

Methodist Homes Sunday:
Creating Communities of Care

Call to worship

Jesus says "I came that they might have life and have it abundantly" John 10.10

This year the MHA Sunday service reflects on the Parable of the Good Samaritan

Luke 10:25-37 – a story that reminds us that care is not one-directional. At MHA we believe that true care is a gift that flows both ways.

Read, pray or sing Hymn StF 28 v1-3

[Jesus call us here to meet him. Lyric video \(StF 28\)](#)

Jesus calls us here to meet him
as, through word and song and prayer,
we affirm God's promised presence
where his people live and care.
Praise the God who keeps his promise;
praise the Son who calls us friends;
praise the Spirit who, among us,
to our hopes and fears attends.

Jesus calls us to confess him
Word of life and Lord of all,
sharer of our flesh and frailness,
saving all who fail or fall.
Tell his holy human story;
tell his tales that all may hear;
tell the world that Christ in glory
came to earth to meet us here.

Jesus calls us to each other
vastly different though we are;
creed and colour, class and gender
neither limit nor debar.
Join the hand of friend and stranger;
join the hands of age and youth;
join the faithful and the doubter
in their common search for truth.

John Bell (B. 1949) & Graham Maule (B.1958)

Prayer

Loving God, as we worship you today
help us to hear your promise of abundant life,
to recognize your presence in all people
and commit ourselves anew to living our lives
in the light of your love.
In the name of Jesus Christ. Amen

Irene's story

Today we meet Irene who has been diagnosed with dementia. When Irene moved into an MHA care home community, she might have been seen as someone in need of care – but the reality is richer. Through the warmth of chaplaincy and support teams, she gives and receives in equal measure – bringing joy to others, checking in on staff, and helping to build a true community of care.

Watch the MHA Sunday 2025 video

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m_-9f6bGr5c



Read, pray or sing Hymn StF 621 Tune: Finlandia
[Jean Sibelius - Finlandia](#)

When memory fades and recognition falters,
when eyes we love grow dim, and minds confused,
speak to our souls of love that never alters;
speak to our hearts by pain and fear abused.
O God of life and healing peace, empower us
with patient courage, by your grace infused.

As frailness grows, and youthful strengths diminish
in weary arms, which worked their earnest fill,
your ageing servants labour now to finish
their earthly tasks, as fits your mystery's will.
We grieve their waning, yet rejoice, believing
your arms, unwearied, shall uphold us still.

Within your Spirit, goodness lives unfading.
The past and present mingle into one.
All joys remain, with heavenly light pervading.
No valued deed will ever be undone.
Your mind enfolds all finite acts and offerings,
Held in your heart, our deathless life is won.

Mary Louise Bringle (B.1953)

Bible reading: Luke 10. 25-37

The Good Samaritan

Reflection

This year, on Methodist Homes Sunday, we meet Irene, one of our residents living with dementia. Irene's life has been full of love – family holidays by the sea, afternoons spent gardening and bustling dining room tables filled with friends and neighbours. Irene's children, Gary and Julie, light up when they talk about her. They recall how their mum created a home where they felt safe, secure and deeply loved. But as Irene grew older, life changed. Everyday tasks became harder, and her diagnosis of dementia brought new challenges. It could have been a time of isolation but Irene's journey took a different path. At Fitzwarren House in Swindon she found not just care but a community. There are challenges, but here's the remarkable thing: Irene continues to bless those around her.

The Good Samaritan

In today's scripture a lawyer asks Jesus "How do I inherit eternal life?" Jesus turns the question back to him: "What does the Torah say?" The lawyer answers "Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul and mind and love your neighbour as yourself." "You've answered well" Jesus says. "Do this and you will live." It seems like the conversation should end there but the lawyer presses further: "Who is my neighbour?" To answer Jesus tells a story. A man is beaten, robbed and left for dead. A priest and a Levite pass by without helping. But a Samaritan – an outsider, someone despised in that society – stops. He cares for the man, tends his wounds and ensures his recovery. The Samaritan's actions redefine what it means to be a neighbour. It's not about proximity or status – it's about compassion, generosity and love that crosses boundaries.

Re-thinking Dementia

In our society people often see those living with dementia as though they are the ones lying on the side of the road- helpless, in need of rescue. It's true that a dementia diagnosis brings loss and grief, and those living with it often need specialist care. But that's not the whole story. Every person living with dementia is unique. You may have noticed this if you've cared for or loved someone with dementia. Some days are harder than others. One day their memory will be impaired; on others it will improve. At times they may be lit up with joy, but at others, they may be more anxious. Tom Kitwood, a writer on dementia, likes to say 'if you meet a person with dementia, you have met one person living with dementia. Every journey is different'. Irene's story challenges the assumption that people living with dementia are passive recipients of care. Instead she shows us what it means to live fully and generously.

Care: A Two-Way Gift

At Fitzwarren House Irene is a source of life and joy. Her neighbour described her as a Good Samaritan. She greets Maria, the music therapist, with warmth and enthusiasm. She organizes domino games and gently enforces the rules. She checks in on the care team, offering them her kindness. Irene is not only a recipient of care, she is a giver. In the language of the parable, she is a neighbour to her community. She helps the people around her slow down and notice the important things.

The best care flows in two directions: sometimes we give and sometimes receive care. Time with Irene is like that. She draws you out of yourself and focuses on the important things. Irene reminds us that when society might overlook someone, they still have gifts to share. At MHA we believe everyone should have the chance to give and receive in a community that values them for who they are. The kingdom of God is made of people of all abilities, each contributing their unique gifts. It takes a whole community – professionals, residents, families and friends – to create a space where people can flourish.

