

Bangor & Holyhead Methodist Circuit
Sunday Worship Sheet, 13th September 2026

Our worship for this week was written by Simon Charters.

You may wish to have your Bible to hand. Please note the hymns are now at the back of the sheet for ease of printing. CCLI licence 556292

Theme: **Forgiveness**

Call to worship: (Psalm 103. Vv1,8)

¹ Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy name.

⁸ The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.

Hymn: **StF 83 Praise my soul the King of heaven**

Opening prayers:

God of all, we come to offer you the best of ourselves: to take hold of mercy and let go of fear, to take hold of generosity and to let go of resentment, to take hold of forgiveness and to let go of sin, to take hold of gratitude and to let go of grudge, to take hold of all your very self, in Jesus Christ our Saviour.

Creator God, living Saviour, enlivening Spirit, your generosity far outweighs our deserving. Your grace is far more beautiful than our imagining. Your forgiveness far exceeds our understanding. So, we bow our heads and open our hearts, as we offer you our lives in adoration and thankfulness.

Incredible God, forgive us when we are reluctant to let go of the things that others have done to hurt us. Help us to understand more fully what it is to forgive, and heal us.

Forgive us when we justify our own mistakes but are harsh in our judgements of others. Help us to understand them better from the way that you treat us. Help us to understand more fully what it is to forgive, and heal us.

Forgive us when we could offer forgiveness but withhold it. Help us to understand more fully what it is to forgive, and heal us. Help us grow into the likeness of your Son Jesus Christ, in whose name we pray. Amen.

(Assurance of forgiveness)

Gracious God, there are debts to you and to others that we cannot pay. There are mistakes that we cannot undo. There are words that we cannot unsay. But because you forgive us through your grace towards us, we can take another step, face another day with confidence, and rejoice at your love for us and for all creation. Amen.

Readings: **Genesis 50.15-21 - Joseph Forgives His Brothers**

Romans 14.1-12 – Do not judge another

Matthew 18.21-35 - Forgiveness

Hymn: **StF 615 Let love be real, in giving and receiving**

Reflection:

Today we look at one of the most challenging and difficult demands that Jesus places upon us. Look at the world today, internationally, nationally, locally: – where is peace? For me, forgiveness is the essence of an everyday approach to creating peace. Does forgiveness walk hand in hand with war? I think not. Is peace possible when one person or group persists in harbouring a grudge against another? No.

When we think of people who have created peace, our minds may be drawn towards people like Nelson Mandela, who understood war and hatred, and that it was only through forgiveness – allowing truth to be aired in the spirit of reconciliation – would there be any hope of a lasting peace in South Africa. But Nelson Mandela was a powerful man and recognised leader, what about you and me?

The passage we heard of Joseph describes the tension between him and his brothers. In fact, it is imagined on the part of his brothers. At this stage they still fear of what Joseph might do. With Jacob, their father, now dead, and Joseph apparently having executive power in the land, the brothers are vulnerable should Joseph now try to seek revenge. They continue to practice their own poor standards and, indeed, attempt to deceive by way of the message they have made up, purporting to be Jacob's dying wish. It says that Joseph wept. It seems likely that Joseph had seen through yet another ruse by his brothers, and was disappointed in them, once again.

But Joseph quelled whatever natural anger and disappointment he felt and understood that he was an instrument of God - it was his place to continue to forgive. In so doing, he allowed his family to continue in peace, and to be ready, as a nation, when the time came to be led by God back to the promised land.

Paul's words are also given to heal divisions. These are words to a church that has its roots in more than one culture, and where these backgrounds are causing rifts. It seems there were people declaring themselves strong in their faith in comparison to others, and considering their culture to be better.

Paul points out that whoever may consider themselves weak or strong, who may worship in a particular way, or live in a particular way, is in no place to judge others. God accepts everyone who comes to him sincerely, and with a desire to know him better, regardless of their background or current circumstances. Pride is causing division, but Paul points out that they are all fellow servants of the same master, who is the only one with the right to judge.

A person stands or falls only by the judgment of their master, our Lord, and whatever they do, or abstain from, should be done for the sake of the Lord.

Listening to these words, and acting upon them, would lead to asking for forgiveness for past judgements, giving forgiveness for past perceived insults, and a peaceful relationship that would be impossible without such forgiveness.

