

**Poole Bay Methodist Circuit Worship**  
**Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> September 2025**

**Peace - Led by Reverend Sarah Knebel**

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Hello and welcome to this time of worship. Today is the International Day of Peace, so in this time of worship we will be reflecting on peace.

**Call to Worship:**

Let's begin with a call to worship (if you have some candles you may like to light them as we share together in this call to worship)

We light a light in the name of the Maker,  
who lit the world and breathed the breath of life for us.

We light a light in the name of the Son,  
who saved the world and stretched out his hand to us.

We light a light in the name of the Spirit,  
who encompasses the world and blesses our souls with yearning.

We light three lights for the Trinity of love:  
God above us, God beside us, God beneath us:  
The beginning, the end, the everlasting one.

Let's pray:

O God, who called all life into being,  
the earth, sea and sky are yours.  
Your presence is all around us,  
every atom is full of your energy.

Your Spirit enlivens all who walk the earth,  
with her we yearn for justice to be done.  
For creation to be freed from bondage,  
for the hungry to be fed,  
for captives to be released,  
for your kingdom of peace to come on earth. Amen.

As we still ourselves for this time of worship we sing

**Hymn: StF 20 - [Be still for the presence of the Lord](#)**

1. Be still,  
for the presence of the Lord,  
the Holy One, is here;  
come bow before him now  
with reverence and fear:  
in him no sin is found —  
we stand on holy ground.  
Be still,  
for the presence of the Lord,  
the Holy One, is here.

2. Be still,  
for the glory of the Lord  
is shining all around;  
he burns with holy fire,  
with splendour he is crowned:  
how awesome is the sight —  
our radiant King of light!  
Be still,  
for the glory of the Lord  
is shining all around.
3. Be still,  
for the power of the Lord  
is moving in this place;  
he comes to cleanse and heal,  
to minister his grace:  
no work too hard for him —  
in faith receive from him.  
Be still,  
for the power of the Lord  
is moving in this place.

David J. Evans (b.1957) | Reproduced from Singing the Faith Electronic Words Edition, number 20

**Reading: 1 Samuel 25: 14-35**

One of the servants told Abigail, Nabal's wife, "David sent messengers from the wilderness to give our master his greetings, but he hurled insults at them. Yet these men were very good to us. They did not mistreat us, and the whole time we were out in the fields near them nothing was missing. Night and day they were a wall around us the whole time we were herding our sheep near them. Now think it over and see what you can do, because disaster is hanging over our master and his whole household. He is such a wicked man that no one can talk to him."

Abigail acted quickly. She took two hundred loaves of bread, two skins of wine, five dressed sheep, five seahs of roasted grain, a hundred cakes of raisins and two hundred cakes of pressed figs, and loaded them on donkeys. Then she told her servants, "Go on ahead; I'll follow you." But she did not tell her husband Nabal.

As she came riding her donkey into a mountain ravine, there were David and his men descending toward her, and she met them. David had just said, "It's been useless—all my watching over this fellow's property in the wilderness so that nothing of his was missing. He has paid me back evil for good. May God deal with David, be it ever so severely, if by morning I leave alive one male of all who belong to him!"

When Abigail saw David, she quickly got off her donkey and bowed down before David with her face to the ground. She fell at his feet and said: "Pardon your servant, my lord, and let me speak to you; hear what your servant has to say. Please pay no attention, my lord, to that wicked man Nabal. He is just like his name—his name means Fool, and folly goes with him. And as for me, your servant, I did not see the men my lord sent. And now, my lord, as surely as the Lord your God lives and as you live, since the Lord has kept you from bloodshed and from avenging yourself with your own hands, may your enemies and all who are intent on harming my lord be like Nabal. And let this gift, which your servant has brought to my lord, be given to the men who follow you.

"Please forgive your servant's presumption. The Lord your God will certainly make a lasting dynasty for my lord, because you fight the Lord's battles, and no wrongdoing will be found in you as long as you live. Even though someone is pursuing you to take your life, the life of my lord will be bound securely in the bundle of the living by the Lord your God, but the lives of your enemies he will hurl away as from the pocket of a sling. When the Lord has fulfilled for my lord every good thing he promised concerning him and has appointed him ruler over Israel, my

lord will not have on his conscience the staggering burden of needless bloodshed or of having avenged himself. And when the Lord your God has brought my lord success, remember your servant.”

David said to Abigail, “Praise be to the Lord, the God of Israel, who has sent you today to meet me. May you be blessed for your good judgment and for keeping me from bloodshed this day and from avenging myself with my own hands. Otherwise, as surely as the Lord, the God of Israel, lives, who has kept me from harming you, if you had not come quickly to meet me, not one male belonging to Nabal would have been left alive by daybreak.”

