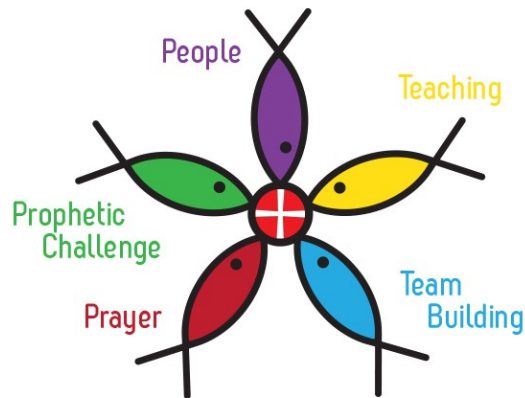




Part of
**Bradford North
Methodist
Circuit**



Come with us, Lord Jesus;
Fill us with your Spirit;
Shape us to your likeness;
Use us to enfold with love our needy world.



All Bible passages are quoted from "The Message" by Eugene H Patterson

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Join us!

An Exploration of The Christian Way...



Learning lessons from the life, teaching, and example, of Jesus, to meet life's challenges



January 3 2021

Hardship

Led by
Mervyn
Flecknoe

To help us to get our sufferings in perspective, we follow the story of Mary from the conception of Jesus to His death on the cross.

What did Mary have to endure? How do our sufferings compare?

Look up the stories of the other four women in Matthew's genealogy of Jesus: Tamar, Rahab, Ruth, and Bathsheba.

Luke said that Mary kept the whole story secret in her heart, telling only him when she was an old woman. Did he record any complaint from her?

John 16:33

In this World you will have trouble, but have no fear, I have overcome the World.

Collect for the day

Mary, mother of Jesus,
we thank you for your selfless example of how to bear
hardship,
and pray that we too may show fortitude in the face of
difficulty, sorrow, and pain,
understanding that others also suffer hardship
with courage and sacrifice,
Amen

The Bible

Forgive your brother seventy times seven times

Matthew 18:22

At that point Peter got up the nerve to ask, "Master, how many times do I forgive a brother or sister who hurts me?"

Love your enemies

Matthew 5:38-40

And if someone takes unfair advantage of you, use the occasion to practice the servant life.

Jesus asked forgiveness for those who crucified him:

Luke 23:34

They crucified him, along with the criminals, one on his right, the other on his left. Jesus prayed, "Father, forgive them; they don't know what they're doing."

Even his best friend, Peter, denied knowing him:

Mark 14:70

The girl spotted him and began telling the people standing around, "He's one of them." He denied it again.

Jesus was rejected by those he had grown up with:

Mark 6:3-5

"He's just a carpenter, Mary's boy. We've known him since he was a kid. We know his brothers, James, Justus, and Simon, and his sisters. Who does he think he is?"

Soldiers mocked Jesus while beating him:

Matthew 27:29

They plaited a crown from branches of a thornbush and set it on his head. They put a stick in his right hand for a scepter. Then they knelt before him in mocking reverence: "Bravo, King of the Jews!"

February 14 2021

Hurt

Led by
Rev Nick
Blundell

Hurt is crippling.
When we feel hurt, when we feel that life, or some individual, is being unfair to us, we find it hard to make loving decisions. Jesus must constantly have been hurt and offended by what people did and said, by their lack of belief, by their lack of humanity in applying their religious laws, by their desire to cling to status and affluence. Yet, he forgave his enemies.

Questions

How can we deal with our own hurt, so that we can help others deal with theirs?
How can we prevent our own hurt from becoming anger, bitterness, or resentment?
How can we avoid hurt by changing our expectations of life?
How can we become more sensitive to those behaviours that hurt others, however unreasonable?

Collect for the day

Lord Jesus Christ,
who suffered pain, rejection, and betrayal,
and who still suffers at our hands as we deny your mission,
teach us how to leave our hurt behind
and understand the pain that we inflict on others,
so that you may work through us
towards a world of hurts transformed. Amen.

The Bible

Being an unmarried mother in a society where this was a capital offence

Luke 1:26-33

God sent the angel Gabriel to the Galilean village of Nazareth to a virgin engaged to be married to a man descended from David. His name was Joseph, and the virgin's name, Mary. Upon entering, Gabriel greeted her...She was thoroughly shaken, wondering what was behind a greeting like that. But the angel assured her, "Mary, you have nothing to fear. God has a surprise for you: You will become pregnant and give birth to a son and call his name Jesus.

