



The Central Norfolk Methodist Circuit

Sunday 9th August 2026:

Today's theme is "Who is the greatest?"

Prepared by Rev Derek Grimshaw



Opening Words:

The Spirit of God is here, and all around us.

Help us to see your hand at work in our lives, in our community, and in this act of worship.

We come to you O God, ready to receive. Come, Lord Jesus, Come. Amen

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.

Opening Prayers

God of grace and glory, to this worried world, you reveal your presence in radiant glory and in gentle whispers, on mountain tops and in shadowed valleys, in classrooms and hospital beds, in homes and churches, in the quiet of nature and on busy streets. Yours is the presence that pushes past our fear to calm us; yours is the love that transforms our doubt with reassurance. We come to dwell in your goodness and offer you the praise you deserve. God of mercy and forgiveness, we confess that many things keep us from trusting fully in your love. We are often distracted by our own desires and disappointments. We cling to anger and resentment. We fear for the future rather than seek signs of hope. Forgive us. Shine your love upon us so that your glory may be seen in us and give us courage to follow Jesus wherever he leads, for we pray in his name. Amen

Readings: **Genesis 37: 1-4, 12-28** **Romans 10: 5-15** **Matthew 14: 22-33**

Hymn 662: **Have you heard God's voice** https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iQ_TRU6aPbY

Have you heard God's voice; has your heart been stirred?

Are you still prepared to follow?

Have you made a choice to remain and serve,
though the way be rough and narrow?

*Will you walk the path that will cost you much
and embrace the pain and sorrow?*

*Will you trust in One who entrusts to you
the disciples of tomorrow?*

Will you use your voice; will you not sit down
when the multitudes are silent?

Will you make a choice to stand your ground
when the crowds are turning violent?

Will you walk the path that will cost you much

In your city streets will you be God's heart?

Will you listen to the voiceless?

Will you stop and eat, and when friendships start,
will you share your faith with the faithless?

Will you walk the path that will cost you much

Will you watch the news with the eyes of faith
and believe it could be different?

Will you share your views using words of grace?
Will you leave a thoughtful imprint?

*We will walk the path that will cost us much
and embrace the pain and sorrow.*

*We will trust in One who entrusts to us
the disciples of tomorrow.*

Reflection:

The story of Joseph is one of the classics of the Old Testament and became hugely popular in 1968 when Andrew Lloyd Webber and Tim Rice wrote the musical Joseph and the amazing technicolour Dreamcoat. I can remember singing some of the songs at junior school and it seems as though the Story of Joseph came to life. The story tells

how Joseph is sold into slavery by his brothers and yet manages to rise above the horrors of his experience and emerge the hero. To be honest I have always found Joseph to be a bit of an irritating smarty-pants, and I question the parenting abilities of Jacob his father, who chose one of his lads to be his favourite. I have tended to sympathise with the brothers who want to put this irritating little brat in his place.

One of the effects of social media in the modern world is that anybody and everybody can be famous, by posting everything they do on the internet. Armed with a mobile phone they film themselves carrying out menial tasks, just to be viewed by thousands of people. The hunger for fame is greater today than ever in my opinion.

Yet when I look back at the early Church through the prism of the letters of St Paul there appears to be a hunger in those days for finding favour with God, being the chosen ones, the elite and elect. There are those who believe that dogged obedience to the law will secure you a place in heaven. Saint Paul in his letter to the Romans suggests a different approach. Jesus of Nazareth has taught a very different relationship; this is all about our relationship with others and our relationship with God. The message of Jesus is the one that people should follow, as Jesus himself put it, there are two commands, Love God and love your neighbour and if you want to understand how that works, imitate the life that Jesus himself lived.

I would suggest that Joseph could have learned so much about his relationship with others from the teaching of Jesus and this is needed as much today.

I was a football fan for a couple of years back in the early 1970's when Leeds United, my local team were winning everything in sight. One of their top goal scorers was Norman Hunter and I remember that some bright spart had painted "Norman hunter walks on water" on a wall. I always think of that when I read this passage from St Mathews gospel. It is almost a suggestion that the ultimate example of supremacy is the ability to walk on water. Over the years I have heard a host of explanations about how Jesus did it. Clearly Peter sees this as nothing more than a bit of a gimmick and wants to give it a go himself but fails.

I don't believe that God wants us to do the impossible, to have the greatest power, to be superhuman, the most popular, the biggest and the best, his desire as the prophet Micah puts it **"And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God."**

Hymn 524 Listening god you hear us <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KmfMSn8jWgk>

Listening God, you hear us when we cannot speak,
when despair and turmoil leave us faint and weak;
in love you call us back to you again,
and your grace reminds us how you feel our pain.

Searching God, you find us when we go astray,
as self-centred living takes us from your way.
in love you seek us, show us what we've lost,
and your tears remind us what forgiveness cost.

Suffering God, you lift us from our deepest grief,
when emotion blinds us to our own belief.
In love you touch us with your nail-torn hand
and your wounds remind us why you understand.

Risen God, you show us love too strong for death,
evil deeds defeated by your living breath.
In love you teach us never to despair,
your new life reminds us, hope is always there.

Prayers:

God of all,

In the quiet of this moment, we lay our wounded world at your feet. It can be almost impossible to hear your voice above the noise, the chaos and the anger all around us. May we learn to listen with open hearts as we seek to be your people of light.

God of justice

We pray that amidst all the injustice we see in this world; we will hear your voice. We pray that your justice will echo through our fractured world, empowering the marginalised, freeing the captive, opening doors for the abused, giving voice to the voiceless. Strengthen us, O God, to be your voice of justice in this world.

God of peace

We pray that amidst the conflict we see in this world; we will hear your voice. We pray that your peace will echo through our fractured world, silencing the bombs, reuniting families, empowering our leaders to act with compassion quelling the insatiable greed. Strengthen us, O God, to be your voice of peace in this world.

God of compassion,

We pray that amidst the indifference we see in this world; we will hear your voice. We pray that your compassion will echo through our fractured world, comforting the sick, bringing peace to the bereaved and the lonely, giving hope to the struggling. Strengthen us, O God, to be your voice of compassion in this world.

O God, may we never stop listening for your voice, may we never stop striving for justice, peace and compassion. May we be your intercessors in all the small ways we can. In Jesus' name Amen.

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

Hymn 693 Beauty for brokenness

Beauty for brokenness
Hope for despair
Lord, in the suffering
This is our prayer
Bread for the children
Justice, joy, peace
Sunrise to sunset
Your kingdom increase!

Shelter for fragile lives
Cures for their ills
Work for the craftsman
Trade for their skills
Land for the dispossessed
Rights for the weak
Voices to plead the cause
Of those who can't speak

*God of the poor
Friend of the weak
Give us compassion we pray
Melt our cold hearts
Let tears fall like rain
Come, change our love
From a spark to a flame*

Refuge from cruel wars
Havens from fear

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O5_TVy2gHRg

Cities for sanctuary
Freedoms to share
Peace to the killing-fields
Scorched earth to green
Christ for the bitterness
His cross for the pain

Rest for the ravaged earth
Oceans and streams
Plundered and poisoned
Our future, our dreams
Lord, end our madness
Carelessness, greed
Make us content with
The things that we need

*God of the poor
Lighten our darkness
Breathe on this flame
Until your justice
Burns brightly again
Until the nations
Learn of your ways
Seek your salvation
And bring you their praise*

God of the poor

Blessing

Go out into a world crying out for healing,
Go out to seek reconciliation, possibility, peace,
Go out, and may the Spirit of God go before you, lighting your path.
Go in peace and serve the Lord.
Amen.