Then David accepted from her hand what she had brought him and said, “Go home in peace. I have heard your words and granted your request.”

### A Reflection: Peace

As we reflect on that **reading**, I wonder first of **all** what does the word **peace** mean to **you**? What images does it conjure up in your **mind**? How does it make you feel? What does it say to **you**?

In my dictionary peace is described **as**:

- the state existing during the absence of **war**
- a state of harmony between people or **groups**
- the absence of mental **anxiety**
- a state of stillness, silence or **serenity**
- a state of harmony or **friendship**

We will see and **hear** echoes of some of these **themes** in the hymns that we will sing this time of worship.

Looking in my Bible **dictionary** I found similar **descriptions**:

- the root meaning of the word **peace** in the OT (**shalom**) means wholeness and **wellbeing**
- it can be used as a greeting or a **farewell** to indicate good **wishes** and friendly **intentions**
- It is also used to indicate peace between **nations** as opposed to **war**
- peace is often related to other words in the **Bible** such as security and **prosperity**, material well-being and **safety**,
- within the OT peace has its source in **God** and the emphasis tends to be **relational**: peace exists between **people** or between people and **God**.
- It isn't until the **NT** that the idea of **peace** as individual spiritual peace with **God** or internal peace of mind is **found**.

When I was preparing for this evening's **service** I came up with my own acronym for **peace**:

- P** is for protection
- e** is for enabling all people to live life in all its **fulness**
- a** is for acceptance
- c** is for care for people and for planet
- e** is for everyone/equality

But peace is so very hard to **find**. Wherever we look there are all kinds of **conflict** that disrupt any sense of peace we may **have**.

Where might there be **conflict** or a lack of **peace** in your life at the **moment**?

Perhaps there is conflict within your family, perhaps you have been impacted by the wars in Ukraine/Russia, Israel/Palestine or by natural disaster – in Afghanistan. Maybe you are experiencing conflict in your workplace or in your church or perhaps there is conflict within you. Issues in society can also cause us conflict as we try to discern what is right and wrong in our own minds. Any one or all of **these** can disrupt our sense of **peace**, our well-being, our **wholeness**, our sense of **security**, our relationship with **ourselves**, with others and with **God**, and the same is true of the **world**.

You may be **wondering** why I chose the reading from 1 Samuel chapter 25 for this **time of worship**. Well, it struck me as I read it, that in this one **reading** there are so many different **forms** of conflict **present**.

Evidence **suggests** that there must have been some form of **conflict** either between two local **landowners** or between **nations**, otherwise why **else** would David have felt the **need** to protect Nabal's **workforce** while they were shearing their sheep in the **fields**? Not only this, but when David travels to meet **Nabal**, he leaves behind 200 men with the **supplies**. Why would he do **this** if there wasn't a sense of threat to his **property**?

As the story continues to **unfold** we witness the growing **tension** between Nabal and David **himself**. David seeks food from **Nabal** to feed the men who have been protecting his **workers**, albeit Nabal hadn't asked them **too**, but Nabal gets **angry** and refuses David's **request**. Annoyed by Nabal's **response** David seeks **vengeance**. Not only was it customary at the **time** that travellers, any number of them, be **fed**, but also Nabal was wealthy enough to more than easily meet David's **request**. Moreover, it wasn't as if David was asking for a free **lunch**, his men had been protecting Nabal's **workforce** and part of Nabal's prosperity, **therefore**, was due to David's **vigilance**. David is, in fact he is so agitated by Nabal's **response** that he leads his men into **battle**!

So, so far, in just one **story**, we've seen signs of interpersonal **conflict** and perhaps even of national **conflict**, but what of Abigail's relationship with **Nabal**. Might there be some evidence **here** of tension within the family **unit**. Abigail makes a decision to feed David and his **men**, but because Nabal is **drunk** she is wary of telling **him** about what she has **done**, frightened perhaps of how he might **respond**; concerned that in his **drunkenness** he might not have understood **her** or may have reacted **foolishly**.

And what of Nabal's drunkenness, **itself**? Is he just throwing a **party** during which he has drunk far too **much**, or is there some internal conflict going **on**, some sense of **insecurity** that is **fueling** his drinking to **excess**? We do not **know**, but what can sense **here** is the total lack of **peace**, of harmony, between all of the **characters** involved in the **story**.

