Poole Bay Methodist Circuit Worship
Sunday 15th November 2026
Have faith, trust and be unafraid!
Led by Reverend Sarah Knebel

Hello and welcome to this time of worship during which we will reflect on our life-stories and the song we are called to sing today, as churches, as communities and as individuals, a song that is real, that is relevant and that connects us with all around us.

StF 466 - Have faith in God, my heart

Have faith in God, my heart,
trust and be unafraid;
God will fulfil in every part
each promise he has made.

Have faith in God, my mind,
for when your light burns low;
God's mercy holds a wiser plan
than you can fully know.

Have faith in God, my soul;
his cross for ever stands;
and neither life nor death can pluck
his children from his hands.

Lord Jesus, make me whole;
grant me no resting place,
until I rest, heart, mind, and soul,
the captive of your grace.

Bryn Rees (1911–1983) | Reproduced from Singing the Faith Electronic Words Edition, number 466

Prayer:

Eternal God,
in the stillness and the silence of this place,
we bring to you the words of our lives
to be set to the music of your love:
the music of stability in an unstable world;
the music of reconciliation in a divided world;
the music of hope in a hurting world.

Whether our hearts are full of songs of joy,
or songs of sadness,
we come before you this day,
offering you all that we are,
and willing to receive,
that our whole lives may become a song of praise to you.

Bless us, we pray with your holy presence and your almighty power.
Challenge us to respond to you.
push us beyond our limits,
that we might be
ready to do your will,
ready to share your love with our neighbours, whoever they may be,

ready to have our hearts opened and our minds stretched.
Bless us, we pray, good Lord, beyond our wildest expectations.

And yet, even as we come into your presence singing,
we admit, that there are times, when we don't want to follow your path.
when we see what we want to see, not what you would have us see,
when we block out the need that is right before our eyes.

Forgive us, for the times
when we deepen the sorrow of others through our lack of openness to their story, to their soul-song,
when we trample on the dreams, and hopes and aspirations of those around us
or respond negatively to good news.

In a moment of quiet we bring to God the things we want to say sorry for.

Thank you, Lord Jesus, for your grace and forgiveness,
that frees us to sing a new song,
that lifts us from the burdens of the past,
and opens new windows on our future.
Encourage us to follow your way,
and enable us to serve you in your world today, we pray
Amen.

Reading: 1 Samuel 2: 1-10

Hannah prayed and said, 'My heart exults in the Lord; my strength is exalted in my God. My mouth derides my enemies, because I rejoice in my victory. 'There is no Holy One like the Lord, no one besides you; there is no Rock like our God. Talk no more so very proudly, let not arrogance come from your mouth; for the Lord is a God of knowledge, and by him actions are weighed. The bows of the mighty are broken, but the feeble gird on strength.
Those who were full have hired themselves out for bread, but those who were hungry are fat with spoil. The barren has borne seven, but she who has many children is forlorn. The Lord kills and brings to life; he brings down to Sheol and raises up. The Lord makes poor and makes rich; he brings low, he also exalts. He raises up the poor from the dust; he lifts the needy from the ash heap, to make them sit with princes and inherit a seat of honour. For the pillars of the earth are the Lord's, and on them he has set the world. 'He will guard the feet of his faithful ones, but the wicked shall be cut off in darkness; for not by might does one prevail. The Lord! His adversaries shall be shattered; the Most High will thunder in heaven. The Lord will judge the ends of the earth; he will give strength to his king, and exalt the power of his anointed.'

Reading: Mark 13: 1-8

As he came out of the temple, one of his disciples said to him, 'Look, Teacher, what large stones and what large buildings!' Then Jesus asked him, 'Do you see these great buildings? Not one stone will be left here upon another; all will be thrown down.'

When he was sitting on the Mount of Olives opposite the temple, Peter, James, John, and Andrew asked him privately, 'Tell us, when will this be, and what will be the sign that all these things are about to be accomplished?' Then Jesus began to say to them, 'Beware that no one leads you astray. Many will come in my name and say, "I am he!" and they will lead many astray. When you hear of wars and rumours of wars, do not be alarmed; this must take place, but the end is still to come. For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom; there will be earthquakes in various places; there will be famines. This is but the beginning of the birth pangs.

A Reflection: Have faith, trust and be unafraid

Have faith in God, my heart, trust and be unafraid, God will fulfil in every part, each promise he has made ... Have faith in God my heart, trust and be unafraid ... my friends, these are difficult words in difficult times, challenging

words in challenging times, unsettling words in unsettled times ... do we sing them with ease? How trusting are we in God right now? How much faith do we have in God and in all that God has planned for us? Or do we doubt what the future holds, are we fearful and afraid?

