



AT HOME SERVICE

Sunday 18th October 2026

20th Sunday after Trinity - Freedom Sunday

*Compiled by Michael Winter Local Preacher &
Anglican Lay Minister*

I confess I had to 'google' to see what the Methodist Plan's reference to Freedom Sunday was all about. It's a day in the Church's calendar about combatting slavery and human trafficking sadly so prevalent in the modern world.

Let us pray

Merciful Father, we have gathered today in your name in great freedom. Yet we acknowledge not all people are free. We confess our tendency to live comfortably with injustice; we confess our use of liberty for personal gain and self-preservation; we confess our ignorance and apathy towards those who are vulnerable and abused. Forgive us, Lord Jesus, and transform us into people who share your heart for justice. Amen

Eternal God,
in whose perfect realm no sword is drawn but the sword of righteousness,
and no strength known but the strength of love:
so guide and inspire the work of those who seek your kingdom that all your people may find their security in that love which casts out fear and in the fellowship revealed to us in Jesus Christ our Saviour,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen

Hymn STF 748

1] Glorious things of thee are spoken,
Zion, city of our God.
He whose Word cannot be broken
formed thee for His own abode.
On the Rock of Ages founded,
what can shake thy sure repose?
With salvation's walls surrounded,
thou may'st smile at all thy foes.

2] See, the streams of living waters,
springing from eternal love,
well supply thy sons and daughters,
and all fear of want remove.
Who can faint while such a river
ever flows their thirst to assuage?
Grace, which like the Lord, the Giver,
never fails from age to age.

3] Saviour, since of Zion's city
I through grace a member am,
let the world deride or pity,
I will glory in Thy name.
Fading is the worldling's pleasures,
all his boasted pomp and show;
solid joys and lasting treasures
none but Zion's children know.

John Newton (1725-1807)

Prayers of Intercession

O God, our words cannot express what our minds can barely comprehend and our hearts feel when we hear of men, women and children deceived, transported to unknown places, forced into sexual exploitation or other forms of labour for the financial gain of their owners. Our hearts are saddened and our spirits are angry that their dignity and rights are transgressed through threats, deception and force. We cry out against this degrading practice of slavery and pray for it to end.

Lord, in your mercy - hear our prayer.

Loving Father, we pray for those who are still trapped in slavery today. Hear their cries and let your tender love and care surround them. Deliver them, O God, from perpetrators' hands. Please protect them and those trying to bring them to safety.

Lord, in your mercy - hear our prayer.

God of Grace, we pray for survivors of slavery and violence, as they adjust to new lives in freedom. Would you give them the support and tools they need to heal and thrive. We pray that you would continue to restore their spirits and give them joy in the midst of their pain. Thank you God that you are able to restore us in spite of our brokenness.

Lord, in your mercy - hear our prayer.

Righteous God, we thank you that you are a God who loves justice and we pray for your wisdom in the conviction of criminals, so that abusers are held accountable for their actions. We pray that they would repent of their crimes and come to know you.

Lord, in your mercy - hear our prayer.

Almighty God, we pray for the justice systems in our world to work for those who have been abused and for people living in poverty who need protecting. We pray for those in leadership and positions of authority in our world can create the necessary change, so that the rights and dignity of all people can be ensured in the future. Help them work together so that violence and abuse can be prevented, before ever happening in the first place.

Lord, in your mercy - hear our prayer.

Compassionate God, we thank you for those that are part of the fight for justice and who, with humility and obedience, work to bring people to safety. We pray for a movement of your justice, for a generation of people to seek justice. Give us the courage and wisdom to stand in solidarity with them.

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

The Lord's Prayer

Readings:

Psalms 99

The Lord reigns, let the nations tremble;
he sits enthroned between the cherubim, let the earth shake.
Great is the Lord in Zion; he is exalted over all the nations.
Let them praise your great and awesome name - he is holy.
The King is mighty, he loves justice - you have established equity;
in Jacob you have done what is just and right.
Exalt the Lord our God and worship at his footstool; he is holy.

Moses and Aaron were among his priests,

Samuel was among those who called on his name; they called on the Lord and he answered them.
He spoke to them from the pillar of cloud; they kept his statutes and the decrees he gave them.
Lord our God, you answered them; you were to Israel a forgiving God,
though you punished their misdeeds.
Exalt the Lord our God and worship at his holy mountain, for the Lord our God is holy.

