**Moulsham Lodge Methodist Church Sunday Service 10th of August at 10:30am**

**Theme: “A Faithful Life in a Watchful World” (by Rev. Asif Karam)**

**Welcome**  (Steward on duty)

**Service: Introduction:** During a pastoral visit, a minister was questioned by a 94-years-old person who asked, “tell me, when will Jesus’ return? I’ve been waiting since I was 14 years old when I accepted him my Lord and Saviour and since then waiting for His coming.” She asked again and again, insisting, “You are in this business of preaching and encouraging churches, so tell me, when will Jesus’ return?”

The minister smiled and politely and replied, “I’m afraid I’m on His welcoming committee, not on His scheduling committee.” We all know the Second Coming of Jesus is the greatest promise He ever made, and He will return just as He said. Friends, today, we will be exploring unpacking our theme under the lectionary readings: Hebrews 11:1-3, 8-16 and Luke 12:32-40

**Theme: “A Faithful Life in a Watchful World”**

As **William Barclay** once said:
“The best way to prepare for the coming of Christ is never to forget the presence of Christ.”

And **Martin Luther** reminded us:
“Live as though Christ died yesterday, rose this morning, and is coming back tomorrow.”

My earnest prayer is that when Christ returns, He may find us not waiting in fear, but working in faith.
I must say, readiness for Christ’s return is not about guessing the time but about giving your time.

Jesus’ first coming was to **Save;** His second coming will be to show His **Sovereignty**. The Second Coming isn’t a myth to study; it’s a reality to live and to ready for.

**Call to worship** Leader /Minister

Come, all you who walk by faith and not by sight. Here we remember Christ’s death, we proclaim His resurrection, and we await His coming in glory. Come to this table, not because you have earned a place, but because Christ himself invites you: the faithful one who will return at an unexpected hour. This is the meal of those who wait in hope. This is the feast of those who walk by faith. Come, the table is prepared, and the Lord is near.

**L:** Grace, mercy and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.
**All: And also with you.**

**L:** People of faith, God did not spare His Son but sent Him to die, to take away our sins.
 We come, not clinging to what we see,
 But walking by faith in what is promised.

**All: We come as pilgrims and strangers, looking to the city whose great architect and builder is God.**

**Opening prayer:** Leader / Minister

Lord Jesus, you call us to live with faith and to watch with hope. In a world full of noise and distraction, help us to keep our eyes fixed on You, our hearts open to Your love, and our lives ready for Your return. Bless this time of worship, that we may be strengthened to serve You faithfully until the day we see You face to face. **Amen.**

**Hymn Intro:**
The first hymn in our service is one of the world’s best-known and most loved hymns. It has been translated into many languages but is always sung to the same familiar tune. Back home in Pakistan, we got Urdu lyrics to that same tune. The original text is based on a Swedish poem written in 1885 by Carl Boberg, a 26-year-old preacher and editor. He wrote it after being caught in a sudden thunderstorm while walking home. When the storm passed, the skies cleared, birds began singing, and a rainbow appeared, filling him with awe at God’s power and beauty, and inspiring the words we now know *as***How Great Thou Art.** If you are able, let us stand and raise our voices in praise.

**StF 82 O, Lord my God, when I in awesome wonder**

**Prayers of Confession and thanksgiving**

**We say together. God of mercy, we confess that we have trusted too often in what we can see
and not enough in You, the unseen source of life. You called us to readiness, but we have been distracted. You called us to journey in faith, but we have clung to the familiar. Forgive us,**

**our doubts,**

**our delays,**

**our disobedience.
Renew us in trust, that we may live as faithful servants of your kingdom. In Jesus’ name. Amen.**

**L:** Thankfully, we hear and share

 the good news:

 Christ died for us while we were still sinners.
 In Him, we are forgiven and made new.
 Let’s Walk then as children of light and of promise.

**All: Thanks be to God. Amen.**

**Song Intro:** This next song is a simple but powerful invitation, not to wait for a perfect moment, but to worship God now*,* just as we are. It reminds us that whether we feel strong or weak, joyful or weary, God welcomes us into His presence. So let’s come with open hearts and willing spirits, as we sing together:

**StF 24 Come now is the time to worship**

**Sharing / Intergenerational or Children’s Talk**

## **Let’s talk about a (Funny Tech Gadget Story) The Phone That’s Always Charged**

**Props:** A smartphone and a charger

**Story:** “Hands up if you’ve ever had your phone die right when you needed it? Maybe you were about to take a photo or call someone and then blank*,* the battery was gone!
Some people are really good at keeping their phones charged they plug it in every night so it’s ready for anything.

Jesus says we should keep our hearts charged with faith and love, ready for when He comes back. Just like you wouldn’t want to be caught with a dead phone, you don’t want to be caught with a tired, unkind heart.

How do we keep charged? By praying, reading the Bible, singing to God, and doing good things for others. Then, when Jesus calls, we’re full of energy for Him.”

**Key Verse:** Matthew 24:44  “You also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect Him.”

**Short action rhymes that kids (and adults) can repeat together**

Stay alert,
Do what’s right,
Shine for Jesus,
Day and night!

