

Worship for 30th Sunday in Ordinary Time (complete text. A video version is also online)
Keep safe. Keep caring. Keep praying.

Welcome: to worship for 30th Sunday in Ordinary Time. We are grateful to all who are all taking part this week.

If you would like to take part, then please get in touch with the Circuit Office on swc.katetennyson@gmail.com

THE PREPARATION

Call to worship

In the name of Jesus we have gathered here:
to rejoice with the Spirit who inspires us,
to worship the God who utterly loves us,
and to celebrate the Lord who still lives among us

Hymn: StF 82 – O Lord my God when I in awesome wonder

1. O Lord, my God, when I in awesome wonder consider all the worlds thy hand has made, I see the stars, I hear the mighty thunder, thy power throughout the universe displayed:

Then sings my soul, my Saviour God, to thee: how great thou art, how great thou art!
then sings my soul, my Saviour God, to thee: how great thou art, how great thou art!

2. When through the woods, and forest glades I wander and hear the birds sing sweetly in the trees; when I look down from lofty mountain grandeur, and hear the brook, and feel the gentle breeze:

Then sings my soul, my Saviour God, to thee: how great thou art, how great thou art!
then sings my soul, my Saviour God, to thee: how great thou art, how great thou art!

**3. And when I think that God, his Son not sparing,
sent him to die, I scarce can take it in
that on the cross, my burden gladly bearing,
he bled and died to take away my sin:**

Then sings my soul, my Saviour God, to thee: how great thou art, how great thou art!
then sings my soul, my Saviour God, to thee: how great thou art, how great thou art!

**4. When Christ shall come with shout of acclamation
and take me home – what joy shall fill my heart;
then shall I bow in humble adoration,
and there proclaim: my God, how great thou art:**

Then sings my soul, my Saviour God, to thee: how great thou art, how great thou art!
then sings my soul, my Saviour God, to thee: how great thou art, how great thou art!

Stuart K Hine

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A gathering prayer

Let us thank God for each other
as we share in worship,
as we come to pray and praise.
Let us thank God for the witness of Jesus
and the gift of the Holy Spirit
to inspire and move us.
Amen.

A prayer of praise

God of Jesus and our God, the very thought of you is mind-blowing!
We cannot define you, but we can praise you in

your holiness.

You are the Light of lights, the Beauty of all beauties, the Love surpassing all loves!

You hold our life in the palm of your hands, you define our nature by speaking your Word, and you save us from delusion and futility by sharing our existence.

You are the heart and soul of the universe, who makes the morning stars sing together and the angels of God shout for joy

**Wonderful, wonderful, wonderful is your name!
We are yours forever! Amen!**

Prayer of confession

Let us examine heart and mind before God, acknowledge where we have lost our direction, or where we have sold ourselves short.

Let us pray.

Where we have been too busy to notice deeds that are beautiful and good; or too preoccupied to say 'thank you' or 'I love you'. Lord have mercy.

Lord have mercy.

When we have been too stubborn to apologise for our mistakes; too proud to do inconspicuous tasks, or too independent to let others help us. Christ have mercy.

Christ have mercy.

Where we have been too self-demanding to enjoy a task well done though not perfectly; or too proudly humble to gracefully accept thanks from others. Lord have mercy.

Lord have mercy.

In silence we each make our personal confession.

Merciful God, Saviour and Friend, forgive us our obsessive busyness, our pride, and our overdone humility. Forgive us for hurts we have inflicted on others, and for the love we have denied them and ourselves. By the grace of Christ Jesus, restore us to the joy of salvation. In his name.

Amen!

Declaration of forgiveness

My friends, God is neither too busy, nor too proud, nor too humble, to say "I love you." In Jesus he has declared that his love and mercy are over all his works.

Your sins are forgiven

Thanks be to God

Amen!

