

Watch this week's service on YouTube by clicking: [September 26 Worship Service Video](#)

- ❖ A new **Children's Church School Video** has been posted. This is unlisted and the following link must be used to access it: <https://youtu.be/gjBFUPDgR8o>
- ❖ **HeBrews e-Café** will be "off-line" this week because of the Farmers' Market. However, you are most welcome to bring a coffee and a lawn chair and visit in the parking lot as some have pledged to do.
- ❖ Enjoy and share the **Men's Chorus** from this week's service: <https://youtu.be/T6hsQLAP7PI>
- ❖ **Offering Information** at: [www.charleswoodunited.org/donate](http://www.charleswoodunited.org/donate) Thank you for your generous support.

Dear Friends

Welcome to worship for Sunday, September 26, 2021.

In "The Merchant of Venice" Shakespeare wrote *The devil can cite scripture for his purpose*. Not only is this true but it has been proven correct far too many times. It is too easy to take scripture out of its context and reapply it to justify something hateful, angry, biased, and otherwise sinful. If its use fails to encourage the love of God and love of neighbour then you know the devil has had a hand in it.

But that doesn't mean we should never lift a verse from scripture out of the story in which it is found and use it to inform, encourage, or inspire. I do it often and I know that I have my favourites. I only hope that my use of quotes from scripture is authentic. That is, heeding Shakespeare's warning, that its *purpose* is of the Spirit.

The reason I mention this is that our text for the service today is the Old Testament Book of Esther and though it is nine chapters long I want to reflect on a single phrase. That phrase is from chapter four, *a time such as this*.

The narrative setting of this phrase, the literal time referred to, is that the lives of Jews living in the Persian Empire are in great peril. A royal decree (falsely attained) has granted permission for Jews across the empire to be destroyed, annihilated, wiped out. Though Jewish, Esther thinks that her position as Queen of Persia will protect her. But her adoptive father Mordecai tells her that she cannot be silent *at a time such as this*. Furthermore, using the phrase a second time, Mordecai wonders if it wasn't precisely for *a time such as this* that Esther became Queen of Persia.

I'm wondering if it wasn't for *a time such as this* that we have nurtured the gifts of the Spirit in our life together. The time in which we are living, the interruption and disruption of the last year and a half, has required remarkable things from us. We have needed *patience* given the indeterminate nature of a pandemic. We have needed *understanding* of things we had not needed to think about before. We have needed *courage* to live without many things we can take for granted. We have needed *perseverance* for this has lasted longer than any of us had imagined. We have needed *hope* in people who have led us and cared for us throughout. And above all, we have needed such *love* as to make sacrifices for the sake of our neighbours, family, and friends.

And where do we learn about and develop traits like patience, understanding, courage, perseverance, hope, and love? In church I hope. Spiritual development is taking the gifts that are inherent within humanity and letting them grow and mature and ripen so that they can be harvested when the time to draw on them arises. It is what Paul refers to as "fruit of the Spirit" in Galatians 5:22.

When this is over we will look back and see how faith has provided for *a time such as this*.

I don't want to give away the ending (and give you a reason not to watch this week's service) but Esther realizes that there is something she can do to save her people. It will take cunning, courage, patience, and persistence but she does discover that the present is the very best time for faith to be put into action.

Grace and peace  
Michael

- Share this week's service: <https://youtu.be/Ez25DhOPizU>
- For news and events please have a look at **Life & Work**: <https://charleswoodunited.org/media/life-work/>
- Read the scripture lesson for today by clicking here: [The Book of Esther](#)

**P.S. Until the September 30 deadline we invite you to contribute to two worthy appeals from our community partners. The dry goods listed will be given to Yazidi Refugee families supported by Operation Ezra. Our Mission and Social Action Committee will distribute donated supplies to students in need at Westgrove School. The church is open Monday to Friday from 9:00 – 4:00 for drop-off.**

#### [Yazidi Refugee Dry Goods Food Drive](#)

All-purpose flour  
Sugar  
Red split lentils  
Chickpeas  
Tetley Orange pekoe tea  
Nescafe - Double filter  
Fine salt  
Canola Oil  
Maggi Brand Chicken Cubes  
Rooster Brand Jasmine Rice  
Cereal  
Coffee mate

#### [Westgrove School Supply Collection](#)

Water Bottles  
Glue Sticks  
Playing Cards  
Pencils  
Pencil Erasers  
Pencil Sharpeners  
Pencil Crayons  
Hilroy Scribblers