These are unsettled times for sure in politics and in economics. There can be no doubt that the world watches with baited breath as the outcome of each political election is announced, and for many the outcome of those elections, both across Europe and in other places in the world that have seen a move to the far right, are a cause of concern. There is a growing sense of tension and of uncertainty as to what the future holds, and that sense of political instability, coupled with economic instability has a direct impact on the lives of many. For people struggling to make ends meet, living on the margins of society and for all who live in fear of the growing tide of racism, for example, into such lives, the words 'have faith, trust and be unafraid' may seem rather trite indeed, and yet, spoken in the right way, they can also be a great witness to a God who is our rock not just in times of prosperity but also in times of trouble and uncertainty. What song are we, as Christians, called to sing, then, at a time such as this, that is real, that is relevant, that is transformative, and that connects us with all around us?

For Hannah, in our reading from 1 Samuel, these were troubled times. Her inability to conceive would have been the cause of much mockery and humiliation. In the time that this story is set in, Hannah would have been seen by many as someone who had failed. Peninnah taunts her, her husband ignores her and Eli the priest misunderstands her, and yet despite all of this Hannah holds onto hope, against all hope. Despite her misery, her anguish, and her low self-esteem, she asks God to remember her by removing her sense of shame.

In the midst of this heartfelt plea, Eli, the priest, meets with Hannah, and whilst at first he is a bit standoff-ish, he speaks words that, though unrecorded, are almost certainly transformative. He takes time to listen, to acknowledge Hannah's pain and to believe her story. And then, into Hannah's despair, he speaks words that give her hope. Hope that for Hannah turns into rejoicing when she conceives and gives birth to her son, Samuel. Hope that leads to the soul-song that she sings in our reading today. Hope, that leads to Hannah singing a song of justice, of God turning things upside down, of a God who redeems, who works to humble the proud and vindicate the oppressed, and who puts the world to rights. In so doing, Hannah becomes a model for living in hope, in what for her felt like a Godforsaken world. She expected God to reach beyond the present order of the world and to do a new thing, to bring something unexpected. Her song anticipates a just world, in which weapons are broken, the hungry are full, the poor and lifted from the ashes, arrogant speech is judged by God and corrupt dynasties fall, and the proof that God is able to do all this, lies in the fact, that for her, in her barrenness she bore a child. God at work in her life, becomes her soul song to the world.

How might we come alongside people like Hannah and offer them hope, through our own soul songs about the times when God was at work in our lives?

The Gospel of Mark, was written either immediately before or immediately after the destruction of the temple in 70CE, during the Jewish revolt against Rome. It was a time when the air in Jerusalem was full of apocalyptic fanatiscism, of talk of the end times, and it was indicative of the social upheaval in Jerusalem at the time, which was one of the worst times in Jewish history. The poverty rate was escalating astronomically, and the tax burden gutted half of family incomes. People were losing their property and falling into destitution and Rome met Jewish resistance with violence that led to many deaths. Into this situation, the writer of the Gospel of Mark, writes this passage today.

As the disciples leave the temple, they turn to one another and share comments about the impressiveness of the temple buildings. Their words give us a sense of the security they felt in that moment. Jesus was making an impact, was doing well for himself, was rising in influence, everything, in their mind, was good. The ground they stood on was solid. But Jesus knew that he had just left the temple for the very last time. Jesus knew that all that the disciples felt was secure was about to crumble to dust, just as the temple was, and so he speaks words of truth, words that, though they bring the disciples back to earth with a bump, will be the rock on which the disciples rebuild their lives, their hopes and their dreams after Jesus' death and resurrection. 'Do you see these

great buildings,' he says. 'Well they won't last forever.' There is no pretence in Jesus' words that follow. Not for one moment does he suggest that life will be easy and that the future will be a bed of roses. Instead he warns of instability, of war, of famine, of dis-ease, of persecution, and of more unsettled times ahead, but this is just the beginning he says, not the end, do not be alarmed, do not be led astray by false teachings. [...] Times of change, times of transition, in the church, in the world around us, in our lives can be unsettling and can cause us to wonder whether God really is in control. When we feel anxious, we can be tempted to look for easy answers and for certainty. When we see anxiety in others we can be tempted to offer easy answers and a certainty that does not exist. Jesus models for us here a way of responding that holds true to life, that, though raw, is real. Life can be tough, like a woman in labour, giving birth comes in waves of pain, with the waves of pain steadily increasing, before painlessness and then, hopefully, as in the story of Hannah, hope and joy break through. But the reality is, we have to endure the pain. Through sharing our experiences, our stories, our soul-songs, by speaking truth, we can offer a very real hope that can be held onto in the worst of times and enable others to set aside their anxieties and trust in God for what the future holds and for all that God has planned and promised.

In our world today, in our neighbourhood, there are many who feel discouraged and who place their hope and their sense of success in material things. Material things that we know can crumble to dust all too easily. In the book of Hebrews, which was itself written to a people who had lost hope, who had lost courage, we are called to come alongside one another, to come together, to share our stories, to be real and to speak truth, even when the truth we speak may not be easy to hear. To live hopefully, where hope, in the words of Walter Brueggeman in The Prophetic Imagination, is the refusal to accept the reading of reality which is the majority opinion. Hebrews chapter 10 verses 21 to 25 reads “hold fast to the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who has promised is faithful. And let us consider how to provoke one another to love and good deeds, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the day approaching”. These are powerful words, words that hold together the sentiment of both of our previous readings. Where people come together, where people are curious about one another, where people are open and understanding and share their stories, stories both of pain and joy, change happens and lives can be transformed.

