Prayer Pointers

Monday 17th June

- Lord, help me to be a faithful steward of the seeds you have entrusted to me, the possibilities of new life, the ideas, hopes and dreams. May I live as a sign of your Kingdom, shining your light in the darkness and offering hope to all who are in need. Amen.

Tuesday 18th June

- Make a cup of tea or coffee, or something else to drink. As you drink it, imagine all the places and people that are responsible for making it, from source to your lips. Thank God for them, the source of all life.

Wednesday 19th June

- Loving God,
Thank you, for this day.
Help me to recognise it as a gift.
Help me to use this gift to be a blessing to others.
Come, by your grace, Lord.
Amen.

Thursday 20th June

- Light a candle. Jesus is the light of the world. Pray about the places you experience darkness in your life, that Jesus light might shine there.

Friday 21st June

- Write a note or a message to a friend with a Bible verse in it that you think might be relevant to your life. Tell them you're thinking of them, and pray about them as they receive it.

Saturday 22nd June

- Parental God, today I express gratitude for those who strive for the well-being of this local community.
You may like to use your prayer time to think of some of the people in your community who need prayer and hold them in the light of God's love.
Amen.