



**EAST SOLENT & DOWNS METHODIST CIRCUIT**  
**DIGITAL CHURCH**  
**Week Beginning Sunday 17th October 2021**  
(Bill Stillwell)

**Digital Church Services can be found on YouTube by searching 'ES&D'**

**WELCOME**

Welcome to Digital Church from the East Solent Downs Methodist Circuit (in the South of England)

**HYMN:** Jesus is Lord! Creation's voice proclaims it (StF 353)  
Jesus is Lord! Creation's voice proclaims it,  
for by his power each tree and flower was planned and made.  
Jesus is Lord! The universe declares it;  
sun, moon and stars in heaven cry: Jesus is Lord!

*Jesus is Lord! Jesus is Lord!*

*Praise him with alleluias, for Jesus is Lord!*

Jesus is Lord! Yet from his throne eternal  
in flesh he came to die in pain on Calvary's tree.  
Jesus is Lord! From him all life proceeding -  
yet gave his life a ransom, thus setting us free.

*Jesus is Lord! Jesus is Lord!*

*Praise him with alleluias, for Jesus is Lord!*

Jesus is Lord! O'er sin the mighty conqueror,  
from death he rose; and all his foes shall own his name.  
Jesus is Lord! God sends his Holy Spirit  
to show by works of power that Jesus is Lord.

*Jesus is Lord! Jesus is Lord!*

*Praise him with alleluias, for Jesus is Lord!*

"Jesus is Lord"

By: David John Mansell (b. 1936)

Words and music: © © 1980 Springtide

Accompanied by: Jo Banbury

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**OPENING PRAYERS - OF ADORATION**

Lord God, this day we have come to praise you, to lift up your name in prayer and song, to respond to the wonder of who you are with heart and soul and voice, to seek the good of others, to remember the poor and lonely and sick and hungry. To find new strength to serve you today, tomorrow and in all our tomorrows. These are our hopes and wishes and prayers. Take what is weak

in us, make it strong. Take what is amiss in us, make it right. See our hesitant steps towards you, and embrace us in the arms of your unfailing love, for the sake of Jesus – Jesus our Saviour, Jesus our friend, Jesus our priest, Jesus our companion, Jesus our leader, Jesus our Lord. **Amen**

We thank you, Lord, for everything in which we find comfort, peace and love – sunlight in autumn days, colour in nature and art, rhythm in poetry and music; human achievement and family success; good humour; work well done; love and friendship and all your gifts to body and soul. Most of all we celebrate your healing of heart, mind and spirit, the knowledge of your love, and the assurance of eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Saviour. **Amen**

### **OUR 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 glory  
for ever and ever. **Amen**

### **READING**      Job 38 v1-7 (GNB)

(1) Then out of the storm the LORD spoke to Job. (2) Who are you to question my wisdom with your ignorant, empty words? (3) Now stand up straight and answer the questions I ask you. (4) Were you there when I made the world? If you know so much, tell me about it. (5) Who decided how large it would be? Who stretched the measuring line over it? Do you know all the answers? (6) What holds up the pillars that support the earth? Who laid the cornerstone of the world? (7) In the dawn of that day the stars sang together, and the heavenly beings shouted for joy.

### **HYMN** Make me a channel of your peace (StF 707)

Make me a channel of your peace  
Where there is hatred let me bring your love  
Where there is injury your pardon Lord  
And where there's doubt true faith in you

Make me a channel of your peace  
Where there's despair in life let me bring hope  
Where there is darkness, only light  
And where there's sadness ever joy

*Oh master grant that I may never seek  
So much to be consoled as to console  
To be understood as to understand  
To be loved as to love with all my soul*

Make me a channel of your peace  
It is in pardoning that we are pardoned  
In giving to all men that we receive  
And in dying that we're born to eternal life

*Oh master grant that I may never seek . . .*

Make me a channel of your peace  
Where there's despair in life let me bring hope  
Where there is darkness, only light  
And where there's sadness ever joy  
And where there's sadness ever joy

*"Make Me A Channel Of Your Peace"*

By: Sebastian Temple (1928-1997) from the prayer of St Francis  
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Accompanied by: Ruth & Joy Everingham (Everingham Music)  
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## **READING** Mark 10:35-45 (GNB)

(35) Then James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came to Jesus. "Teacher," they said, "there is something we want you to do for us." (36) "What is it?" Jesus asked them. (37) They answered, "When you sit on your throne in your glorious Kingdom, we want you to let us sit with you, one at your right and one at your left." (38) Jesus said to them, "You don't know what you are asking for. Can you drink the cup of suffering that I must drink? Can you be baptized in the way I must be baptized?" (39) "We can," they answered. Jesus said to them, "You will indeed drink the cup I must drink and be baptized in the way I must be baptized. (40) But I do not have the right to choose who will sit at my right and my left. It is God who will give these places to those for whom he has prepared them." (41) When the other ten disciples heard about it, they became angry with James and John. (42) So Jesus called them all together to him and said, "You know that those who are considered rulers of the heathen have power over them, and the leaders have complete authority. (43) This, however, is not the way it is among you.