An uncomfortable journey nine months pregnant

Luke 2:1-7

So Joseph went from the Galilean town of Nazareth to Bethlehem in Judah, David's town, for the census...He went with Mary, his fiancée, who was pregnant. While they were there, the time came for her to give birth. She gave birth to a son, her firstborn. She wrapped him in a blanket and laid him in a manger, because there was no room in the hostel.

A refugee on the road to Egypt

Matthew 2:14-15

After the scholars were gone, God's angel showed up in Joseph's dream and commanded, "Get up. Take the child and his mother and flee to Egypt. Stay until further notice. Herod is on the hunt for this child, and wants to kill him." Joseph obeyed. He got up, took the child and his mother under cover of darkness.

Fear of Herod during the massacre of the innocents

Matthew 2:13-17

They lived in Egypt until Herod's death...Herod, when he realized that the scholars had tricked him, flew into a rage. He commanded the murder of every little boy two years old and under who lived in Bethlehem and its surrounding hills.

Watching her son die in pain as a criminal

Mark 15:17-20

They dressed him up in purple and put a crown plaited from a thornbush on his head. Then they began their mockery: "Bravo, King of the Jews!" They banged on his head with a club, spit on him, and knelt down in mock worship. After they had had their fun, they took off the purple cape and put his own clothes back on him. Then they marched out to nail him to the cross.

January 10 2021

**Warning
Step Down!**

**Led by
Rev Phil Drake
With Covenant
Vows**

**Letting go of roles or responsibilities is never easy.
Knowing when is the right time is a problem.
Handing the torch over to others can be nerve-
wracking.
How can we avoid feeling like
failures or quitters?**

**When radical action becomes necessary,
do we have the dedication to take it?
Jesus faced these problems too. What can we learn?**

Collect for the day
Lord Jesus, who handed over your work to a group of fallible disciples and watched them fail and try again, who sees us stray from the path of love to pursue the paths of power and influence, help us to know when to let others take over, show us how to help them, and give us strength to watch their progress.
Amen

The Bible

**Pay your taxes
Luke 20:20-25**

“Then give Caesar what is his and give God what is his.”

**The rich man building a barn
Luke 12:33**

It’s obvious, isn’t it? The place where your treasure is, is the place you will most want to be, and end up being.

**The rich young ruler
Mark 10:17-25**

The man walked off with a heavy heart. He was holding on tight to a lot of things, and not about to let go.

**The widow’s mite
Luke 21:1-4**

All these others made offerings that they’ll never miss; she gave extravagantly.

**Invite the poor to your feast
Luke 14:12-14**

“The next time you put on a dinner, don’t just invite your friends and family and rich neighbours... Invite some people who never get invited out, the misfits from the wrong side of the tracks... They won’t be able to return the favour, but the favour will be returned—oh, how it will be returned!

**Sheep and Goats
Matthew 25:40**

‘I’m telling the truth: Whenever you did one of these things to someone overlooked or ignored, that was me, you did it to me.’

**Share your wealth
Luke 3:11**

“If you have two coats, give one away,” he said. “Do the same with your food.”

**Give and it will be given to you
Luke 6:38**

Give away your life; you’ll find life given back, but not merely given back—given back with bonus and blessing.

**Camel needle’s eye
Mark 10:25**

“Do you have any idea how difficult it is for people who ‘have it all’ to enter God’s kingdom?”

February 7 2021

Diseases of Affluence

Led by
**Ruth Kerr and
Rev Kerry Tankard**

Jesus did not live an affluent lifestyle.

He began by rejecting the lures of the Devil in the desert.

He had stern words for those who revelled in affluence.

How can we be made to see just how affluent we are?

How can we adjust our living standards so that we can give more away?

John Wesley, like Jesus, could have commanded huge resources in his personal life but chose not to do so

Where is that which we treasure most?

Collect for the day
Lord God of all the Earth,
grant that we, as your stewards,
seek a fair and equal share of its wealth,
preserve and enhance the natural world that sustains us,
rather than seeking our own comfort before everything else,
following the example of our Lord Jesus Christ.
Amen

The Bible

**Jesus persuaded other people to join him in his work:
Mark 2:13-14**

Then Jesus went again to walk alongside the lake. Again a crowd came to him, and he taught them. Strolling along, he saw Levi, son of Alphaeus, at his work collecting taxes. Jesus said, "Come along with me." He came.

