

Poole Bay Methodist Circuit Worship
Sunday 5th October 2025

Belonging - Led by Reverend Sarah Knebel

Hello and welcome to this time of worship, during which we will be exploring what it means to belong and how we express that sense of belonging.

Call to Worship:

Let's begin with a call to worship:

Come together as followers of Jesus.
Come together as believers in his story.
Come together with stories to share
and treasures of faith to pass on.

Let's pray:

Creator of our world,
saviour of our souls,
guardian of our hearts,
we come to you today,
acknowledging that we are yours.
We belong to you,
and in our belonging we find faith -
faith to live our lives,
celebrating your goodness
and faithfulness to us. Amen.

As we gather in worship we profess together what it means to belong to Jesus, with our faith rooted in Christ and built on a firm foundation as we sing:

Hymn: [StF 322 - How sweet the name of Jesus sounds](#)

1. How sweet the name of Jesus sounds
in a believer's ear!
It soothes our sorrows, heals our wounds,
and drives away our fear.
2. It makes the wounded spirit whole,
and calms the troubled breast;
'tis manna to the hungry soul,
and to the weary, rest.
3. Dear name — the rock on which I build,
my shield and hiding-place,
my never-failing treasury, filled
with boundless stores of grace!
4. Jesus! My Shepherd, Brother, Friend,
my Prophet, Priest, and King,
my Lord, my Life, my Way, my End,
accept the praise I bring.

5. Weak is the effort of my heart,
and cold my warmest thought;
but when I see thee as thou art,
I'll praise thee as I ought.
6. Till then I would thy love proclaim
with every fleeting breath;
and may the music of thy name
refresh my soul in death.

John Newton (1725–1807)

Reproduced from Singing the Faith Electronic Words Edition, number 322

Prayer:

Bonding, loving God,
from the many peoples of the world
you have made your church the family of Christ,
nurtured us into being and breathed life into us.
It is the friendship of Jesus that binds us together,
his love that gives us unity,
and his care that sends us out to serve the world.
We thank you that when we are strong
we can give ourselves to your Church with active strength;
and that in our times of weakness
we can lean on the strength of others.
Taught by Jesus, we have learned
to rejoice with those who rejoice
and weep with those who weep,
so that as friends of God,
we become friends of one another.
Bonding, loving God,
we delight in you;
in your steadfast love,
in your nourishing strength,
in your constant care.
Ever present, ever true,
we adore you.
Amen.

Reading: Habakkuk 1:1-4, 2:1-4

This is the message that the prophet Habakkuk received in a vision.

How long, O Lord, must I call for help?
But you do not listen!
“Violence is everywhere!” I cry,
but you do not come to save.

Must I forever see these evil deeds?
Why must I watch all this misery?
Wherever I look,
I see destruction and violence.

I am surrounded by people
who love to argue and fight.

The law has become paralyzed,
and there is no justice in the courts.
The wicked far outnumber the righteous,
so that justice has become perverted.

I will climb up to my watchtower
and stand at my guardpost.
There I will wait to see what the Lord says
and how he will answer my complaint.

Then the Lord said to me,

“Write my answer plainly on tablets,
so that a runner can carry the correct message to others.

This vision is for a future time.
It describes the end, and it will be fulfilled.
If it seems slow in coming, wait patiently,
for it will surely take place.
It will not be delayed.

“Look at the proud!
They trust in themselves, and their lives are crooked.
But the righteous will live by their faithfulness to God.

2 Timothy 1: 1-5, 13-14

This letter is from Paul, chosen by the will of God to be an apostle of Christ Jesus. I have been sent out to tell others about the life he has promised through faith in Christ Jesus.

I am writing to Timothy, my dear son. May God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord give you grace, mercy, and peace.

Timothy, I thank God for you—the God I serve with a clear conscience, just as my ancestors did. Night and day I constantly remember you in my prayers. I long to see you again, for I remember your tears as we parted. And I will be filled with joy when we are together again. I remember your genuine faith, for you share the faith that first filled your grandmother Lois and your mother, Eunice. And I know that same faith continues strong in you. This is why I remind you to fan into flames the spiritual gift God gave you when I laid my hands on you. For God has not given us a spirit of fear and timidity, but of power, love, and self-discipline.

