

Church at home

East Leake Methodist Church 2021

Sit comfortably in a quiet place and prepare, start with a brief period of silence, turning your mind and spirit towards God. You may want to have a cross or candle in view as a focus.

Welcome & Call to Worship

Let us bring ourselves to God,
whatever our age and gifts.
Let us prepare to share in worship,
Giving thanks for all that God shares with us.
Let us open our hearts and minds
to know more of God's unconditional love and care,
and be ready to share it with others. **Amen**

Hymn 489 (StF) All I Once Held Dear

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Merf00qcQik>

Prayer

God, our generous provider,
as the young boy offered all he had to Jesus –
five loaves and two small fish –
we come today offering you everything we have:
a pocketful of faith, a bit of time,
ourselves, our gifts, our talents.
teach us how to give ourselves to others,
generously and wholehearted
sharing who we are and what we have.
May we learn to share all the world's resources,
so that everyone has enough
of the good things that you provide.
And we know that, however small our gift or offering,
you will do amazing things with it,
far more than we can hope, believe, or imagine.
Thank you, awesome God.

Reading John 6: 1-15

Meditation of Andrew

The people were hungry
and the hour was growing late,
so we were understandably concerned,
not least because there were little kids in the crowd,
most well past their bedtime, let alone supper.
For their sake alone, we thought,
it was time to break things up and head for home.
All right, so we were more than a bit peckish ourselves,
but, having given up everything to follow Jesus,
we were used to roughing it,
unlike many gathered there that evening,
so we discreetly urged him to call it a day.
True to form, though, he had a surprise in store,
a solution that left us reeling.
'No need to send them away,' he said.
'You feed them!'
Well, we were flabbergasted.
I mean, how could anyone rustle up a meal out there
in the middle of nowhere?
For the twelve of us, perhaps,
But there were masses to feed,
I'd say five thousand, at least.
We genuinely thought he was joking at first,
but he wasn't,
so, we turned to the multitude and appealed for help,
and somehow, despite there being only a few loaves and fish between them,
the food materialised –
not just a few scraps,
but enough to feed us all
with basketfuls left over.
It taught us a lesson that day about what God can do if only we have faith,
When we're ready and willing to share.
If everyone walked the way of Christ,
putting others first and self second,
we could feed the needy again,
today, tomorrow and the next day,
for there's plenty to go around,
sufficient for all our needs and beyond.
We can't just leave it to God though –
That's not the way things work.
In a world where thousands still go hungry,
where children die each day for want of a crust of bread,

Jesus continues to bring that simple but scary challenge: 'You feed them!'

Address

Last week you heard Jesus describe himself as the 'bread of life'. There was a very real sense of disbelief that the son of a local carpenter could do anything other than follow the family trade, and certainly not talk about having come from heaven.

Today we are looking back to the story where a young boy's small offering to Jesus, blessed a whole multitude.

As a child, I loved to see the pictures of the little boy offering his own lunch to Jesus.

Imagine that you are the little boy in the crowd, holding the cloth bag with lunch in it, moving it round in your hands, seeing the crowd, hearing Jesus asking his disciples how they'll feed everyone.

Imagine being Andrew, the little boy tugging your sleeve, holding up his bag, thinking 'can I seriously take this to Jesus'? Imagine be the other disciples seeing this play out before your eyes – a small boy, one of our own – believing that so little could go so far.

On that hill in Galilee, a boy offered his lunch.

In 'lockdown' did someone offer you food? Did you deliver food? Huge numbers of ordinary people pulled together so that everyone was looked after. Many doing jobs out of their normal experience. Footballers delivered food parcels. An airline pilot drove a van. Marcus Rashford did an amazing job using his time and his voice, which resulted in the government making a u-turn when it came to providing meals for children.

Throughout the lockdown period some students remained on campus, many were miles from home, missing family, missing friends, even missing lectures! Others stayed on campus for the sake of their wellbeing; nowhere to study; parents were key works; vulnerable family members. They all needed to be fed and cared for.