If one of you wants to be great, you must be the servant of the rest; (44) and if one of you wants to be first, you must be the slave of all. (45) For even the Son of Man did not come to be served; he came to serve and to give his life to redeem many people.”

## **REFLECTION**

Job was a man who had it all. He used to be wealthy. In the words of the Good News Bible he owned seven thousand sheep, three thousand camels, one thousand head of cattle, and five hundred donkeys. He also had a large number of servants and was the richest man in the East. We're told that he had ten children, and the family used to get together on a regular basis for a banquet. Now it's all gone – possessions, home, family and hope – and he's trying to make sense of what's going on in his life.

Faced with any disaster or major challenge in our lives, the first thing we do is try to make sense of it all, but Job has a particular problem with trying to make sense of it. His so-called friends speak for the rest of their generation when they say that Job must have done something really evil for God to have taken everything he loved away from him. Job tells them that what they say doesn't hold water: he's genuinely never behaved in a way to make God angry with him. He effectively says what we might still be inclined to say in the face of disaster: 'What have I done to deserve this?' 'Why me?'

During the great plague of the fourteenth century a lot of people were saying what Job's friends were saying: they thought that humanity must have done something really evil to make God send a pandemic that wiped out a third of the population. As a gesture of penance a number of people walked around Europe publicly flogging themselves to try to win forgiveness for humankind. All of us always have the urge to think that we have to earn whatever we receive, whether it's good or bad. It's part of our childhood learning: if we did something well we'd get a present, or at least a hug and a smile, but if we behaved badly we'd get told off, grounded for a week, or something worse. In our gospel reading we seem to get the flip side of the coin. James and John have learnt a lot from their time with Jesus. They've been inspired; they've found wisdom; all's right with the world because Jesus is very much in control of things. Much of all that has rubbed off on them, and they seem to think they understand all they need to, so now they feel that they themselves are in control of life. I suspect that's why they believe they've earned a right to get preferential treatment from Jesus and be given the right to sit on either side of him when he's universally recognised, praised and adored. Jesus points out to them that the future that lies ahead for all of them will be anything but a bed of roses, but they seem to be almost blasé when they say,

in so many words, 'That's OK, we can cope.' They just want what they believe they deserve.

We know, in our heart of hearts, that life just doesn't work like that, but we still want it to operate by our standards of what we think is fair, just as we learnt when we were growing up. The other day a girl of 15 died of Covid, and it doesn't seem fair when a young person dies, especially when we're told that younger people are far more resilient to the disease. It doesn't seem fair when powerful people appear to get away with fraud and murder when those most in need of resources and of mental and physical help get jailed instead. It doesn't seem fair when people who give themselves in the service of others are ignored while those seeking power receive adulation and prestige. It doesn't seem fair that such huge numbers of ordinary, seemingly innocent, people continue to suffer from the stress, grief, fear and confusion of the pandemic.

Job and his friends use around 18,000 words in the book named after him to try to get their heads around the conundrum of why God allows so much pain to be suffered by people who don't appear to deserve it. They never get to the bottom of it all. Jesus, though, offers us a key to an answer by overturning the whole notion of fairness and getting what you deserve. He effectively says, 'Forget all about all your notions of fairness and what people deserve: these are just human ways of trying to control your day to day life. Just focus, he says, on what God calls you to do and to be. The way to true greatness is to forget your self and serve your neighbour in the power of your Lord.'

Thinking back over the years, who's had the most long-lasting impression in your life? I can think of a couple of people whose names were reasonably well known in their time. One was Gordon Wilson. He was the man caught up in the IRA bombing, along with his daughter, at Eniskillen in 1987. They were both pinned down by the rubble, and he held her hand while she died there. Instead of seeking vengeance, he forgave the bombers and urged that there should be no retaliation. Another man I remember well was our French teacher, Ted Walker, who became a published poet. I remember him less for his poetry and his French than I do for his quirky sense of humour, which encouraged in me a sense of the absurdity of everyday life.

There are many others I've known from around here whose memory I value. I won't mention their names because I couldn't list them all, but they and the two people I've mentioned by name share a similarity. None of them was someone who'd change the world or had a huge media presence: none of them aspired to high office like James & John. All of them were servants at the table, and content to be the best servant they could be.

Each one of us, in our turn, is called to be the best servant that we can be. Comparing ourselves with one another, judging ourselves to be of greater or lesser importance than other people, is of no value at all. We don't earn an easy, joy-filled life, and we don't necessarily earn pain, sorrow and grief. They are simply parts of being human: we can't control them all and we'll find the answers to our questions in the world to come. For the time being, we need simply to embrace gladly the fact that we are servants at God's table.

