

**Worship for 12th Sunday in Ordinary Time (complete text. A video version is also online)**  
**Keep safe. Keep caring. Keep praying.**

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Hymn: My God (Go Fish)

*My God is so big, and so strong and so mighty,  
there's nothing My God cannot do.  
My God is so big, and so strong and so mighty,  
there's nothing My God cannot do.*

In the beginning, God made everything  
God simply spoke and the world came to be  
He sent a flood and made everything new  
He parted the sea and let his people walk  
through.  
He helped a boy bring a giant right down  
Joshua marched, the walls fell to the ground.  
These acts of power are worthy of praise,  
But if you want to question my God and his  
ways,  
I'll look you in the eye and say:

*My God is so big, and so strong and so mighty,  
there's nothing My God cannot do.  
My God is so big, and so strong and so mighty,  
there's nothing My God cannot do.*

Though we are sinners, he still gave us worth  
God sent his Son to live here on the earth.  
He healed the sick, he made blind men see,  
he let the lame walk and he set the world free.  
He died on a cross and he rose from the grave,  
he conquered sin, he is mighty to save.  
He went to heaven, and he's coming back.  
God's word is true, but if it's attacked,  
I'll look you in the eye and say:

*My God is so big, and so strong and so mighty,  
there's nothing My God cannot do.  
My God is so big, and so strong and so mighty,  
there's nothing My God cannot do.*

**God the Spirit, God the Father, God the Son,  
one plus one plus one equals one.**

**God the Spirit, God the Father, God the Son,  
one plus one plus one equals one.**

**I want the world to know about my God  
I want to live so the whole world can see  
that my heart has changed, I'm forgiven and  
new  
if people need proof, may they see it in me  
Let's look the world in the eye,  
let's look them in the eye and say:**

*My God is so big, and so strong and so mighty,  
there's nothing My God cannot do.  
My God is so big, and so strong and so mighty,  
there's nothing My God cannot do.  
My God is so big, and so strong and so mighty,  
there's nothing My God cannot do.  
My God is so big, and so strong and so mighty,  
there's nothing My God cannot do.  
My God is so big, and so strong and so mighty,  
there's nothing My God cannot do.  
My God is so big, and so strong and so mighty,  
there's nothing My God cannot do.*

Welcome

Yes – don't worry – you are in the right place –  
you haven't tuned into the wrong service –  
welcome to worship with The South  
Warwickshire Methodist Circuit for this Father's  
Day 2021!

My name is Michael, for those of you who don't  
know me I'm the Children and Families Missioner  
at Dale Street and Kenilworth. I will be your  
Worship Leader for today and I am delighted to  
be joined by Russell Blackwell who will be  
sharing some reflections with us later on. Thanks  
also goes to our readers who this week includes  
a young person from Kenilworth and from  
Henley.

Before we start, a reflection on Fathers – As a  
Children's Worker I have met many families for  
whom fathers are either absent or a negative

influence in a household, sometimes Fathers fail to be the person we would hope them to be – through ignorance, through ill health or through deliberate acts. Others here today will have fond memories of good fathers who are no longer with us – those who have passed over back to Heaven or those who's minds are not what they once were. Some fathers will be overseas today – for work or for service to their country. Wherever your father is today, whether he is your biological father or an adopted father – whether you know him or not – whether he is young or old, alive or in Heaven. Whether the person who is like a father to you is male or female, black or white – know this – God is your good father – he is everything you desire from a father – he is love – he is kindness – he is acceptance – he is cheering you on – and today – on this father's day – we give thanks for the knowledge of his parenthood.....

#### THE PREPARATION

Hymn: StF 72 – Father God, I wonder

**Father God, I wonder  
how I managed to exist  
without the knowledge  
of your parenthood  
and your loving care.  
But now I am your child,  
I am adopted in your family,  
and I can never be alone  
'cause, Father God,  
you're there beside me.**

*I will sing your praises,  
I will sing your praises,  
I will sing your praises forever more.  
I will sing your praises,  
I will sing your praises,  
I will sing your praises forever more.*

Ian Smale (b. 1949)

#### Opening Prayers

Father God – I am adopted into your family

....