Luke 4:18-21

‘The Spirit of the Lord is on me,
because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor.
He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind,
to set the oppressed free, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favour.’
Then he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant and sat down.
The eyes of everyone in the synagogue were fastened on him.
He began by saying to them, ‘Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.’

Hymn STF 504

1] May the mind of Christ my Saviour
Live in me from day to day,
By His love and power controlling
All I do or say.

2] May the Word of Christ dwell richly
In my heart from hour to hour,
So that all may see I triumph
Only through His power.

3] May the peace of God my Father
Rule my life in everything,
That I may be calm to comfort
Sick and sorrowing.

4] May the love of Jesus fill me,
As the waters fill the sea;
Him exalting, self forgetting,
This is victory.

5] May I run the race before me,
Strong and brave to face the foe,
Looking only unto Jesus
As I onward go.

Katie Barclay Wilkinson (1859-1928)

Reflection from the Freedom Sunday Website

Godwin was a bright young boy who loved nothing more than reading and dreamed of becoming a doctor. When he was 17, a woman claiming to be related to his father appeared and offered to take him on a trip to meet his extended family, whom she said wanted to meet him and buy him school supplies. Godwin, always a model student, took all of his schoolbooks with him so he could study while on the trip. But the woman sold him to a man who trafficked children to fish for him on a remote island. When Godwin woke up the next day, the woman who brought him there was gone, and he was told that the chief of this island had paid her for five years of Godwin’s labour. It only got worse as he saw the woman return again and again with more trafficked children - including his own half-brother, who was six years younger than him. Godwin watched his little brother and other young children work on the fishing boats every day. He saw them beaten when they failed to meet the fishermen’s demands. Godwin began to lose hope that he would ever return to his family or continue to pursue his love for learning. Finally, after several years of Godwin attempting sporadic calls to his aunt Jessie, an older man who had also been trafficked to the island used his phone to give Godwin’s family enough information to know his location and report it to the authorities. IJM joined police on an operation to bring Godwin to safety in May 2018. But Godwin was not ready to go home yet. As Godwin shared his story, it was clear that his intel was going to be an asset for IJM investigators and police, and he bravely chose to return to the place where he’d

been trafficked without blinking an eye. Over the course of multiple operations, with help from Godwin, 29 trafficked children and young adults and one infant were brought to safety. Some had been trapped on the island for ten years or more. A total of 17 suspects were arrested. Now Godwin has picked up his books once again and is back in school, loved by his teachers and just as determined to pursue his dream of being a doctor.

The Collect

O Almighty and most merciful God, of thy bountiful goodness keep us,
we beseech thee, from all things that may hurt us;
that we, being ready both in body and soul,
may cheerfully accomplish those things that thou wouldst have done;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

Hymn STF 455

1] All my hope on God is founded;
he doth still my trust renew.
Me through change and chance he guideth,
only good and only true.
God unknown, he alone
calls my heart to be his own.

2] Human pride and earthly glory,
sword and crown betray his trust;
what with care and toil we fashion,
tower and temple, fall to dust.
But God's power, hour by hour,
is my temple and my tower.

3] God's great goodness aye endureth,
deep his wisdom, passing thought:
splendour, light, and life attend him,
beauty springeth out of nought.
Evermore from his store
new-born worlds rise and adore.

4] Daily doth the Almighty giver
bounteous gifts on us bestow;
his desire our soul delighteth,
pleasure leads us where we go.
Love doth stand at his hand;
joy doth wait on his command.

5] Still from earth to God eternal
sacrifice of praise be done,
high above all praises praising
for the gift of Christ his Son.
Christ doth call
one and all:
ye who follow shall not fall.

*Robert Bridges (1844-1930)
based on Joachim Neander (1650-1680)*

THE PRAYER OF ST. FRANCIS

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace.
Where there is hatred, let me sow love;
Where there is injury, pardon;
Where there is doubt, faith;
Where there is despair, hope;
Where there is darkness, light;
Where there is sadness, joy.

O Divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled as to console,
To be understood as to understand,
To be loved as to love;
For it is in giving that we receive;
It is in pardoning that we are pardoned;
It is in dying to self that we are born to eternal life.

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