The whole context of this is, of course, if we don't have complete understanding or control of our lives or our world, who does? The answer is clear, but we have to remind ourselves constantly the powerful words in the book of Job which are placed on the lips of God:

Who are you to question my wisdom with your ignorant, empty words? Were you there when I made the world? Who decided how large it would be? Who stretched the measuring line over it? What holds up the pillars that support the earth? Who laid the cornerstone of the world? In the dawn of that day the morning stars sang together, and the heavenly beings shouted for joy.

We rest content in the hands of our Creator God and seek to walk humbly in the footsteps of Christ, his Son who came to serve.

**HYMN** I, the Lord of sea and sky (StF 663)

I, The Lord Of Sea And Sky,  
I Have Heard My People Cry.  
All Who Dwell In Dark And Sin,  
My Hand Will Save.  
I Who Made The Stars Of Night,  
I Will Make Their Darkness Bright.  
Who Will Bear My Light To Them?  
Whom Shall I Send?  
*Here I Am Lord, Is It I, Lord?  
I Have Heard You Calling In The Night.  
I Will Go Lord, If You Lead Me.  
I Will Hold Your People In My Heart.*

I, The Lord Of Snow And Rain,  
I Have Borne My People's Pain.  
I Have Wept For Love Of Them,

They Turn Away.  
I Will Break Their Hearts Of Stone,  
Give Them Hearts For Love Alone.  
I Will Speak My Word To Them  
Whom Shall I Send?

*Here I Am Lord, Is It I, Lord? . . .*

I, The Lord Of Wind And Flame  
I Will Tend The Poor And Lame.  
I Will Set A Feast For Them,  
My Hand Will Save  
Finest Bread I Will Provide,  
Till Their Hearts Be Satisfied.  
I Will Give My Life To Them,  
Whom Shall I Send?

*Here I Am Lord, Is It I, Lord? . . .*

"I the Lord of sea and sky"

By: Daniel L. Schutte (b1947)

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Accompanied by: Jo Banbury

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## PRAYERS FOR OTHERS

**Holy One**, for the gift of the church handed down through the ages and for all who carry on the servant ministry of Jesus, we praise you. Send your Holy Spirit upon all who are discerning calls to ministry in its many forms and equip them with your gifts, making them aware that they are your servants. Lord, in your mercy **Hear our prayer**.

**Creating One**, for the infinite mystery of this world that you provide in love for all your creatures, we praise you. Use us, your children, to help provide healing for the earth so that all living things may flourish as you intend. Lord, in your mercy **Hear our prayer**.

**Suffering One**, for all who work toward peace and who lead nations with a servant's heart, we praise you. Bring justice for all who suffer violence, persecution, discrimination, hunger, poverty, and homelessness, and create places of refuge for all people. Lord, in your mercy **Hear our prayer**.

**Merciful One**, for all who do the work of healing in mind, body, and spirit, we praise you. Especially in these times of sorrow, surround and comfort those who struggle with depression, anxiety, cancer, diabetes, dementia, or any illness, that all may be healed in this world or the next according to your good will. In a moment of silence we bring to you those whose needs weigh heavily on our hearts. Lord, in your mercy **Hear our prayer**.

**Sustaining One**, for all who volunteer for the vitality of the Christian fellowship to which we belong, we praise you. Strengthen and encourage the people who prepare and serve for worship and for meetings; those whose work is necessary but unseen; people called to lead and those who are called to follow; the letter writer and the pastoral carer; the ones who challenge and the ones who pray; those who are called to practical work and those you call to dream dreams. Lord, in your mercy **Hear our prayer**.

**Risen One**, we thank you for those who have shaped your church and shared your gospel. Through the witness of your saints in every age in whose footsteps we seek to walk continue to inspire us with hope until we all are gathered at your eternal feast. Lord, in your mercy **Hear our prayer**.

Confident that you hear us, O God, we boldly place our prayers into your hands; through Jesus Christ, our truth and life. **Amen**.

**HYMN:** Brother, sister, let me serve (StF 611)

Brother, sister let me serve you.  
Let me be as Christ to you;  
pray that I may have the grace to  
let you be my servant too.

We are pilgrims on a journey,  
and companions on the road;  
we are here to help each other  
walk the mile and bear the load.

I will hold the Christ-light for you  
in the night-time of your fear;  
I will hold my hand out to you,  
speak the peace you long to hear.

I will weep when you are weeping;  
when you laugh I'll laugh with you;  
I will share your joy and sorrow  
till we've seen this journey through.

When we sing to God in heaven  
we shall find such harmony,  
born of all we've known together  
of Christ's love and agony.

Brother, sister let me serve you.  
Let me be as Christ to you;  
pray that I may have the grace to  
let you be my servant too.

*"Brother, Sister, Let Me Serve You"*

Words & Music: Richard A M Gillard (b 1953)

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Accompanied by: Jo Banbury

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**BLESSING**

And may the blessing of God,  
Creator, Redeemer and Sustainer  
rest and remain on each one of us now and always.

**Amen**