Hymn: StF 65 – Sing of the Lord's goodness

1. **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.*

2. **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,
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.*

3. **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 loving God.**

***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.***

- 4. Praise him with you singing, praise him with the trumpet,
praise him 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,
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.***

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THE MINISTRY OF THE WORD

1st Reading Isaiah 40:18-31 (NRSVA)

- ¹⁸To whom then will you liken God,
or what likeness compare with him?
¹⁹An idol? —A workman casts it,
and a goldsmith overlays it with gold,
and casts for it silver chains.
²⁰As a gift one chooses mulberry wood
—wood that will not rot—
then seeks out a skilled artisan
to set up an image that will not topple.
²¹Have you not known? Have you not heard?
Has it not been told you from the beginning?
Have you not understood from the
foundations of the earth?
²²It is he who sits above the circle of the earth,
and its inhabitants are like grasshoppers;
who stretches out the heavens like a curtain,
and spreads them like a tent to live in;

²³who brings princes to naught,
and makes the rulers of the earth as nothing.

²⁴Scarcely are they planted, scarcely sown,
scarcely has their stem taken root in the earth,
when he blows upon them, and they wither,
and the tempest carries them off like stubble.

²⁵To whom then will you compare me,
or who is my equal? says the Holy One.

²⁶Lift up your eyes on high and see:
Who created these?

He who brings out their host and numbers them,
calling them all by name;
because he is great in strength,
mighty in power,
not one is missing.

²⁷Why do you say, O Jacob,
and speak, O Israel,

'My way is hidden from the Lord,
and my right is disregarded by my God'?

²⁸Have you not known? Have you not heard?
The Lord is the everlasting God,
the Creator of the ends of the earth.

He does not faint or grow weary;
his understanding is unsearchable.

²⁹He gives power to the faint,
and strengthens the powerless.

³⁰Even youths will faint and be weary,
and the young will fall exhausted;

³¹but those who wait for the Lord shall renew
their strength,
they shall mount up with wings like eagles,
they shall run and not be weary,
they shall walk and not faint.

Psalm Psalm 69:1-21 (NRSVA)

*Prayer for Deliverance from Persecution
To the leader: according to Lilies. Of David.*

¹Save me, O God,
for the waters have come up to my neck.

²I sink in deep mire,
where there is no foothold;
I have come into deep waters,

and the flood sweeps over me.
³I am weary with my crying;
 my throat is parched.
 My eyes grow dim
 with waiting for my God.

⁴More in number than the hairs of my head
 are those who hate me without cause;
 many are those who would destroy me,
 my enemies who accuse me falsely.
 What I did not steal
 must I now restore?
⁵O God, you know my folly;
 the wrongs I have done are not hidden from
 you.

⁶Do not let those who hope in you be put to
 shame because of me,
 O Lord God of hosts;
 do not let those who seek you be dishonoured
 because of me,
 O God of Israel.

⁷It is for your sake that I have borne reproach,
 that shame has covered my face.
⁸I have become a stranger to my kindred,
 an alien to my mother's children.

⁹It is zeal for your house that has consumed me;
 the insults of those who insult you have fallen
 on me.

¹⁰When I humbled my soul with fasting,
 they insulted me for doing so.
¹¹When I made sackcloth my clothing,
 I became a byword to them.
¹²I am the subject of gossip for those who sit in
 the gate,
 and the drunkards make songs about me.

¹³But as for me, my prayer is to you, O Lord.
 At an acceptable time, O God,
 in the abundance of your steadfast love,
 answer me.
 With your faithful help ¹⁴rescue me
 from sinking in the mire;
 let me be delivered from my enemies
 and from the deep waters.

¹⁵Do not let the flood sweep over me,
 or the deep swallow me up,
 or the Pit close its mouth over me.

¹⁶Answer me, O Lord, for your steadfast love is
 good;
 according to your abundant mercy, turn to me.

¹⁷Do not hide your face from your servant,
 for I am in distress—make haste to answer me.

