

Kingswood IAW September 6th– Love Thy neighbour

Today is the first Sunday in the new connexional year and also the Sunday when, at Kingswood, we would gather for Interactive worship. In our service today there are various options for you to engage with and a mixture of youtube hymns to sing or listen to. This act of worship has been prepared by Liz Rowe, Irene Bostock and Jan Smith.

Opening prayer.

Lord of all,
In reverence and humility, awe and wonder,
We come to worship you.
As we draw near to you – draw near to us
And meet with us now we pray.
In Jesus name
Amen.

Song Bless the Lord o my soul (10,000 reasons)

*Bless the Lord O my soul
O my soul
Worship His Holy name
Sing like never before
O my soul
I'll worship Your Holy name.*

2. You're rich in love
And You're slow to anger
Your name is great
And Your heart is kind
For all Your goodness
I will keep on singing
Ten thousand reasons
For my heart to find.
Bless the Lord O my soul...

1. The sun comes up
It's a new day dawning
It's time to sing Your song again
Whatever may pass
And whatever lies before me
Let me be singing
When the evening comes.
Bless the Lord O my soul...

3. And on that day
When my strength is failing
The end draws near
And my time has come
Still my soul will
Sing Your praise unending
Ten thousand years
And then forevermore
Bless the Lord O my soul...

Words and Music Matt Redman and Jonas Myrin CCLI 6021

Let us pray.

Loving and generous God, on this the first Sunday of a new Connexional year we are aware that so many people are still unable to gather in a church or chapel to worship you. We know you hear our prayers from wherever we are, but for many our desire is to gather together for mutual support and to praise your name.

Hear the prayers of our hearts as we long for a better world.

Hear the prayers of our minds as we try to find new ways to worship you.

Hear the prayer of our souls as we long to draw closer to you.

On this day, we thank you once again for the gift of your Son, Jesus Christ. How he modelled a way for us to live, and how he showed us that there is nothing in earth or heaven that can separate us from your love.

Forgive us Lord in the times when we doubt you.
Give us strength when we feel weak.
Hold us close, until the day finally comes when we might all gather as one to praise your name.
Amen.

Readings - Psalm 119:33-40

Romans 13:8-12

Craft – paper figures



Who are your neighbours? Cut out figures to represent people you know and stick them together. Thank God for each one.

Reflecting on the passage from Romans 13:8-12.

1. Read the passage of scripture aloud.

Pause and recall if some word or phrase stood out or something in the reading touched your heart. If so, pause and dwell for a moment on that insight or feeling.

2. Read the passage again.

Take a few moments to think about the words that have stood out to you and spend a moment in quiet prayer.

Listen to the version below of the hymn - A new Commandment I give unto you – or read the words through slowly.

A new commandment
I give unto you
That you love one another
As I have loved you,
That you love one another
As I have loved you.
By this shall all men
Know you are My disciples
If you have love one to another.

Discussion questions

In the passage from Romans 13: 8-12 we are reminded again to love our neighbours as we love ourselves.

- 1) For a few moments bring to mind your immediate neighbours, those living on the same street, next door or maybe opposite. How well do you know them? Did the recent lockdown provide an opportunity to get to know them better? Can you recall any acts of kindness received from them during this time? Were you able to show neighbourly love to any of them during lockdown?

Who is my neighbour? We are reminded in the gospels (Luke Ch10) that our neighbour includes all in need.

- 2) As Christians how can we, as a church and also as individuals, show the love of Jesus to people in the community surrounding Kingswood?

- 3) Broadening this further, in a world full of need how can we as individuals, as a church, and as a relatively wealthy country, demonstrate the love of God and his concern for the world he created to those in need regardless of race, culture or religion?

StF 256 When I needed a neighbour were you there.

Intercessions by Irene (Irene to record)

We are told that we should love our neighbours as we love ourselves.

So, let us bring before God the needs of our individual neighbours, those who live next door, opposite us or on the same street as we do. In a moment's quietness let each of us think of our own individual neighbours, some we know well and some we would like to know better, all with their own problems and needs and commend them to God in prayer. SILENCE

Help us Lord to love our neighbours as we love ourselves.

