

## **Advent 2: Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> Dec. Greenhill Methodist Church.**

### **Welcome (David Channon)**

**Welcome** all (including online) to **second Sunday of Advent**.  
**I'm David Channon** – but don't worry - **I have good news. God is here!**  
I am here to point the way to Jesus who is the way.

(John 14:6 NLT) *Jesus told him, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one can come to the Father except through me.”*

### **Light Advent Candle (\*\*\*\*) + my comment...**

I know Christmas anticipation will have been in play here at Greenhill yesterday. Today it's time to light the second Advent candle. **Invite (Geoff Pheasey) to front.**

### **Comment (David Channon)**

**Advent means “coming” We celebrate Christmas and anticipate the second coming of Jesus. Advent candles are used in a whole variety of ways. Google said it probably started with a teacher in Germany and spread -distributed to America in 1930's. Candles are given many meanings.**

**I like the four Advent candles on this slide. PowerPoint slide available.**



Biblical **love** refers to more than just a feeling. It's about caring for someone regardless of their response, and it's modeled perfectly by Jesus.

Biblical **joy** is more than a happy feeling. It's a lasting emotion that comes from the choice to trust that God will fulfill his promises.

Biblical **peace** is about wholeness or completeness, and it was brought to earth in the person of Jesus, the Prince of Peace.

It can be difficult to feel **hopeful**. But biblical hope means trusting in God's character and choosing hope despite our circumstances.



**BibleProject** <https://bibleproject.com/explore/category/advent-series/>

## Prayers of Adoration (David Channon)

Jesus, we journey with you, to Bethlehem's stable and a new-born King.

Ears attuned to the song of angels,

Eyes alert for Bethlehem's star and your eternal leadership.

We ask your forgiveness when we are distracted by the tempting offers of this world.

Help us to be aware of your presence, knowing that we are never alone that we might always be working with you, and for you.

Keep our hearts aflame with the hope of Christmas, and the promise of salvation to restore our relationship with you.

Amen

## News/announcements. (Open invitation)

## Song of the Month (\*\*\*\*) – Move

## **“All-age” puppet - service summary**

*Horatio the short-sighted hedgehog*

*Refused to wear glasses at all*

*He said I can see, in front of me*

*And quicky walked into a wall.*

*Horatio was proud and was stubborn*

*He said I can stand on my own four feet*

*I don't need you to tell me what to do*

*And fell down a hold in the street.*

*And that was the way with Horatio*

*That lovable hedgehogy chap*

*He chose to ignore what other folks saw*

*And fell over this thing and that.*

*Until the day, when Horatio*

*Tried to cross a busy main road*

*He'd not seen the lorry in a hurry, bearing an enormous load*

*Too late Horatio looked up, he cried, someone help me please!*

*Horatio gasped; the lorry sped past*

*And it missed it by the skin of his teeth*

*Horatio was very much shaken, and said -what a fool I have been  
I must have been out of my mind, to walk round half blind  
When all along I could have seen*

*Horatio now wears his glasses  
His world has now become clear  
He can tell people from trees, the birds from the bees  
And things that are far or are near*

*What can we learn from Horatio  
I think its sufficient to say*

***On our own we are lost, but if Jesus we trust  
He's promised to show us the way.***

*(JM – friend, teacher training)*

**Worship songs with children (\*\*\*\*)**

**My Saviour, Redeemer**

**Children go to their time with God.** When we need to know what to do, it is a good idea to ask Jesus and think about what he would do.

May God bless you as you leave to learn more about Jesus.

## **Call to worship & prayer of confession (David Channon)**

When in the presence of God, we remember how our presumptive deliberate sin and many transgressions have separated us from him during the week.

Before we pray together -some thoughts...

**I read from Matthew 6:5-8 (The Message)** This was How Jesus introduced the Lord's prayer in verses 9-15

***"And when you come before God, don't turn that into a theatrical production either. All these people making a regular show out of their prayers, hoping for stardom! Do you think God sits in a box seat?"***

***"Here's what I want you to do: Find a quiet, secluded place so you won't be tempted to role-play before God. Just be there as simply and honestly as you can manage. The focus will shift from you to God, and you will begin to sense his grace."***

***"The world is full of so-called prayer warriors who are prayer-ignorant. They're full of formulas and programs and advice, peddling techniques for getting what you want from God."***

***Don't fall for that nonsense. This is your Father you are dealing with, and he knows better than you what you need."***

## **Bear with me. There can be problems with the Lord's prayer.**

- We have all learned our own version. And our version is the right one. Often the one we learned as a child.
- Or we could use the authorised one. **If one authorised what are the others. CE offer a *Traditional / Contemporary*.**
- When we pray together confusion can reign when versions get mixed up.
- The Lord's Prayer can feel so familiar, we may say it without engaging with its meaning.