¹⁸Draw near to me, redeem me,
 set me free because of my enemies.

¹⁹You know the insults I receive,
 and my shame and dishonour;
 my foes are all known to you.

²⁰Insults have broken my heart,
 so that I am in despair.
 I looked for pity, but there was none;
 and for comforters, but I found none.

²¹They gave me poison for food,
 and for my thirst they gave me vinegar to
 drink.

Epistle Romans 5:1-11 (NRSVA)

Results of Justification

¹Therefore, since we are justified by faith, we
 have peace with God through our Lord Jesus
 Christ, ²through whom we have obtained access
 to this grace in which we stand; and we boast in
 our hope of sharing the glory of God. ³And not
 only that, but we also boast in our sufferings,
 knowing that suffering produces endurance,
⁴and endurance produces character, and
 character produces hope, ⁵and hope does not
 disappoint us, because God's love has been
 poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit
 that has been given to us.

⁶For while we were still weak, at the right time
 Christ died for the ungodly. ⁷Indeed, rarely will
 anyone die for a righteous person—though
 perhaps for a good person someone might
 actually dare to die. ⁸But God proves his love for
 us in that while we still were sinners Christ died
 for us. ⁹Much more surely then, now that we

have been justified by his blood, will we be saved through him from the wrath of God. ¹⁰For if while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of his Son, much more surely, having been reconciled, will we be saved by his life. ¹¹But more than that, we even boast in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.

Gospel *John 14:15-21 (NRSVA)*

The Promise of the Holy Spirit

¹⁵'If you love me, you will keep my commandments. ¹⁶And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, to be with you for ever. ¹⁷This is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, because he abides with you, and he will be in you.

¹⁸'I will not leave you orphaned; I am coming to you. ¹⁹In a little while the world will no longer see me, but you will see me; because I live, you also will live. ²⁰On that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you. ²¹'They who have my commandments and keep them are those who love me; and those who love me will be loved by my Father, and I will love them and reveal myself to them.'

Sermon

Greetings to you all, whether you have been a follower of Jesus for decades or have just come to see him as Lord. This afternoon it will be dark by 6.00pm so winter looms, and the Covid 19 news does not uplift us. The tasks of a preacher are to encourage, to build up, to comfort and to challenge, so today I choose encouragement. When on the local preachers training course, I was told 'always isolate the dominant thought' so the dominant thought for today is using faith in Christ to face the problems and troubles of everyday life.

Before I set off, allow me to touch on a paradox in Scripture in relation to suffering. We are told that suffering is used to refine us, as you heard in Psalm 69 David links his troubles to his guilt and yet we also hear that God is always there for us - our reading from Isaiah ended "but those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength, they will soar on wings like eagles.". To our New Testament readings, in Romans Paul states "suffering produces perseverance" raising the issue of God's discipline, yet John tells us "I will not leave you as orphans, I will come to you." Let us hold the two elements – suffering as discipline, and love of God empowering us, in a positive tension.

So now to the dominant thought. - overcoming daily difficulties.

As believers in Jesus we look to him to be our example. As individuals we all have memorable highs and lows and so did Jesus – the Mount of Transfiguration is set in stark contrast to the garden of Gethsemane. For Jesus most of life was not lived at these extremes and it is the same for us. To face daily difficulties effectively it is important for us to choose right thoughts and that is why we are told to have the mind of Christ because where the mind goes, the person follows. Did Jesus encounter daily difficulties? Yes! – let us take a quick look at some.

I'll start with people pressure. Mark's gospel tells us that Jesus had got up early to pray in solitude, but his companions went to find him to tell him "Everyone is looking for you". In Luke Jesus' mother and brothers came to seek him but they could not get near him on account of the crowds. Where are you most at ease? Perhaps listening to music or in your garden. For me it is alone on the mountains of Cumbria and Scotland so pressure from people is not a strength for me at all.

