**Bamford Chapel and Norden URC &**

**Rochdale, Bury and North Manchester Missional Partnership Service – Sunday 15th August 2021**

**Welcome and opening words**

Welcome to worship! My name is the Revd Richard Bradley and I, along with my colleague Daniel Harris, am one of the ministers in the Rochdale, Bury and North Manchester Missional Partnership.

We gather with one another and we gather in God’s presence.

We may come burdened with life.

We may come with burdens lifted.

We may come in sickness.

We may come in health.

We may think we come because our diaries allowed us to.

But we do come at God’s invitation and because God wants us here today.

In the Bible we read: “28 **“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. 29 Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. 30 For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.”** (Matthew 11:28-30 NIVUK)

However we come today you are most welcome and God meets you where you are at in life and on your journey of faith. And we are here to sing God’s praises today. We’re going to do that by singing out first song: King of Kings, majesty.

**Opening song: CMP 1000 (we all sing): King of Kings Majesty**

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| 1.. King of kings, majesty,  God of heaven living in me,  gentle Saviour, closest friend,  strong deliverer, beginning and end,  all within me falls at Your throne. | 2.. Earth and heaven worship You,  love eternal, faithful and true,  who bought the nations,  ransomed souls,  brought this sinner  near to Your throne;  all within me cries out in praise. |
| Chorus: *Your majesty, I can but bow.*  *I lay my all before you now.*  *In royal robes I don't deserve I live to serve Your majesty.  I live to serve Your majesty.* (extra line after verse 2) | Jarod Cooper © 1996 Sovereign Lifestyle Music  Ccli 169737 Streaming licence 595811 |

**Prayers**

Awesome God, we gather in this moment of stillness to pray.

We gather in this moment of stillness speak.

We gather in this moment of stillness to listen.

We gather in this moment of stillness to be changed and transformed.

As we come we bring your our prayers of praise and thanksgiving. We praise you for your amazing love and your amazing grace. We praise you for the beauty of creation. We praise you for the beauty of the seasons that we enjoy year after year.

We praise you for your faithfulness to us even though we are frail and fail so often. But in your grace, love and mercy and in the sacrifice your made in giving your Son Jesus Christ to be our Lord and our Saviour.

We thank you, Lord, that you are always there. Whatever situations we may face whether of joy or of sorrow, you are *always* there. You never leave us and we thank you.

We thank you that you hear our prayers and you always want what is best for us even if, at times, we don’t agree. Help us to acknowledge that you know more than we do and always want the very best for us.

Forgive us, Lord, for times of weakness when we have not stood against injustice and unfairness. Forgive us, Lord, for times of silence when we should have spoken out and have not.

Forgive us, Lord, for those times when we should have acted and have remained inactive.

But in our weakness may we know you to be our strength.

And as we gather in prayer we do so with countless numbers of people across the globe who are worshipping today – and so we join in the prayer that unites us:

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.

**Introduction to the theme – FOOD!**

Who here enjoys preparing food? Who here enjoys eating food?

Who knows what they are having for lunch/dinner today?

I am going to show you some foods and I want you to tell me if you like these foods or not…..

1. Kidney 2) Bacon 3) Sprouts 4) Curry 5) Cereal 6) Bananas
2. 7) Chocolate 8) Bread 9) Fish

Some people don’t enjoy food. They know they need to eat but they do so to keep healthy.

Jesus enjoyed food. We often hear of Jesus having meals with people in the Bible. He saw the importance of needing to eat but also the conversations that happen at the meal table.

Spiritually food is important for us to. Not the sorts of food that we have seen on the screen….but we need to be fed spiritually too and God feeds us through:

\*Attending church \*Singing hymns \*Praying \*Reading the Bible

So, like we eat and drink daily to keep us healthy – let us also allow God to feed us spiritually so that we can become more like Jesus as we listen to him.

Let us pray….

Loving, God you love us and want the best for us. Help us to be fed so that we can be healthy in our spiritual lives and grow in our faith. Amen.

**Song: CMP 1003 (we all sing) My Jesus, my Saviour (x2)**

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| 1.. My Jesus, My Saviour,  Lord, there is none like You.  All of my days, I want to praise  the wonders of Your mighty love.  My comfort, my shelter,  tower of refuge and strength,  let every breath, all that I am,  never cease to worship You. | Chorus: *Shout to the Lord, all the earth, let us sing,*  *power and majesty, praise to the King!*  *Mountains bow down and the seas will roar,*  *at the sound of your name!*  *I sing for joy at the work of your hands,*  *forever I'll love you, forever I'll stand.*  *Nothing compares to the promise I have in You.* |
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**Bible Reading: John 21:1-14 -Jesus and the miraculous catch of fish (NIVUK)**

1 Afterwards Jesus appeared again to his disciples, by the Sea of Galilee. It happened this way: 2Simon Peter, Thomas (also known as Didymus), Nathanael from Cana in Galilee, the sons of Zebedee, and two other disciples were together. 3‘I’m going out to fish,’ Simon Peter told them, and they said, ‘We’ll go with you.’ So they went out and got into the boat, but that night they caught nothing.