### **The Lord's Prayer is in the bible, right? (Mathew 6:9-15 NLT)**

**(v9) Pray like this: Our Father in heaven, may your name be kept holy. V9**

**(v10) May your Kingdom come soon. May your will be done on earth, as it is in heaven.**

**(v11) Give us today the food we need,**

**(v12) and forgive us our sins, as we have forgiven those who sin against us.**

**(v13) And don't let us yield to temptation, but rescue us from the evil one.**

**(v14) "If you forgive those who sin against you, your heavenly Father will forgive you.**

**(v15) But if you refuse to forgive others, your Father will not forgive your sins.**

## When we say the Lord's prayer...

- Are we really seeking forgiveness for our presumptive deliberate sin and unknown transgressions? (V12)
- Are we asking God for **his Kingdom to come?** (v10)  
If so, am I willing let **my kingdom go?**
- Does 'our' version have the additional last line not in Matthew?  
**"For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory, for ever and ever."**

## *Lord's Prayer*

Let's say the Lord's prayer together. *(Slide of version used by GMC)*

Let us

- *be IN the words,*
- *mean the words,*
- *and not simply say them.*

*Meaningful prayer. Perfect!*

*Presentational performance. Unnecessary.*

*Our focus should be on our God, who is here with us.*

**Worship (\*\*\*\*) Offering**

**In the secret, in the quiet place**

**Immanuel, O Immanuel**

## Bible Reading (\*\*\*\*)

Isaiah 61v1 (NLT) Luke 3:1-6 (NLT) Philippians 1:3-11 (NLT)

### Isiah 61

(v1) *The Spirit of the Sovereign LORD is upon me, for the LORD has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to comfort the broken-hearted and to proclaim that captives will be released and prisoners will be freed.*

### Luke 3

(v1) *It was now the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius, the Roman emperor. **Pontius Pilate was governor** over Judea; Herod Antipas was ruler over Galilee; his brother Philip was ruler over Iturea and Traconitis; Lysanias was ruler over Abilene.*

(v2) *Annas and Caiaphas were the high priests. **At this time a message from God came to John son of Zechariah**, who was living in the wilderness.*

(v3) *Then John went from place to place on both sides of the Jordan River, preaching that people should be **baptized to show that they had repented of their sins and turned to God to be forgiven.***

(v4) ***Isaiah had spoken of John** when he said, “He is a voice shouting in the wilderness, ‘Prepare the way for the LORD’s coming! Clear the road for him!’*

(v5) *The valleys will be filled, and the mountains and hills made level. The curves will be straightened, and the rough places made smooth.*

(v6) *And then all people will see the **salvation sent from God.**”*



## Philippians 1

**(v3) Every time I think of you, I give thanks to my God.**

**(v4) Whenever I pray, I make my requests for all of you with joy,**

**(v5) for you have been my partners in spreading the Good News about Christ from the time you first heard it until now.**

**(v6) And I am certain that God, who began the good work within you, will continue his work until it is finally finished on the day when Christ Jesus returns.**

**(v7) So it is right that I should feel as I do about all of you, for you have a special place in my heart. You share with me the special favor of God, both in my imprisonment and in defending and confirming the truth of the Good News.**

**(v8) God knows how much I love you and long for you with the tender compassion of Christ Jesus.**

**(v9) I pray that your love will overflow more and more, and that you will keep on growing in knowledge and understanding.**

**(v10) For I want you to understand what really matters, so that you may live pure and blameless lives until the day of Christ's return.**

**(v11) May you always be filled with the fruit of your salvation—the righteous character produced in your life by Jesus Christ—for this will bring much glory and praise to God.**

## Sermon: (David Channon)

***We have just heard from***

***Isaiah 61:1***

This OT verse was read and fulfilled by Jesus in NT Luke 4:16-21 ***Are the needy and disenfranchised our priority as they were his?***

***Luke 3:4-6***

Quotes from OT **Isaiah 40:3-5** prophesying NT John the Baptist

***Saint Augustine about OT & NT***

***"The new is in the old concealed; the old is in the new revealed".***

Greek **apokalupsis**, translated 'revelation' **apo** (out of) and **kalupsis** ('hiding'). The word means 'dis-closure'. Veil removed; mystery is unlocked.