Just let those words sink in for a moment.....

We are adopted into God's family – God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit – adopted into that great family,

Let's pray:

Thank you – Thank you Father that I am adopted into your family, thank you that I am precious to you – I am a child of God – I belong, I matter, I am special, nobody can take that away from me because I am a child of God.

Some people sharing this prayer will have heard this truth many times before, for others this may be the first time, and for others, these words may finally be becoming reality – Father God I pray that all those who are praying with me will know that you are love – your love is that of a good Father – Jesus called you Abba which means “Daddy” – as we dwell in that place and imagine ourselves as small children sat on your lap, laughing, having fun, we cast off all that is negative, we cast off all that causes us pain, we cast off all our mistakes, all that is blocking us from true relationship with you.

We ask forgiveness for all those who have hurt us – especially those who have had a father-like responsibility for us who have failed to fulfil that role.

We place all of our shame, all of our hurting, all of our past regrets into your hands, knowing that you are forgiveness and love – and we hear your gracious words “You are forgiven”

Hymn: StF 439 – Abba Father, let me be

**Abba Father, let me be  
yours and yours alone.  
May my will forever be**

**ever more your own.  
Never let my heart grow cold,  
never let me go,  
Abba Father, let me be  
yours and yours alone.**

Dave Bilborough (b. 1965)

#### THE MINISTRY OF THE WORD

1<sup>st</sup> Reading 1 Samuel 17:4-20 (NRSVA)

<sup>4</sup>And there came out from the camp of the Philistines a champion named Goliath, of Gath, whose height was six cubits and a span. <sup>5</sup>He had a helmet of bronze on his head, and he was armoured with a coat of mail; the weight of the coat was five thousand shekels of bronze. <sup>6</sup>He had greaves of bronze on his legs and a javelin of bronze slung between his shoulders. <sup>7</sup>The shaft of his spear was like a weaver's beam, and his spear's head weighed six hundred shekels of iron; and his shield-bearer went before him. <sup>8</sup>He stood and shouted to the ranks of Israel, 'Why have you come out to draw up for battle? Am I not a Philistine, and are you not servants of Saul? Choose a man for yourselves, and let him come down to me. <sup>9</sup>If he is able to fight with me and kill me, then we will be your servants; but if I prevail against him and kill him, then you shall be our servants and serve us.' <sup>10</sup>And the Philistine said, 'Today I defy the ranks of Israel! Give me a man, that we may fight together.' <sup>11</sup>When Saul and all Israel heard these words of the Philistine, they were dismayed and greatly afraid.

<sup>12</sup>Now David was the son of an Ephrathite of Bethlehem in Judah, named Jesse, who had eight sons. In the days of Saul the man was already old and advanced in years. <sup>13</sup>The three eldest sons of Jesse had followed Saul to the battle; the names of his three sons who went to the battle were Eliab the firstborn, and next to him Abinadab, and the third Shammah. <sup>14</sup>David was the

youngest; the three eldest followed Saul, <sup>15</sup>but David went back and forth from Saul to feed his father's sheep at Bethlehem. <sup>16</sup>For forty days the Philistine came forward and took his stand, morning and evening.

<sup>17</sup>Jesse said to his son David, 'Take for your brothers an ephah of this parched grain and these ten loaves, and carry them quickly to the camp to your brothers; <sup>18</sup>also take these ten cheeses to the commander of their thousand. See how your brothers fare, and bring some token from them.'

<sup>19</sup>Now Saul, and they, and all the men of Israel, were in the valley of Elah, fighting with the Philistines. <sup>20</sup>David rose early in the morning, left someone in charge of the sheep, took the provisions, and went as Jesse had commanded him. He came to the encampment as the army was going forth to the battle line, shouting the war cry.

