

Regent St Methodist
Sunday 10th May 2020

Welcome & announcements- Colin

Christian Aid welcome

Gathering prayer- C Aid staff

Song- Be Still

Prayer & OT Reading - Colin

Children's Talk- Dave Thomas C Aid

New Testament Reading - C Aid

Sermon- Rev Dr Liz Hughes, Chair of Christian Aid Ireland's board

Prayer- C Aid staff Burundi

Prayers for others – Colin

Hymn- HP 770 Go forth & tell, Sun 8/4/18

Blessing- Colin

Good morning everyone & welcome to our service today. Today is our annual service supporting the work of Christian Aid & they will lead much of our service. However before we begin just a few announcements-

Firstly the 24th May is 'Aldersgate Sunday' which commemorates the conversion of John Wesley & the start of the Methodist movement. Our Methodist President is hosting a special online service that day & he is asking Methodists to vote for their favourite Wesleyan hymn. The top hymn will be used in some way, during the service. The President is also asking people to write a new coronavirus-related prayer for the world, of not more than 200 words. One of these will be used by us all on the

24th and the rest will be made available for use on other occasions.

The President is also calling Methodists to submit their faith story - either in writing or by video(using wetransfer) - of not more than 500 words with the title "*How God has been my adventure through the coronavirus crisis.*" Again one story will be used on the 24th & the rest will be used at other times.

All votes & submissions are to be made before Monday 18th May to the President via his email president@irishmethodist.org You should also include your name, age & the name of your Church with each submission.

Secondly - just to encourage you all that, although we continue in lock down we haven't forgotten our annual Ark service. So Sunday 31st May will see our young people & children lead most of our online service.

Finally just a reminder that we look to support Christian Aid today by sharing, in our separate homes, a bread & cheese lunch. As part of that we want to encourage you to give a gift to Christian Aid but we also want you to give a gift to the rest of us by coming on ZOOM at 12 noon & saying hello! The easiest way to do that is to quickly send of an email to Laura Ewing now on laura.ewing@irishmethodist.org and ask her to email you a link.

Many thanks for your patience & we now take a moment in quiet as we prepare to worship God.

Call to worship Ps 22: 25- 28

I will praise you in the great assembly.

I will fulfil my vows in the presence of those who worship you. ²⁶ The poor will eat and be satisfied. All who seek the Lord will praise him. Their hearts will rejoice with everlasting joy. ²⁷ The whole earth will acknowledge the Lord and return to him.

All the families of the nations will bow down before him. ²⁸ For royal power belongs to the Lord. He rules all the nations.

Christian Aid welcome - Rosamond Bennett
CEO Christian Aid Ireland

Gathering Prayer – C Aid Staff

Song- *Be Still*

Be still for the presence of the Lord
The Holy One is here
Come bow before Him now
With reverence and fear
In Him no sin is found
We stand on holy ground
Be still for the presence of the Lord
The Holy One is here

Be still for the glory of the Lord
Is shining all around
He burns with holy fire
With splendour He is crowned
How awesome is the sight
Our radiant King of light
Be still for the glory of the Lord
Is shining all around

Be still for the power of the Lord
Is moving in this place
He comes to cleanse and heal
To minister His grace
No work too hard for Him
In faith receive from Him
Be still for the power of the Lord

Is moving in this place
Be still for the power of the Lord
Is moving in this place.

Prayer- Living God, we still ourselves in your wonderful presence. We come with reverence & in holy fear for You are the radiant King of light, the One in whom all life & goodness has its origin. You are the Almighty God, there is none like You.

So we still ourselves & say you are our God.... and we worship you.

But even as we quieten our hearts in your perfect presence, so we are again aware of our need of grace. We confess our sins to God & look again to Jesus who washes away all sin. We hear the good news that ⁹ *If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*

Our sins are forgiven in Jesus & now we hear our Old Testament Reading from psalm 31 & then our Children's talk

In you, LORD, I have taken refuge; let me never be put to shame; deliver me in your righteousness. Turn your ear to me, come quickly to my rescue; be my rock of refuge, a strong fortress to save me. Since you are my rock and my fortress, for the sake of your name lead and guide me. Keep me free from the trap that is set for me, for you are my refuge. ⁵ Into your hands I commit my spirit; deliver me, LORD, my faithful God. I hate those who cling to worthless idols; as for me, I trust in the LORD. I will be glad and rejoice in your love, for you saw my affliction and knew the anguish of my soul. You have not given me into the hands of the enemy but have set my feet in a spacious place.

⁹ *Be merciful to me, LORD, for I am in distress; my eyes grow weak with sorrow, my soul*

and body with grief. My life is consumed by anguish and my years by groaning; my strength fails because of my affliction, and my bones grow weak. Because of all my enemies, I am the utter contempt of my neighbours and an object of dread to my closest friends – those who see me on the street flee from me.

¹² I am forgotten as though I were dead; I have become like broken pottery. For I hear many whispering, 'Terror on every side!' They conspire against me and plot to take my life. But I trust in you, LORD; I say, 'You are my God.' My times are in your hands; deliver me from the hands of my enemies, from those who pursue me.

¹⁶ Let your face shine on your servant; save me in your unfailing love. Let me not be put to shame, LORD, for I have cried out to you; but let the wicked be put to shame and be silent in the realm of the dead. Let their lying lips be silenced, for with pride and contempt they speak arrogantly against the righteous.

²³ Love the LORD, all his faithful people! The LORD preserves those who are true to him, but the proud he pays back in full. Be strong and take heart, all you who hope in the LORD.

Children's Talk- Dave Thomas C Aid

Dave encourages us to remember others in prayer as we wash our hands, he reminds us that for many people in developing nations fresh water is a luxury.