And we can see the two sides – both seeking and giving forgiveness – in the story told by Jesus. Peter is being typically literal – what’s the benchmark number of times he should forgive a wrong? Jesus’ answer is equally forthright, setting a ridiculous target as a means of making a point. It highlights the disproportionality of the size of our debt that God has forgiven, compared to anything that anyone may owe us.

Forgiveness must be limitless. We forgive because we have been forgiven by God, and no offence against us can compare with the forgiveness we have received. It is an insult to our Lord not to forgive others when we have been forgiven so much.

But that isn’t easy, is it? Have a think – is there someone who you might like to be sat with, in a quiet room right now, to say sorry to? Is there someone who wants to say sorry to you, but you can’t bring yourself to accept it? If that is the case then you are not living in peace either with them, or with yourself.

In these passages we find hope for us all, that God’s forgiveness and love will transform us again. Let us seek forgiveness, give forgiveness and in so doing, do our little bit for peace.

Prayers for the world and the Church, thankful of God’s goodness.

We come before you now to offer up prayers for our troubled world; so many people and so many situations where forgiveness could bring so much healing and power. We think about the stories in the news this week. We pray for countries where people live each day with uncertainty and terror. We pray for people working together to promote peace and forgiveness.

We pray for the church worldwide. May it be a beacon of your love and forgiveness. We pray for our communities. We pray for people who have had things happen that they can’t forgive. We pray for people whose lives are eaten up by guilt over things they have done.

We pray for the sick, in body mind and spirit, and for those who have lost a loved one. May they know your healing touch in the way they need it most. We pray for people who have hurt us; and for people we have hurt.

We pray for our young people, our children and grandchildren, that they will learn the way of forgiveness, forgiving and being forgiven. God, who alone can forgive all our sins and heal all our infirmities, in your mercy, hear our prayer. **Amen.**

Lord’s Prayer

Hymn: StF 712 Put peace into each other’s hands

Blessing: May the blessing of the God who longs for an earth of harmony and balance; the blessing of the child who grew to ride a donkey into the conflict-torn city of Jerusalem; and the blessing of the Spirit who knows the path of justice is not easy, yet challenges us to reconciliation; be with us in all our struggles and give us peace. **Amen.**

Hymn 83

- 1 Praise, my soul, the King of heaven ;
to his feet thy tribute bring.
Ransomed, healed, restored, forgiven,
who like thee his praise should sing ?
Praise him ! Praise him !
Praise the everlasting King !
- 2 Praise him for his grace and favour
to his people in distress ;
praise him, still the same for ever,
slow to chide, and swift to bless.
Praise him ! Praise him !
Glorious in his faithfulness.
- 3 Father-like, he tends and spares us ;
well our feeble frame he knows ;
in his hands he gently bears us,
rescues us from all our foes.
Praise him ! Praise him !
Widely as his mercy flows.
- 4 Angels in the height, adore him ;
ye behold him face to face ;
sun and moon, bow down before him,
dwellers all in time and space.
Praise him ! Praise him !
Praise with us the God of grace !

Henry Francis Lyte (1793–1847)

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Hymn 615

- 1 Let love be real, in giving and receiving,
without the need to manage and to
own ;
a haven free from posing and
pretending,
where every weakness may be safely
known.
Give me your hand, along the desert
pathway,
give me your love wherever we may go.
*As God loves us, so let us love each
other :
with no demands, just open hands and
space to grow.*
- 2 Let love be real, not grasping or
confining,
that strange embrace that holds yet sets
us free ;
that helps us face the risk of truly living,

and makes us brave to be what we might
be.

Give me your strength when all my
words are weakness ;
give me your love in spite of all you
know.

- 3 Let love be real, with no manipulation,
no secret wish to harness or control ;
let us accept each other's
incompleteness,
and share the joy of learning to be
whole.

Give me your hope through dreams and
disappointments ;
give me your trust when all my failings
show.

Michael Forster (*b.* 1946)

Hymn 712

- 1 Put peace into each other's hands
and like a treasure hold it,
protect it like a candle-flame,
with tenderness enfold it.
- 2 Put peace into each other's hands
with loving expectation ;
be gentle in your words and ways,
in touch with God's creation.
- 3 Put peace into each other's hands
like bread we break for sharing ;
look people warmly in the eye :
our life is meant for caring.
- 4 As at Communion, shape your hands
into a waiting cradle ;
the gift of Christ receive, revere,
united round the table.
- 5 Put Christ into each other's hands,
he is love's deepest measure ;
in love make peace, give peace a chance,
and share it like a treasure.

Fred Kaan (1929–2009)