Another trial for Jesus was opposition, especially from religious people. In Mark's gospel the

Pharisees accuse Jesus of eating with sinners and the chief priests ask him “by what authority are you doing these things?” Notice how Jesus did not stand on his status by replying 'Don't you know who I am?' Instead he gives them questions to throw them into confusion. It is very testing to meet ingratitude and opposition when you are trying to do good, but we should expect it. As believers in Jesus we cannot expect a quiet life as we are told to be salt and light. Salt stings as it heals whilst light reveals things that people want to keep hidden.

A third trial of Jesus was from his disciples – James & John ask him for the top spot and in frustration he replies “you do not know what you are asking, can you drink the cup I drink?” Peter says to Jesus “explain the parable” to which Jesus answers “Why are you still so dull? If we could hear the tone of voice used in these two replies by Jesus, we would probably pick up a tone of deep exasperation. Is it possible that a Methodist minister ever felt frustration with his or her congregations? Of course not.

Some daily difficulties we share with Jesus and others we do not, BUT as followers of Jesus we need to know what he had to help him carry on? I have chosen three truths that, as believers, we share with him. Now taking hold of them is not the same as knowing about them. I preach to myself & I need to keep asking myself “Has it really taken hold? What evidence is there that it has actually dropped?

First truth we share with Jesus is as he was a child of God, we are children of God, Not only children but HIS beloved children. Because Jesus has taken our sin away, the close relationship that Jesus had with his Father is available to us. In Psalm 69 the writer says, “my guilt is not hidden from you”. That is the Old Testament but for us that guilt has been dealt with. If Isaiah can write about faith in God giving strength to the weary and hope that soars like eagles HOW

MUCH MORE does that apply to us since we now have Jesus and the Holy Spirit? In the Highlands I have seen plenty of eagles, to watch them soar is an inspiration. Let us live in that truth as an inspiration. At this point I remind you that you have an enemy in the spiritual realm who does NOT want that truth to drop.

Second truth. As Jesus was empowered by the Holy Spirit following his baptism, so are we once we confess our sins and believe in Jesus. In Romans Chapter 5 Paul tells us “hope does not disappoint us because God has poured out his love into our lives by the Holy Spirit who is in us and never leaves us.” For anyone not sure who is the Holy Spirit, the Bible is a story of the one creator God who comes close to a special people, those of Israel, He then comes closer **to all people** in the person of Jesus. In Jesus God is walking his patch to be with us. Next to those who repent and believe, God comes even closer to live actually within us. **How I need to let that truth drop and stay in my heart**. If we can claim to be Christians, folk have a right to say, “Then show me the evidence.” Our actions are vital but also our words. Let us ask ourselves “What sort of world will our words create today?” We can diminish the power of the Holy Spirit by either quenching or grieving that person. This is why in the beatitudes Jesus tells us “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.” Our hearts are not pure when we have sinful thoughts which can stick to us like flies stick to fly paper so we MUST deal with them.

Thirdly. Jesus needed others and so do we. God's model for restoring this world is in Jesus. God did not just 'snap his fingers and say 'done'” did he? He sent Jesus who got help from others. When we are strong, we can definitely do stuff, when we are on the back foot, we need help. We all have times when we are strong and can give to others, and other times when we are broken.

Now good fortune (in this world) is not shared equally, but for **many, tragedy suddenly becomes a reality in our lives.** The inevitable happens, you lose your job, you get sick, you have an accident, a loved one dies. Perhaps one of the hardest things is when a long term illness hits us and continues for decades. When **we do need** help, we must not be too proud to ask for help, or so eager to get others to help that we fail to take action to help ourselves.

There is a balance here. Let us go back to Psalm 69 where David writes “If only one person would turn and comfort me” One truth that Jesus found when needing help from others was that they would let him down – and that will happen to us – **just as we fail others, so they will fail us.** BUT, and this is something else we need to learn, Jesus did not let these failings destroy him and so we must try to follow Him in that way.

