MOTHERING SUNDAY SERVICE 2020





ST MICHAEL’S CHURCH HOOLE

**We can‘t celebrate Mothering Sunday together as a Church Family as we had planned but we can still worship and thank God for our mothers from our homes; we can read His Word and be encouraged and strengthened, and we can pray for our families, our community and our world.**

Let us pray:

**PRAYER FOR MOTHERING SUNDAY AND THIS WEEK:**

God of compassion, whose Son Jesus Christ, the child of Mary,

shared the life of a home in Nazareth, and on the cross drew the

whole human family to himself: strengthen us in our daily

living that in joy and in sorrow we may know the power of your

presence to bind together and to heal; through Jesus Christ your

Son our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of

the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

**BIBLE READING:** Exodus 2 v 1-10

**THE BIRTH OF MOSES**

Now a man of the tribe of Levi married a Levite woman, and she became pregnant and gave birth to a son. When she saw that he was a fine child, she hid him for three months. But when she could hide him no longer, she got a papyrus basket for him and coated it with tar and pitch. Then she placed the child in it and put it among the reeds along the bank of the Nile. His sister stood at a distance to see what would happen to him.

Then Pharaoh’s daughter went down to the Nile to bathe, and her attendants were walking along the river-bank. She saw the basket among the reeds and sent her female slave to get it. She opened it and saw the baby. He was crying, and she felt sorry for him. ‘This is one of the Hebrew babies,’ she said.

Then his sister asked Pharaoh’s daughter, ‘Shall I go and get one of the Hebrew women to nurse the baby for you?’

‘Yes, go,’ she answered. So the girl went and got the baby’s mother. Pharaoh’s daughter said to her, ‘Take this baby and nurse him for me, and I will pay you.’ So the woman took the baby and nursed him. When the child grew older, she took him to Pharaoh’s daughter and he became her son. She named him Moses, saying, ‘I drew him out of the water.’

**SERMON**

Lord God, source of all love, as we thank you for our mothers today, please teach us more about your love and the wonderful truth that you are in control. Amen

THE 3 BEARS ….

It’s a sunny morning in the big forest and the bear family are just waking up. Baby Bear goes downstairs and sits in his small chair at the table. He looks into his bowl. It was empty! “Who’s been eating my porridge?” He squeaks.

Daddy Bear arrives at the table and sits in his big chair. He looks into his big bowl. It is also empty! Who’s been eating my porridge?” he roars.

Mummy Bear puts her head through the serving hatch from the kitchen and shouts, “For heaven’s sake, how many times do we have to go through this? I haven’t made the porridge yet!!”

Most Mother’s Day jokes make capital out of how impossibly demanding a mother’s life is, but especially now in this global crisis and virtual national lock down, life is becoming even tougher by the day. Millions of elderly mothers, many of them widows, won’t be able to see their families today on Mothering Sunday and perhaps for many weeks to come. And millions of other mothers with schools closed find themselves with the prospect of trying to keep all their energetic, demanding children at home safe, occupied and happy for what could be many months.

So what does the Bible have to say to us in our current situation? We rightly call God our Father as Jesus taught us to. However did you know that in both the Old and New Testament, God’s love is described as being like a mother’s love.

The prophet Isaiah compares God’s love to a mother’s love, caring for and comforting us like a child in arms. David wrote that in God’s presence he is quiet and at peace like a child who feels safely protected by a mother’s love. Jesus spoke of His love longing to shield us like a mother hen’s wings around her chicks.

Today’s reading is the familiar story of Moses and the bulrushes which takes us into the very heart of our loving God.

Imagine the baby in the homemade basket, lovingly woven by his mother to save the newborn who was supposed to be slaughtered. The basket is floating in the water half hidden by the rushes. And then think about the 3 women who each play an essential part in this wonderful story of the rescue of the baby Moses. Notice how each of these women display great love and courage

First there is Jochebed, Moses’ mother – it is unbearable to her to think of her little baby being thrown into the Nile so, no doubt at terrifying risk to herself, she hid her baby and then when she could hide him no longer put him in a basket smothered with tar to make it float and left it by the reeds where she knew it would be found. It was the ideal place – shallow and therefore no crocodiles and it would not be carried away by the current. And then she put her trust in God and waited.

