Order of Service Sunday 25th July 2021 (Ninth Sunday after Pentecost)

Service led by Debbie Wood

**Welcome and intro to first song:**

Welcome to worship on this ninth Sunday after Pentecost, my name is Debbie and I am a member of Bamford Chapel and Norden URC which is part of the Rochdale, Bury and North Manchester Missional Partnership. Psalm 145 verse 18 proclaims: “The Lord is near to all who call on Him, to all who call on Him in truth.” Let us take a moment of stillness as we begin, to call on our Lord to fill our hearts with compassion, to open our eyes to what He asks of us, to hear and understand His message to us through our worship together today.

Now we will join together in our first hymn: Filled with Compassion for all Creation

**Song-** Filled with Compassion for all Creation

Chorus
God, You are waiting. Your heart is breaking
For all the people who live on the earth.
Stir us to action, filled with Your passion
For all the people who live on the earth.

From every nation we shall be gathered,
Millions redeemed shall be Jesus’ reward.
Then He will turn and say to His Father:
“Truly my suffering was worth it all!”

Chorus
God, You are waiting. Your heart is breaking
For all the people who live on the earth.
Stir us to action, filled with Your passion
For all the people who live on the earth

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| --- |
| Filled with compassion for all creation,Jesus came into a world that was lost.There was but one way that He could save us,Only through suffering death on a cross.ChorusGod, You are waiting. Your heart is breakingFor all the people who live on the earth.Stir us to action, filled with Your passionFor all the people who live on the earth.Great is Your passion for all the peopleLiving and dying without knowing You.Having no saviour, they’re lost foreverIf we don’t speak out and lead them to You. |

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 **Prayers of thanksgiving and confession:**

Let us pray: We turn to you Lord, with thankful hearts, grateful for all the blessings You bestow on us. You give us everything we need. We can always rely on you to nourish and protect us physically, emotionally and spiritually if we just turn to You. Thank you for Your great compassion in hearing and responding to our prayers. In the silence we reflect on all You have done for us. (SILENCE) We come to you Lord to quietly confess the wrong-doings we have done in thought and word and deed so that we can prepare our hearts to be moved by You. In the silence we reflect on those times that we have let you down. (SILENCE) Have mercy on us, O God, according to your unfailing love; according to your great compassion blot out our transgressions for you are a forgiving God, gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and abounding in love. We ask this in Jesus’ name who died for our sins. Amen

Let us join together now in saying the Lord’s Prayer-

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.

**Children’s Address:**  Let’s think today about how we always have enough to give to others even when we think we might not have. We’ll start by watching the story of Jesus feeding the 5000.

 [Jesus Feeds the 5,000 - YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S6rj9cAJrWE)

This story from the Bible shows us that we might think we don’t have enough ourselves to give to others but that when we give what we have we get so much more back. God always gives us what we need and wants us to give to others. So how can we give to others? We might donate money to a charity or take clothes, books and toys that we no longer use to the charity shop. We might give our time by volunteering or doing shopping for an elderly neighbour. We might use our gifts or talents to help others in some way, for example bringing joy through music and song. We might share what we have with our friends. If our friends are upset we might feel upset for them, we can give them comfort by listening to them and giving them a hug. This is called being compassionate. We can share our belief in Jesus with others so that they too can share in the joy and hope of having Jesus in their lives. It doesn’t have to cost us anything to give to others but the one thing we can be sure of is that when we give freely to others in whatever way we receive so much more back.

Now let us sing together the hymn: Freely, Freely

**Song- Freely, Freely**

God forgave my sin in Jesus' name.
I've been born again in Jesus' name
And in Jesus' name I come to you
To share his love as he told me to.

He said 'Freely, freely you have received;, freely, freely give.
Go in my name, and because you believe others will know that I live.

All pow'r is giv'n in Jesus' name
In earth and heav'n in Jesus’ name
And in Jesus' name I come to you
To share his pow'r as he told me to.

He said 'Freely, freely you have received;, freely, freely give.
Go in my name, and because you believe others will know that I live.

God gives us life in Jesus' name
He lives in us in Jesus' name
And in Jesus' name I come to you
To share his peace as he told me to.

