



## The Central Norfolk Methodist Circuit

**Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> February 2026: 8<sup>th</sup> Sunday after the Epiphany**

**Theme for today is "Salt and Light"**

**Prepared by Glyn and Angela Constantine**

### Opening Words

As we have gathered, so Jesus is here.  
As we are connected, so the Spirit unites and inspires us.  
As we worship, so the Creator hears our voices and sings with us.  
Come, O come, Immanuel. Amen.

**Hymn 489 All I once held dear** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Merf00qcQik>

All I once held dear, built my life upon  
All this world reveres, and wars to own  
All I once thought gain I have counted loss  
Spent and worthless now, compared to this

*Knowing you, Jesus  
Knowing you, there is no greater thing  
You're my all, you're the best  
You're my joy, my righteousness  
And I love you, Lord*

Now my heart's desire is to know you more  
To be found in you and known as yours  
To possess by faith what I could not earn  
All-surpassing gift of righteousness

Oh, to know the power of your risen life  
And to know You in Your sufferings  
To become like you in your death, my Lord  
So with you to live and never die

### Prayers:

Hush. Be still. Rest in the House of God. You are welcome here.

Hush. Be still. Come with all you are, the bitter and broken bits, the shining and shimmering parts, the questions and the doubts, the convictions and the certainties.

Hush. Be still. Bow your knees in quiet humility as we confess that we worship together as a community of imperfect people. Listen to God's wisdom for new ways of being.

Hush. Be still. Open your heart to the generous grace of God. Reach out your hands to those who are marginalised, those who are hungry, the naked, the rejected. Let us all worship together, all loved immensely by God.

And now, raise your voice! Sing the praises of our God! Let us worship You, O God! Let us be your righteous ones! Let us be Your people, steadfast and trusting!

Raise your voice in hallelujahs! Loving God, bless our time together as we come together to sing and dance and praise you! God is good, Amen!

**Readings:** Isaiah 58:1-9a; Psalm 112:1-9; 1 Corinthians 2:1-12; Matthew 5:13-20

**Hymn 504 – May the mind of Christ my saviour** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gE5fOXSymBc>

May the mind of Christ, my Savior,  
live in me from day to day,  
by His love and power controlling  
all I do and say.

May the word of God dwell richly  
in my heart from hour to hour,  
so that all may see I triumph  
only through His power.

May the peace of God my Father  
rule my life in everything,

that I may be calm to comfort  
sick and sorrowing.

May the love of Jesus fill me  
as the waters fill the sea;  
Him exalting, self-abasing:  
this is victory.

May I run the race before me,  
strong and brave to face the foe,  
looking only unto Jesus  
as I onward go.



## Reflection

Never have we had to be more wary. Nowadays we seem to be surrounded by fakes and scams whether it is on social media, eBay, emails, the internet or phone calls. All of them claiming to be something that they are not; either cheap copies or out and out scams. It is sad when we have to question the veracity of every email, phone call and advert.

The lectionary readings today from Isaiah and Matthew take up that theme. Isaiah was writing at a time of exile in Babylon but was critical of the direction worship and religion had taken. People looked the part; they practiced all the right ceremonies of worship. They fasted and even lay on sackcloth and ashes but inside nothing had changed. They wanted God to act for them but at the same time exploited the poor and helpless and fought amongst themselves.

In Matthew chapter 5, Jesus questions the righteousness of the Pharisees and teachers of the law. Again, they followed every minute law from their scriptures but missed the whole point of why they were doing so. The outward show had not resulted in an inward change. Jesus takes that a lot further in Matthew 23. The woes!

One reason that the church and Christianity are seen as an irrelevance by many today is precisely that. Sexual scandals, abuse by clergy, millionaire preachers and Christian politicians who only care for themselves confirm opinions that the faith they profess is skin deep. It has not made any real difference.

That is why the first part of the Matthew reading is so vital. Jesus tells us that as his followers we are the salt and light of the earth. In other words, we make a real difference to the situations we find ourselves in as we demonstrate God's compassion and love to those around us. As Christians we are how others judge Christ. Has he made a difference to our lives? Are we the real thing?

## Prayer of response and Intercession

Lord, in the dank dreariness of winter we long for warmth and light. In our confusion, we turn to you. We pray for the powerful and the influential, that they may be servants of the common good. In a world of deep fakes and deceptions, we seek your truth, your light, your will for us, your people. Help us to be truly holy, set apart for you in service to others.

Christ our Light

**Make us salt and light for others, so that your Kingdom may come**

Lord, we pray for true peace, not just the absence of war.

We pray for those whose lives are threatened by warfare and aggression. We call to mind the peoples of the places that figure all too often in our news feeds: the people of Ukraine and Russia, of Palestine and Israel, of the Congo and of Sudan... We pray for warmongers and for peacemakers. Change hearts bring your reign of peace and security for all peoples. Enable us to speak out for peace and champion those who are victims of aggressors.

Christ our Light

**Make us salt and light for others, so that your Kingdom may come**

We pray for all farmers and food producers.

We pray for food security for those in lands where crops have failed owing to drought, flood, disease or other disaster. Lord, in a world of plenty, where the rich can gorge on the good things, where some go on diets whilst others stare starvation in the face, when, even in our own area, there are those who must choose between eating or heating, bless the endeavours of relief charities worldwide and those of our local foodbanks and food pantries. Help us to share.

Christ our Light

**Make us salt and light for others, so that your Kingdom may come**

We give thanks for homes to go to places where we feel warm and secure, we pray for the homeless, the rough sleepers and sofa-surfers. We pray for those helped by homelessness charities. We pray for those evicted by uncaring landlords for those for whom rents on habitable properties are unaffordable. For anyone struggling to find a place in which to live in an unfamiliar town for all who need a new place to call home. Inspire us to welcome newcomers and those who relocate to our communities.

Christ our Light

**Make us salt and light for others, so that your Kingdom may come**

We hold before you, Lord, all who are sick or sorrowing. We think of loved ones lost and those who mourn them. We pray for those undergoing or awaiting medical treatment and for any fearing what tests will reveal. We remember those who care at home for loved ones help us to reach out to all in need, in your name.

Christ our Light

**Make us salt and light for others, so that your Kingdom may come. Amen.**

**The Lord's prayer:**

**Hymn 505 – More like you Jesus**

**<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9hlilji0f2Q>**

*More like you, Jesus, more like you,  
Fill my heart with your desire  
To make me more like you  
More like you, Jesus, more like you,  
Touch my lips with holy fire  
and make me more like you.*

Lord, you are compassion,  
And never-ending love,  
For you have redeemed me  
by your precious blood.  
Create in me a clean heart,  
A spirit that is new,  
The joy of my salvation  
Is only found in you

Lord, you are my mercy,  
Lord, you are my grace,  
All my deepest sins have  
Forever been erased.  
Draw me in your presence,  
Lead me in your ways,  
I long to bring you glory  
In righteousness and praise.

**Closing Blessing**

God of all grace, as we go from this space, may we also go with God's grace in our hearts, may we know the love of God in our midst, and may we be inspired by the Spirit, moving through the world, ahead of us, lighting the way,

**Amen.**

Now may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us now and evermore.