Then we have Moses’ resourceful big sister Miriam. Miriam noticed how lovingly Pharaoh's daughter looked at the baby. She recognised the princess's compassionate heart and then Miriam had the audacity to bring the baby’s mother into the equation as his nurse. What a turnaround! It’s an amazing irony that the royal family that wanted to kill the boy actually came to his rescue.

And then there is Pharoah’s daughter herself –from the very family that was trying to commit genocide comes a tender-hearted princess with a mother’s heart- the very opposite of her Dad.

And so thanks to the courageous self-sacrificial love of all 3 women Moses was able to be brought up by his own mother for long enough to take on his real people’s identity and have their hopes and dreams stamped for ever on his heart. Somehow he grew up with a real faith in his people’s God

So God, full of motherly love, was in control of the whole situation throughout. He was able to use the love of the 3 women to save and train the future liberator if His people. But notice; this was possible because each of these 3 women reflected that love, that costly love of God himself by their own selfless actions

In this current crisis, in the midst of this global pandemic which has already claimed so many lives, let us take heart. We have a God who cares for each of us more than we can begin to imagine; we are all infinitely precious in His sight. He sent his own Son to die on a cross to rescue us from sin and death. None of us knows how this crisis will unfold or how each of us will be affected but let us now gaze in awe at God’s love and compassion which is so much greater than the very best human maternal love. So let’s give Him thanks and praise for our salvation and let’s ask Him to so fill us with His love that we might in turn reflect that love to those around us.

There are and there will be many more opportunities in the coming days and weeks to show that love in very practical ways to our friends and neighbours. Please let me know if you are able to join our group of volunteers offering practical help like shopping to those confined to their homes.

And so put your trust in our God who saves and our Lord Jesus Christ who gave His life that we might have the assurance through faith in Him of sins forgiven and the precious gift of eternal life.

Let us pray:

Heavenly Father thank you for the example of Moses’ mother who did what she could and put her trust in you. Please help us to do the same. Keep us close to you. Help us to trust you to bring good out of this terrible situation the world finds itself in and as we thank you for your great love for us, help us to show that same self- sacrificial love to our friends and neighbours in need at this time.

Amen

**INTERCESSIONS**

Lord of all hopefulness, Lord of all calm, we pray that you will be with us all as we come to the end of one of the most stressful and distressing weeks many of us have ever experienced. We have faced so much change, heard so many frightening instructions, and contemplated so many things that are almost impossible to comprehend, and in the coming week we will have no respite.

We, the congregation of St Michael’s, pray for each other and for our community. We pray for good health, both physical and emotional, and especially for all those who are vulnerable in any way. We pray for those in need and those who are trying to organise help, and for the leaders within our church and wider community.

Lord in your mercy

Hear our prayer

Lord we cannot meet together here in our church on Sundays at this time, and we cannot organise our church fellowship as we would like to do. But we pray that with your help we will find peace if we come here alone, and that this church may become a sanctuary from all that we face in the weeks ahead. We pray for all who will feel lost without being able to participate actively in their church, all who fear isolation and loneliness, and all those new to faith who value regular support and guidance. When we are here in this church help us to remember everyone who normally leads worship in any way, to picture the people who normally sit near us, to hear the music and to repeat the prayer that Jesus taught us – the Lord’s Prayer.

Lord in your mercy.

Hear our prayer.

On this Mothering Sunday, we pray for our families and especially our mothers. Help us to truly value our families at this time of stress, and to consider each other as we learn to spend much more time together than we are used to. We remember all who have lost their mother during the past year, for whom this will be a difficult day; and this year we especially pray for all mothers and children who have had to cancel their plans to celebrate this day together.

Lord in your mercy.

Hear our prayer.

Finally Lord we pray for all who are sick, all who fear sickness, and all who are struggling emotionally to manage and process what is happening around us.

We give thanks for the lives of those known to us who have died recently.

Help us to remember Lord that you are with us at the beginning and end of each day, that through you we have hope, and that your Word to us contains so many words of comfort.

Merciful father, accept these prayers for the sake of your son, our Saviour, Jesus Christ. Amen.

**BLESSING**

Jesus said, ‘Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid’.

And so may the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit be with you and all those who you love now and for evermore. Amen

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