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**Today’s First Reading:**

**Psalm 145: 10-18**

All your works praise you, Lord;
    your faithful people extol you.
11They tell of the glory of your kingdom
    and speak of your might,
12so that all people may know of your mighty acts
    and the glorious splendor of your kingdom.
13Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom,
    and your dominion endures through all generations.

The Lord is trustworthy in all he promises
    and faithful in all he does.[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm%20145:10-18&version=NIV;#fen-NIV-16334a)]
14The Lord upholds all who fall
    and lifts up all who are bowed down.
15The eyes of all look to you,
    and you give them their food at the proper time.
16You open your hand
    and satisfy the desires of every living thing.

17The Lord is righteous in all his ways
    and faithful in all he does.
18The Lord is near to all who call on him,
    to all who call on him in truth.

**Reflection part 1:**

There are so many times in my life when I have worried about things that I am sure many of us worry about. When I have worried about not having enough or about what I have not got or more especially about what I have lost especially when that has been the death of a loved one. Eventually, in each situation, I realised that I just needed to turn to God, to pray to Him, to ask for help and guidance and that He would give me comfort and peace. For the Lord, our God, is a compassionate God who will always provide for my every need.

Right from the moment of Creation, God has been giving us whatever we might need- as we read in the start of Genesis when God tells Adam and Eve all that He has provided for them to live. Indeed, in Acts 17:25 we are told: “He himself gives everyone life and breath and everything else.” He knows better than us what it is we need and also what we don’t need- if only Adam and Eve had heeded His warnings and not succumbed to temptation and us too. Even then, when sin entered the world, God did not give up on us. He continued to give through the giving of His Son, Jesus Christ, our saviour and redeemer, so that we are given a route to salvation and redemption and everlasting life with Him through His greatest gift to us, through God’s sacrifice of His own Son on the cross and His resurrection! And if God has given us the ultimate gift, the gift of eternal life with Him, how can we not believe that He will give us what we need in our lives now? As it says in Romans 8:32 “He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things?” We can rely on God for all that we need, as the Psalmist wrote in verse 16 of our first reading today: “You open your hand and satisfy the desires of every living thing.” All we need to do is turn to Him for what we need, which of course is very different to what we want! Matthew tells us in chapter 7 verse 7 ““Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you.”

God does not only provide for our earthly needs; He provides for us emotionally and spiritually. He will always be there for us, all we need to do is turn to Him, He is waiting for us to do just that! He is ready to show us compassion and comfort us, as Paul’s words to the Philipians in chapter 4 verses 6-7 show:” Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. **7**And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.“ This peace is a spiritual peace that Jesus promised his disciples: **“**Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.” (John 14:27) We simply need to turn to God in prayer and know that He will hear us and respond- even if it might not be in the way we expect. What we can be sure of is that we can find peace in Him.

The gift of the Holy Spirit is also freely given, by God’s grace, to those who turn to Him. In the Holy Spirit we have a spiritual guide who will show us the way (and The Way is Christ) if we will listen and follow our hearts. With the Holy Spirit we have God’s power and help in all situations. The Holy Spirit is God given and freely given. Being filled with the Holy Spirit is only possible by God’s grace and because of His compassion for us. The Holy Spirit is the essence of God being with us and, if we ask Him, in us. We receive the Holy Spirit by faith we simply have to ask, as Jesus Himself says: “If you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!” (Luke 11:13) So our God is a compassionate and giving God only wanting to meet our needs.

Let us reflect on this as we follow the words of a song by Lauren Daigle called Everything.

**Song: Everything by Lauren Daigle** [**Lauren Daigle ~ Everything (Lyrics) - YouTube**](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zgvV_iQW4O0)

When I can't see, You lead me
When I can't hear, You show me
When I can't stand, You carry me
When I'm lost, You will find me
When I'm weak, You are mighty
You are everything I need

You give me everything
You give me everything
You give me everything I need
You give me everything
You give me everything
You give me everything I need
You give me everything
You give me everything
You give me everything I need
You give me everything
You give me everything
You give me everything I need

Musixmatch
Jason David Ingram/Lauren Ashley Daigle/Paul Brendon Mabury
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Even the sparrow has a place to lay its head
So why would I let worries steal my breath?
Even the roses, You have glowed them brilliant red
Still I'm the one You love more than this

