**‘Living Faith’ Session Nine: Chapter Eight – “Our Life in Christ”**

8.1 **Discipleship**

8.1.1 Disciples of Christ are called to obedience.

Jesus said: "If you love me, keep my commandments." Obedience involves us totally.

Yet as we give ourselves to him we discover that his service alone brings true freedom.

8.1.2 Life in Christ is formed in a believing community, and expressed in daily living.

We are to bring Christ's healing presence to the world for which he died, his peace to its pain and anguish.

8.1.3 Life in Christ brings joy, liberty, glory. But it also brings conflict with unbelief, fear, and temptation. Throughout our lives we struggle with disheartening difficulties. Yet the Holy Spirit helps us and gives us power to grow in Christ. While we are far from perfect yet our lives can be pleasing to God and helpful to others.

8.1.4 Life in Christ involves prayer, the seeking of God's will and blessing on all of life.

Prayer is openness to the presence of God. In words, or the absence of words, prayer is the focusing of our lives towards God. As we commune with God through Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit enables us to express our deepest longings, and we experience the sustaining power of God's presence.

8.1.5 We live in Christ as we study the Scriptures

learning to think and act in a Christian way.

The Scriptures are given that Christians may be complete, equipped for every good work.

8.1.6 We live in Christ as in freedom we observe Sunday

as the weekly festival of the resurrection, for the worship of our Lord, rest from our work, and the enjoyment of God's world.

8.2 **The Christian Family**

8.2.1 All Christians are members both of a human family and of the church, the household of God. We honour our parents who gave us life, and also the church which has nurtured us in the faith.

8.2.2 God's purpose for us can be realized in both single and married life. Marriage is not God's will for everyone. Fullness of life is offered to all, both single and married.

8.2.3 Christian marriage is a union in Christ whereby a man and a woman become one in the sight of God. It is the commitment of two people to love and to support one another faithfully for life.

God's law forbids adultery.

Loyalty is necessary for the growth of love.

Disloyalty destroys the union of marriage. Sexual union in marriage is intended to provide mutual joy and comfort as well as the means of creating new life.

8.2.4 Parents in caring for their children are mediators of God's love and discipline. They are called to raise their children within the covenant community, to be faithful to vows taken at Baptism to nurture them in the Faith by teaching and example.

8.2.5 When we fail each other as parents or partners, we are called to forgive each other as God forgives us, and to accept the possibilities for renewal that God offers us in grace.

When a marriage is shattered beyond repair, it is sometimes better that it be dissolved than that the family continue to live in bitterness.

8.2.6 The church is the family of God.

Here all should be valued for themselves.

We are one body in Christ: together rejoicing when things go well, supporting one another in sorrow, celebrating the goodness of God and the wonder of our redemption.

8.3 **Love**

8.3.1 We bow before the mystery of God's love. From it came our creation.

By it we are daily nurtured.

Through it we find salvation. A consuming fire of purity, God's love is yet warm and gentle compassion. We respond to the God who is love by loving in return.

8.3.2 Love means seeking the best for others and is the mark of a Christian. Love for God leads to love for others.

We cannot claim to love God, whom we do not see, if we hate those about us, whom we do see. Love of God and of neighbour fulfills the law of God.

8.3.3 Love is compassion for creation.

Love is the service of others and is not self-centred.

Love speaks the truth tempered with kindness. Love grows in knowledge and discernment. It is the road to Christian maturity, and is the way of seeing others as God sees them.

Love follows the example of Jesus Christ.

8.3.4 We should also love ourselves. Self-love is not selfishness.

We love and accept ourselves because God has already loved and accepted us in Christ, providing the foundation of our sense of worth.

8.3.5 Love is the greatest gift in the world because it will last beyond this world and is supremely pleasing to our Lord.

Love foreshadows life in heaven.

8.4 **Justice**

8.4.1 God is always calling the church

to seek that justice in the world which reflects the divine righteousness revealed in the Bible.

8.4.2 God's justice is seen when we deal fairly with each other and strive to change customs and practices that oppress and enslave others.

8.4.3 Justice involves protecting the rights of others.

It protests against everything that destroys human dignity.

8.4.4 Justice requires concern for the poor of the world. It seeks the best way to create well-being in every society.

It is concerned about employment, education, and health, as well as rights and responsibilities.

8.4.5 Justice seeks fairness in society.

It involves the protection of human beings, concern for the victims of crime, as well as offenders.

It requires fair laws justly administered, courts and penal institutions that are just and humane.

8.4.6 Justice opposes prejudice in every form. It rejects discrimination on such grounds as race, sex, age, status, or handicap. Justice stands with our neighbours in their struggle for dignity and respect and demands the exercise of power for the common good.

8.5 **World Peace**

8.5.1 Christ, the Prince of Peace, calls his followers to seek peace in the world.

8.5.2 We know that nations have fought in self-defense and that war, at times, may be unavoidable. But the tragic evil that comes with war, the slaughter of men, women, and children must rouse us to work for peace.

8.5.3 We protest against the world arms race that diminishes our ability to fight hunger, ignorance, poverty and disease. We fear nuclear war and the devastation it would bring.

We affirm that God is at work when people are ashamed of the inhumanity of war and work for peace with justice. We pray for peace to him who is the Prince of Peace.