***Philippians 1:9 (NLT) Prisoner Paul Praying that, "...your love will overflow more and more, and that you will keep on growing in knowledge and understanding."***

***Knowledge and understanding? What is the bible?***

In a recent bible study the leader came up with

***"A theo-historical foreign language library."***

An approved cannon of 66 books by 40+ authors.

We have a Second layer of deuterocanonical apocryphal books.

**Baruch 5:1-9** is in the Methodist and CE lectionary for today.

***Inexhaustible depth. 'Ev ἀρχῆς ἦν ὁ Λόγος*** In the beginning was THE WORD. Irrespective of language, ***The Word of God is not a book that can be completely understood, but a person to be met.***

*Is our intention to meet with Jesus today?*

## Intro

My dad was a local preacher. I did have a CE licence to preach but I am now trying to follow in his footsteps as a Methodist Local Preacher on trial.

Mum accused him of always preaching about Love. **Like father, like son.** That's what I've believe God has been leading me to illuminate today. It's come from prayerful reflection, scripture and communication with Katie a couple of weeks ago.

**Group 1 People: Luke 3 v1: Pilot and other leaders unknowingly imprisoned by worldly values;** authority, social status, political connection, wealth, education, even religious roles like High priest.

**Group 2 People: John the Baptist and Paul -pointing the way to Jesus and the good news of salvation.**

**Luke 3v2-3:** John **responding to a message from God (calling)** and travelling to sharing that message, **despite personal risk (selfless)**, so that all people could, **“see the salvation sent from God.”**

**(Others) (v6)**

**John the Baptist was not distracted by material things and how he looked.**

**(Matthew 3:4 NLT) “John’s clothes were woven from coarse camel hair, and he wore a leather belt around his waist. For food he ate locusts and wild honey.”**

**Apostle Paul wrote from prison** **thinking of others** and **wanting to support** them. Perhaps preparing them for his absence from this world. He was in **partnership with others to point to The Way to the truth** and share the good news. **Distributive leadership in action.** He did this despite being in a bad place and subject to beatings and imminent judgments.

***(Phil 1:7 NLT) “You share with me the special favor of God, both in my imprisonment and in defending and confirming the truth of the Good News.”***

**Which of these two groups do GMC Christians look like?  
The worldly or those signposting Jesus? Both?**

**When you ask people about a church -they often talk about its people. Their love for one another and the reality of God in their lives.**

***(John 13:34-35 NLT) “So now I am giving you a new commandment: Love each other. Just as I have loved you, you should love each other. Your love for one another will prove to the world that you are my disciples.”***

**Mission as action -use words if you have to.**

**Leading and living with love** was not easy for John the Baptist, Apostle Paul and Jesus. Love is not just cuddles and kisses on the couch or being shot at by a farcical cupid.

**How do you know and understand love here at GMC?  
Do you show it to the world despite your difficulties.**

David Channon: <https://djchannon.me.uk/>

*(Philippians 1:9) Remember prisoner Paul praying for others that, “**your love will overflow** more and more, and that you will keep on growing in knowledge and understanding.”*

***Lets take a closer look at love exemplified in the bible.***

<https://bibleproject.com/explore/video/agape-love/>

**(Many different Hebrew/Aramaic and Greek words are translated as LOVE. Just some of them are in this video which summarises my message this morning.)**

**Biblical love -the 5min video can be downloaded from the link below.**



Love is throughout the bible. In 1 John 4:7-21 The words ‘love’, ‘loves’ and ‘loved’ appear twenty-seven times in this short passage

## **What about Truth** What is truth?

When Jesus met nobleman Pilot on trial, Pilot was a group 1 guy. Too worldly to connect with **THE truth**.