You give me everything
You give me everything
You give me everything I need

Even the oceans push and pull at Your command
So You can still my heart with Your hand
You tell the seasons when it's time for them to turn
So I will trust You even when it hurts

You give me everything
You give me everything
You give me everything I need
You give me everything
You give me everything
You give me everything I need

**Today’s second reading:**

**Matthew 14 13-21 NIV**13When Jesus heard what had happened, he withdrew by boat privately to a solitary place. Hearing of this, the crowds followed him on foot from the towns. 14When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, he had compassion on them and healed their sick. 15As evening approached, the disciples came to him and said, "This is a remote place, and it's already getting late. Send the crowds away, so they can go to the villages and buy themselves some food." 16Jesus replied, "They do not need to go away. You give them something to eat." 17"We have here only five loaves of bread and two fish," they answered. 18"Bring them here to me," he said. 19And he directed the people to sit down on the grass. Taking the five loaves and the two fish and looking up to heaven, he gave thanks and broke the loaves. Then he gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the people. 20They all ate and were satisfied, and the disciples picked up twelve basketfuls of broken pieces that were left over. 21The number of those who ate was about five thousand men, besides women and children.

**Reflection part 2:**

Having considered the generous heart of our compassionate God we need to consider how that should impact on how we give to others; how we too can be compassionate. Compassion: The origin of the word helps us realise the true depth of compassion. In Latin, ‘compati’ means “suffer with.” Compassion means someone else’s heartbreak becomes our heartbreak. Another’s suffering becomes our suffering. But compassion is not just an awareness of another’s suffering it’s followed up with action to ease that suffering. Indeed, God sacrificed Christ to ease our suffering of being removed from Him for, in the words of Isaiah “In our suffering, God suffers with us” God knew how much we needed to be reconciled with Him, He saw our suffering and suffered with us and then sent Jesus to take away our suffering by reconciling us once again with God.

In our reading from Matthew, we heard how the disciples wanted to send the crowds away to fend for themselves rather than responding to their needs. It wasn’t their problem; they didn’t think they could meet the needs of the crowds; they felt unable to show compassion; how often have I been guilty of that? But, of course, Jesus (despite trying to seek some peace) insisted the crowds stay and be fed with what they had. It is pertinent I think that Jesus turned to God in prayer before this miracle- “looking up to Heaven, He gave thanks”- if Jesus Himself turned to God in prayer when he helped others, eased their suffering, showed compassion, how much more do we need to do so? It is also important to acknowledge that although the disciples felt they did not have enough to give, through Christ’s intervention there was more than enough to satisfy the hunger of the crowds. The lesson for us is that the disciples could not meet the needs of others by themselves but with the power of God through Christ they were able to provide more than enough for those in need, those who were hungry; they had to believe as we do that what we have to give is enough and that in giving we will receive much more that we started with. For as Jesus says in Mark 10:27: ““With man this is impossible, but not with God; all things are possible with God.” For us to show true compassion we must ask for God’s help.

True compassion changes the way we live. Indeed, in Galatians 6:2 we read: “Carry each other’s burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ.” To be Jesus-shaped we must be compassionate of others because Jesus Himself was the ultimate example of how to show compassion to others. Throughout His ministry He healed and comforted; He gave up everything, voluntarily and selflessly sacrificing Himself for us so that we can have eternal life. The many stories of compassion in the Bible should motivate us to be compassionate and act on that compassion; for compassion is not just an attribute of God but a quality demanded from those who believe in Him as we read in 1 John 3:17: “If anyone has material possessions and sees a brother or sister in need but has no pity on them, how can the love of God be in that person?”

So what is expected of us? Well perhaps it is best explained in Matthew chapter 25 when Jesus says: “ ‘For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.’ Then the righteous will answer him, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink?  When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you?  When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?’ “The King will reply, ‘Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.’ “Matthew 25 35-40. We need to put ourselves in the shoes of others, but more than that, we need to feel their need, their despair and do everything we can to ease their suffering or pain. We turn to God, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, to comfort us in all our troubles, so then we must comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God; as Paul reminds the Corinthians.