**Jesus used his time serving others instead of taking power:
Luke 22:24-26**

Within minutes they were bickering over who of them would end up the greatest. But Jesus intervened: "Kings like to throw their weight around and people in authority like to give themselves fancy titles. It's not going to be that way with you. Let the senior among you become like the junior; let the leader act the part of servant."

**Jesus recruited a team of 70 to go out to do his work:
Luke 10:1**

Later the Master selected seventy and sent them ahead of him in pairs to every town and place where he intended to go

**Jesus left disciples in charge and a betrayer as leader:
Matthew 16:18**

I'm going to tell you who you are, *really* are. You are Peter, a rock. This is the rock on which I will put together my church, a church so expansive with energy that not even the gates of hell will be able to keep it out.

The Covenant

I am no longer my own but yours.	Let me be full, let me be empty
Put me to what you will	Let me have all things
Rank me with whom you will;	Let me have nothing:
Put me to doing,	I freely and wholeheartedly yield all things to your pleasure and disposal.
Put me to suffering;	And now, glorious and blessed God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit,
Let me be employed for you, or laid aside for you,	You are mine and I am yours.
Exalted for you, or brought low for you;	So be it.
	And the covenant now made on earth, Let it be ratified in heaven.

Stepping Up!

Led by
Peter
Jackson

How can we gain the confidence to step up to a challenge without appearing to be swanking about our abilities?

How can we persuade ourselves to take on tasks for which we feel unqualified?

Jesus faced these challenges too, what can we learn?

Jesus took on many challenges, choosing his mission and rejecting easy options.

What is God calling you to do right now?

What is the work of God in the church to enable us to fulfil our mission in society right now?

What team would you like to join?

Collect for the day
Lord Jesus Christ,
who accepted many challenges
and who rejected many easy ways out,
look kindly on our lives,
especially on our selfish concerns,
show us how we can improve the lives of those around us
by taking up the challenges that you offer.
Amen

The Bible

**Jesus didn't let fear steal the joy of his entry into Jerusalem
Luke 19:28-40**

They brought the colt to Jesus, threw their cloaks on it and put Jesus on it. As he went along, people spread their cloaks on the road...the whole crowd of disciples began joyfully to praise God in loud voices for all the miracles they had seen:

**Fear did not prevent Jesus from being compassionate:
Luke 22:49-51**

When Jesus' followers saw what was going to happen, they said, "Lord, should we strike with our swords?" And one of them struck the servant of the high priest, cutting off his right ear. But Jesus answered, "No more..." he touched the man's ear and healed him.

**Jesus did not let fear make him feel inferior to Herod
Luke 23:8**

When Herod saw Jesus, he was greatly pleased... From what he had heard about him, he hoped to see him perform a sign of some sort. He plied him with many questions, but Jesus gave no answer.

**Fear did not stop Jesus being kind to the repentant thief
Luke 23:39-43**

Then he said, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom." Jesus answered him, "Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in paradise."

**Jesus told us not to fear those who kill the body
Luke 12:4-5**

"I tell you, my friends, do not be afraid of those who kill the body and after that can do no more... Fear him who, after your body has been killed, has authority to throw you into hell. Yes, I tell you, fear him.

Collect for the day:
Lord Jesus Christ, who had much to fear from those who would prevent your mission,
and who did not let fear distract you,
help us to control our fears
so that our lives and mission are liberated and revel in the opportunities for service that lie in the present time.
Amen

31 January 2021

Fear!

Led by
**Rev Christine
Crabtree**

Some of us feel fear more than others.

Some people have more reason to fear than others.

We can all learn from how Jesus dealt with the fear that he must have experienced.

Jesus knew that he was to suffer a painful death.

He did not let fear of pain and death get in his way of doing what he judged to be right.

How am I to deal with my own fears so that they do not restrict my ability to serve?

Questions

Most women have a different experience of fear from that which most men experience.

How does this affect the potential of women in our society? What should men be doing to make this situation better?

Most black people have a different experience of fear, prejudice and policing than do most white people,

How should our behaviour change to help them?

What is our responsibility for people who routinely live in fear?

