



The Central Norfolk Methodist Circuit

Sunday 16th August 2026:

Today's theme is "Charity begins at home"

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Opening words

Receive, O God, our sacrifice of praise; that of thanksgiving for your mercies, that of prayer for your grace, that of penitence for our sins, and that of love for your love, being the only gift that you seek or desire.

(John Donne 1572-1631) From The Methodist Prayer Handbook Day 16

Hymn 137 New every morning is the love

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QPZn-4ZyGJI>

New every morning is the love
our waking and uprising prove;
through sleep and darkness safely brought,
restored to life and power and thought.

New mercies, each returning day,
hover around us while we pray;
new perils past, new sins forgiven,
new thoughts of God, new hopes of heaven.

If on our daily course our mind
be set to hallow all we find,
new treasures still of countless price,
God will provide for sacrifice.

Old friends, old scenes will lovelier be,
as more of heaven in each we see;
some softening gleam of love and prayer
shall dawn on ev'ry cross and care.

The trivial round, the common task,
will furnish all we ought to ask:
room to deny ourselves, a road
to bring us daily nearer God.

Only, O Lord, in your dear love
fit us for perfect rest above;
and help us, this and every day,
to live more nearly as we pray.

Reading Matthew 15: 21-28

Reflection

'Charity begins at home' is a phrase often heard when people are asked for money to support a cause in which they have no interest. Maybe it is a legitimate idea when so many people in our own communities are in need, but it may just be an excuse not to give anything to anyone at all. How hard must it have been for this woman to hear of the miracles performed by this man, Jesus, and then be ignored by him when she asked for help.

His disciples, presumably taking their cue from him, urged Jesus to send her away. His answer may have been interpreted as 'Charity begins at home'. And maybe He did feel that his task was set in Israel and with its people. But this woman who, as far as I understand from Google, would now be classed Palestinian, was persistent and pleaded again, on her knees, for help. Jesus reminds her that 'Charity begins at home', but she points out that even dogs take every opportunity to clean up when food is dropped, and this is her opportunity. Jesus likes her wit and her understanding, acknowledges her faith, and tells her so. Her daughter is healed at that moment.

We often have our favourite charities which may be within our church, our community or our particular interest. And we may have those which we wouldn't support because we have no interest in them. How easy do we find it to allow our 'crumbs' to be taken up by those whom we don't know, don't like, or don't understand?

Hymn 685 In Christ there is no east or west

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zpEycHpPLM8>

In Christ there is no east or west,
In him no south or north,
But one great fellowship of love
Throughout the whole wide Earth.

In him shall true hearts everywhere
Their high communion find.
His service is the golden cord
Close binding humankind

Join hands, then, all the human race,
Whate'er your nation be!
All children of the living God
are surely kin to me.

In Christ now meet both east and west,
In him meet south and north;
All Christlike souls are one in him,
Throughout the whole wide Earth.

Prayers:

We thank you, Lord, for all that we receive from you in our daily lives, in the love of those around us, and in the world in which we live. Help us to be ever mindful of your goodness to us.

How often do we fail you, unknowingly, thoughtlessly and carelessly? How often do we expect you to answer our prayers before those of others? How often do we ask for, and expect forgiveness for the sins we don't know about? We ask now, in our own silence, that you make us aware of our failings and of the loving forgiveness that comes from you.

We pray for those whom we can support in our giving, our caring and our loving. But we ask that you make us aware of those who need that support, whom we would usually pass by. Open our eyes, our ears and our hearts to the needs of others in our communities and in the world, recognising that, whatever our differences, we are all your children.

We bring our thoughts and prayers together as we pray ...

The Lord's Prayer

Hymn 416 There's a wideness in God's mercy

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=26cyYoBqiQ8>

There's a wideness in God's mercy
like the wideness of the sea;
there's a kindness in His justice
which is more than liberty.

For the love of God is broader
than the measure of the mind;
and the heart of the Eternal
is most wonderfully kind.

There is plentiful redemption
In the blood that has been shed;
There is joy for all the members
In the sorrows of the head.

But we make his love too narrow
By false limits of our own;
And we magnify his strictness
With a zeal he will not own.

There is grace enough for thousands
Of new worlds as great as this;
There is room for fresh creations
In that upper room of bliss

If our love were but more simple,
we would take Him at His word,
and our lives would be illumined
by the presence of our Lord.

The Grace

May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.