Gospel Mark 4:35-41 (NRSVA)

#### *Jesus Stills a Storm*

<sup>35</sup>On that day, when evening had come, he said to them, 'Let us go across to the other side.' <sup>36</sup>And leaving the crowd behind, they took him with them in the boat, just as he was. Other boats were with him. <sup>37</sup>A great gale arose, and the waves beat into the boat, so that the boat was already being swamped. <sup>38</sup>But he was in the stern, asleep on the cushion; and they woke him up and said to him, 'Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?' <sup>39</sup>He woke up and rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, 'Peace! Be still!' Then the wind ceased, and there was a dead calm. <sup>40</sup>He said to them, 'Why are you afraid? Have you still no faith?' <sup>41</sup>And they were filled with great awe and said to one another, 'Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?'

Sermon

*DON'T YOU CARE?*

It was September 1853 when the three-masted clipper Dumfries crept out from Liverpool bound for China. The single passenger was confident about his call but did not expect to see his mother again. However by the afternoon of Saturday the 25th, the wind was almost a hurricane, the Irish Sea was white with foam and the waves were towering over little Dumfries, seeming to swamp it. The Methodist captain shouted that he had never seen a wilder sea and unless God helped them there was no hope. They struggled to sail away from the coast but as night came on the Holyhead light showed in the wrong position. The passenger went below and prayed, and wrote his name and address in a pocket book which might be found with his body. The captain tried to tack one way to no avail. Then he tried the other way and just as the ship started to drift to the shore again, the wind changed direction and they cleared the rocks by no more than twice her own length. Hudson Taylor was saved and the China Inland Mission had begun.

The frightening force of water in a storm is not easily forgotten, whether at sea or on a lake. The Lake of Galilee deep below sea level is renowned for the winds which rush down from the high mountains around it. Local fishermen could relate to the eyewitness talking to Mark about the vivid details of an unforgettable 7 mile evening trip. Several boats set out. Jesus was tired out, sleeping on a cushion in the stern, just as he was from speaking to the crowd – no warm clothes, no provision for the journey. The furious wind, with waves nearly swamping the boat. And that memorable cry of the disciples: 'Teacher, don't you care if we drown?'

Do you remember Lance Corporal Jones in Dad's Army? 'Don't panic, don't panic!' But he did, and so did the disciples. 'Don't you care?' Surely there was both anger and a cry for help in those words. What did they want? The account in Matthew's gospel records that they asked Jesus to save them. Did they want extra hands to bail out, or a carpenter to tell fishermen what to do in a storm? What did they want? They wanted Jesus to do something. Yet in their fright they missed what they already had for survival – Jesus was in the boat with them. His caring and calming presence was right there.

What did Jesus want from the disciples? I think he wanted them to trust him. It's often the experts who recognise danger. Maybe the carpenter couldn't see what might happen, but surely more likely he could not conceive of other than the love and protection of his Father, just as he cared for others. A little later in Mark's gospel we read of another boat journey unsuccessfully seeking to escape the crowds. But the people followed him and he 'had compassion on them'. He did care about them 'because they were like sheep without a shepherd'.

In the passage from 1 Samuel, we hear about Jesse's concern for his sons. Jesse was an able man from a humble family at Bethlehem, David the shepherd being the youngest son of eight. Jesse's oldest three sons were at the battlefield with Saul, so he asks David to take food to them and their commander and to bring back some assurance of how they are. If Jesse as a good father shows care for the well-being of his weak sons, who are frightened by Goliath, how much more will God in Jesus care for those he loves?

Jesus does care for the frightened disciples – and for the people in the other boats with them. It was his nature to act when there was extreme

human need. And so he does. Miraculously the storm is stilled. The wind becomes a calm. The disciples' mission would continue.

