

cynnal+

# RECOVERY SUNDAY SERVICE

25 OCTOBER 2020

## Fabric



STAFELL FYW CAERDYDD  
YN AGOR Y DRWS I FYWYD NEWYDD  
LIVING ROOM CARDIFF  
OPENING THE DOOR TO A NEW LIFE



**ORDER OF SERVICE:**

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## INTRODUCTION

Recovery is a theme that is repeated throughout the Bible, offering hope when there seems to be no hope. From the book of Genesis to the book of Revelation, the Bible is full of rich images and stories of healing and restoration - it's a constant theme that repeats throughout history and we today continue to experience recovery.

An important part of any recovery is to have purpose and feel useful, to have what we do valued and recognized as being of worth.

In our service this year we want to reflect on the word FABRIC. We will reflect on the different ways the word is used - in the field of clothing and materials around us, in what makes us as people and how we can be used in the world.

Let's start with a prayer:

## OPENING PRAYER

God the Creator, we know that you made us to be complex beings. In our bodies there are miles of veins, litres of fluids, electricity and chemicals that fuel the brain, that control all our senses and emotions and there are muscles and bones that allow us to lift and carry, walk, run and jump.

And we have a heart. The heart is the world's symbol for love, and we know that love can affect every part of our body in so many different ways.

The cross is also a symbol of love - the love that Jesus your Son gave unconditionally to the world, the love shown through his sacrifice for us all.

God the Saviour, let us take time in this service of worship, to marvel at how we are made as individuals, recognizing that we are complex and that this complexity sometimes brings challenges. Let us now acknowledge our weaknesses and ask for your forgiveness and renewed vigour to accept every challenge that comes our way and to know that you are with us every step of the way.

In our complexity, give us simplicity.  
In our confusion, give us a straight path.  
In our darkness, give us light.  
In our desert, give water to quench our thirst.  
In our decline, give us recovery.  
Amen.

*Hymn 1:*  
**I, the Lord of sea and sky, Daniel L Schutte.**

## THE STORY OF THE WATER POTS

**(The story can be read by different readers.)**

A water carrier in India had two large pots, hanging at the ends of a pole that rested across his shoulders. One of the pots had a hole while the other was perfect and always collected and delivered a full pot of water. At the end of the long walk from the stream to the house, the pot with the hole always reached the house half-full.

The one with the hole was ashamed of his own imperfection, and saddened that he had been able to accomplish only half of what he was intended to do. After two years of feeling bitter, he spoke to the water carrier one day at the stream:

‘I’m ashamed of myself, and I want to apologize to you. I have only been able to carry half the water because this hole in my side causes water to leak all the way back to your house. Because of my shortcomings, you have to do all this work, and you’re not getting full value from your efforts.’

The carrier said to the pot, ‘Did you notice that there were flowers on your side of the path but not on the other? That’s because I’ve always known about your deficiency, and I planted flower seeds on your side of the path, and every day when we walk back, you’ve watered them. For two years I have been able to choose these beautiful flowers to decorate the table. If it were not for your imperfection, it would not have been possible to decorate the house

with their beauty.'

So many of us are like the imperfect water pot, in the way we see ourselves and how we think of our work and achievements throughout our lives. The pot compared itself to the other of course, in terms of what it achieved at the end of the journey, and didn't think about what it had achieved indirectly as a result of - well, not a hole but a feature perhaps?

In Japan, there is a style of repairing broken pottery known as the Kintsukuroi, where gold or silver is used to repair a broken vessel, with the understanding that the piece is more beautiful and more valuable for having been broken in the first place.

We do not need to be perfect for God to make use of us. We all want to be useful. We want our lives to be of value and the love of God enables us to be of value and to be valued at the same time. That's the gold and silver that can fix us and make us more beautiful and more useful than ever! Like the Japanese vessel.

## PSALM

Recognizing our imperfection before others is a challenge. But God sees it all the time!

In our psalm, the psalmist recognizes that God knows everything, every thought and every action that we do - the deliberate and unintentional. And yes, on one hand, that's a rather scary concept and the psalmist recognizes that fear. But on the other hand, this can also be comforting, because we are completely open to God's scrutiny and God is willing to forgive, to love us and to show us that, despite our weaknesses, what we do can contribute beauty to our world. God has a use for us all!

The psalm also describes how we were made, how we were woven and he portrays the wonder of God in his creations and in his constant presence.

Let's read the verses together.

### **Reading: Psalm 139:1-18. NIVUK**

- 1 You have searched me, LORD,  
and you know me.
- 2 You know when I sit and when I rise;  
you perceive my thoughts from afar.
- 3 You discern my going out and my lying down;  
you are familiar with all my ways.
- 4 Before a word is on my tongue  
you, LORD, know it completely.

- 5 You hem me in behind and before,  
and you lay your hand upon me.
- 6 Such knowledge is too wonderful for me,  
too lofty for me to attain.
- 7 Where can I go from your Spirit?  
Where can I flee from your presence?
- 8 If I go up to the heavens, you are there;  
if I make my bed in the depths, you are there.
- 9 If I rise on the wings of the dawn,  
if I settle on the far side of the sea,  
10 even there your hand will guide me,  
your right hand will hold me fast.
- 11 If I say, 'Surely the darkness will hide me  
and the light become night around me,'  
12 even the darkness will not be dark to you;  
the night will shine like the day,  
for darkness is as light to you.
- 13 For you created my inmost being;  
you knit me together in my mother's womb.
- 14 I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made;  
your works are wonderful,  
I know that full well.
- 15 My frame was not hidden from you  
when I was made in the secret place,  
when I was woven together in the depths of the earth.
- 16 Your eyes saw my unformed body;  
all the days ordained for me were written in your book  
before one of them came to be.