4Early in the morning, Jesus stood on the shore, but the disciples did not realise that it was Jesus.

5He called out to them, ‘Friends, haven’t you any fish?’

‘No,’ they answered.

6He said, ‘Throw your net on the right side of the boat and you will find some.’ When they did, they were unable to haul the net in because of the large number of fish.

7Then the disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, ‘It is the Lord!’ As soon as Simon Peter heard him say, ‘It is the Lord,’ he wrapped his outer garment round him (for he had taken it off) and jumped into the water. 8The other disciples followed in the boat, towing the net full of fish, for they were not far from shore, about a hundred metres. 9When they landed, they saw a fire of burning coals there with fish on it, and some bread.

10Jesus said to them, ‘Bring some of the fish you have just caught.’ 11So Simon Peter climbed back into the boat and dragged the net ashore. It was full of large fish, 153, but even with so many the net was not torn. 12Jesus said to them, ‘Come and have breakfast.’ None of the disciples dared ask him, ‘Who are you?’ They knew it was the Lord. 13Jesus came, took the bread and gave it to them, and did the same with the fish. 14This was now the third time Jesus appeared to his disciples after he was raised from the dead.

Thanks be to God for His Word.

**Song (we listen and reflect): CMP 1305 – Speak, O Lord, as we come to you**

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| 1.. Speak, O Lord, as we come to You  to receive the food of Your Holy Word.  Take Your truth, plant it deep in us;  shape and fashion us in Your likeness,  that the Light of Christ might be seen today  in our acts of love and our deeds of faith.  Speak O Lord, and fulfill in us  all Your purposes, for Your glory. | 2.. Teach us, Lord full obedience,  holy reverence, true humility.  Test our thoughts and our attitudes  in the radiance of Your purity.  Cause our faith to rise, cause our eyes to see  Your majestic love and authority.  Words of power that can never fail;  let their truth prevail over unbelief. |
| 3.. Speak, O Lord, and renew our minds;  help us grasp the heights of Your plans for us.  Truths unchanged from the dawn of time  that will echo down through eternity.  And by grace we'll stand on Your promises,  and by faith we'll walk as You walk with us.  Speak, O Lord, till Your church is built  And the earth is filled with Your glory. | Keith Getty and Stuart Townend ©2005  Thankyou Music/Capitol CMG Publishing/Integritymusic.com  ccli 169737 Streaming licence 595811 |

**Reflecting together on God’s Word**

*I don’t know how many of you watch Saturday morning TV. There is a programme on ITV which is one of James Martin’s cooking programmes. I think it is called “James Martin’s Saturday Morning”*

*He cooks for various celebrities sometimes in his kitchen…sometimes in his garden…and sometimes he goes on one of his travels and you see him cooking on the beach! That came to mind as I read this reading from John’s gospel in preparation for today.*

I feel for the disciples. They have spent some three years being taught and trained by Jesus….they have in recent days seen him crucified and laid in a tomb…..but….as he said to them on several occasions he would rise again!

The last time the disciples saw Jesus they were huddled together in a locked room because of **“fear”** (John 20:19 NIVUK) In that encounter as Jesus quite literally broke into that room he showed himself to be very much alive by showing the wounds of crucifixion.

After assuring them and offering them his peace he breathed on them and said, **“receive the Holy Spirit”** (John 20:22 NIVUK) in that moment Jesus had empowered them and in many ways commissioned them for the next stage of their faith journey!

And so, the disciples, filled with the Holy Spirit, full of life and ready to proclaim the gospel burst out of that locked room and went to preach to the nations……

Oh, no, hang on a minute….that’s not what it says in John 21 is it…..we read that 7 of the disciples who were together…Peter and the others went back to what they knew, perhaps what they felt comfortable doing. Peter said, **“I’m going to fish”** (John 21:3) and the others went along with him.

*How often in life do we do that? It’s human nature isn’t it…we go through difficult times and we want that which is familiar, that which is comforting, that which in some way we are in control of.*

*Our youngest daughter (who probably won’t thank me for telling you this!) as a baby loved her blankets. She had these crocheted blankets which were made by someone we know. She loved them! She used them so much that some of them looked terrible….we tried to replace them with new (albeit different blankets) but to no avail…she would always want her old, worn blankets – they, in many ways, were a comfort – they were familiar to her.*

And when we think what we have come through with the pandemic, and continue to go through, in difficult times with this dreadful virus. The church has had to find new ways of being church….of offering worship…but as we return to a new normality I hope we don’t do the equivalent of going back to fish! That we don’t simply toss out what we have learned over the last 18 months and simply revert back to what we did before. I am not suggesting we need to simply sell the building and use zoom and YouTube….but equally let us not also lay aside new technologies that have enabled friendships to be made across the Missional Partnership and new ways of worship, learning and fellowship that have begun during the last 18 months or so.

