

# World Mission Council

## Church of Scotland HIV Programme

### Souper Sunday 2020

### Service theme: Caring For One Another



#### Introduction

Welcome to Souper Sunday 2020. 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. Souper Sunday is designed to be an elder-led service. You can use it in its entirety, or select parts of it to use – please feel free to adapt it to your own local situation.

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. You may wish to have different people reading different sections of the talk – e.g. one to read the parts about the passage and one to read the parts about projects funded by the programme.
- 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, or for those who wish to give but can't stay for lunch. 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](mailto:hiv@churchofscotland.org.uk)  
They are also downloadable from [www.churchofscotland.org.uk/serve/world\\_mission](http://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 partners around the world that are responding to the challenge of HIV.

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 have a moment of silence as we prepare to worship.

### ***Call to Worship: Psalm 100***

Shout for joy to the LORD, all the earth.

Worship the LORD with gladness; come before him with joyful songs.

Know that the LORD is God. It is he who made us, and we are his; we are his people, the sheep of his pasture.

Enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise; give thanks to him and praise his name.

For the LORD is good and his love endures forever; his faithfulness continues through all generations.

Amen

### **HYMN CH4 608**

#### **Spirit of Truth and Grace**

**Worship leader** : Please be seated

#### **Let us Pray**

Loving God, we thank You that when two or three are gathered in Your name, You are with us.

We pray that as we come to You with hearts, minds and spirits open to receive, that You draw close to us.

Lord, let us feel your presence.

Loving God, we thank You that You keep in perfect peace those whose minds are steadfast, because they trust in You. Help us find in You today the peace that passes all understanding.

Lord, let us feel your peace.

Loving God, we thank You that Your love for us is unending and unending. As your love pours into our hearts, let us be open to loving those around us who are in need.

Lord, let us feel your love.

Bless us as we worship you today, teach us as we read from Your word, and hear us as we pray the words that Jesus taught us... **Our Father** .....

#### **Lord's Prayer**

## **All age talk**

Props needed – a blanket, a flask of soup, and a jug of water and a cup.

Get 3 volunteers up (ideally children),

Now, I want you to imagine that you are feeling really unwell. You've had some medicine but what else do you think you might need to feel better? (wait for responses)

How about a blanket to get nice and cosy and warm? (Give one the blanket and get them to wrap up in it and go to one side of the chancel.)

How about some nice soup to fill you up? (Give one the soup and get them to go to the other side)

How about a drink of water? (give one the jug of water and get them to stand in-between somewhere)

Now, are you all feeling a lot better? One of you is warm, one of you is fed, one of you has had a drink! No? Hmm. Ok, what could you do to help you all feel better? (Wait for responses)

You could share your blanket and have a hug together (get them to do that)

You could share your soup (get them to do that)

You could share your water (get them to do that).

No one has lost anything, everyone has gained and feels better.

This morning we are going to be learning about a bug that some people have called HIV. There is medicine that can help people feel better, but they don't get better just by having the medicine – they need food, water, care and someone to look after them.

Jesus teaches us that as Christians we should care for those who are in need, and share what we have with them. Churches all around the world have asked for our help as they care for people who have HIV. By helping them, we are doing as Jesus taught us, and sharing what we have with those who need it.

## **Let us Pray**

Dear God. Thank you that we have food to eat, water to drink, blankets to keep us warm, and medicines for when we are ill. Help us share what we have with those around the world who don't have these things. We pray that as churches around the world work with those are sick, that they will feel your love. Amen.

## **Hymn : CH4 504**

### **Two Little Fishes**

Children leave

## **Bible readings**

Our first reading this morning is taken from the Book of Psalms

### **Psalm 119:33-40**

Teach me, Lord, the way of your decrees,  
that I may follow it to the end  
Give me understanding, so that I may keep your law  
and obey it with all my heart.  
Direct me in the path of your commands,  
for there I find delight.  
Turn my heart toward your statutes  
and not toward selfish gain.  
Turn my eyes away from worthless things;  
preserve my life according to your word.  
Fulfill your promise to your servant,  
so that you may be feared.  
Take away the disgrace I dread,  
for your laws are good.  
How I long for your precepts!  
In your righteousness preserve my life.

Our second reading is taken from the Gospel of John.

### **John 6:1-14**

#### **Jesus Feeds the Five Thousand**

Some time after this, Jesus crossed to the far shore of the Sea of Galilee (that is, the Sea of Tiberias), and a great crowd of people followed him because they saw the signs he had performed by healing the sick. Then Jesus went up on a mountainside and sat down with his disciples. The Jewish Passover Festival was near.