Hearts awake,
Hands that care,
Jesus is coming
Be ready to share!

**Happy Birthday or Wedding Anniversaries:**

As a church family, we celebrate birthdays and wedding anniversaries, along with all who rejoice in God’s goodness, provision, and unfailing love. We value every person, young and old alike. These celebrations, along with our wishes and prayers, draw us together as one family in Christ.

**Blessing**
May the Lord bless you and keep you.
May His face shine upon you and fill your days with joy.
May His love guide your steps and His peace guard your heart, today and always. **Amen.**

**Prayer of Intercession,** it is a responsive prayer (from Roots)

Lord, when life is hard and when life is good **Help us to keep going, with our eyes fixed on you.**

Lord, we come to you today from different homes, different stages of life, different situations. We come with the memories of the week just passed and our thoughts about the week ahead. We come with our joys and our sorrows, our good days and bad, our hopes and our fears. We come, knowing that you listen, you care and you long for us to pour out our hearts to you.

We pause to think of a time this week that made us smile, even if only for a moment… Thank you for those times of positivity, of happiness, humour or joy. Thank you that you smile with us.

Lord, when life is hard and when life is good **Help us to keep going, with our eyes fixed on you.**

Lord, we know that there have also been some difficult moments in our lives this week. Times when we were confused, sad, in pain, lonely or lost… we name them in our hearts now.

Lord, we know in our heads that you are with us in those times, but sometimes our hearts feel as if you are looking the other way. Give us the confidence, like Abraham and Sarah, to know that, despite everything, you are there, and you do care. Help us not to give up on you because you never give up on us.

Lord, when life is hard and when life is good **Help us to keep going, with our eyes fixed on you.**

We turn our prayers away from ourselves now to those around us: the people sitting near us here, our families, our neighbours and friends. We lift to you those who have had good news to celebrate this week: maybe exam results, a birth, a good diagnosis, a new job… as they rejoice, let us rejoice with them.

But we are also aware of those who have had bad news this week: a difficult diagnosis, a bereavement, sickness, plans that have gone very wrong...

Lord, when life is hard and when life is good **Help us to keep going, with our eyes fixed on you.**

We pray for all young people expecting exam results this week. Give them your peace, whatever the outcome. We pray for Christian camps and holiday clubs and missions, seeking to bring the good news of your love to our young people. We thank you for your Word that has been preached down the centuries. Bless LPs WLs, circuit staff, supernumeraries, stewards, ecumenical partners, district chair, Rev. Jennifer. We turn our prayers to the wider world. when we see war and suffering on our TV screens and newsfeeds.

Lord, when life is hard and when life is good **Help us to keep going, with our eyes fixed on you.**

Lord, sometimes this world seems too painful and we long for that better country to come soon, the new heaven and new earth you have promised us. Give us the faith to wait for your perfect timing. But, when we pray ‘Thy kingdom come’, help us to be the answer to our prayers. Send us out from here renewed and revived to take your goodness, your kindness, your love and your justice to everyone we will meet this week

Lord, when life is hard and when life is good
**Help us to keep going, with our eyes fixed on you.**

**Bring in your kingdom through us, we pray.** **Amen.**

**Lord’s Prayer**

**Offering:**

As we come to the time of offering, let us remember the words of Scripture: “Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.” (2 Corinthians 9:7) Today, we invite you to dig deeper and give cheerfully, supporting the mission and ministry of this church. Every gift, big or small, helps us to share God’s love and make a difference in our community. Let us give with joyful hearts, knowing that our generosity brings blessing to others and honours our Lord. During this hymn Joy to the world, the Lord is come offering will be collected

**Hymn Intro**: Joy to the world, the Lord is come is a paraphrase of Psalm 98. written by Isaac Watts, which speaks a Christological interpretation, focusing on Christ's second coming rather than the first coming as a baby.

**StF 330 Joy to the world, the Lord is come**

1st Reading Hebrews 11:1-3, 8-16 (Reader Requested)

2nd Reading Luke 12:32-40 (Reader Requested)

**Sermon Leader / Minister**

**Theme: “A faithful life in a watchful world”**

Texts: Hebrews 11:1–3, 8–16 & Luke 12:32–40

**Introduction:**

We live in a watchful world. Everywhere you look, people are alert, constantly checking, tracking, and waiting. We track our parcels online, refreshing the page to see if the delivery driver is any closer. We watch flight tracker apps to see exactly when our loved one’s plane will land.

We check our phones every few minutes for breaking news alerts or social media notifications. Some of us have security cameras or doorbell alerts so we can see instantly who’s at the door. Sports fans will wake up at ridiculous hours to watch a game live from another country. And when elections come, people stay up all night to watch the results unfold. We are a society that knows how to be watchful. But here’s the question, if we can be this alert for a package, a game, or a news headline…are we just as watchful for Jesus?

In Luke 12, Jesus tells us to **“stay dressed for action”** (like lighthouse keepers, firefighters, paramedics, Imagine an airport security officer. Every day they stand at their post, scanning the crowd, alert for anything unusual. They never know when an incident might occur, but they’re trained to be ready at all times.