And so back to the passage, Peter and some of the other disciples go out to fish. A frustrating night’s work for them. They caught nothing! They knew how to fish! They knew the Sea of Galilee well…they would have known the best places to fish for they had fished for so long and were experts! But alas this was just a bad day on the water for them.

Until….a person on the beach shouts out to the men in the boat. **“Friends, haven’t you any fish?”** (John 21:5 NIVUK) **‘“No’ they answered”**

At this point the disciples haven’t spotted who the man on the beach is. After their response he advises them to throw their nets on the other side of the boat. Was is that he could sea the fish better from the land that the disciples couldn’t see from the boat?

They did as advised and such was the catch that they couldn’t even haul the net over the side of the boat – 7 men, no doubt 7 strong men couldn’t haul the net into the boat. Such was the size and weight of the catch!

These fishermen would have been tired from a night trying to find fish. They would have been frustrated at not getting a catch until the sun started to rise and they were about to give up. And Jesus came, Jesus spoke, and Jesus transformed their lot.

John was the first to spot that it was Jesus….and Peter didn’t waste any time in jumping overboard and wading towards Jesus.

The others in the boat returned to shore with their net full of 153 fish!

When they did Jesus invited them to share breakfast with him – he was doing a James Martin!

The invitation was to eat fish, fish which Jesus was already cooking. Jesus didn’t need the fish the disciples had caught. He had come prepared and was ready and waiting for them to land on shore.

*This reading teaches us something about listening to Jesus. The disciples could so easily have ignored the advice from the man on the sea shore. They could have simply hauled the empty net onto the boat and simply come back to the shore. But they didn’t….they obeyed and did as Jesus said.*

*Jesus surprised the disciples that day. I don’t think they were expecting him to be there and they were ready to be surprised.*

*Q: When was the last time God surprised you? How guilty can we be of filling our time with fishing in wrong places…. Like the disciples we need to be ready to be surprised by Jesus and be ready to respond to what Jesus says to us and the direction he is calling us in.*

Like for the disciples it was a new chapter in their life and ministry – so for churches Missional Partnerships are a new thing as we grapple with new ways of working and the sharing of resources across a greater number of churches. In amidst it all we need to be seeking God in prayer (personal and corporate prayer) and asking that He lead us and guide us in new ways of being church and in being faithful followers being ready to lift our nets and placing them in new places in order that we can catch fish!

Amen.

**Song (we listen and reflect): CMP 825 – Faithful one, so unchanging (x2)**

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| Faithful One, so unchanging;  ageless One, You're my rock of peace.  Lord of all, I depend on You,  I call out to You again and again,  I call out to You again and again.  You are my rock in times of trouble,  You lift me up when I fall down;  all through the storm Your love is the anchor -  my hope is in You alone. (x2) | Brian Doerksen © 1989 Mercy/Vineyard Publishing/Vineyard Songs Canada/Song Solutions CopyCare  Ccli 169737 Streaming licence 595811 |

**Prayers:**

*During our prayers I will leave moments of silence in order that you can bring your own concerns to God….*

Loving God, who in his grace listens to our prayers. We gather in this moment to offer our prayers of concern and worry to you.

***We bring you our prayers of concern for the world.***

For the parts of the world where there is war and injustice…..

For the parts of our world where there is famine and thirst….

For parts of our world where there is sickness and death….

***We bring you our prayers for the Church.***

We pray for churches who struggle to connect with their communities….

We pray for churches that a new and are reaching into their communities….

We pray for churches that are having to close and for the pain in that process….

***We bring you our prayers for ourselves and those we love.***

We pray for those who are undergoing medical tests or in hospital….

We pray for those who have suffered or are suffering from Covid 19….

We pray for those who are trying to find work….

We pray for ourselves and ask that you, Lord, would guide us in all that we do….

Help us to follow you more closely…help us to be ready to listen to Jesus and to be fed by Jesus in our daily spiritual lives so that we might be more like him in all that we do.

We offer all our prayers in and through the name of Jesus, our Lord, Saviour and friend.

Amen.

**Closing Song (we all sing): CMP 178 - Go forth and tell**

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| 1.. Go forth and tell! O Church of God, awake!  God’s saving news to all the nations take:  proclaim Christ Jesus, Saviour, Lord and King,  that all the world His worthy praise may sing. | 2.. 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? |
| 3.. 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. | 4.. 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. |
| 5.. Go forth and tell! O Church of God, arise!  Go in the strength which Christ Your Lord supplies;  go till all nations His great name adore  and serve Him, Lord and King for evermore. | James E Seddon (1915 - 1983)  Jubilate Hymns  ccli 169737 Streaming licence 595811 |

**Blessing**

May the blessing of almighty God known to us as Father, Son and Holy Spirit,  
be with us, guides us, feed us and nurture us as we go from this act of worship to be a follower and to learn more of Jesus.

Amen.