When Jesus looked up and saw a great crowd coming toward him, he said to Philip, "Where shall we buy bread for these people to eat?" He asked this only to test him, for he already had in mind what he was going to do.

Philip answered him, "It would take more than half a year's wages to buy enough bread for each one to have a bite!"

Another of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, spoke up, "Here is a boy with five small barley loaves and two small fish, but how far will they go among so many?"

Jesus said, "Have the people sit down." There was plenty of grass in that place, and they sat down (about five thousand men were there). Jesus then took the loaves, gave thanks, and distributed to those who were seated as much as they wanted. He did the same with the fish. When they had all had enough to eat, he said to his disciples, "Gather the pieces that are left over. Let nothing be wasted." So they gathered them and filled twelve baskets with the pieces of the five barley loaves left over by those who had eaten.

After the people saw the sign Jesus performed, they began to say, "Surely this is the Prophet who is to come into the world."

### **HYMN CH4 193**

#### **God is love, His the care**

## Talk

In the passage from John we heard the story of Jesus feeding 5000 people. This is the only miracle that is reported in all 4 Gospels, apart from the story of the Resurrection of Jesus. John writes the story a little differently from the others. He doesn't want to just tell us the story; he wants to tell us what it means. He wants us to learn some important things from it – about God, about Jesus, and about the church.

### Physical, as well as spiritual needs

In this story, the thousands of people had gathered for the day to hear Jesus speak. Jesus had spent the day tending to the spiritual needs of those around him, yet his care did not stop there. He realised that all these people who had come to hear him, some from miles away, would be tired and hungry. He understood that although he had met their spiritual needs, people come with physical needs too, and they needed to rest and eat. All he had to hand was 5 loaves of bread, and 2 fish, but with these, Jesus and His disciples were able to ensure that everyone was well fed, with food to spare.

The Church of Scotland HIV Programme currently supports 17 projects in 13 countries, including Scotland. Lots of these projects around the world are run by partner churches of the Church of Scotland, who have taken the lesson from Jesus that as Christians, we should have eyes that are open to see the needs of those around us, and a willingness to meet these needs.

In Zambia, Mwandu Mission AIDS Relief – through the United Church of Zambia - works with those in the area who are HIV positive. Currently over 1500 people are regularly receiving antiretroviral medication from the hospital. This medicine can stop HIV from spreading through their bodies and are crucial in helping those who have HIV live longer, healthier lives. However, the drugs are only able to work if the person taking them has a good balanced diet, and in many areas of the world, Zambia included, this is a real problem. The Church of Scotland HIV Programme supports a Nutritional Care Programme at Mwandu Mission, so that people receiving treatment for HIV can also be given food packs with things like beans, peanut butter and dehydrated vegetable soups.

The church in Zambia has had eyes open to see the need around them, and – with support from the Church of Scotland, is working to help meet that need, just as Jesus and His disciples did.

### Gathering Together

In this passage, John also tells us that the story took place near the time of Passover. Passover was, and is, one of the biggest holidays in the Jewish calendar, and would have been a time when a huge percentage of the population would have made pilgrimage to Jerusalem. It is likely that many of those gathering to hear Jesus speak would have been travelling from distant places, people from numerous different backgrounds would have been gathered together. Passover would also have been a time where people celebrated by feasting. Simply by asking all these people to sit down together, and inviting them to eat together, Jesus modelled how we as a church should behave. Most of these people would have been strangers, yet they were all invited to share the same table, regardless of who they were or where they came from. Jesus broke down barriers in a culture where, under normal circumstances, your place in society determined who you were allowed to eat with. Imagine the discussions that may have happened over this simple meal of bread and fish!

We see a similar thing in the work of many of the projects that the HIV Programme supports. The Church of Christ in Thailand has a dedicated HIV and AIDS ministry. The country has a relatively high HIV prevalence rate, compared with other Asian countries, partly because of a lack of awareness amongst the general population, but also because of the flourishing commercial sex trade. The Church of Christ in Thailand reaches out to the most vulnerable in society, especially

those who for various reasons do not have access to the Thai health care services, and draws them close for the holistic care that they require. This includes providing emergency care and shelter for those in need, getting them access to the antiretroviral drugs they require, and providing practical help in peoples' homes. However, one of the simplest and perhaps most valuable service they offer is the chance to get together with other people living with HIV in a safe space to discuss issues they may be going through, often over a meal. Staff and volunteers, some of whom had been supported by the programme themselves, gather with clients and provide opportunities for group activities. This peer support is crucial for the support of people living with HIV, and valuable friendships have been formed through this. It doesn't take much input but the facilitating of peer group support means long term support for people living with HIV in the community as they increase in their care and support of each other.