What about our storms and questions? What do we want? Sometimes in the ups and downs of life we might feel that we are clinging on by our fingertips. We know that bad things can happen to good people. We are well aware of present crises such as illness from the pandemic or the prospect of unemployment after furloughs end. In our personal crises it is normal to call on God. Perhaps the biggest question we ask of God and of each other is: 'Do you not care?'

The instructor in the learner driver's car avoids grabbing the wheel or using the secondary controls if at all possible. They care that the driver should learn from their mistakes and with mutual trust become better. Let our questioning become a sign of trust in God's care at our time of weakness and fear.

But it is not just individuals who might find themselves in peril. Let's remember congregations overseas or right here in our own land who feel themselves under threat. Early Christian readers would have focused on Jesus' questions: 'Why are you so afraid? Have you still no faith?' Do we do better than the panicky disciples, wondering what the future will bring for our church work? Perhaps there is a temptation to avoid difficult action or to be asleep to each other. We feel obliged to find a way to 'wake Jesus' so all will be well. Doesn't he care?

Sometimes it takes a crisis to change people's views. The disciples had to undergo a traumatic lake crossing to understand how much Jesus cared for them. They were transformed as they asked each other: 'Who is this?' – and realised a new dimension to Jesus. How often do we miss

the full significance of Jesus? On the lake and later in their storms of life and death they would recall whose presence was with them at all times, whose care sustained them.

God's love protects us from nothing. But sustains us in all things.

Here is assurance. In the storm we are not alone. It is enough that Jesus knows our worries, our anxieties, our fears and goes with us on our journey. It is he who will grant peace and stillness when we think the boat is being swamped.

We should not judge God's care for us - nor the state of our discipleship – by the roughness of our passage. Rather, trust in the perfect Father's love which can never be overwhelmed by the wind or storms of life.

Let us pray:

O God, teach us to care, and not to care,  
Teach us to sit still,  
To be still and know your presence. Amen

Hymn: Good, Good Father

**Oh, I've heard a thousand stories of what they  
think You're like  
But I've heard the tender whisper of love in the  
dead of night  
And You tell me that You're pleased and that  
I'm never alone**

*You're a good, good Father  
It's who You are, it's who You are, it's who  
You are  
And I'm loved by You  
It's who I am, it's who I am, it's who I am*

**Oh, and I've seen many searching for answers  
far and wide  
But I know we're all searching for answers only  
You provide**

'Cause You know just what we need before we say a word

*You're a good, good Father  
It's who You are, it's who You are, it's who You are  
And I'm loved by You  
It's who I am, it's who I am, it's who I am*

**Because You are perfect in all of Your ways  
You are perfect in all of Your ways  
You are perfect in all of Your ways to us  
You are perfect in all of Your ways  
Oh, You're perfect in all of Your ways  
You are perfect in all of Your ways to us**

**Oh, it's love so undeniable  
I, I can hardly speak  
Peace so unexplainable  
I, I can hardly think  
As You call me deeper still  
As You call me deeper still  
As You call me deeper still into love, love, love**

*You're a good, good Father  
It's who You are, it's who You are, it's who You are  
And I'm loved by You  
It's who I am, it's who I am, it's who I am*

*You're a good, good Father  
It's who You are, it's who You are, it's who You are  
And I'm loved by You  
It's who I am, it's who I am, it's who I am*

*You're a good, good Father  
It's who You are, it's who You are, it's who You are  
And I'm loved by You  
It's who I am, it's who I am, it's who I am  
(You're a good, good Father)*

**You are perfect in all of Your ways (it's who You are, it's who You are, it's who You are)**

**(And I'm loved by You)**

**You are perfect in all of Your ways (it's who I am, it's who I am, it's who I am)**

Songwriters: Tony Brown / Pat Barrett

THE RESPONSE

Prayers of thanksgiving and Prayers of intercession

Let's pray – Father God – you are a good, good father and we are loved by you. God, there have been times in our lives, maybe even this week when we have felt caught in the storm – attacked at every side, maybe even in fear of our lives and we cry out “Do you not care?”