Although our reading from Matthew focused on the physical feeding of the 5000 we must remember this is also metaphorical, for Jesus fed the spiritual hunger of those crowds and it is also the spiritual as well as the physical and emotional needs of others that we, as followers of Christ, are expected to respond with compassion to. It would not be compassionate to neglect to share our joy and hope in Christ with others. I know only too well myself that I feel ill-equipped to meet the needs of those who suffer, especially because of spiritual hunger, as those disciples felt ill-equipped in feeding the crowds (spiritually as well as physically) but I know that with God’s help and Jesus’ example and by the power of the Holy Spirit I can do more than I think, just as they did with Jesus’ intervention. What matters is that we ARE compassionate, that we do what we can with God’s help, that we believe that we can do something to help and do it; that we don’t turn those in need away or turn away from them.

Billy Graham (who believes that “Our compassion for others is an accurate gauge of our devotion to God”) in his one of his daily devotionals in June 2020 captures the need for compassion from all of those who turn to God when he said: “Jesus wept over Jerusalem. How often do we weep over the great cities of this country or those around the world? Do we even weep for our own communities when we see poverty, abuse, and suffering? As believers we have a special responsibility to have compassion on the poor, the sick, the oppressed, the hungry, the outcast, and those torn by terrorism and war all over the world. You don’t have to get up and preach; you don’t have to be an evangelist; you don’t have to be a vicar or a priest; you can be an ordinary worker wherever you are and witness for Christ. You witness by the way you live, by your attitude – your love, care, and compassion toward people no matter their race, religion, or ethnic background. If we put hands and feet to the Gospel message and live it out daily, those around us will see it for what it is – the Truth that transforms.” —Billy Graham

Compassion then, is at the heart of what it means to be a Christian, our hearts must be moved by love to stir us to action in the interests of others to, in whatever small way we can, bring some comfort, some joy, some hope into the lives of others and the best way we can show compassion ultimately is by sharing the hope of the Gospel by witnessing for Christ, which we can all do by striving to live lives worthy of our hope, our salvation, the most compassionate, Jesus Christ. Amen.

We will now sing the hymn Compassion **Song:**  Compassion

There is an everlasting kindness you lavished on us,
When the radiance of heaven came to rescue the lost.
You called the sheep without a shepherd to leave their distress,
For Your streams of forgiveness and the shade of Your rest.

And with compassion for the hurting You reached out Your hand,
As the lame ran to meet You and the dead breathed again.
You saw behind the eyes of sorrow and shared in our tears;
Heard the sigh of the weary, let the children draw near.

What boundless love, what fathomless grace
You have shown us, O God of compassion.
Each day we live an offering of praise
As we show to the world Your compassion.

We stood beneath the cross of Calvary and gazed on Your face,
At the thorns of oppression and the wounds of disgrace;
For surely You have borne our suffering and carried our grief,
As You pardoned the scoffer and showed grace to the thief.

What boundless love, what fathomless grace
You have shown us, O God of compassion.
Each day we live an offering of praise
As we show to the world Your compassion.

How beautiful the feet that carry this Gospel of peace
To the fields of injustice and the valleys of need;
To be a voice of hope and healing, to answer the cries
Of the hungry and helpless, with the mercy of Christ.

What boundless love, what fathomless grace
You have shown us, O God of compassion.
Each day we live an offering of praise
As we show to the world Your compassion.

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**Prayers of Intercession-**

We now come to our prayers of intercession.

After each prayer focus please join in with the words: “**Hear our prayers Lord, and help us to show to the world Your compassion”**

Dear Lord, we come to You in prayer, asking that You will help us to show the world Your compassion through the compassion we give to others.

We pray for our precious world, asking that you will help us to show compassion towards your wondrous creation. Help us to give rest to the ravaged earth, the oceans and streams that we have plundered and poisoned. Help us to see the harm that mankind’s carelessness and greed is causing our planet. Give us the compassion needed to act and find solutions to the issues of climate change, habitat loss, pollution and diminishing natural resources.

**Hear our prayers Lord, and help us to show to the world Your compassion**

We pray for the governments and religious leaders of our world asking that they will act with compassion for all Your people so that they will have the vision to work together for the good of all mankind, to realise the world You intended. We pray that the leaders of all nations will learn of Your ways so that they might respond with compassion when natural disasters strike, that they might relieve the debts of those countries whose people live in poverty and that all nations will love their neighbours so that we can have harmony because decisions are made through compassion rather than self-interest.