Once a week our Vice Chancellor – VC Bob and I have been going on a campus walkabout, meeting students and staff at a social distance, we noticed over the weeks more students came out of their rooms to talk with us, sharing their joys and concerns.

Key workers on campus did whatever was needed to care for the students and staff, while also maintaining and keeping the campus safe - one of the

chefs, slept in a caravan on his drive, to keep his family safe, so his dedication to feeding the students could continue. VC Bob delivered food himself.

Food poverty in the UK is as bad as it has been in living memory. Food bank use, creative schemes by schools to feed hungry children, soup runs for the homeless – all ways people have responded to this.

My heart was broken when at the beginning of the lockdown the supermarket shelves emptied, people taking far too much, I was ashamed to see how much then ended up in landfill!

Like Marcus Rushford, I know what it feels like to go to bed hungry! Waking up to bread and sugar if I was lucky! Maybe that is why I now hold the title of 'queen of the leftovers' nothing is ever wasted.

We have Sunday roast; Monday: Sunday dinner pie; Tuesday: Curry; Wednesday: bubble and squeak with sausage and beans or fish. Thursday, I serve freshly cooked food, this will last for two main meals. Saturday, I cook again, something like stir fry that lasts one meal – then we are back to Sunday.

'Turn nothing into something' how many of you have seen the advert where actors search through their fridges, struggling to find something they can make a decent meal out of? They discover a jar of mayonnaise, and the leftover food is transformed. Turn nothing into something – make taste not waste.

Imagine the mounting sense of awe as Jesus takes the nothing that he is offered and turns it into a feast for many.

There is a lesson in the leftovers. God gives in abundance. He takes whatever we can offer in time, ability, or resources and multiplies its effectiveness beyond our wildest expectations.

If Jesus can take the offering, thanks God for it and feeds about five thousand people – with 12 baskets left over. What can we do? Jesus brings that simple but scary challenge: You feed them. **Amen**

Hymn **713(StF) Show Me how to Stand for Justice**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l8CIU66oFMQ>

Lord's Prayer (Traditional)

As our Saviour taught his disciples, we pray:

**Our Father, who art in heaven,
Hallowed be thy Name;
Thy kingdom come;
They 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**

Final Prayer

Inspired by 'When I Needed a Neighbour (Sydney Carter)

When I needed a neighbour, were you there, were you there?

When I needed a neighbour, were you there?

And the creed and the colour and the name won't matter.

We will be there.

I was hungry and thirsty, were you there, were you there?
I was hungry and thirsty, were you there?

**And the creed and the colour and the name won't matter.
We will be there.**

I was cold, I was naked, were you there? Were you there?
I was cold, I was naked, were you there?

And the creed and the colour and the name won't matter.

We will be there.

When I needed a shelter, were you there? Were you there?

When I needed a shelter, were you there?

And the creed and the colour and the name won't matter.

We will be there.

When I needed a healer, were you there? Were you there?

When I needed a healer, were you there?

And the creed and the colour and the name won't matter.

We will be there.

Wherever you travel we'll be there, we'll be there, wherever you travel we'll be there.

And the creed and the colour and the name won't matter.

We will be there.

God of all, teach us that you long to bring comfort, hope and justice to those who cry out in need, and help us to play our part in that ministry, refusing to leave to you the things we can do ourselves. **Amen**

Hymn 409 (StF) Let Us Build a House Where Love Can Dwell

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mTdxFRfEoMs>

Blessing

Go out from here with a pocket full of free gifts
To give to those you meet,
Give freely your love and concern
as a token of the greater love of God.
Give freely your time and effort
as a token of the sacrifice of Jesus.
Give freely your help; friendship and kindness,
as a token of the upholding Spirit.
And may all you give and all you do
cause others to seek the true gift
of the God who blesses without end.

In a world where you can be anything, be kind and show love.