Our call

In Irene's story and the parable of the Good Samaritan we see that love and care are not one-directional. In God's kingdom, the lines between giver and receiver blur as we find moments to serve and to be served. Irene's life demonstrates that even in the face of challenges like dementia, each of us carries gifts that bless those around us.

The call to love our neighbour is not limited to a single act of compassion – it's a way of life. It's about creating communities where everyone is valued, seen and included, where people can give and receive in ways that reflect their unique gifts and experiences. As we reflect on Irene's generosity and the Samaritan's courage, let us ask ourselves: How can I build a community of care in my life? How can I embody neighbourliness in my actions? This MHA Sunday may we be inspired by Irene's generosity, by the Samaritan's courage, and by God's boundless love, to go and do likewise.

Read, pray or sing Hymn StF 524 Tune: Noel Nouvelet

Hymn tune: NOEL NOUVELET

Listening God, you hear us when we cannot speak,
when despair and turmoil leave us faint and weak.
In love you call us back to you again
and your grace reminds us how you feel our pain.

Searching God, you find us when we go astray,
as self-centred living takes us from your way.
In love you seek us, show us what we've lost,
and your tears remind us what forgiveness cost.

Suffering God, you lift us from our deepest grief,
when emotions blind us to our own belief.
In love you touch us with your nail-torn hand
and your wounds remind us why you understand.

Risen God, you show us love too strong for death,
evil deeds defeated by your living breath.
In love you teach us never to despair,
your new life reminds us, hope is always there.

Marjorie Dobson (b.1940)

Offertory prayer

Heavenly Father, all things come from you and of your own do we give you. We offer our gifts of thanksgiving for all we have received, Lord, accept the gifts we give, our regular offering for the work of the church and Circuit, donations we make to charities like Methodist Homes, and our gifts of time and energy as we walk in your way. May they be used fruitfully in your service. Amen

Prayers on intercession

Lord God, we give you thanks for the joys of life, for family, for music, for friends, for fun. We give you thanks for the work of MHA, as they work to help people in later life to continue to enjoy all the good things you provide. We thank you for people like Irene, good Samaritans in unlikely places, who put others before themselves even in the face of their own needs. As we come before you now with our concerns this MHA Sunday, may our prayers strengthen the work of MHA, and our own resolve to help others live later life well.

Loving God, hear our prayer

Creator God, help us to enjoy and protect all your creation. We pray for a fair sharing of the good things you give, and for justice, peace and equity throughout the world. Bless all those in later life, whatever their circumstances and wherever they live. Give your peace to those who are worried about their health, and to those living with any long term diagnosis, and today we especially ask your blessing on people like Irene who are living with dementia. May they continue to enjoy life in abundance.

Loving God, hear our prayer

Heavenly Father, bless families who are walking the journey that Irene's family are treading; those concerned for a loved one, those seeking to care at home and those taking decisions about housing and care, with and for a family member. We pray for assurance of your love for them, that they may find the right place for those in their care. We ask that you will give wisdom and insight to those in positions of power, that the needs of those requiring care in our nation may be met and that the cost may be borne fairly.

Loving God, hear our prayer

Almighty God, strengthen and sustain the work of MHA across communities, retirement living schemes and in care homes up and down our land. Bless and keep colleagues working throughout the organization, managers like Sue, carers like Julie, music therapists like Maria, chaplains like Carolyn and all the other staff who create community within different settings. We pray too for those who are charged with leading MHA, for the Board, the CEO and the leadership team, that they might have the insights and skills required to enable the charity to fulfil its purposes, whose mission is to deliver trusted, high quality care and support services that enrich the lives of older people. With decades of experience MHA is committed to providing compassionate and highly-rated care and support, tailored to meet the unique needs of each individual, ensuring dignity, respect and a positive impact in every community we serve. To nurture, to inspire and to respect are the values that have been held at the heart of MHA for more than 80 years. This is what they mean to us and to every individual and family that we support: We nurture mind, body and spirit. We inspire the best in each other. We respect every person, treating them with dignity.

Loving God, hear our prayer

Loving God, we bring these prayers in the power of your Spirit, through your Son, Jesus Christ. Amen

We pray the Lord's Prayer

Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name;
thy kingdom come, thy will be done
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread,
and forgive us our trespasses
as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory
for ever and ever. Amen

Read, pray or sing Hymn StF 526 Tune: Slane
[Lord of All Hopefulness \(Slane\) \(Singing the Faith 526 / StF 526\) with lyrics and singing](#)

Lord of all hopefulness, Lord of all joy
whose trust ever childlike no cares could destroy,
be there at our waking and give us, we pray,
your bliss in our hearts, Lord, at the break of the day.

Lord of all eagerness, Lord of all faith,
whose strong hands were skilled at the plane and the
lathe,
be there at our labours and give us, we pray,
your strength in our hearts, Lord, at the noon of the
day.

Lord of all kindliness, Lord of all grace,
your hands swift to welcome, your arms to embrace,
be there at our homing and give us, we pray,
your love in our hearts, Lord, at the eve of the day.

Lord of all gentleness, Lord of all calm,
whose voice is contentment, whose presence is balm,
be there at our sleeping and give us, we pray,
your peace in our hearts, Lord, at the end of the day.

Jan Struther (Joyce Placzek)
(1901-1953)

Blessing

May our small acts of care grow by God's spirit
to encompass all who need fellowship, friendship or
love;
may our small gifts of time be used fruitfully,
blossoming into more than we expect or hope,
and may our small acts of faith be rewarded
in ways that surprise and delight us,
and may the blessing of the God of love,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit, be with us,
and all those for whom we care, now and forever.
Amen

Resources:
mha.org.uk/Sunday
CCLI: 30794