Advent is almost upon us, and this Advent, the Methodist Church has chosen as its theme the words, ‘Do not be afraid’. In the coming Advent season, let us listen to where God is calling us to speak words of hope instead of fear as we meet together not just in our churches, but with the communities around us, and may we listen to and share our stories and through our soul-songs bring hope that leads to transformation, as we work together in shared solidarity for a better world, for the lives of the people around us and for ourselves.

Have faith in God, my heart, trust and be unafraid, for God will fulfil in every part, each promise he has made.

StF 718 - We lay this broken world

We lay our broken world
in sorrow at your feet,
haunted by hunger, war and fear,
oppressed by power and hate.

Here human life seems less
than profit, might and pride,
though to unite us all in you,
you lived and loved and died.

We bring our broken towns,
our neighbours hurt and bruised;
you show us how old pain and wounds
for new life can be used

We bring our broken loves,
friends parted, families torn;
then in your life and death we see
that love must be reborn.

We bring our broken selves,
confused and closed and tired;
then through your gift of healing grace
new purpose is inspired.

O Spirit, on us breathe,
with life and strength anew;
find in us love, and hope, and trust,
and lift us up to you.

Anna Briggs (b.1947) | Reproduced from Singing the Faith Electronic Words Edition, number 718

Prayers:

Lord, we come with grateful hearts. We think of all the good things you have done for us this week: beautiful sights, times with people we love, music enjoyed, exercise, food, a good book. Thank you for all the good times. And thank you for being our Saviour, for being our support, our friend, our all in all. We praise you for who you are.

What song shall we sing?
We will sing a song of praise.

Lord, we lift to you all the places of brokenness and pain within the world. We cry out to you for those held hostage, refugees in tented camps, those whose soundtrack is bombing and shelling. We pray for all who are displaced, seeking refuge or somewhere safe to bring up their children. We pray for all people who are at war. And we think of the forgotten places where there is drought, flooding, no food, no communication. We confess to you any part that we play in making your world a place of conflict and pain. But, most of all, we cry out to you: Lord, have mercy.

What song shall we sing?
We will sing a song of lament.
Lord, we turn, now, to those closer to home who need our prayers. We lift to you all we know who are sick today, whether they have been sick for a long or a short time. Lord, relieve their suffering. We particularly pray for...

We think of all we know who are lonely, sad or depressed, who can't see a way out of their troubles. We name in our hearts, all we know who need a touch of God's love and closeness today...

We think of stories we've heard on the news this week which have brought sorrow or sadness...

We pray for all who have no one else to pray for them...

What song shall we sing?
We will sing a song of compassion.

Lord, thank you for all those that we love and those who love us. We picture them now… our families; our friends; people at school or at work that make our lives better in some way. We thank you for this fellowship of followers of Jesus with whom we can share God's love, God's peace and God's challenge. We think of special moments in our lives full of love and joy… and we also remember those who find life hard: who have no-one to love and don't

know if anyone loves them. Lord, wrap your arms of love around them and show us how we can be the love-bringers.

What song shall we sing?
We will sing a song of love.

Lord, we come now to pray for the week ahead. We picture our Mondays, our Tuesdays… until we meet here together again next week. We think of those moments we find boring: touch them with newness, we pray. We look forward to moments that we enjoy: give them an extra sparkle this week, we pray. We pray for everyone we meet: help us to see you in them and for them to see you in each of us. Send us out from here ready to serve you, to be your hands and feet, to speak your words and listen for your voice.

What song shall we sing?
We will sing a song of service.

We will sing songs of praise, songs of lament, songs of love and songs of service. We will sing the songs of our lives as we mix our voice with your song, O God the great singer of life.
Amen.

StF 548 - Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine

Blessèd assurance, Jesus is mine:
O what a foretaste of glory divine!
Heir of salvation, purchase of God;
born of his Spirit, washed in his blood:

This is my story, this is my song,
praising my Saviour all the day long.
This is my story, this is my song,
praising my Saviour all the day long.

Perfect submission, perfect delight,
visions of rapture burst on my sight;
angels descending bring from above
echoes of mercy, whispers of love:
This is my story, this is my song, …

Perfect submission, all is at rest,
I in my Saviour am happy and blest —
watching and waiting, looking above,
filled with his goodness, lost in his love:
This is my story, this is my song, …

Frances Jane van Alstyne, (Fanny Crosby) (1820–1915) | Reproduced from Singing the Faith Electronic Words Edition, number 548

Blessing

Let us go out into the world,
and welcome the Lord gladly into our homes.
As he passes through our world,
may he stay with us and transform our lives,
that we may be a source of joy and hope for others,
In Jesus name we pray.
Amen.

Every blessing to you all. Rev Sarah