(John 18:37-38 NLT) *“Pilate said, “So you are a king?” Jesus responded, “You say I am a king. Actually, I was born and came into the world to testify to the truth. All who love the truth recognize that what I say is true.”*

*“What is truth?” Pilate asked. Then he went out again to the people and told them, “He is not guilty of any crime.”*

This is the **only place in the bible where Jesus was asked a question but there is no record of an answer.**

**Perhaps Jesus knew that the best way to learn about truth, is to see “The Truth” in action.**

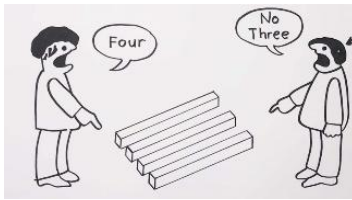
**We see the truth in action when we keep our eyes upon him. Actions speaking louder and more clearly than words -including in the many enacted parables of Jesus.**

**Do people see Jesus is us?**

## What is Truth?

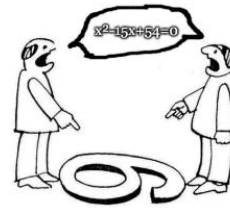
Truth is not a yes/no or zero/one matter. There is too much digital thinking in an analogue world. Black and white in a grey world.

Even educated people, can interpret numbers differently. We see things from our own perspective, understanding and experience.



Whilst talking  
comments above.

Show one at a time



Worldly wisdom and **sounding clever can fall short in a spiritual perspective.**

**Half-truths** added together can paint an untrue picture. In courts we ask for the **Truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth.**

**Biblical events** written by over 40 different authors make the bible **more** truthful and genuine. If the police hear different **witnesses describe things the same way, it could just be a well-rehearsed pe-prepared story. Not first-hand evidence at all. We understand and describe things from our own perspective for the diverse audiences before us. Just like many biblical authors and what they include in their advent events.**

**In truth** -the cutest dog in the world. I **Love** him!

**My truth.**



**Why can't humans hear a dog whistle?** I could offer a **truthful** answer about frequency reception in human ears. BUT Why can't humans can hear a dog whistle? **The real truth is: dogs can't whilst.**

**As Eugene Peterson says: "Wisdom is not primarily about knowing the truth, although it certainly includes that; it is skill in living."**

(James 2:17 MSG) ***"Isn't it obvious that God-talk without God-acts is outrageous nonsense?"***

Most communication is nonverbal. 90% of words are forgotten. **How you make people feel is remembered. How you live is a more important witness than words.** We need to live our love for God and others demonstrably.



**Heroes of faith exemplify Gods love in action.**

**Many are listed in Hebrews 11. Enacted love priorities?**

Remember Isaiah 61 where the spirit of the sovereign lord brings good news **to the poor, broken-hearted, prisoners and mourners.**  
**Love neighbors in need.** We are all equal before God.

**Any heroes nowadays? Many!**

The school of discipleship considered **Dietrich Bonhoeffer**. How about: *Jackie Pullinger, William Wilberforce* - **superb example of loving leaders** holding together the tension between **vision and controlled restraint**, to ensure effective response with impact.

**Another: Martyn Luther King. He lived the truth demonstrably.**

Around midnight on January 27, 1956 his parsonage phone rang. He and his family were threatened for his non-violent response for equality. It was making a difference.

**Following the way and the truth was frightening in the extreme.**

*"Lord, I am here taking a stand for what I believe is right. But now I am afraid. The people are **looking to me for leadership**, and if I stand before them without strength and courage, they too will falter. I am at the end of my powers. I have nothing left. I've come to the point where I can't face it alone."*

**Have you been in that place? I have.**

I needed to know his presence. **Heart Felt and Soul Full.**

## **He heard an inner voice saying.**

***“Martin Luther, stand up for righteousness, stand up for justice, stand up for truth. And lo I will be with you, even until the end of the world.” And I’ll tell you, I’ve seen the lightning flash. I’ve heard the thunder roll. I felt sin-breakers dashing, trying to conquer my soul. But I heard the voice of Jesus saying still to fight on. He promised never to leave me, never to leave me alone. No, never alone. No, never alone. He promised never to leave me, never to leave me alone.”***

*With that assurance. His courage returned.*

***God is with us.***

*(Hebrews 13:5-6 NLT) Don’t love money; be satisfied with what you have. For God has said, “I will never fail you. I will never abandon you.” So we can say with confidence, “The LORD is my helper, so I will have no fear. What can mere people do to me?”*

**Group 2 people:** *John the Baptist was executed because of his service to God. I think this was the probable outcome for Paul.*

***In discussion with Pilot, Jesus did what the father asked*** *despite knowing how he would suffer and die.*

## **Have WE really given our lives to Christ?**

**Martyn Luther King did.**

***“Like anybody, I would like to live a long life. Longevity has its place. But I'm not concerned about that now. I just want to do God's will. And He's allowed me to go up to the mountain. And I've looked over. And I've seen the Promised Land. I may not get there with you. But I want you to know tonight, that we, as a people, will get to the promised land!***

***And so I'm happy, tonight.***

***I'm not worried about anything.***

***I'm not fearing any man!***

***Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord!”***

I think we know that he was shot and killed.

