

Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup> August 2020 Order of service

The service this week has been prepared by local preacher Tracy Cooper, who is a member at Stubbington Methodist Church.

**Gathering hymn Stf 65 Sing of the Lord's goodness**

Sing of the Lord's goodness, Father of all wisdom,  
come to him and bless his name.

Mercy he has shown us, his love is for ever,  
faithful to the end of days.

*Come, then, all you nations, sing of your Lord's goodness,  
melodies of praise and thanks to God.*

*Ring out the Lord's glory, praise him with your music,  
worship him and bless his name.*

Power he has wielded, honour is his garment,  
risen from the snares of death.  
His word he has spoken, one bread he has broken,  
new life he now gives to all.

*Come, then, all you nations....*

Courage in our darkness, comfort in our sorrow,  
Spirit of our God most high.  
Solace for the weary, pardon for the sinner,  
splendour of the living God.

*Come, then, all you nations....*

Praise him with your singing, praise him with the trumpet,  
praise God with the lute and harp.  
Praise him with the cymbals, praise him with your dancing,  
praise God till the end of days.

*Come, then, all you nations....*

*Ernest Sands (b.1949)*

**Call to worship**

Lord, here we are to worship, to say that you are our God.

Here we are from our different circumstances, united with others in seeking a way of life  
in your company.

Be with us in this time of worship, accept all that we have and are as we come to you.

**Opening prayer**

Father, we praise you and give you thanks. You lift us up so we can stand on mountains. You  
lift us up to stand on stormy seas. We are strong, when we are on your shoulders. You lift

us up to more than we can be. It is when we are at our lowest that you are there to lift us up, give us strength and help us carry on. It is only right that we should give you praise and lift your name on high. We pray this in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

**Hymn Stf 332 Lord I lift your name on high**

Lord, I lift Your name on high  
Lord, I love to sing Your praises  
I'm so glad You're in my life  
I'm so glad You came to save us

You came from heaven to earth  
To show the way  
From the earth to the cross  
My debt to pay  
From the cross to the grave  
From the grave to the sky  
Lord, I lift Your name on high

Songwriters: Rick Doyle Found

**Prayers of adoration and confession**

Holy and loving God, we bring you our worship, our praise and adoration for all that you are to us.

For creating our world, for giving us life and breath, for stepping down into our lives in Jesus and for the cross and the rising to new life - a sign of the depth of your love and care for each one of us.

Thank you for your Spirit, drawing us and each other close to you, blowing in your world and enabling and empowering us to serve you.

Forgive our lack of commitment,

forgive our apathy when faced with injustice and wrong,

forgive the things we do that are not what we should do,

forgive us the missed opportunities and our blindness to things you are trying to draw our attention to.

*Pause in quiet.....*

The mercy of God knows no bounds. We are forgiven and set free. Amen.

### **All age talk**

As a child I was fascinated by balloons, when my mum bought me a dress with colourful balloons on a white background I was so happy. I have watched a single balloon flying high in the sky, so carefree, so uplifting, so wondrous. Some of us will find our spirits uplifted with a piece of good news, or a new haircut, or a piece of music which always cheer us up. When I first joined facebook my profile picture was a balloon. I chose that because I imagined being wrapped inside, feeling safe from the outside world. Those of you who have a balloon please hold it now with both hands and close your eyes as we meditate. Lord lift us up with your balloon, slowly and surely, help us to leave each one of our worries behind as we fly higher and higher and trusting in you. Help us to praise you for taking away our fears and sadness and making us feel safe and happy again. As we drift slowly back down to earth give us the strength we need to start over. Let us land in a new place with a new frame of mind and the knowledge that with you nothing is impossible. Thank you for this magical journey Lord where you are the balloon which lifted us up from the depths to the heights. Now slowly open your eyes. When you feel down and troubled, you can always remind yourselves of a line in the song 'Up, up, and away in my beautiful balloon'. In a moment we will hear about David, his life was in danger and yet he praised God.

