

Sunday 12th July 2020 – Action for Children Sunday

Opening Verses:

Act with justice and righteousness - Jeremiah 22: 1-5

Introduction:

The theme of today's service is '**Choose Childhood**'.

Action for Children believes that every child should grow up safe and happy. To make this vision a reality, they offer practical and emotional care and support, make sure children's voices are heard, and campaign to bring lasting improvements to their lives. Doing this lays the foundations for children to thrive.

The work that Action for Children does is only possible with our support. The Methodist Church has been by the charity's side for more than 150 years. But, tragically, there are still thousands of vulnerable children who desperately need our help. With our worship, prayers and gifts, we can make a real difference to these children. Together we can choose safe and happy childhoods for every child.

Let us pray:

Heavenly Father, as we worship today with thanksgiving and an open heart, help us to hear you.

Fill our hearts with love and compassion for those you have sent us to. Stir up our hearts and strengthen our arms to act with justice and righteousness in Jesus' name. **Amen.**

Prayer by Karis Kolawole, Head of Faith Partnerships

Hymn: Singing the Faith: 123 / Hymns & Psalms: 355 - Come, you thankful people, come

<https://youtu.be/imK0j7eBJsc>

Let us pray:

Lord, we lift up the work of Action for Children.

We think of all the families who come into contact with the charity and pray your blessing over them. We think of those struggling with their physical or mental health, and pray your peace descends on them. Lord, remove any barriers that may prevent people from reaching out.

We thank you for the thousands of staff members and volunteers who serve children and families, and pray that you would sustain them. Give them the energy and enthusiasm they need to lovingly support those most in need.

We thank you for the infrastructure that makes Action for Children's work possible: the buildings, the vehicles, the IT – all the variables that help them to reach and serve communities across the UK.

We pray for the leadership and the trustees – may your wisdom and guidance be present as they map out the future of the charity.

We pray for our wider society – we ask that your will be done; from our Governments all the way down to our communities. We ask that lives led by love – love modelled so perfectly by Christ – transform the world we live in.

In the name of the King, Jesus, **Amen.**

Prayer by Megan Ludlow, Bid Manager and Action for Children Christian Network

The Lord's Prayer : Our Father.....

Reading: Jeremiah 22: 1-5

Hymn: Singing the Faith: 693 - Beauty for Brokenness

<https://youtu.be/D81ZD1NDPyE>

Reading: Luke 4:16-21

Time to Reflect:

Lyle's story

Lyle* was physically and emotionally abused by his parents. They punched and kicked him, and he'd often go hungry. After turning to alcohol to numb the pain, Lyle ran away from home. Action for Children stepped in to find him a safe and stable place to live.

"Drugs were always a big problem in my family and there was a lot of violence," Lyle explains. "I wasn't fed at home and my big sister would sneak food into her room most nights. But we'd often go days without getting food."

Lyle was left to fend for himself after his parents threw his sister out. "I didn't have clean clothes. Mum and Dad wouldn't let me bath or shower. I wasn't even allowed to get my hair cut," he says. After getting bullied at school, Lyle started to isolate himself. At 14, he started drinking. "Mum and Dad would offer me alcohol all the time, and eventually I said yes. I'd get home from school and they'd give me glasses of things. I'd just drink them. I couldn't feel anything. I thought nothing bad could ever happen when I was drunk."

Lyle left school and found a job he really liked. But things at home got even worse. "I loved my job. But I was the only one putting money in the house. And if I didn't give the money to them for drugs, they'd take it out on me."

Lyle's depression and anxiety started to take their toll. "I just knew I had to get out," he says. "I left that house with nothing apart from the clothes on my back. I was in a really bad state. I came to Action for Children with nothing."

Action for Children found Lyle a safe place to live in supported accommodation. "They reminded me that I'm enough," he says. "They helped me recover from alcohol. Without them, I don't think I'd be alive. I nearly took my own life and, if it hadn't been for my support worker coming and just talking to me, I wouldn't be here."

**we've changed Lyle's name to protect his identity.*

Hymn: Singing the Faith: 409 - Let us build a house where love can dwell

https://youtu.be/W3Pb77ylz_Q

A time of prayer:

Heavenly Father, in the name of Jesus, we ask that you bring healing to any child or young person who has been the victim of abuse or neglect. They are your children and have been called into your wonderful light.

Show them that you see them and know what they are going through. Show them that you are right beside them. No matter how terrible the situation, we pray that they will know that they can lean on you.

Open our eyes, Lord, to see any potential signs of abuse and remove every form of ignorance from us.

Give these children and young people hope and provide healing in their body, soul and mind. Ease their suffering, Father, and cause a complete restoration in their lives. **Amen.**

Prayer by Alison Smith, Fostering Marketing Officer and Action for Children Christian Network

Prayer of committal:

In celebration of over 150 years of work and witness, we commit ourselves afresh:

Where children cry in need:

We will hear their cry.

Where children are denied the gifts of childhood:

We will provide for them to delight in good things.

Where there is exclusion or deprivation:

We will challenge injustice.

Where poverty is rife:

We will share what we have.

Where others also care:

We will work with them.

Wherever we see a need:

We will pray for means to meet it.

Loving God, you have called us to be your people and to share in the ministry of your Son. Grant us, we pray, ears that are open to the cries of those in need, hearts that are eager to respond, voices that are ready to speak out for the oppressed, and hands that are active in sharing your bounty. In the name of Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Prayer by the Reverend Dr Jonathan Hustler, Secretary of the Methodist Conference

Hymn: Singing the Faith: 663 – I, the Lord of sea and sky

<https://youtu.be/mgLwH5RdtPk>

The Blessing:

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with us all, now and for evermore. **Amen.**

Acknowledgement: The full service (bi-lingual version) can be found at:

<https://www.actionforchildren.org.uk/media/12999/1301-worship-outline-welsh-online.pdf>

Resources and publications can be found at:

<https://www.actionforchildren.org.uk/resources-and-publications/promotional-materials/resources-for-methodist-fundraisers/>

Radio 4:

8.10am Sunday Worship – Sowing in a time of uncertainty: A service from South Wales Baptist College with Rev Dr Rosa Hunt and Rev Dr Craig Gardiner

BBC1:

10.45am Sunday Morning Live – Sean Fletcher & Sally Phillips explore the ethical and religious issues of the day

1.15pm Songs of Praise – The UK's Favourite Hymn

Radio Cymru:

12.00yp Yr Oedfa

12.30yp Bwrw Golwg

4.30yp Caniadaeth y Cysegr

S4C:

11.00yb Oedfa Dechrau Canu Dechrau Canmol – Karen Owen