**Today is the tomorrow we feared yesterday,
and it is not so bad.**

The Bible

Jesus repeatedly asked whether this was the job for him, beginning in the wilderness:

Luke 4:1-13;

Now Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, left the Jordan and was led by the Spirit into the wild. For forty wilderness days and nights he was tested by the Devil. He ate nothing during those days, and when the time was up he was hungry...That completed the testing. The Devil retreated temporarily, lying in wait for another opportunity.

and ending in Gethsemane:

Luke 22:41-44

He pulled away from them about a stone's throw, knelt down, and prayed, "Father, remove this cup from me. But please, not what I want. What do *you* want?" At once an angel from heaven was at his side, strengthening him. He prayed on all the harder. Sweat, wrung from him like drops of blood, poured off his face.

Even on the cross in pain, he continued to look after other people:

John 19:24-27

While the soldiers were looking after themselves, Jesus' mother, his aunt, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene stood at the foot of the cross. Jesus saw his mother and the disciple he loved standing near her. He said to his mother, "Woman, here is your son." Then to the disciple, "Here is your mother." From that moment the disciple accepted her as his own mother.

Jesus thought that his mission was restricted to the Jews but reluctantly appeared to change his mind to encompass gentiles too:

Mark 7:27-31

He said, "Stand in line and take your turn. The children get fed first. If there's any left over, the dogs get it." She said, "Of course, Master. But don't dogs under the table get scraps dropped by the children?" Jesus was impressed. "You're right! On your way! Your daughter is no longer disturbed. The demonic affliction is gone." She went home and found her daughter relaxed on the bed, the torment gone for good. Then he left the region of Tyre, went through Sidon back to Galilee Lake and over to the district of the Ten Towns.

Jesus sought inspiration in prayer when he was in doubt about taking something on,

Matthew 14:23

With the crowd dispersed, he climbed the mountain so he could be by himself and pray. He stayed there alone, late into the night.

January 24 2021

Parenting

Led by
Nicki Arkell
Rachel James
Naomi Haworth
Amanda McCarthy

Parenting is the most difficult activity we ever take on, and the most permanent; it lasts all our lives.

No-one who becomes a parent is qualified to do it. Every child is different.

Raising two children does not fully prepare you for the third.

Jesus was not a parent but it will help us if we study how he treated his disciples and how he talked about children.

Show those of us without children of our own how to care for the children of those around us

Collect for the day

Lord Jesus, source and example of selfless love, knowing the pain of rejection and of the misunderstandings of your disciples, we ask your blessing on ourselves and on parents everywhere, as we try to love and to teach our children, allowing them to learn by making mistakes, giving us comfort and strength when weariness sets in, so that we may truly represent you to our growing children
Amen

The Bible

Children get the highest rank: Matthew 18:1-7

At about the same time, the disciples came to Jesus asking, "Who gets the highest rank in God's kingdom?" For an answer Jesus called over a child, whom he stood in the middle of the room, and said, "I'm telling you, once and for all, that unless you return to square one and start over like children, you're not even going to get a look at the kingdom, let alone get in. Whoever becomes simple and elemental again, like this child, will rank high in God's kingdom. What's more, when you receive the childlike on my account, it's the same as receiving me. But if you give them a hard time, bullying or taking advantage of their simple trust, you'll soon wish you hadn't. You'd be better off dropped in the middle of the lake with a millstone around your neck. Doom to the world for giving these God-believing children a hard time! Hard times are inevitable, but you don't have to make it worse—and it's doomsday to you if you do.

Don't shoo children away; Mark 10:13-16

The people brought children to Jesus, hoping he might touch them. The disciples shooed them off. But Jesus was irate and let them know it: "Don't push these children away. Don't ever get between them and me. These children are at the very centre of life in the kingdom. Mark this: Unless you accept God's kingdom in the simplicity of a child, you'll never get in." Then, gathering the children up in his arms, he laid his hands of blessing on them.

Questions

How can we prepare all our children for living in the world of tomorrow, a world that we have never even visited?

How must our behaviour and habits as adults change so that we present good examples to all our children?

How and when can we let them go into temptation and danger?

How can we hear what they are telling us about their needs, as opposed to their wants?

How can we find the strength to forgive them and help them back on their feet?

How can we graciously accept their help, when they are more capable than we are?

How can we love all our children better?