### **Bible Reading - Psalm 34:1-7, 15-18 A psalm of David**

- <sup>1</sup> I will praise the LORD at all times.  
I will constantly speak his praises.
- <sup>2</sup> I will boast only in the LORD;  
let all who are helpless take heart.
- <sup>3</sup> Come, let us tell of the LORD's greatness;  
let us exalt his name together.
- <sup>4</sup> I prayed to the LORD, and he answered me.  
He freed me from all my fears.
- <sup>5</sup> Those who look to him for help will be radiant with joy;  
no shadow of shame will darken their faces.
- <sup>6</sup> In my desperation I prayed, and the LORD listened;  
he saved me from all my troubles.
- <sup>7</sup> For the angel of the LORD is a guard;  
he surrounds and defends all who fear him.
- <sup>5</sup> The eyes of the LORD are on the righteous,  
and his ears are open to their cry.
- <sup>16</sup> The face of the LORD is against evildoers,  
to cut off the remembrance of them from the earth.
- <sup>17</sup> When the righteous cry for help, the LORD hears,

and rescues them from all their troubles.

<sup>18</sup> The LORD is near to the brokenhearted,  
and saves the crushed in spirit.

### **Hymn Stf 327 Jesus is king**

Jesus is King and I will extol him, give him the glory, and honour his name;  
he reigns on high, enthroned in the heavens - Word of the Father, exalted for us.

We have a hope that is steadfast and certain, gone through the curtain and touching the throne;

we have a priest who is there interceding, pouring his grace on our lives day by day.

We come to Him, our Priest and Apostle, clothed in his glory and bearing his name,  
laying our lives with gladness before Him - filled with His Spirit we worship the King.

'O Holy One, our hearts do adore You; thrilled with Your goodness we give You our praise!  
Angels in light with worship surround him, Jesus, our Saviour, for ever the same.

Wendy Churchill

### **Reflection**

Psalm 34 is a psalm of praise, it begins with a call to praise, moves on to reveal the reasons why we should praise the Lord, and ending with a concluding praise. David was going through a rough patch at the time, and he had to resort to pretending to be insane in order to avoid capture and possibly death. Yet, David decided to write a psalm praising the Lord for that difficult situation in his life. Therefore, we too can praise the Lord during bad times because we know of the Lord's goodness. When we do that, we would be using the bad situation to praise and glorify God. David praised the Lord for deliverance and called on others, you and me included, to do the same. The psalm shows us if we pray, God will answer; he will rescue us and keep us safe, he will take away our fears and save us from our troubles. Time for a story now.

There was a man who was named David, not just any Tom, Dick or Harry. In fact, he was a well known figure in Jewish history; remember David and Goliath? He must have been a brave young man at the time. His life was filled with much happiness and also much pain, but most of all, David was a man of God. Saul was king at the time of this story. He chose David to be a warrior in his army. When they returned to Jerusalem after killing the Philistines, the town women cheered and chanted "Saul killed thousands and David killed tens of thousands" Saul started to become envious of David's standing with the people and kept his jealous eyes on David. There were battle after battle and it appeared that God

helped David with his success. Saul feared that David was becoming too popular and too powerful that he felt David would take over as king.

Time moved on. One day David was playing the harp in the court of the king and a cloud of anger overcame king Saul, he threw a spear at David. Somehow, or if you believed in the divine, David managed to escape. He fled to the mountains and stayed with some priests from the tabernacle. But alas, he was seen by one of Saul's servants. David's plight now truly begun. He made his escape to the city of Gath, and took cover in caves; the caves were a safe place, even his family visited him there several times. Soon many people who were in trouble of one sort or other joined David in the caves. I am not sure if it was coincidence, again the same servant of Saul's found out the hiding place and revealed the whereabouts to the king. A one to one took place as Saul tried to kill David, but David was stronger and he spared Saul. Happier times came for David, he was later crowned king. He had a huge army made up of many tribes of Israel; but he thought that peace would only come when the neighbouring enemies are defeated. He marched to the nearby empires and destroyed their armies. The combined victories only further establish David's power. But, yes there is a but, life was not always tickityboo.