But Jesus tells us that our neighbours are those who need help no matter where they are, what creed they are or what culture they are.

So let us widen our prayers and think firstly about the country in which we live and its people. We remember our youngsters returning to schools at the moment after so many months of home schooling and pray that their return to the world of school will go smoothly. We think of students who will soon be returning to universities or going to university for the first time.

We remember those who have lost jobs recently or will soon have no job to return to as a result of the ongoing pandemic, who are struggling to cope financially, maybe needing to use food banks for the first time to feed their families.

We pray for those in positions of authority, in our country, that they will use their influence and power wisely and responsibly and lead with justice and fairness for all people.

Help us Lord to love our neighbours as we love ourselves.

We widen our prayers even further and think about the many countries in our world so far away from ours, where fighting and bloodshed are rife; where people are living amongst the rubble of damaged homes following years of civil wars. We think of the humanitarian disaster in the Yemen, where hospitals, often damaged themselves, are struggling to cope with the many ill and injured people. Of the thousands of people made homeless by the explosions in the Lebanese capital. Of the many African countries whose peoples live in poverty with insufficient food, water and sanitation and who are now struggling to cope with the Corona virus.

May we as individuals and also, as part of a wealthy country, find ways of helping those in particular need at this time in so many areas world-wide. Help us to remember that, though far away, they are also our neighbours.

Help us Lord to love our neighbours as we love ourselves

Amen.

Concluding thought – an adaptation of 'The Rabbi's gift' by Francis Dorff

Francis Dorff has a wonderful story called "The Rabbi's Gift," which seems to sum up all we've been thinking about today regarding our treatment of others and loving our neighbour. The story goes like this:

"There was a famous monastery which once had been full of monks and visitors seeking spiritual guidance. But the monastery had fallen on dry years when their spirituality level was very low. Few pilgrims came to seek guidance, and few young people gave themselves to become monks. At last there were only a handful of elderly monks going about their work, their prayer, their study, all with heavy hearts. The only time their spirit lifted was when the word went out that the rabbi was walking in the woods. You see, in the woods near the monastery, there was a small hut that this rabbi had constructed as a place of retreat, and he came from time to time to fast and pray. And when the monks in the monastery knew he was fasting and praying, they felt supported by his prayer.

One day the abbot of the monastery heard that the rabbi was walking in the woods and decided to go see him. They greeted one another, sat together, silently prayed, and then the abbot began to weep. He poured out his concern for the monastery and for the spiritual health of the monks. Finally, the rabbi said, 'You seek a teaching from me and I have one for you. It is a teaching which I will say to you and then I will never repeat. When you share this teaching with the monks, you are to say it once and then never to repeat it. The teaching is this. Listen carefully. "The Messiah is among you."

Well, when the abbot heard that teaching, he thanked the rabbi. He went back to the monastery to gather the monks and to tell them the teaching of the rabbi. He told him, as he was instructed, that he would say the teaching once, and then they were to talk about it no more. "Listen carefully," he said. "The teaching is this: One of us is the Messiah." It wasn't exactly what the rabbi had said, but they began to look at one another in a whole new light. Is Brother John the messiah? Or Father James? Am I the messiah?

In the days to come, as they went about their prayer life and their work and their study of scripture, they began to treat one another in a whole new light. Each one of them might be the messiah, and this new treatment of one another, this new sense of expectation, was noted by the few pilgrims who came. And soon word spread about the spirit of concern and compassion and expectation which could be felt at the monastery! Young people began to offer themselves in service. Pilgrims began to come in great number, all because they looked at each other as people of worth".

What would our church our communities look like if we believed and practiced this same love; if we loved our neighbour in that same way, if we loved as God loves us.

Adapted, Francis Dorff's "The Rabbi's Gift," in A World of Stories, William Bausch, Editor, (Twenty-Third Publications, 1998), pp. 91-92

StF 547 Beyond these walls of Worship

Blessing

Go in peace to love God, love your neighbour and love yourself. And may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all this day and for evermore. Amen