In spite of his **shortcomings**, Nabal's household did what they **could** to keep him out of **trouble**. A loyalty that must have been inspired by **Abigail**. Although her **culture** and her **husband** placed low value on **her**, she made the most of the **skills** and opportunities she **had** to prevent both Nabal and **David** from making rash **moves**. By her swift **action** and skillful **negotiation** she kept **David** from taking vengeance upon **Nabal**, promoting **peace** and her efforts are **rewarded**, David stands **down** and sends her **back** saying, "Go home in peace!" How powerful are those words. "Go home in peace!"

Would we have acted in the same way in her **place**, or would we have been more **rash** like David and **Nabal**? Everyday, in innumerable **ways**, we have the opportunity to act as **peacemakers** or to perpetuate the things that cause **division**. We can show **forgiveness** or nurse **grievances**, swallow our **pride** or thrust ourselves **forward**, admit **mistakes** or refuse to **bend**, make the first **move** or resist every **advance**. All of us have the **opportunity** in our daily **relationships** to work for harmony and **reconciliation**, but few of us take the **opportunity** as often as we **should**.

Where is the **conflict** or lack of peace in your **life** at the **moment**, and which will you **be** - a peace maker or a peace **breaker**?

In Romans chapters 12 and **14**, Paul offers these words of **encouragement**, "If possible, so far as it depends upon **you**, live peaceably with **all**. Beloved, never avenge **yourselves**, [instead] pursue the things that make for **peace** and the building up of one **another**."

Let us pray:

Loving God, make us an instrument of your **peace**. Teach us to heal **wounds** rather than create **them**, to unite rather than **divide**, to reconcile rather than to **separate**. Put a new spirit within **us** - a spirit of love and **openness**, acceptance and **understanding**, healing and **reconciliation**. May the peace we so often pray **for** begin here and now within **us**, in the name of Christ. **Amen**.

**Hymn: StF 712 - [Put Peace into each other's hands](#)**

1. Put peace into each other's hands  
and like a treasure hold it,  
protect it like a candle-flame,  
with tenderness enfold it.
2. Put peace into each other's hands  
with loving expectation;  
be gentle in your words and ways,  
in touch with God's creation.
3. 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.
4. As at Communion, shape your hands  
into a waiting cradle;  
the gift of Christ receive, revere,  
united round the table.
5. 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) | Reproduced from Singing the Faith Electronic Words Edition, number 712

**Prayer:**

O God of all creation  
who has come to us in Jesus,  
lead us in your ways of love  
and fill us with your Spirit.  
Choose us  
to bring good news to the poor,  
to proclaim liberty to the captives,  
to bring sight to the blind,  
and set free the oppressed.  
So shall your new creation come  
and your will be done.

Spirit of truth and judgement,  
who alone can cast out  
the powers that grip our world,  
at the point of crisis,  
give us your discernment,  
that we may accurately name what is evil  
and know the way that leads to peace.

Spirit of integrity,  
You drive us into the desert,  
to search out our truth.  
Give us clarity to know what is right,  
that we may abandon the false innocence

of failing to choose at all,  
but may follow the purposes of Jesus Christ.

God of history,  
you share our joys and crushing sorrows,  
you hear the cries of the afflicted,  
you fill the hungry,  
and you set free the oppressed.  
We pray for the end to all injustice.  
Inspire us with the all-embracing love of God,  
challenge us with the sacrificial love of Jesus,  
empower us with the transforming love of the Spirit,  
that we and all God's people may live and be free!  
Through Jesus Christ, we pray.  
Amen.

Let us say **The Lord's Prayer**, using which ever form or language speaks to your heart.

**Hymn: StF 239 - [Sent by the Lord am I](#)**

1. Lead us, heavenly Father, lead us  
o'er the world's tempestuous sea;  
guard us, guide us, keep us, feed us,  
for we have no help but thee,  
yet possessing every blessing  
if our God our Father be.
2. Saviour, breathe forgiveness o'er us;  
all our weakness thou dost know,  
thou didst tread this earth before us,  
thou didst feel its keenest woe;  
tempted, taunted, yet undaunted,  
through the desert thou didst go.
3. Spirit of our God, descending,  
fill our hearts with heavenly joy,  
love with every passion blending,  
pleasure that can never cloy;  
thus provided, pardoned, guided,  
nothing can our peace destroy.

James Edmeston (1791–1867) | Reproduced from Singing the Faith Electronic Words Edition, number 238

## Blessing

May the God who shakes heaven and earth,  
Whom death could not contain,  
who lives to disturb and heal us,  
Bless us with power to go out from here  
and proclaim the Gospel,  
to all the people we meet,  
through all we do and say,  
**Amen.**

Every blessing to you all.  
Rev Sarah