**Vine at Home – 21st June 2020**

**Call to worship** We come to the table, grateful for your welcome. We gather in your presence, sharing together in fellowship. We are here to receive, bless us by your Spirit, O God. Amen.[[1]](#footnote-1)

**Hymn** – StF 409 – Let us build a house

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W3Pb77ylz_Q>

Let us build a house where love can dwell and all can safely live,
A place where Saints and children tell how hearts learn to forgive.
Built of hopes and dreams and visions, rock of faith and vault of grace;
Here the love of Christ shall end divisions;

*All are welcome, all are welcome,
All are welcome in this place.*

Let us build a house where prophets speak, and words are strong and true,
Where all God's children dare to seek to dream God's reign anew.
Here the cross shall stand as witness and a symbol of God's grace;
Here as one we claim the faith of Jesus:

Let us build a house where love is found in water, wine and wheat:
A banquet hall on holy ground where peace and justice meet.
Here the love of God, through Jesus, is revealed in time and space; As we share in Christ the feast that frees us:

**Prayer: God our Generous Host**, we recognise as we pray that we have received so much from your hand: you have given us breath to live and praise your name,
you have given us food to strengthen us and water to refresh us, you have given us Jesus to be our friend, companion and Saviour, we are glad to be your guests today.

**God our Gracious Guest**, we recognise as we pray that you come to us in so many ways: you whisper to us deep within our spirits when we feel alone, you show your love for us in the kindness of friends and strangers, you sit with us in our homes and walk with us on our streets, we are glad to welcome you today. **God, you are both the ground** of our being and the gift of life within us: thank you for your gift of love which has surrounded us all our lives, thank you for your gift of grace which accepts us as we are, right now, thank you for your gift of hope which holds us now and for eternity.

**So triune God**, as we gather in your name this day, we ask for your forgiveness. We acknowledge all within us that is less than it could or should be. This day through your grace, may we know we are truly forgiven. Amen

**We now say the Lord’s prayer**

**Reading - Matthew 9:35-10:8** The Harvest Is Great, the Labourers Few **35**Then Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and proclaiming the good news of the kingdom, and curing every disease and every sickness. **36**When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. **37**Then he said to his disciples, “The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; **38**therefore ask the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest.”

### The Twelve Apostles 10 Then Jesus summoned his twelve disciples and gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to cure every disease and every sickness. 2 These are the names of the twelve apostles: first, Simon, also known as Peter, and his brother Andrew; James son of Zebedee, and his brother John; 3 Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas and Matthew the tax collector; James son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus; 4 Simon the Cananaean, and Judas Iscariot, the one who betrayed him. The Mission of the Twelve 5 These twelve Jesus sent out with the following instructions: “Go nowhere among the Gentiles, and enter no town of the Samaritans, 6 but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. 7 As you go, proclaim the good news, ‘The kingdom of heaven has come near.’ 8 Cure the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out demons. You received without payment; give without payment.[[2]](#footnote-2)

**Reflection** “Then Jesus made a circuit of all the towns and villages. He taught in their meeting places, reported kingdom news…When he looked out over the crowds, his heart was broken…”What a huge harvest!” he said to his disciples. “How few workers! On your knees and pray for harvest hands!” The Prayer was no sooner prayed than it was answered. Jesus called twelve of his followers and sent them into the ripe fields…Go to the lost, confused people right here in the neighbourhood. Tell them that the kingdom is here…”. **These selected verses** form our reading from Matthew, and when read from The Message, help us to really focus in on Jesus’ words and actions. He shared words of love and grace where people gathered, wherever he met them. He went to them. He talked of the creator, of how it might be, of how it could be. Jesus was full of compassion as he looked out amongst the people. The task was huge, yet he had hope. He saw the need, so he prayed and then responded.

**He didn’t stay on his knees**. He didn’t call a meeting, to arrange to pray some more, although constant prayer was a vital component to his life on earth. He called his followers. They gathered, they prayed and they set about meeting the needs. They didn’t wait for a complete plan with all the “t’s” crossed and the “I’s” dotted, they went and sat, they went and listened, they went and trusted, they went and ministered to those in need. As we look around us today, as we watch the news, like Jesus we need to have compassion. Today’s harvest is huge. But how will we respond? Like the disciples in our reading Jesus is calling us near, calling us to pray. But how will you respond?[[3]](#footnote-3)

**Reading:** Isaiah 40: 28-31 Have you not known? Have you not heard? The Lord is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He does not faint or grow weary; his understanding is unsearchable.**29**He gives power to the faint, and strengthens the powerless. **30**Even youths will faint and be weary, and the young will fall exhausted; **31**but those who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength, they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary,  they shall walk and not faint.[[4]](#footnote-4)

**Reflection**  Some might say “I am not an optimist, but I am always hopeful, I keep hope alive and encourage others to do so too”. Optimism is an attitude that says, relax, everything will be ok, leave everything to God, all shall be well. Hope is an attitude that says, whatever situation we find ourselves, we will say “right, now come on, roll up your sleeves, we will work together with others around us.”

Optimism is individualistic and passive. Hope is solidarity and pro-active. This hope is in me, for me it is rooted in faith, and solidarity with others. I see it around me and I find it in others.

This hope has inspired and sustained many in the midst of the current coronavirus pandemic. This hope inspires many in the incredible expressions of solidarity in people, that within all our vast differences we are all one human race, every person is precious, every person is vulnerable, no one is immune, our sickness and our health, our existence and our survival, rests in each other. We can see this hope in the incredible solidarity in people, in that attitudes and acts of grace and generosity, in people of all faiths and ethnicities and nationalities.