The Church of Christ in Thailand has made space for those in need to come together and share stories and fellowship, just as Jesus and his disciples did.

#### All can contribute, all can belong

John's version of this story is the only one that mentions the boy who provides the food. "Here is a boy with five small barley loaves and two small fish." The original Greek translation is 'small boy' or 'little boy'. In the time of Jesus, children were pretty low on the social ladder. Barley bread was also generally the bread of the poor – so here we have a young, poor boy, yet he was important enough to be mentioned by John in his Gospel, and significant enough to be chosen by Jesus to play a hugely important part in this story. Imagine how special that boy must have felt amongst his peers!

The Evangelical Church of Christ in Mozambique runs a project called 'The Way of Hope' that focuses on those that some may also see as pretty low on the social ladder – children living with or orphaned by HIV in rural areas of the country. Many of these children are living in incredibly difficult conditions – abandoned by their families or excluded from their villages, but this project works to improve their lives and give them hope for the future. Most of these children have been unable to attend school due to hunger and lack of clothes and supplies. Lack of schooling means they will struggle to support themselves in the future. The project is working to fulfil these needs by providing food, clothes, soap and supplies so that children can attend school, but is also working more widely in the communities in which these children live. The project doesn't just work with Christians, but with the wider Muslim population too, and different areas of the community have been coming together to learn more about HIV so that stigma is reduced, and these children can start to feel included and welcomed by the community.

The Church in Mozambique has focused on those who have been overlooked by almost everyone else, and has welcomed them in and given them hope for the future, just as Jesus and his disciples did.

We may think of the story of the Feeding of the 5000 as "just" one of the stories of the miracles that Jesus performed, and perhaps see it as a story for children, but when we start to look a little deeper into it, there are so many lessons that we can learn. It's the same when we start to learn about the world church, and to think about how we can support those infected and affected by HIV. People living with HIV aren't just a collection of symptoms to be treated; they are individuals who come with complex needs and wants. Just as Jesus didn't only tend to the spiritual needs of the people who came to hear him, the projects supported by the Church of Scotland HIV Programme don't just tend to the medical needs of those they are working with – they look beyond the virus to the person, with the aim of helping people live lives of fullness and hope. This is happening much close to home too. Positive Help, a small Edinburgh-based charity, offers free volunteer-led help to those in the area that are affected by HIV. The Church of Scotland HIV Programme assists the Supportive Transport service which offers door to door lifts to and from appointments that they need to attend. It may seem like a simple thing, but we know from feedback that this small bit of help plays a vital

part in helping these people feel valued and cared for. The charity has just had its 30 year anniversary and is going from strength to strength. They are always looking for volunteers, could you be one of them?

By taking part in Souper Sunday, and hearing about some of the projects supported by the Church of Scotland, and learning more about HIV and the valuable work that is being done all around the world, you are contributing towards this work and playing a part in the mission that Jesus and his disciples started.

#### **HYMN CH4 562**

**Through the love of God, our Saviour**

#### **Offering**

##### **Dedication Prayer**

Lord we give you this offering freely and with glad hearts. Take what we offer and use it to spread the promise of hope, peace, joy, community and a life of fullness to all those who need it.

Amen

#### **Intercession Prayer (Add prayers for your own and current world situations and finish with the following.)**

We pray O Lord for those around the world who have HIV or are affected by HIV and AIDS. We pray that your love and blessings will pour out on them and on those who work to serve and help them. We pray that those who need help will find the support that they need from people around them. Be with those that have been excluded from their communities due to stigma. Shine your light in the dark, forgotten spaces and show yourself to those who feel rejected. Let them feel your Spirit and your love.

We pray this in Jesus's name,

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. A reminder to everyone that a lovely warming lunch of soup and bread awaits us. You are all welcome to join us for lunch in (LUNCH VENUE)

And now we close our time of worship by singing

#### **HYMN CH4 646**

**Forth in the peace of Christ we go**

#### **Benediction**

The Grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us, now and evermore. **AMEN.**