World Mission Council

Church of Scotland HIV Programme

Souper Sunday 2017

Service theme: Salt & Light.

(Matthew 5 13-16)
Introduction

Welcome to Souper Sunday 2017. This act of worship may be used on any Sunday of the year. This order of service is offered as a guide to how worship might be led in your Souper Sunday celebrations. You can use it in its entirety, but feel free to adapt it to your own local situation. (e.g. Think about where you would normally have intimations. etc.)

Before the service you need to:

- Recruit your participants. Identify roles for each – e.g. worship leader, someone to deliver the all-age talk, people to read and to pray.
- Gather what you need for the all-age talk.
- Prepare a very simple soup and bread lunch for after the service, either in church or (as catering facilities may dictate) at members’ homes

We also suggest that you order Gift Aid envelopes from the Church of Scotland HIV Programme for lunch attenders. You might also consider using our optional images, leaflets, PowerPoint presentation, and children’s craft resources for your Sunday School or Junior Church.

These resources, along with others, may be ordered by e-mailing hiv@churchofscotland.org.uk; some are also downloadable from www.churchofscotland.org.uk/serve/world_mission

All hymns noted here are taken from the Church Hymnary Fourth edition (CH4), although other hymns may be substituted. The Bible readings printed in this order of service are taken from the New International Version.
Order of Service
Those leading the service enter and sit in the chancel or delegated seats.

Welcome

Worship leader gives welcome (and intimations), ending with:

Today, our service is a special act of worship led by elders and members of our congregation, as we celebrate “Souper Sunday”. “Souper Sunday” is an initiative of the Church of Scotland HIV Programme. It allows us to look at some of the issues around HIV, as well as to raise money for projects around the world that are responding to the challenge of HIV.

This year, we focus on the passage of salt and light from Matthew’s Gospel and think of how, as a church community, we can be salt and light in our community and in the world.

At the close of our service, everyone (whether church member or visitor here today) is warmly invited to share in a simple lunch of soup and bread. This will take place in (INSERT NAME OF LUNCH VENUE HERE) where there will also be an opportunity to make a donation to benefit the vital work of the Church of Scotland HIV Programme.

And now, let us take a moment of silence as we prepare to worship.

(A FEW SECONDS OF SILENCE)

Call to worship:
Shout it aloud, do not hold back. Raise your voice like a trumpet. (Isaiah 58:1)

Hymn: Let us worship God, singing to his praise Hymn number 623
Here in this place, new light is streaming.
(ALL SING)

Worship Leader: Please be seated.
Let us pray:

In the rising of the sun and in its setting, you are…
In the calm of the night and in the busyness of the day – you are…
In the midst of smiles and in each teardrop, in the cries of despair and in the silence of desolation – you are…
Father God, open the eyes of our souls to your constant presence…
that we may draw strength from you and inspiration…
that we may choose to live like you, following the example of your Son
who rejoiced with those who were rejoicing, challenged those who
thought they knew best, grew angry at injustice, spoke up for those
ignored
carried the suffering, and in so doing showed his love for you with all his
heart, soul, mind and strength…
Breathe his Spirit into us, we pray and into this day, that we may we find
the courage, to go and do likewise.
And Jesus taught us to pray, let us together say The Lord’s Prayer

All: 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 debts,
    as we forgive our debtors.
    And lead us not into temptation,
    but deliver us from evil.
    For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory,
    for ever. AMEN

All Age talk

Today one of the things we are going to be thinking about is salt and what
difference does it make?

- Bring out some packets of salt and shake crisps.
- Ask the children to try the crisps without the salt
- What do they think of them?
• Open the little blue bag in a grand gesture and sprinkle the salt over the crisps and shake vigorously!
• Let the children taste the crisps again.
• Ask if they taste better now? (Most people would agree that the crisps without the salt is a bit bland and tasteless and that after the salt is added then they taste better.)
• Then say Jesus tells us we are like the salt, by doing small things to help others can make a big difference.
• Then talk about how today we are having a Souper Sunday, learning a bit about a virus called HIV which can make people all over the world really ill. Just like the little bag of salt, our help can make a big difference to people’s lives. That is why we support the Church of Scotland HIV programme.

Let us pray:
Dear God, help us to be like salt, so that we can make changes in our world by what we do. Help us to be aware of the times when we can do even something very small that will help people in need, so that they can know that you love and care for them. Bless them, and us, as we are all part of your great family. In Jesus’ name we pray.
Amen.

Worship leader:
Hymn: 204 I am the church, you are the church, we are the church together.