Hold on to the pattern of wholesome teaching you learned from me—a pattern shaped by the faith and love that you have in Christ Jesus. Through the power of the Holy Spirit who lives within us, carefully guard the precious truth that has been entrusted to you.

Reflection: Belonging

I can't help but like prophets, like Habakkuk, who in the midst of suffering and struggle cry out to God asking, 'How long must I wait for you to act?' There is something very real about this cry. One, I'm sure, many of us can relate to and may even be asking at this current time. In crying out to God, though, we are each recognising something important, that there is a God, and that we are in relationship with God. There is a sense of belonging

to one another, of expectation that God will, out of loving concern for us, act to ease our pain. We have someone to turn to, someone to shout at, someone to ask, 'how long' of.

How long must there continue to be conflict in our world? How long must we watch people suffer as a result of poverty or climate change? How long must we continue to experience inequality as a result of diversity? How long, must we continue to live in a world where some feel that they belong, and others are scapegoated, isolated, separated out from the humanity of which we are all a part?

The book of Habbakuk resembles the laments of the Psalms and Lamentations. Writing to returning exiles facing a desolate city, economic shortfalls and corruption, we sense the prophet's frustration at his inability to do anything about the violence and injustice that he sees. Out of his frustration, he seeks clarification from God. He wants God to intervene, to do something to improve the lot of those around him. In response, God reminds Habakkuk, that a day will come when the Kingdom of God will be restored. A kingdom of justice and real and lasting peace, where God's people, each one of us, will be actively working to bring about justice in a weary land until all people share a common sense of belonging and of unity within a shared humanity.

As we listen to the national news or walk through our villages, towns and cities, evidence of injustice can be witnessed daily if we open our eyes to see and our ears to hear. Acts of racism, discrimination because of gender, place of origin, age, ability, financial status or ethnicity, or other rationales for exclusion or inequality such as immigration and hospitality to people who come from countries beyond our borders; each a potential cause of division and discord that breeds discontent and fear and results in some feeling safe and welcome and others quite the opposite. Some of these acts may be easy to see, others may seem so insignificant as to not be important to many and yet to those for whom they do matter, it can make a huge difference to whether they feel like they belong or not. Access to disabled toilets, space for people to breast-feed, a friendly smile and a warm welcome to someone new, all of these make a huge difference, and change a person's sense of value and belonging.

Often we may feel powerless to counteract or influence the injustice that is evident around us, but we equally cannot bury our heads in the sand or pretend it is not there. As Christians, we are called to believe that a better world, a just world is possible and to have the audacity to hope, to have faith in a God who will one day bring about change. Patiently waiting for this day to come, though, does not mean being inactive and doing nothing to counteract what we see happening around us. Whilst we wait, even the smallest act of kindness counteracts the social injustices we see around us. Giving hope, even to just one person, through passive acts of peaceful resistance, motivated by a faith that calls us to love our neighbour as ourselves makes a difference to the imbalance in our world.

In his letter to Timothy, Paul encourages Timothy to remember the time when his ancestors had lived in slavery and had been treated disrespectfully as foreigners in a foreign land. He reminds Timothy of the promises his ancestors made to themselves, as a result, that they would never forget what it felt like and would treat foreigners in their own land with dignity and respect. Paul tells Timothy to remember his faith and the principles on which it is built and to use this faith as the basis of a life guided by love, power and a sound mind, not fear, living a life that reflects what he believes. Can you remember a time when you felt you had been treated disrespectfully, or unjustly? What did it feel like for you? How did you want to respond towards the person? How might the situation have been different if you had been shown loving kindness instead? Drawing on these memories, can you imagine for a moment how people might feel who are being discriminated against and treated unfairly today and how very differently they would feel if they were treated with loving kindness? When we are unkind to people because of our fear, we create fear in them, but when we treat people with love, love is returned to us. How might this thought impact the way we treat others in the week ahead? And, how might we help to make people feel welcome and sense that they belong, through acts of loving kindness?