We have also realised that though people say “we are all in the same boat together”, that we are not all in the same boat. There are different boats, with different levels of protection. We are all in the same storm, but in different boats. Some people are not even in boats, they are in the water, and looking for life belts**. We have all experienced fear and anxiety** about the wellbeing of ourselves, our families, and friends. We have realised others are in a similar situation to us. We have a solidarity in our humanity, and frailty, and desire to be safe. We all seek safety, sanctuary and refuge.

We have realised that while some of us have good protective people and provision around us, and have homes and gardens, others don’t, and live in danger, in streets and refugee camps. Thousands have lost their homes through wars and violence and extreme weather and are as refugees seeking refuge and sanctuary.

This coronavirus storm will pass. But as we take sanctuary ourselves we keep in our hearts and minds those in their own sanctuaries now, with all the surrounding concerns, those without homes, those away from homes, and refugees who continue to be “the least important” internationally, and uphold them in our work and prayers. I give thanks for and find hope in the work of organisations like All We Can, through whom we can maintain our solidarity with those who feel most excluded and vulnerable.”[[5]](#footnote-5)

**Putting hope into action** This kind of hope is not passive – it is not how we feel about the world, but rather how we are a part

All We Can, the official relief and development agency of the Methodist Church, has been putting hope into action for over 80 years now, responding to the greatest challenges faced by the world, on behalf of the church. Today, the biggest challenge is Coronavirus, and its wide-ranging effects around our world. In particular, the way refugee camps and settlements are left exposed to the dangers of a highly-contagious, lethal disease.

Thanks to the support of their recent appeal, All We Can is already able to make a dramatic difference in some of these places. For example local partners in Cox’s Bazar refugee camp (home to 850,000 Rohingya refugees) have been able to set up triaging centres and a 1,000 bed isolation unit to help isolate and test anyone with suspected symptoms of Coronavirus.

In addition, around the world, All We Can has been supporting local partners and churches to build handwashing stations in rural communities, make and supply their own hand-sanitiser and supply sanitised bicycles to enable people to make essential journeys for food supplies or healthcare. Local partners have also been using their creativity and the trust they have built up in the local communities to spread important messages around social distancing and containing the virus.

You can find out more about the appeal, and you can join All We Can by praying, giving and saving lives together, at allwecan.org.uk/globalresponse. [[6]](#footnote-6)

**Let us pray.**

Holy God, you are our refuge and our hope. You live in heaven, on earth, and in our hearts. Your majesty surrounds us in all your creation.
In Christ you are revealed as One who pitches a tent and lives among us.
You take sanctuary in us and make your home in the core of our being.
Holy is your name. Holy are your ways.

We bless you for the honour you give us
By making us all in your image,
By calling us all to share in your mission,
And by inviting us all to eat at your Table.

We thank you for Jesus Christ,
In Him You have given the whole world
New patterns of living, loving, learning, serving and suffering,
And the promise of the fullness of life,
Wholesome life on earth,
And life that is not extinguished by death.

We bless you for giving us the gift of your Holy Spirit,
The breath of life.
The strength to live by each day.

We hold before you
All those who are struggling today, and those who bring care, help and support.
Those who are taking their last breaths, and those who watch and wait and pray with them;
Those who have died, and all who are bereaved.
Grant to all your sanctuary and strength,
And bring us all where you want us to be.

In the Name of Christ.
Amen.[[7]](#footnote-7)

**Hymn - Everlasting Arms – by Lou Fellingham**

[**https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XvNfjLmlviI**](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XvNfjLmlviI)

He lavishes grace as our burdens grow greater
He sends us more strength as our labours increase
To added afflictions He offers more mercy
To multiplied trials He multiplies peace

When we have exhausted our store of endurance
When our strength has failed and the day is half done
When we've reached the end of our earthly resources
Our Father's full giving is only begun
Our Father's full giving is only begun

*So lean hard
Lean hard
Lean on the everlasting arms
Lean hard
Lean hard
Lean on the everlasting arms
Lean on the everlasting arms*

His love has no limits, His grace has no measure
His power has no boundary that's known unto men
For out of His infinite riches in Jesus
He giveth and giveth and giveth again
He giveth and giveth and giveth again

You lead me beside still waters
Your goodness restores my soul
I know that you'll never leave me
I know that you won't let go
You lead me beside still waters
Your goodness restores my soul
I know that you'll never leave me
I know that you won't let go

Your mercy flows like a river
Your mercy flows like a river
Your mercy flows like a river on us

**Blessing**

As we continue with our day, as we face this coming week, as we move from this focused moment into a lifetime of worship, show us how to love one another dear Lord, as you have loved us.
Through the power of your Holy spirt we pray. Amen[[8]](#footnote-8)

Wishing you every blessing as you enter into a new week, you are all in my prayers and my thoughts. Please do contact me if there is anything you would like me to pray for or do. Reverend Gina

1. Call to worship by Tim Baker

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**The Vine at Home** is compiled and produced by **twelve**baskets [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Reflection by Wayne Grewcock [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Bible Text is from New Revised Standard Version Bible, copyright © 1989 National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

**The Vine at Home** is compiled and produced by **twelve**baskets [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Reflection written by Inderjit Bhogal

**The Vine at Home** is compiled and produced by **twelve**baskets [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Update from All We Can – allwecan.org.uk [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Prayer written by Inderjit Bhogal

**The Vine at Home** is compiled and produced by **twelve**baskets [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Blessing by Tim Baker

**The Vine at Home** is compiled and produced by **twelve**baskets [↑](#footnote-ref-8)