Children leave

Bible Reading
Our reading this morning is taken from the Gospel of Matthew, chapter 5, reading from verse 13 to verse 16.

13 “You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled underfoot.
“You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.

Contemporary reading.

Today’s contemporary reading is two small excerpts from volunteers with Waverley Care, which is Scotland’s HIV and Hepatitis C charity, who provide services all over Scotland. The Church of Scotland HIV Programme supports a small part of the work of Waverley Care and several of the volunteers are members of the church. Hear the voices of two of them.

Voice 1: I am Sandra. I started volunteering in the early 1990s, helping out in the drop in cafe. It was a safe place at a time when not a lot was understood about HIV and medication was in its infancy.

I was given counselling training and was there as a listening ear for service users when they needed to talk. It could be about anything from how they were coping to what they were watching on TV.

Now I help out as a befriender, meeting up with a couple of people and helping them with day-to-day things like the grocery shopping. The real benefit for me is the feeling that I’m giving something back, helping people who need support in difficult times.

Voice 2: I am Jim. When I retired I’d always intended to get involved in volunteering. I approached Waverley Care because I know a few people living with or affected by HIV and the organisation seemed absolutely clear about what they stood for and what they were aiming to achieve.

I find it very rewarding to be playing a small part in the organisation’s work. I like the fact that the focus is always exactly where it should be – on the people who use the services.
I enjoy meeting such a wide range of interesting people, with different ages, backgrounds and life experiences. Volunteers are welcomed, supported and valued and there are so many interesting opportunities available.

**Hymn : 692** Jesus puts this song into our hearts.

**SERMON**

In a short little extract from a conversation with Jesus, the writer of the gospel captures two powerful, fabulous metaphors for what a life with Jesus looks, and tastes like.

Who would have thought that a life with Jesus actually tasted of something?! But, then, the disciples would never have dreamt what life was going to be like when they set out on their journey with this strange man who had called them from their lives. They could never have imagined what they’d encounter, or the people they’d meet, or the situations they’d find themselves in. A life with Jesus was definitely tasty at times!

Today, we are a little ambivalent towards salt, with refrigerators to preserve things and most of us heeding the doctor's calls to go easy on the salt for the sake of our blood pressure! But in Jesus' day salt was a powerful commodity and an essential part of life. Something precious, the effects of which went a long way. Salt could keep food fresh and nourishing. Just a little could improve the taste of a dish. But salt that was stale wasn't much use for anything else. Use it or lose it, because if it goes off its fit only to be thrown out.

Light, on the other hand, is a bit different. It isn't a commodity to be bought and sold. Nor is it something tangible that you can touch or hold or quantify. But, yet, without light, we’re nothing. Light dates back to the beginning of time. In the dark we stumble around banging into things. In the light, everything makes sense. Dark can be frightening and mystifying.

In the light, we feel safer, and things become clearer. God is likened to light throughout the Bible, and Jesus says 'I am the light of the world' in John's gospel.
Salt and light. Two very different things and now Jesus says to his friends that this is how they’re to be. They’re to be tasty. To make things around them taste better. They’re to bring light into darkness.

These two metaphors were a call to action to Jesus’ disciples, and they can be for us too. We’re to be tasty, improving the situations we find ourselves in. Making life better. Even a little action can make all the difference.....you don’t need an awful lot of salt to make a big improvement. And we can't hide the light of Jesus within us. (or shouldn’t – because what’s the point in a light if you don’t use it?!) Just as Jesus is the light of the world, we are to be as well. Ordinary you and me. To bring what we see and hear out into the light, exposing darkness for what it is. Letting our actions not be hidden but clear for all to see.

When the disciples started out on their journey with Jesus, they had no idea who they were going to meet. Along the way, we can read of lots of encounters that they’d have rather not had. Lots of times when Jesus introduced them to folks they’d have rather kept at a distance. Lots of people that they’d already made judgements about.

HIV and Aids are pretty stigmatising conditions to be labelled with. It’s easy to judge others without actually knowing much about them. Many people find it hard to be open about their status, because they know what will possibly be the look they’ll get, or the involuntary body movement they may see when they tell someone for the first time. They’ve seen it countless times before. People are quick to imagine lots of things about what it’s like to live with HIV or Aids, and already have stigmatised the person before they’ve even got to know them.

When Jesus met folk that everyone else judged or shunned or pitied, he did the opposite. He touched when society rules said he shouldn’t have. He spoke when he was meant to be silent. He walked towards, when the rules said walk away. He listened when no one else ever did. He brought salt and light into every single meeting and every single encounter.