New Testament Reading

- 1 Corinthians 13:4-8

Love is patient and kind. Love is not jealous or boastful or proud ⁵ or rude. It does not demand its own way. It is not irritable, and it keeps no record of being wronged. ⁶ It does not rejoice about injustice but rejoices

whenever the truth wins out. ⁷ Love never gives up, never loses faith, is always hopeful, and endures through every circumstance.

⁸ Prophecy and speaking in unknown languages and special knowledge will become useless. But love will last forever!

Sermon- Rev Dr Liz Hughes Chair of C Aid Ireland. - Liz begins by thanking everyone for their prayers & practical support of Christian Aid through the years.

Liz tells us that in January she had the privilege of visiting Sierra Leone to see at first hand the work of C Aid & its partners. During her visit Liz heard from Christians and Muslims how much the work of Christian aid is valued in their community. The local assemblies of God Pastor thanked C Aid & took up 3 offerings in their service! Liz also heard about how the Ebola outbreak in Sierra Leone had caused much distress especially when families could not properly bury their loved ones or touch them. Christian Aid had an important role in bringing faith leaders together to help families in such difficult situation. Little did they know then that very shortly Ireland and the world would be faced with the same distressing circumstances.

Whenever things get tough Christian Aid is there. It is in difficult times that people find strength and comfort in scripture & in particular the psalms. One of today's lectionary readings is Psalm 31, it was written by someone who was clearly feeling very poorly because of some form of illness or disease.

vs⁹ Be merciful to me, LORD, for I am in distress; my eyes grow weak with sorrow, my soul and body with grief. My life is consumed by anguish and my years by groaning; my strength fails because of my affliction, and my bones grow weak...

Even in the face of serious illness the psalm writer puts his trust in God... *vs⁵ Into your hands I commit my spirit; deliver me, LORD, my faithful God.* It was a prayer that Jesus would also use on the cross...later in the psalm the phrase reappears...*vss 14-15 But I trust in you, LORD; I say, 'You are my God.' My times are in your hands*

One of the biggest challenges with the Covid 19 has not being able to be with those we love and hold the hands of those who are ill. However Liz reminds us that we can trust the ones we love and ourselves into God's hands in these dark times.

Christian aid has been running health programs in Sierra Leone, these programs have made a huge impact and helped people stand up for their rights. Liz marvelled at the good work that was happening yet she also is concerned about the potential for huge distress that an outbreak of Covid 19 could have in the village of Sierra Leone. Yet these people can also teach us something as they had learnt to wash their hands with only small amounts of water during the Ebola crisis.

The psalm writer, even in his distress, talks of God's unfailing love.... This unfailing love is spoken of all through the bible. Our NT passage from 1 Cor 13 reminds us that *love will never come to an end...that it never fails...*

Even today in the midst of trouble we can experience that unfailing love. The love that took Jesus to the cross...for God so loved the world that He gave his only Son...

Liz speaks of how her heart goes out to those places in the world, like Sierra Leone, where life is precarious enough without this new pandemic. This year's Christian aid theme is 'love never fails'. Christian Aid is challenging people to pass on to the poorest some of the money we may have saved through not going out to coffee shops, or for a day out etc This is 1 way of making up for the usual door to door collections etc that can't happen this year.

Even in the darkest moments love gives hope and it compels us to stand together with others this year Christian Aid reminds us of how important it is to pray & give.

Prayer from Burundi-

Local prayers- *For God so loved the world that He gave his only Son....*

God of wondrous love we rejoice & find strength in your gracious love & mercy. So we bring to You our needy world, a world not only troubled by Covid 19 but also by inequality, poverty & war. Lord forgive us all for any part we have played in the troubles of this world & help us learn important lessons from this difficult time. We pray for an end to this virus but also for an end to the unjust systems that maintain inequality & poverty. Lord let your kingdom come let your will be done.

So we bring to God those we know who need our prayers- We pray for all our Y people undertaking exams. For David , Robert, Olivia, Sophie & Jill.

We ask for healing for two young boys with cancer Daniel Kidson & Timothy Harte, & for baby Rosie very ill in hospital

We also continue to pray for Sammy, his wife Muriel, daughters Alison & Julie & the family. We also remember Elsbeth & Marion her daughter caring for her. *'Lord, You promise to never leave for forsake us & we pray that Sammy & Elsbeth & their families would continue find strength & hope in You.*

We also continue to pray for Ellen Stewart & Nicola's mother who has been diagnosed with Covid 19 in there care homes.

We now bring to God those who have lost loved ones in the past days... For Anne, Ian, Marie, Gary, Ann, Rikki, Claire, Samantha & Morris, Hilda, Marta & David. Lord surround them all in your arms of love.

We finish with the Lord's Prayer

We will now sing our closing hymn -
Go forth & tell!

*Go forth and tell! O Church of God, awake!
God's saving news to all the nations take:
proclaim Christ Jesus, Saviour, Lord & King,
that all the world His worthy praise may sing.*

*Go forth and tell! God's love embraces all;
He will in grace respond to all who call:
How shall they call if they have never heard
The gracious invitation of His word?*

*Go forth and tell! men still in darkness lie;
In wealth or want, in sin they live and die:
give us, O Lord, concern of heart and mind,
A love like Yours which cares for all mankind.*

*Go forth and tell! the doors are open wide:
share God's good gifts - let no one be denied;*

*live out your life as Christ your Lord shall
choose,
Your ransomed powers for His sole glory use.*

Can I remind you that if you wish to give to the work of Christian aid you can give online at the Christian Aid .ie website or you can send a cheque to our treasurer Judith & she will arrange a bank transfer. And do remember to come on Zoom at 12 noon or send us a photo of you having lunch for next week's service. Or both!

And as we close we share in the grace together

THE GRACE of our Lord Jesus Christ , the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all forever more. amen