King David was taking a walk in the grounds when he spotted a beautiful woman called Bathsheba and wanted to marry her. However, the woman was already married to a soldier. David plotted to have him killed by sending the man to the frontline of battle so he can then marry his widow. Wrong thing to do! His actions displeased God so much that a prophet was sent to rebuke David. When David realised he has sinned, he paid penance until God forgave him. Ah ha, so David wasn't always a man of God. Let us rewind back to when David fled from king Saul to the city of Gath and presented himself to the king there, asking for food, weapons and men. Unfortunately, the servants there knew about the women's chant that David slain tens of thousands and it made David afraid of the king Achish. As a last resort, David pretended to be a madman whilst staying in Gath. King Achish could not endure a madman scribbling on doors and dribbling saliva from the mouth so he let David leave without harming him. David realised he was nearly killed, instead of blaming God for not helping him, he composed a psalm to praise God. What a story.

I like to end the reflection story with a recent experience of mine. Just over two weeks ago I was going through a phase of sleepless nights. I know what it was, the lockdown has affected me in a way I did not expect. The night in question I told myself to set the alarm for an early start at work. I managed a couple of hours of sleep and then was wide awake. A huge wave of sadness washed over me, and every reason which could have made me sad appeared in front of me. I have never known such sadness, I cried and cried until my tears ran dry. The hymn 'Lord I lift your name on high' came into my mind and I started singing it over and over. I was praising God repeatedly and I began to feel better and a little more

cheerful. The Lord took my sadness away. David in Psalm 34 testified that no matter how afflicted we are we can be sure that God will rescue us and lift up our spirits once again. Amen.

### **Prayers of intercession**

Gracious God, you are Lord of today and every day. We gather to give you praise as we remember those who need our prayers.

We pray for those who need love because you are the source of love. Show them your compassion, whether they love you or not. We gather to give you praise and ask that your love will flow freely to those without love.

*Lord God on high, hear our prayer.*

We pray for those who look for peace because you are the source of peace, you bring resolve to conflict, hope to despair and comfort to sorrow. We gather to give you praise and ask that your peace will be felt throughout the troubled world.

*Lord God on high, hear our prayer.*

We pray for those who long for freedom because you are the source of freedom, you pull out all the stops and release us from all which binds us, all that which stops us from being closer to you. We gather to give you praise and ask that we are given the freedom to acknowledge you.

*Lord God on high, hear our prayer.*

We pray for ourselves that no matter what happens in our lives that we remember to praise you and lift you up even though we may feel sad, or lost, or full of worries; for you are there to raise us up to more than we can be. In Jesus' name, amen

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

#### **Closing hymn - Count your blessings**

When upon life's billows, you are tempest tossed,  
when you are discouraged thinking all is lost,  
count your many blessings, name them one by one  
and it will surprise you, what the lord has done:

*Count your blessings, name them one by one,  
count your blessings, see what God has done.*

*Count your blessings, name them one by one,  
count your many blessings, see what God has done.*

Are you ever burdened, with a load of care?  
Does the cross seem heavy, you are called to bear?  
Count your many blessings, every doubt will fly  
and you will be singing, as the days go by:  
*Count your blessings, name them one by one.....*

When you look at others with their lands and gold,  
think that Christ has promised you his wealth untold,  
count your many blessings money cannot buy,  
your reward in Heaven nor your home on high:  
*Count your blessings, name them one by one.....*

So, amid the conflict, whether great or small,  
do not be discouraged, God is over all.  
Count your many blessings, angels will attend -  
help and comfort give you, to your journey's end:  
*Count your blessings, name them one by one.....*

Songwriters: Edwin Othello Excell / Johnson Jr Oatman

**Closing words**

So Lord, we go in your name, lifted up in spirit, by your Spirit,  
Seeking to lift up others and the life of the world wherever you place us and whoever you  
call us to.

**Blessing**

And now may the blessing of God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit be with us, all those we know  
and love; and those who we are called to love now and forever more. Amen