Taken with the passage from Habbakuk and following the example of Jesus Christ, we can be clear that following Christ involves valuing the other, loving our neighbour as ourselves, giving ourselves in compassionate service and acting with humility towards all people. How pleased might God be with us if we would not claim our own right,

but instead stand for the rights of others as we seek God's kingdom here on earth, where all are welcome and all belong.

Hymn: [StF 519 - Father, I place into your hands](#)

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| <p>1. Father, I place into your hands the things I cannot do. Father, I place into your hands the times that I've been through. Father, I place into your hands the way that I should go, for I know I always can trust you.</p> | <p>3. Father, we love to see your face, we love to hear your voice. Father, we love to sing your praise and in your name rejoice. Father, we love to walk with you and in your presence rest, for we know we always can trust you.</p> |
| <p>2. Father, I place into your hands my friends and family. Father, I place into your hands the things that trouble me. Father, I place into your hands the person I would be, for I know I always can trust you.</p> | <p>4. Father, I want to be with you and do the things you do. Father, I want to speak the words that you are speaking too. Father, I want to love the ones that you will draw to you, for I know that I am one with you.</p> |

Jenny Hower (b. 1945)

Reproduced from Singing the Faith Electronic Words Edition, number 519

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.

Faithful God, we lift before you the world.
Across the globe, there are so many places in conflict,
torn apart by discord and violence.
We pray for an end to these wars and for peaceful resolutions to be found.
Would the plans to end the war in Gaza bring peace,
and would the needs of the vulnerable be safeguarded.
Give your guidance to world leaders
who negotiate and oversee these changes.
Lord, bring your gift of peace.
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.

Faithful God, we pray for those around the world who are marginalised.
 Those we are close to, those in our local communities,
 and the people groups around the world who are downtrodden and persecuted.
 We lift up the people of Afghanistan, where Taliban rule restricts their freedoms.
 For the women and young people who are barred from education,
 for those with restricted internet access that cuts off their communication,
 restricting their news of the outside world and their ability to run businesses.
 For those imprisoned for speaking out against the government.
 Lord, bring your gift of freedom.
 So shall your new creation come
 and your will be done.

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.

Faithful God, we pray for the discord that can exist in our society.
 Where discontent and fear turn people to divisiveness and blame.
 Help us to find ways to listen to one another, even where there is disagreement,
 that every person would feel their concerns can be heard.
 Impress upon us the importance of loving our neighbour,
 even when they are entirely different from ourselves.
 Lord, bring your gift of unity.
 So shall your new creation come
 and your will be done.

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!
 So shall your new creation come
 and your will be done.

Through Jesus Christ, we pray.
 Amen.

(Adapted from rootsontheweb.com, Prayers of Intercession for 5th-11th October 2025)

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

Hymn: [StF 545 - Be thou my vision](#)

1. Be thou my vision, O Lord of my heart,
be all else but naught to me, save that thou art;
be thou my best thought in the day and the night,
both waking and sleeping, thy presence my light.
2. Be thou my wisdom, be thou my true word,
be thou ever with me, and I with thee, Lord;
be thou my great Father, thy child let me be;
be thou in me dwelling, and I one with thee.
3. Be thou my breastplate, my sword for the fight;
be thou my whole armour, be thou my true might;
be thou my soul's shelter, be thou my strong tower:
raise thou me heavenward, great Power of my power.
4. Riches I heed not, nor earth's empty praise:
be thou mine inheritance now and always;
be thou and thou only the first in my heart:
Sovereign of heaven, my treasure thou art.
5. High King of heaven, thou heaven's bright Sun,
grant me its joys after victory is won;
Great Heart of my own heart, whatever befall,
still be thou my vision, O Ruler of all.

Irish, 8th century
translated by Mary Elizabeth Byrne (1880–1931)
versified by Eleanor Henrietta Hull (1860–1935) (alt.)

Blessing

Lord as we go from this place,
help us to make the most
of all that you have given us.
As we look back on life's journey,
may we draw strength
from all the ways that you have helped us.
Encouraged by your presence in our lives,
may our faith continue to grow,
as we journey on, rooted in you.
In the name of Christ we pray.
Amen

Every blessing to you all.
Rev Sarah