WORSHIP AT HOME SERVICE

15TH NOVEMBER 2026.

Opening Prayer.

Loving and faithful God, we come into your presence rejoicing.

We come to sing your praise, we come to hear your words of power we come to share your all-embracing love.

Be present with us in this time together as we come to worship you.

Called to be your people called to walk the way of Jesus we come with the offering of ourselves and seeking your words of comfort and challenge.

Living Jesus, we praise you because you show us that God is love: love which reaches to all people; love which does not count the cost of loving; love which never ends. Forgive us when we love ourselves and not you.

We praise you because you are the Way: you are the way to God; you lived the way we want to live; you guide us on God's way of life. Forgive us when we take our own way and not yours.

We praise you because you are the Truth: you are the truth about God; you show us the truth about ourselves; you show us how to live as true human beings. Forgive us when we think we know better than your truth.

We praise you because you are the Life: you lived life perfectly, without sin; you give us the example for life; you help us to live our life to the full. Forgive us when we live for ourselves and not for you.

Loving God, help us to respond to your promise and challenge of discipleship and renew us in your service. **Amen**.

Hear now the good news: There is rejoicing in heaven when we turn from our sins. Rejoice, people of God; in Christ, our sins are forgiven. Thanks be to God! **Amen.**

The Lord's Prayer.

Hymn:- StF 132.

O God, our help in ages past,
our hope for years to come,
our shelter from the stormy blast,
and our eternal home.

Under the shadow of thy throne
thy saints have dwelt secure;
sufficient is thine arm alone,
and our defence is sure.

Before the hills in order stood
or earth received her frame,
from everlasting thou art God,
to endless years the same.

A thousand ages in thy sight
are like an evening gone,
short as the watch that ends the night
before the rising sun.

The busy tribes of flesh and blood,
with all their cares and fears,
are carried downward by the flood,
and lost in following years.

Time, like an ever-rolling stream,
bears all its sons away;
they fly forgotten, as a dream
dies at the opening day.

O God, our help in ages past,
our hope for years to come,
be thou our guard while life shall last,
and our eternal home.

Isaac Watts (1674-1748)

Bible Reading:- Romans 12:9-21.

Message.

The previous chapters of Romans are all about things we should know and believe. This chapter moves into things we should do and how we should act. The ideas are very simple to grasp, but not always easy to put into action. The common phrase easier said than done comes to mind.

God has put together a checklist for a legacy that is pleasing to him. The most important item on that checklist is Christian love. In Romans 12:12-16 Paul teaches us how to show love in practical ways.

The most important qualities of genuine love are sincerity and discernment. If there is no sincerity, love becomes manipulation, competition and pretence. There is no room for this because love and truth go hand in hand. Love clings to what is good.

Love is characterized by devoted affection to God and others. It is to be characterized by the warm affection that is shared by family members. In our case, it is the warm affection we have for all of God's people.

In some Bibles, Romans 12:9-21 bears the simple title 'Love' whereas in others the title is "The Marks of a True Christian". The implication is that this is how to spot a real Christian from a fake Christian. How sad is that? If part of us remains unchanged, then all we will ever be able to do is 'act' like a Christian, and let's face it, God is not running a stage production.

Looking over Paul's extensive list of Christian qualities, I am struck by the overwhelming sense of what we are called to be as well as what we are called to do. This is truly a mission statement for the Church of Christ as a whole. Whatever our denomination, this is what Christians are. Period.

Look at this list. Is there one entry there you would disagree with, one action you could not imagine yourself doing? Loving sincerely. Hating evil. Loving one another. Holding on to what is good. Serving God. Rejoicing with hope. Accepting suffering with patience. Praying. Contributing to others. Sharing with others. Welcoming others. Blessing others. Rejoicing and weeping with those who do likewise. Living in harmony. Associating with the lowly. Leaving vengeance to God. Living in peace to the best of your ability. Treating your enemies with kindness. Overcoming evil with good.

That last one seems especially important for the Church. We are people saved by grace, positioned in a world that has fallen from grace. Are we satisfied to show the world how much we are like them? Or should we be different? Should we not be working on overcoming the evil of the world by means of the good we do? That cannot happen unless we truly subject ourselves to God's transforming touch. The renewal of our minds allows us to be tested and from that testing to learn what God wants.