In a very small way, the Church of Scotland’s HIV Programme has tried to be salt and light for people living with these labels, and the very real
physical and emotional issues that come with them. Salt and light. Making things taste a little better. Making dark places just a little bit lighter. And especially when so many others would rather walk on by.

Let’s hear from one of the projects that you have helped to fund and support... (Play one or a selection of the video clips.) OR Let’s hear about one of the projects that you have helped to fund and support...(have another voice read a short extract.)

Here at home, or far away on the other side of the planet, there are people like you and me living with HIV and Aids. And for many, in many places, it’s not just a physical illness, but one that comes with a whole lot of judgements and baggage that make things even worse. Maybe these are exactly the sorts of situations that Jesus was asking his friends to bring light into. Maybe these are exactly the sorts of people that Jesus wanted his friends to make life a little better for.

Over the years we, collectively, have been salt and light in Christ’s name. And that work continues, both at home and abroad, supported by you. Jesus posed his friends the challenge, and through them, us....how can we be salt and light to the people we meet, and the people we learn of?

This Souper Sunday (or Sundae Sunday), can we make the question even more specific? How can we be salt and light to those who live with HIV and Aids? How can we improve the world we live in, even with a little action, God's love can go a long way? How can we shine a light for others to see the suffering and difficulty that many with HIV and Aids have to live with? How can we be a light for them by rejecting the stereotypes and labels, and instead being the friend that Jesus was? Can we be a volunteer for Waverley Care or Positive Help, can we support the work of our partners financially and prayerfully at home and overseas? Can we educate ourselves to understand about HIV and Aids and begin in our small way to reduce stigma for those infected and affected?

To be salt and light is a calling from God. It can be a gift too. But it’s also a challenge, because there’s not much point in salt that’s gone off and lost its saltiness. And only someone who was daft would hide their light!
Salt and light. Good things. Jesus wants good things for us all, and for us all to be good things for others. Amen.

Hymn CH4 694: Brother, sister, let me serve you

Offering
Worship leader: Today as the offering plate comes to you and as an act of worship, the acknowledgement of following Jesus’s example of being salt and light to others, please take a red ribbon, the universal symbol of awareness and support for those living with HIV.
(The Offering is taken up and/or brought forward)

Prayers of dedication and intercession

Holy God, to you be honour and praise. You are the light that allows us to see the glory of your creation, and the glory of each living person. You are the salt that brings out the unique and special flavour of all that exists and of all that can be experienced. In Jesus Christ we have a teacher who reveals to us what it feels like to be blessed, and what it takes to be a blessing to others. Today, grant us a spirit of discernment that we may never remain blissfully unaware of what it means to be truly blessed in your love for us, nor ignorant of the many opportunities in our lives to extend this blessing to all.

Loving God, every person is precious in your eyes, and you provide comfort and hope to all those who suffer. Be present with all people who are HIV positive and their families, in our land and every land, that they may be strengthened in their search for health, wholeness and abundant living,

Be with groups and organisations that respond faithfully and with sacrifice to the daily needs of people infected and affected by HIV. Particularly the Church of Scotland HIV Programme. Guide all organisations that advocate prevention through education and outreach that they may be successful in their efforts especially among at-risk populations and among those with health disparities. We remember today particularly all who are involved with Waverley Care, Positive Help and the Terence Higgins Trust here in
Scotland and all who tirelessly work in HIV programmes in our partner churches overseas.

Inspire and encourage the women and men who spend their lives researching treatments and possible cures. Bless them with wisdom and knowledge.

Receive all 35 million people who have died of AIDS during last 35 years, and give them peace in your eternal presence.

Caring God, you have promised “I will never leave you; I will never abandon you”. It is with this calm assurance, believing that your Kingdom will come, that we offer our prayers to you this day through Jesus Christ. Amen.

Worship leader A word of thanks goes to everyone who has taken part in today’s service, and in Souper Sunday as a whole. And a reminder to everyone that a warming lunch of soup and bread awaits us. All are most welcome to join us for lunch in (INSERT LUNCH VENUE)

Hymn
And now we close our time of worship by singing Hymn CH4 166: Lord of all hopefulness, Lord of all Joy.

(ALL SING)

Benediction:

Worship leader
May we reflect the light of God, may we shine brightly for his Kingdom may we invite others to taste God’s goodness and may we know his blessing, now and always. Amen.
Contact:
HIV Programme
World Mission Council
121 George Street
Edinburgh. EH2 4YN
Tel: 0131 225 5722
Email: hiv@churchofscotland.org.uk  Charity No: SC011353