**Hear our prayers Lord, and help us to show to the world Your compassion**

We pray for the Church across the world and ask that it act with compassion in all that it does recognising and responding to suffering. We pray that You will give our churches and their leaders the vision to reach outwards; that Your church will shine with Your light penetrating the darkness of the world to share Your message of hope with those waiting to hear the good news of the Gospel which is the greatest act of compassion that can be offered. We pray that You will Help us to have compassion for those Christians who are persecuted for their faith- who share our faith but not our freedom. Give them strength and peace Lord as they bear their cross in Your name and let us be ready to act in any way we can to ease their suffering.

**Hear our prayers Lord, and help us to show to the world Your compassion**

We pray for those in need. We pray that You will help us have compassion for all, as You did, and put the needs of others before ourselves, especially those marginalised in society. We ask for shelter for fragile lives- for refugees of war and poverty and disaster and all people who find themselves displaced, victims of trafficking and abuse and those experiencing homelessness let us be filled with compassion for their plight so that we might welcome them, provide refuge from cruel wars, havens from fear and freedoms to share.

Let us have compassion for those living in poverty so that we might advocate for fair sharing of wealth across the world. Let us be filled with compassion to do more to help all those in need and use our voices to plead the cause of those who can't speak and petition on their behalf so that all people across the world would have their basic human rights met.

**Hear our prayers Lord, and help us to show to the world Your compassion**

We pray for all those who are sick and give thanks for those caring for them. We ask that everyone might have compassion to support those suffering from loneliness and mental disorders such as depression and alcohol abuse; as well as those who have a breakdown in the ability to deal with life stresses, such as financial problems, relationship break-up or chronic pain and illness along with those experiencing conflict, disaster, violence, abuse, or loss and a sense of isolation all who are strongly associated with suicidal behaviour so that the terrible global suicide statistics of more than 700,000 deaths a year (for each of which there are many more who attempt suicide) might be curbed. We continue to pray for Your healing touch to provide the miracles of medicine. We pray also that we might show compassion for the bereaved and ask that You will comfort them and give them peace that they might discover solace in Your gift of everlasting life.

**Hear our prayers Lord, and help us to show to the world Your compassion** We offer all these prayers Lord and those in our hearts in the name of our great intercessor, Your son, Jesus Christ, the most compassionate of all. **AMEN.**

We will now share our final hymn; Beauty for Brokenness

**Song-** Beauty for Brokenness

God of the poor
Friend of the weak
Give us compassion we pray
Melt our cold hearts
Let tears fall like rain
Come, change our love

From a spark to a flame

Lighten our darkness
Breathe on this flame
Until your justice burns
Brightly again
Until the nations
Learn of Your ways
Seek Your salvation
And bring You their praise

God of the poor
Friend of the weak
Give us compassion we pray
Melt our cold hearts
Let tears fall like rain
Come, change our love
From a spark to a flame

Beauty for brokenness
Hope for despair
Lord in the suffering
This is our prayer
Bread for the children
Justice Joy Peace
Sunrise to sunset
Your Kingdom increase

Shelter for fragile lives
Cures for their ills
Work for the craftsman
Trade for their skills
Land for the dispossessed
Rights for the weak
Voices to plead the cause
Of those who can't speak

God of the poor
Friend of the weak
Give us compassion we pray
Melt our cold hearts
Let tears fall like rain
Come, change our love
From a spark to a flame

Refuge from cruel wars
Havens from fear
Cities for sanctuary
Freedoms to share
Peace to the killing-fields
Scorched earth to green

Christ for the bitterness
His cross for the pain

God of the poor
Friend of the weak
Give us compassion we pray
Melt our cold hearts
Let tears fall like rain
Come, change our love
From a spark to a flame

Rest for the ravaged earth
Oceans and streams
Plundered and poisoned
Our future, our dreams
Lord, end our madness
Carelessness, greed

Make us content with
The things that we need

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**Blessing**

Dear Lord, we thank you for all that we have shared together today. Thank you for inviting us to come and be with You in worship today so that we can understand that we are all capable of compassion and that the gifts and compassion You freely give to us we should be ready to freely give to others. Send us out now Lord full of Your compassion; stir us into action, our hearts softened towards others filled with the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit today and always.

Amen