Father – in this time of quiet reflection, we listen for your healing words “Be Still”

In this, our special time, our time with you oh God, we come to you in the stillness and the quiet laying all our burdens at your feet, we pray for our broken world, for the pain and suffering this pandemic has caused so many, for the issues of climate change and the ongoing threat of war and civil unrest.

We pray for our chapels and churches, for those we know and love in our communities, for our friends and families – we hold up to you those who are unwell at this time and we pray for your healing touch.

Be with us this week as the lockdown restrictions further ease, protect us and the ones we love. May this dreadful pandemic finally be over in this land and throughout the world.

We draw our minds now to the Methodist Conference taking place here in our District and around the country through means of digital technology. We pray for all those working so hard to make this conference possible – those going above and beyond to arrange

accommodation and venues. We reflect on the decisions this conference will need to make, most notably the historic decisions to be made about marriage and relationships – may the choices this conference make be pleasing to you and bring glory to your kingdom oh God.

We stay in a prayerful state of mind as we listen to the words of the song “Father I place into your hands” which to me sums up all my prayers in a concise and beautiful way. After the song we will join in the Lords prayer which will be led by various members of our Circuit and District in various languages reflecting the multi-culturalness of God’s family.

Hymn: StF 519 – Father, I place into your hands

- 1. Father, I place into your hands  
the things I cannot do.  
Father, I place into your hands  
the times that I've been through.  
Father, I place into your hands  
the way that I should go,  
for I know I always can trust you.**
- 2. Father, I place into your hands  
my friends and family.  
Father, I place into your hands  
the things that trouble me.  
Father, I place into your hands  
the person I would be,  
for I know I always can trust you.**
- 3. Father, we love to see your face,  
we love to hear your voice.  
Father, we love to sing your praise  
and in your name rejoice.  
Father, we love to walk with you  
and in your presence rest,  
for we know we always can trust you.**
- 4. Father, I want to be with you  
and do the things you do.**

**Father, I want to speak the words  
that you are speaking too.  
Father, I want to love the ones  
that you will draw to you,  
for I know that I am one with you.**

Jenny Hewer (b. 1945)

The Lord’s Prayer

We say the Lord’s prayer:

**Our Father in Heaven,  
Hallowed be your name,  
Your kingdom come,  
Your will be done,  
On earth as in heaven.  
Give us today our daily bread.  
Forgive our sins  
as we forgive those who sin against us.  
Save us from the time of trial  
and deliver us from evil,  
For the kingdom, the power and the glory  
are yours, now and forever  
Amen**

The Offering & prayer

We’ve been hearing today how our almighty Father God can take our acts of faith and trust and turn them into life changing miracles – it is in that faith that through the giving of money and our time to the life and witness of our local church and circuit we come now to God offering all that we are, all that we give in blessing and honour to our God. Lord accept the gifts of your people given by direct debit, volunteer time and so many other means in gratitude to you – our God who saves – our God to whom we place all things into your hands.

THE DISMISSAL

Prayer & blessing

**And now, may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ  
the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy  
Spirit be with us all evermore  
Amen**

We have one final song to see us out, so before I  
get accused of favouring modern songs – our  
final song is an early 19<sup>th</sup> Century hymn based on  
Psalm 103 written by Henry Francis Lyte – Praise  
my soul the King of Heaven.

God bless you all – have a wonderful week!

Hymn: StF 83 – Praise, my soul, the King of  
heaven

- 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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StF 72 – Father God, I wonder

Ian Smale (*b.* 1949)

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StF 439 – Abba Father, let me be

Dave Bilborough (*b.* 1965)

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StF 519 – Father, I place into your hands

Jenny Hewer (*b.* 1945)

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Good, Good Father

Songwriters: Tony Brown / Pat Barrett

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Hymn: StF 83 – Praise, my soul, the King of heaven

Henry Francis Lyte (1793–1847)

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My God (Go Fish)

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