

So, important as our actions are, we need also to be able to say what we believe and to tell our own story of faith and the story of Jesus. Who might the Spirit be stirring you to speak to today?

### PRAYERS: A Prayer of Commitment

If your heart has been nudged today, I offer you this very simple little prayer. If you feel that this is right for you today, then I invite you to share, in an intentional and focussed way, in this short prayer – Let's pray:

***Dear Lord Jesus, I know that I am a sinner, and I ask for your forgiveness. I believe you died for my sins and rose from the dead. I turn from my sins and invite you to come into my heart and my life. I want to trust and follow you as my Lord and Saviour. Lord please continue to reveal yourself to me, as I commit to love, to follow and to serve you. In your precious name I pray, Amen.***

### Prayers of Intercession for the Sharing of the Good News

We pray for the witness and message of the church in the world and in our local communities.

We ask your blessing on all who preach the good news to us in our church communities.

Give us all wisdom and courage to go out and proclaim your message in the world both in our words and in our actions.

Thank you, eternal God, that we have a message of hope to declare through the life and death of your son, Jesus. **Amen**

As we come to share the Lord's Prayer we hold before God all known to us who are in particular need on this day:

**Our Father, who art in heaven... Amen**

Closing Hymn: StF 418 / H&P 465 **We have a gospel to proclaim**

### Blessing:

Go in the love of God to declare the good news of Jesus led by the Holy Spirit in wisdom and in joy. **Amen**

<sup>a</sup> ***New Revised Standard Version Bible: Anglicised Edition, © 1989, 1995 United States of America. Used by permission. All rights reserved.*** <sup>b</sup> *Isaiah 6: 5*

## **Worship at Home 25 July 2021 Darlington District**

### **Methodist Way of Life: 4 – Evangelism**

*This service sheet was prepared from a service led by Rev Tim Woolley.*

CALL TO WORSHIP: [Isaiah 61: 1-4, 10-11](#)

I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, my whole being shall exult in my God; for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation, he has covered me with the robe of righteousness (verse 10)<sup>a</sup>

### OPENING HYMN:

StF 404 / H&P 315 **God's spirit is in my heart**

*The calling of the Methodist Church is to respond to the gospel of God's love in Christ and to live out its discipleship in worship and mission.*

We reach the final word in the Our Calling statement 'mission' as we look at the fourth action area 'evangelism'. The word can evoke feelings of fear for some. As we share in this time today may we gain a fresh appreciation for the good news of Jesus, and why proclaiming that good news is still vitally important.

### OPENING PRAYER

You are holy, Lord, the only God  
And your deeds are wonderful.  
You are love, you are wisdom,  
You are humility, you are endurance  
You are rest, you are peace,  
You are joy and gladness,  
You are all our riches, and you suffice for us.  
You are beauty, you are gentleness.  
You are our protector,  
You are our guardian and defender,  
You are courage, you are our haven and hope,  
You are our faith, our great consolation,  
You are our eternal life, great and wonderful Lord,  
God almighty, merciful saviour. **Amen** (attributed to St Francis)

Lord we know that of ourselves we are not worthy to stand in your presence. We echo the words of Isaiah who, when faced with your countenance and glory confessed “I am a man of unclean lips and live among a people of unclean lips”.<sup>b</sup> We too want to say sorry. Touch our lips and our hearts, so that we might both speak and live in a way that reflects your goodness and your glory, and proclaims the good news about Jesus. In His precious name we pray, **Amen.**

### MY STORY:

On a wet, slightly foggy, dull night in May 1984, at Roker Park stadium, a teenage boy heard Billy Graham preach a simple message about the love of God shown to us through the cross of Jesus and its power to save. Then a challenge was given to respond, to commit to Jesus and to believe in that saving message of the cross. The boy responded to the challenge and as he travelled home that evening, he sensed a deep peace that he'd not felt before. The stuff that he'd heard about Jesus over the years seemed to move from an intellectual 'head knowledge' to a heart knowledge that shaped that boy's life from thereon in. 'That lad' says Tim Woolley 'was me!'

*Pause: What is your story?*

### READING: [1 Corinthians 1: 18-31](#)

In our reading Paul writes to people in Corinth in Greece. Grecian culture held oratory prowess in high esteem – they loved a good speaker! By his own admission Paul was not a first class orator. He saw himself more as a herald. A herald was someone who was commissioned by the Roman Empire to be dispatched from Caesar to the outer limits of the Empire. They would go into a village, stand in the market place, gather the people around and make an announcement: “Good news from the throne of Caesar.” A herald was not 'results orientated' – a herald was obedience orientated. The herald's task was to faithfully convey the message that had been entrusted to them, irrespective of whether or not the listeners responded to the message they heard.

Paul's preaching about Jesus – his life, death and resurrection, gets a mixed response from its hearers. The cross, in particular, proves to be a stumbling block. Crucifixion was a horrible and shameful death, reserved for murderers and insurrectionists – it was so violent that no Roman citizen could be crucified. The gospel says that God became a man, a lowly carpenter, and was later subjected to the most ignominious death known to people – crucified publicly as an enemy of the Roman Empire. Paul says that for those who are being saved, this mad and foolish message of the cross represents the very power of God, and contains all the rich truth about of the grace of God.

The herald Paul, talks about God essentially 'frustrating' conventional wisdom, and choosing the most important, life-changing truth of all to be something that many would consider (on the face of it) completely foolish and sometimes even offensive. In this passage Paul elevates that message to put the cross centre stage and make it the greatest wisdom that anyone could embrace.

*Pause: What does the cross mean for you today?*

We may not be great speech-makers, but we too can have the guidance of the Holy Spirit. We too have a story to tell. Never underestimate the power of the simplest of faith stories shared with someone else. When we find the courage to tell it, our story can be an amazing witness to Jesus that comes along for someone else at just the right time, and resonates with them in just the right way. That happens so often, and is the Holy Spirit at work, going ahead of us and putting the right words in our mouths at just the right time for someone else who is searching. Research conducted in the late 20th century showed that over 75% of Christians said they came to faith through a friend or relative.

St Paul says “*But how are they to call on one in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in one of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone to proclaim him?*” And he concludes “*faith comes from what is heard, and what is heard comes through the word of Christ.*” (Romans 10: 14, 17)<sup>a</sup>