17 How precious to me are your thoughts,[a] God!

How vast is the sum of them!

18 Were I to count them,

they would outnumber the grains of sand –

when I awake, I am still with you.

### *Hymn 2:*

**Bind us together, Lord, Bob Gillman.**

## **MEDITATION**

*(You will need a piece of old material, possibly with frayed edges, for this meditation.)*

During this time of meditation we will think about how complex yet wonderful we are as people by holding a piece of old material.

Fabric is something we use every day and take for granted. There are different types of fabrics, cotton, wool, silk, hessian, nylon. Indeed, a team of archaeologists and palaeontologists are known to have discovered flax fibres that are more than 34,000 years old, making them the oldest fibres known to have been used by humans. The theory of using fabric today is the same - a combination of smaller pieces is brought together to make a larger, useful, stronger piece.

*(Background music of your choice could be played as the worship leader reads the following words.)*

Place the piece of material in the palm of your hand.

Look at it. Think about how the material was used before it started to get worn and frayed.

Was it a piece of clothing? Do you remember wearing it?

Was it a curtain that kept out the darkness and cold at night?

Was it a towel? Was it used for drying and warming up after a bath or having a swim in a pool or on a beach?

Has the piece of material been used for something else after its initial use?

*(Pause)*

Thank you God, for the use made of this piece in our hand. We give thanks for what we have been able to contribute to the world, and how God has used us. Let's be aware of God's constant call.

*(Pause)*

Hold the piece between your thumb and finger. What does the material feel like? Is it smooth or rough?

Look at the colour. Have the colours faded since you first saw it?

*(Pause)*

Thank you God, for the different kinds of fabric. The ones that keep us warm, the ones that keep us cool, the ones that keep us dry and the ones that are soft and comforting. We give thanks for our own unique qualities as we contribute to the life of the world, and as

God has used our abilities and continues to do so.

Let us recognize our abilities and be ready to use them through God's power.

*(Pause)*

Look closely at the texture of the material. Slowly pull a thread, one at a time, from the ragged side. How many threads are in that piece of material? Hundreds? Thousands? Consider the work that went into creating that piece of material - the weaving, the weaver, the machine, the engineer keeping the machine working, the designer ... the list is never ending.

*(Pause)*

Thank you God, for your church which brings us all together as individuals, to fulfil a range of purposes. Thank you for the strength we get from each other, bringing small parts together to create something bigger, something beautiful, something stronger. In holding the material in my hand today, God reminds me how useful this piece has been in the past and how useful it can be yet again. Although the yarn is thin and light on its own, weaving the pieces together can create a strong whole.

*(Pause)*

We come to you as individuals today, Lord, each with our own unique characteristics. When we are vulnerable, we tend to feel isolated and lonely. Be with us in our weakness, heavenly Father. Weave us anew into a colourful and diverse patchwork!

Hold the piece between your two hands, and put your hands together as if saying a prayer. We will pray the Lord's Prayer together:

Our Father, which art in heaven,  
Hallowed be thy Name.  
Thy Kingdom come.  
Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread.  
And forgive us our trespasses,  
As we forgive them that 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.

In the New Testament, the story of Jesus' crucifixion also mentions a piece of fabric - Jesus' robe.

## NEW TESTAMENT READING: THE SOLDIERS MOCK JESUS

**Matthew 27:27-31 NIV UK**

27 Then the governor's soldiers took Jesus into the Praetorium and gathered the whole company of soldiers around him. 28 They stripped him and put a scarlet robe on him, 29 and then twisted together a crown of thorns and set it on his head. They put a staff in his right hand. Then they knelt in front of him and mocked him. "Hail, king of the Jews!" they said. 30 They spit on him, and took the staff and struck him on the head again and again. 31 After they had mocked him, they took off the robe and put his own clothes on him. Then they led him away to crucify him.

It is in this reading, the whole purpose of Jesus' life is made manifest in the most moving and mocking way. We know that God intended Jesus to come into the world to show how he wanted the world to be. A world of peace, of tolerance, a world where there was no violence and poverty, mockery and oppression. Jesus was a model, a model for us all to emulate. A model where love reigns over all things! We remember how Paul's letter to the Corinthians says "And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love."

The soldiers, in a simple yet symbolic act, mock Jesus by placing a royal looking robe over his shoulders. A simple piece of material. And then, they further mock him with a crown of thorns, a rod and begin bowing before him. They then removed the rod, leaving him

in his own clothes, as a man, our King.

A 'scarlet robe on your shoulders  
Your followers in tatters  
But they took off the mantle  
And left you as it all began  
A Man, our servant King.

God does not want us to be anything but ourselves. Yet God needs us to be able to use us as the disciples and evangelists in our time. It's our turn to be models now. This is our purpose. And in order to be the best disciples possible, we have to take off any robe and let all worldly things fall away. That is how God wants to make use of us.  
Amen

*Hymn 3:*

**Will you come and follow me, John L Bell & Graham Maule**