I think it is fair to say that pleasing God is in part a process of trial and error. Unfortunately, we may bring the trials on ourselves, and we don't always learn from our errors. The truth is, we assume that the change must come entirely from within us, that we have to accomplish all the characteristics Paul speaks of in our own strength, which is, of course, impossible. Transformation is God's job. However, that doesn't mean we do nothing ourselves. Accepting and applying the transformation is our job. As someone once said, any recipe for success must include the ability to follow instructions.

Confidence in our own abilities to be all things on Paul's list is not as critical as confidence in God's ability to soften our hearts and gradually change us if we ask Him to.

Methodists believe in three forms of grace that we experience as we journey with God prevenient grace, justifying grace and sanctifying grace.

Sanctifying grace is the ongoing work of the Holy Spirit that changes us so that our lives are increasingly conformed to the mind of Christ. John Wesley called this lifelong process sanctification or becoming "perfected in love."

Sanctifying grace draws us toward Christian perfection, which Wesley described as a heart "habitually filled with the love of God and neighbour" and as "having the mind of Christ and walking as he walked."

The answer to the question, "Do you have it in you to be all these things Paul lists?" is 'no'. You do not have it in you to be all those things that Paul speaks of. To be that kind of person is beyond your ability, and yet you are fully expected to be. Jesus said that with God all things are possible. We need to stop trying to do all things ourselves, being disappointed when we fail, then assuming we are incapable and expecting God will just have to take us the way we are. God knows better than that.

HYMN. StF 707.

Put peace into each other's hands
and like a treasure hold it,
protect it like a candle-flame,
with tenderness enfold it.

Put peace into each other's hands
with loving expectation;
be gentle in your words and ways,
in touch with God's creation.

Put peace into each other's hands
like bread we break for sharing;
look people warmly in the eye:
our life is meant for caring.

As at Communion, shape your hands
into a waiting cradle;
the gift of Christ receive, revere,
united round the table.

Put Christ into each other's hands,
he is love's deepest measure;
in love make peace, give peace a chance,
and share it like a treasure.

Fred Kaan (1929-2009)

from the Prayer of St Francis. Words and Music: Dedicated to Mrs Frances Tracy. (c) 1967.

Prayers of Intercession.

Loving Lord, we come to you this morning with all our worries and concerns, for ourselves, our friends, our neighbours, and the world at large.

Lord, we pray for all those who live in countries affected by war or unrest

Lord, we pray for those who have been affected by climate change and natural disasters, from drought to flood, from earthquakes to landslides.

Lord, we pray for all those who are in positions of power. May they make decisions based on the value of people and not the value of coins, and may they come to lean on You, O Lord, to find wisdom in their choices.

Lord, we pray for the people of our communities. Those that work at the sharp end of life, the police officers and ambulance staff. We think of our local health care professionals.

Lord, we pray for our family and friends, those who are unwell and those in hospital. We think of our communities, those who

know you and those that don't. We pray that others will hear your call, Lord.

Finally, Lord, we pray that we may continue to be changed in accordance with your will. Help us to become more like Christ.

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

Hymn:- StF 81.

1 Now thank we all our God,
with hearts and hands and voices,
who wondrous things has done,
in whom this world rejoices;
who from our mothers' arms
has blessed us on our way
with countless gifts of love,
and still is ours today.

2 O may this bounteous God
through all our life be near us,
with ever joyful hearts
and blessed peace to cheer us;
and keep us in his grace,
and guide us when perplexed,
and free us from all ills
in this world and the next.

3 All praise and thanks to God
the Father now be given,
the Son, and him who reigns
with them in highest heaven,
the one eternal God,
whom earth and heaven adore,
for thus it was, is now,
and shall be evermore.

Martin Rinkart (1586-1649) translated by Catherine Winkworth (1827-1878)

BLESSING.

Go out into the world in peace.
Have courage.
Hold onto what is good.
Return no one evil for evil.
Strengthen the faint-hearted.
Support the weak.
Help the suffering.
Honour all persons.
Honour all creation.
Love and serve the Lord,
rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit.
And may the love of God,
the Light of Christ,
and the power and communion of that Spirit
be with us all.
Go in peace. **Amen.**

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