



The Central Norfolk Methodist Circuit

Sunday 2nd August 2026:

Today's theme is "feeding the hungry"

Prepared by Aileen Fox Local Preacher



Opening Words

The LORD is gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.

The LORD is good to all, and his compassion is over all that he has made.

Hymn 544 As the deer pants for the water

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jv6Z8t1Tz_g

As the deer pants for the water,
so my soul longs after you.
You alone are my heart's desire
and I long to worship you.

*You alone are my strength, my shield,
to you alone may my spirit yield.
You alone are my heart's desire
and I long to worship you.*

I want you more than gold or silver,
only you can satisfy.
You alone are the real joy-giver
and the apple of my eye.

You alone are my strength, my shield,

You're my friend and you are my brother,
even though you are a king.
I love you more than any other,
so much more than anything.

You alone are my strength, my shield,

Opening Prayers

Loving God as we share together on our own, or with others, we bring our worship to you. Accept our singing, praying and speaking as we truly seek to follow you and proclaim your majesty and might. Amen

As we come before you, we recognise all the missed opportunities that have presented themselves and yet we have ignored. We come to say sorry for all that we have done and now bitterly regret. We also know that we could have made a difference yet ignored the opportunities. Forgive us Lord. Amen

Thank you for loving us and giving us so much, for the gift of Jesus who sacrificed himself on the cross for each one of us. We realise the love and care you have for each of us and we are so thankful, yet often forget to say thank you. Accept our thanks in the name of Jesus. Amen

Reading: Psalm 145: 8-9, 14-21

Hymn 443 Come let us sing of a wonderful love

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2dOSfceRw0U>

Come, let us sing of a wonderful love,
tender and true,
out of the heart of the Father above,
streaming to me and to you:
wonderful love
dwells in the heart of the Father above.

Jesus, the Saviour, this gospel to tell,
joyfully came,
came with the helpless and hopeless to dwell,
sharing their sorrow and shame;
seeking the lost,
saving, redeeming at measureless cost.

Jesus is seeking the wanderers yet;
why do they roam,
Love only waits to forgive and forget;
home, weary wanderer, home!
Wonderful love
dwells in the heart of the Father above.

Come to my heart, O thou wonderful Love,
come and abide,
lifting my life till it rises above
envy and falsehood and pride;
seeking to be
lowly and humble, a learner of thee.

Readings: Isaiah 55: 1-5 Matthew 14: 13-21

Hymn 706 **Longing for light, we wait in darkness:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kt3Qc04ulOM>

Longing for light, we wait in darkness.
Longing for truth, we turn to you.
Make us your own, your holy people,
light for the world to see.

Christ, be our light!
Shine in our hearts.
Shine through the darkness.
Christ, be our light!
Shine in your church gathered today.

Longing for peace, our world is troubled.
Longing for hope, many despair.
Your word alone has power to save us.
Make us your living voice.

Christ, be our light!

Longing for food, many are hungry.
Longing for water, many still thirst.
Make us your bread, broken for others,
shared until all are fed.

Christ, be our light!

Longing for shelter, many are homeless.
Longing for warmth, many are cold.
Make us your building, sheltering others,
walls made of living stone.

Christ, be our light!

Many the gifts, many the people,
many the hearts that yearn to belong.
Let us be servants to one another,
making your kingdom come.

Christ, be our light!

Offertory prayer: Loving God accept our gifts however given and use them and each of us to further your kingdom here on earth. Amen

Reflection:

The feeding of the five thousand is a well-known story in the gospels. Jesus has gone away alone in a boat after hearing news of John the Baptist's death; possibly to grieve or reflect on what has happened. Crowds who had heard about John followed from nearby towns to find Jesus. Perhaps they felt a need to seek Jesus out for some explanation? When Jesus came ashore, he saw the crowd, had compassion on them, healing the sick. When it got late the disciples urged him to send the crowd away so that people could go and buy food from nearby villages. Was it a real concern by the disciples or were they wanting leave? Jesus reply is probably not what they were expecting. He tells them that they should feed them. Practicality sets in with the response "we only have 5 loaves and 2 fish". Was this the provision they had taken with them or as in other accounts was it someone else's? Jesus tells the people to sit and asks for the bread and fish which he breaks and blesses, then gives to the disciples to give to the crowds.

There is enough for all with 12 baskets of crumbs left over. We are told 5,000 men, plus women and children were fed. It is a miracle however you wish to look at it. In our world there are people starving, yet food is regularly wasted! Farmland is being reused in our own country for other uses, and the one thing we are struggling with is water, with the lack of rain affecting food production. People are complaining using all sorts of excuses as to the reasons we may be struggling. Refugees, people not working, corrupt governments, the rich, the wealthy pensioners, those who are old.! Where is the compassion like Jesus showed to a crowd of people? He didn't turn round and tell them to go away, that they shouldn't have come. Where is the concern for those who are unemployed, cannot however they try find work? There are many using foodbanks, there are people in debt sometimes through their own choices but all need compassion and help as do those who are homeless. What is our Christian response? What is our church community response? Could we do more? It is difficult sometimes to respond to every appeal but perhaps we should be praying and asking the Holy Spirit to show us how best we can use the resources available to us?

Hymn 519 **Father, I place into your hands** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6T8759Wdg3U>

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.

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.

Father, we love to seek 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.

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.

Prayers:

We focus on the needs of the world and the sad fact that there are many wars being fought.
For all facing persecution, displacement, imprisonment, as we pray for a just and lasting peace.
Those in leadership that they may show and make good and helpful decisions for everyone.
For those who are bereaved and grieving especially for people unsure about family after natural disasters or war. Those in need of a meal, a friend and hope.
In our own environments and communities we remember all who are ill, sad, those experiencing devastating news of illness and conditions affecting family friends and themselves.
As the summer holidays are here we pray for families struggling, overwhelmed and in need; grant them respite, help and support. For those able to seek a holiday that they may be refreshed. We bring before you all our Church communities in Central Norfolk circuit thinking of future decisions, Lastly we bring ourselves and ask in Jesus name that we may have strength and vision to show your love to others. Amen .

The Lord's Prayer – Our Father who art in heaven....

Hymn 611 Brother, sister let me serve you

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EQaOErUUjm8>

Brother, sister, let me serve you;
let me be as Christ to you;
pray that I may have the grace to
let you be my servant too.

I will weep when you are weeping;
when you laugh I'll laugh with you;
I will share your joy and sorrow,
till we've seen this journey through.

We are pilgrims on a journey,
and companions on the road;
we are here to help each other
walk the mile and bear the load.

When we sing to God in heaven,
we shall find such harmony,
born of all we've known together
of Christ's love and agony.

I will hold the Christ-light for you
in the night-time of your fear;
I will hold my hand out to you,
speak the peace you long to hear.

Brother, sister, let me serve you;
let me be as Christ to you;
pray that I may have the grace to
let you be my servant too.

Blessing

May you know that you are loved by God, and you can trust in him always. Amen