

Hymns: 88 "Praise to the Lord, the Almighty, the King of Creation!"
483 "We are Marching in the Light of God"
707 "Make me a channel of your peace"
594 "Lord Jesus Christ, you have come to us"

Readings: Colossians 3.12-17
John 19:25b-27

"Mothers to all" – a talk, following the interview with 'Susanna Wesley'

Prayer

Holy God, break your word among us as bread for the feeding of our souls. And may the words of my lips, and the meditation of all our hearts be acceptable to you O Lord our strength, and our redeemer. AMEN.

Well, here we are, celebrating mothers of all kinds – and mothering done by men and women both, of all ages and in households of all shapes and sizes. In a few minutes we'll all be given a bunch of daffodils by our children – they are stewards of our future – to remind us that though the winter is long, spring is coming.

We've seen Susanna Wesley – not an idealised mother, but a real one. Perhaps what every man and woman who's ever felt overwhelmed needs is a pinny to put over their head, an antidote to multitasking and smartphones and email. Of course, this is not really a day that is meant to be about mothers. And frankly, every day should be mother's day in that sense.

Today is actually a day when we pause in the discipline and penitence of Lent, and give thanks for our mother church. This feels particularly poignant to me, here in this church, which has as one of its strap lines, 'The Mother Church of World Methodism.' That's a lot to live up to – think how many people and places that would give us to worry over and yearn for.

But here's the thing, I think that strap line sets our sights too low – because although this community – and by that I mean everyone who is here today – not just those who make it their normal place of worship – this community is not just about being a mother church among Methodists.

Last time I checked, God is sending us to the motherless. Not just Methodists, and not to remember years gone by, but the motherless men and women, children of today.

A few years ago one of my step daughters sent me a mothering Sunday card that said knowing me as her had showed her 'what kind of woman she wanted to be.'

She didn't say whether it was a positive or negative example – and I'm very humbled by that.

We come home to our mother church, this church or any, to remember and discover the kind of people we want to be.

And what we do each Sunday is about remembering who we are – not an idealised cleaned up version, but really how we are – in the midst of laundry and credit card bills and all the rest.

Who we are is real people, who are not going to wait for perfection to get on with the work of mothering and fathering. Jesus on the cross made family – woman, here is your son, man, here is your mother – and we are called to make household out of whatever is around us. Out of rubble we will build tables and call people to them. We come to our mother church to remember who we are: because we are Boys Brigade officers. We are teachers, and nurses, and people who know how to measure and decide things.

We are artists, we are some of us workers, some retired, we are neighbours, we are people who observe the world with kindness. We are people who resist easy scapegoating headlines, we look for growth, for new life! We are people who pray as we breathe. Not cleaned up church prayers, those too, some of them.

And our church is also changed by who we are. Who I am as a disciple of Christ is different today, because you are each here. We come to mother church to learn more from each other the kind of people we want to be.

And perhaps, to make peace with who we are – because we are made by God. Who we are, each of us, a child of God. Mothered by all sorts of people ourselves, and sent not just to Methodism, but to all the motherless places and people of the world. Friends take the flowers you are given today and remember that spring is coming: winter may be long, but spring is coming.

In the name of Christ, Amen.