**(Matthew 16:24 NLT) “Then Jesus said to his disciples, “If any of you wants to be my follower, you must **give up your own way,** take up your cross, and follow me.”**

**To conclude this sermon -scripture puts things better than me.**

The Kingdom of God is for all people. But we **need to let our kingdom go**, for his kingdom to come into our lives.

(1Jn 1:8-9 NLT) **If we claim we have no sin, we are only fooling ourselves and not living in the truth. But if we confess our sins to him, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all wickedness.**

We are supposed to **love people and use things**. We go wrong when we start **loving things and using people**.

(Albert Schweitzer, the French theologian), **'Example is not the main thing in influencing others – it is the only thing.'**

Jesus our example to follow. (1Jn 3:18 NLT) **Dear children, let's not merely say that we love each other; let us show the truth by our actions.**

(John 14:6 NLT) **Jesus told him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one can come to the Father except through me.** Selfish roads separate people from our awesome holy God. We can't find **the way** on our own. The sacrificial **God of grace brought him to us.** Put posh: **Justification, Regeneration and Sanctification for Salvation.**

(1Jn 2:6 NLT) **"Those who say they live in God should live their lives as Jesus did."**

**The evidence of true faith is love – love for God, love for Jesus, love for others. Faith expresses itself in love."**

## **Application -follow the example of Jesus?**

(Hebrews 12:1-2 NLT) “Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a huge crowd of witnesses to the life of faith, let us strip off every weight that slows us down, especially the sin that so easily trips us up. And let us run with endurance the race God has set before us.

We do this by keeping our eyes on Jesus, the champion who initiates and perfects our faith. Because of the joy awaiting him, he endured the cross, disregarding its shame. Now he is seated in the place of honour beside God’s throne.”

## **Are you left with unanswered **questions?****

I may stand at the front, but **I don’t have all the answers. But I’d like to point the way to Jesus. The one who is the answer. That’s the job of all Christian here today.**

## **Intercession (\*\*\*\*)**

### **Final worship (\*\*\*\*)**

**How deep the Father’s love for us**

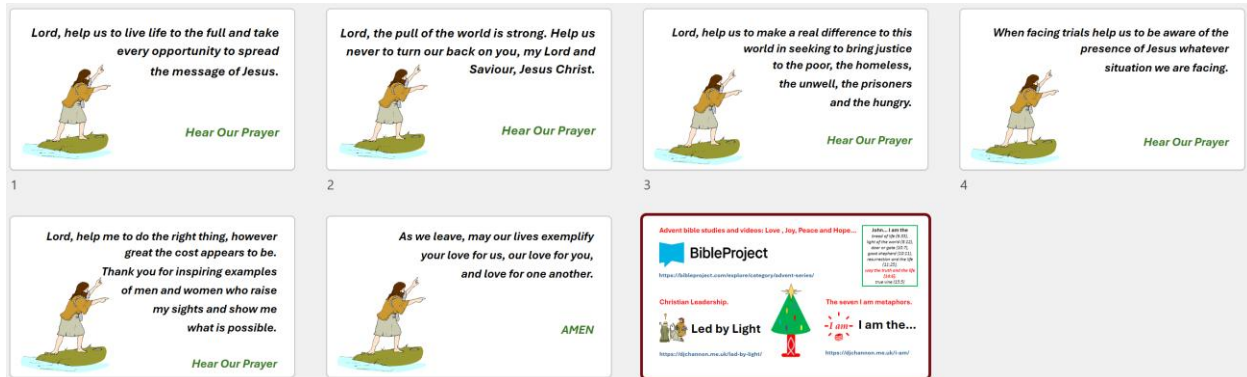
**The Power of Your Love**

**Children come back in point and return to their adults**

**From the squalor of a borrowed stable**

## Close (David Channon)

**Sometimes adults need more depth, but... What can we learn from Horatio, I think it's sufficient to say. On our own we are lost, but if Jesus we trust, he's promised to show us the way.**



Can **bible verses during sermon** be on screen?  
(Screen things are in Green in notes)

**At close:**

Can **prayers** be on screen? **Final image** as we leave.