How to understand**, “keep our lamps burning”**, in our present context when we don’t use lamps any more it says **keep your phone charged and your notifications on.** Just as the lamp in Jesus’ day gave light to serve and be ready, a charged phone today keeps us connected and responsive. Spiritually, it means staying connected to Him through prayer, Scripture, and obedience. Or, it is like ***“Keep your torch on and your batteries fresh.”*** Just like a torch in an emergency, our faith should be ready to shine when the moment comes. Or ***“Keep your Wi-Fi signal strong.”*** Staying spiritually connected, just like we keep connected to the internet for updates and messages. And ***“Keep your running shoes by the door.”*** A modern picture of readiness, prepared to act without delay. Just like the faithful servant in Luke 12:35–40*,* We live ready for Christ’s return. It’s not about guessing the day; it’s about living each day ready, for it because the Son of Man will come at any hour we do not expect. And in Hebrews 11, we’re reminded of Abraham and others who lived by faith, looking forward to a better country, the city God Himself is building. They didn’t just wait… they walked faithfully while they watched. And that’s our challenge today:
How do we live faithfully in a watchful world, a world full of alerts but ready for the only arrival that really matters? I want to make three points, with three Ws to remember.

**Walk by Faith** Hebrews 11:1–3, 8–10

Abraham obeyed God without knowing exactly where he was going. Faith is not about having the whole map, it’s about trusting the One who holds it. Faith looks forward, it sees beyond the present, beyond the problems, beyond the headlines, beyond the temporary.

**Takeaway:** Walk each day in obedience to God’s Word, even when you don’t see the full picture. If we can trust a parcel will arrive because a courier says so, how much more should we trust God when He says His Son will return? Key thought is : Faith walks even when the path isn’t clear.

**Watch with purpose Luke 12:35–36**

Jesus says, “Be dressed ready for service and keep your lamps burning.” That’s not about sitting around in fear, it’s about living with intent. Watchfulness means we’re actively engaged in God’s work, loving, serving, giving, and forgiving. The watchful Christian isn’t idle; they’re intentional.

**Takeaway:** Don’t just keep your eyes on the horizon, keep your hands busy for the kingdom. If we can be this committed to watching a game or election results, how much more should we be committed to watching for Jesus with our lives aligned to His will? Key thought is: Don’t just wait, watch and work.

**Welcome the King Luke 12:37–40**

Jesus says the Master will return at an unexpected hour, and here’s the surprise: He will serve the ready servant. The return of Jesus is not a moment of fear for the faithful, it’s a moment of joy. It’s the homecoming we’ve been waiting for.

**Takeaway:** Live every day as though this might be the day He arrives. If we prepare the house before guests arrive, how much more should we prepare our hearts for the King of kings? Key thought is: Let your life say, “Come, Lord Jesus.”

**Conclusion:** Our world is already watchful, but often for the wrong things.
We Walk by faith, we Watch with purpose, and we Welcome the King.
The promise stands: he still says to us **“Do not be afraid, little flock, for it is your Father’s good will to give you the kingdom.”** So, ready or not… here He comes. Remember we’re on His welcoming committee, not on His scheduling committee. Are you sharing, welcoming and living like you believe it?

**Prayer after Sermon:**

Lord God, **in a society of constant surveillance,** where our cities are full of cameras, our lives are seen by friends, family, colleagues, and neighbours. Remind us that this isn’t about living in fear, but about letting our actions reflect the love, integrity, and truth of Jesus, even when no one is “officially” watching us. as we always keep an umbrella handy for our unpredictable weather, may we keep our hearts ready for the return of Christ, even when it feels far off. May our readiness not be fear-based, but hope-filled, may we live faithfully and watchfully by loving everyone, serving all in need, and sharing transparently the gospel of Christ, who was, who is, and who will come. **Amen.**

**Vote of thanks** **Unsung Heros Moment**

Friends: Church doesn’t run on autopilot; it runs on love and service. Every Sunday, there are people doing small things with great love, turning on lights, setting up sound, live streaming chairs, sharing notices, adjusting microphones. We see some of them and others we don’t. So, here’s to the unsung heroes today, Stewards, Band, Readers, Visitors, Worshipers and Volunteers, Tech Team, and Helpers of all kinds. Thank you for your faithfulness.” “Let’s give a warm round of applause (or maybe a quiet prayer of thanks!) for all who helped today. Friends, hoping you stay for behind for fellowship and refreshment

**Hymn Intro:** The Battle Hymn of the Republic," is a powerful American patriotic song.

At the return of the Lamb, the enemies of Christ will be eternally punished and there is

reward for those who have their faith in Jesus. Faithful Followers of Jesus Have a Glorious Future

**H&P 242 Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord**

# **The Blessing** Leader / Minister

Go now in peace, not fearing but trusting,
not clinging but journeying,
not sleeping but watching,
until the kingdom comes in full.

And the blessing of God Almighty,
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
be among you and remain with you always. **Amen.**