Let us affirm our faith by believing that we are children of God, filled by the Holy Spirit, with friends to help us, because these truths will transform the quality of our lives. Let us see correct thoughts as a candle flame shedding light into gloom and despair. Knowing Jesus gives light to our inner being. With right thoughts in place inside us we can deal with the things that happen outside us, our circumstances. It is crucial for us to choose right thoughts. Where the mind goes, the person follows. May we seek to hold on to the best of our personalities, with the gifts we have been given, and have the rest modified into the mould of Christ. Amen.

Hymn: StF 470 – Lord for the years your love has kept and guided

**1. Lord, for the years your love has kept and guided,
urged and inspired us, cheered us on our way,
sought us and saved us, pardoned and**

**provided,
Lord of the years, we bring our thanks today.**

- 2. Lord, for that word, the Word of life which fires us,
speaks to our hearts and sets our souls ablaze,
teaches and trains, rebukes us and inspires us,
Lord of the word, receive your people’s praise.**
- 3. Lord, for our land, in this our generation, spirits oppressed by pleasure, wealth and care;
for young and old, for commonwealth and nation,
Lord of our land, be pleased to hear our prayer.**
- 4. Lord, for our world: when we disown and doubt him,
loveless in strength, and comfortless in pain;
hungry and helpless, lost indeed without him,
Lord of the world, we pray that Christ may reign.**
- 5. Lord for ourselves; in living power remake us,
self on the cross and Christ upon the throne;
past put behind us, for the future take us,
Lord of our lives, to live for Christ alone.**

Timothy Dudley Smith
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THE RESPONSE

Prayers of thanksgiving

THANKSGIVING, based on a Prayer from the Guaraní indigenous people, Paraguay

Great One, you have made us
With your loving hands.

You have formed us
With the mud of this earth.
You have given us your spirit.
We are part of you,
We are your family
And you recognize us as such.

For this we give you thanks.

You have perfumed us with the smell of this earth
You have painted us with the sun of this earth:
We, the children of this earth,
Are your offspring too.
Lord, you have given all your children
The destiny of reaching the fullness of life.

For this we give you thanks.

For some purpose you created us,
For some purpose you sowed us in this earth,
For some purpose you gave everyone the dream
Of a LAND WITHOUT EVIL.

For this we give you thanks.

We ask you to accompany us
On our path and in our search
For the LAND WITHOUT EVIL
In this earth full of Evils.

Amen.

Prayer of Searchers for the Land without Evil, A letter from Paraguay.

The "land without evil" is the traditional dream of the Guaraní indigenous people, which then relates to the Garden of Eden, the Promised Land and Paradise.

Prayers of intercession

Holy and loving God,
you created the world
for us all to share,
a world of beauty and plenty.

Create in us a desire to live simply,
so that our lives may reflect your generosity.

SILENCE

God of Love:

Banish our greed.

Creator God,
you gave us responsibility for the earth,
a world of riches and delight.

Create in us a desire to live sustainably,
so that those who follow after us
may enjoy the fruits of your creation.

God of Creation:

Heal our world.

God of peace and justice,
you give us the capacity to change,
to bring about a world that mirrors your wisdom.

Create in us a desire to act in solidarity,
so that the pillars of injustice crumble
and those now crushed are set free.

God of Justice:

Open our eyes.

God of Comfort and Compassion,
you place us in relationships of love and trust,
and make us neighbours, one of another.

Create in us a desire to care for the stranger,
the lonely and the vulnerable,
that through us, all might know your love.

God of Compassion:

Fill our hearts.

God of love, show us our place in this world
as channels of your love
for all the creatures of this earth,
for not one of them is forgotten in your sight.

The poor and the earth are crying out.
O Lord, seize us with your power and light,
help us to protect all life,
to prepare for a better future,
for the coming of your Kingdom
of justice, peace, love and beauty.
Praise be to you!

Amen.

'A Christian prayer for union with creation' was published in Pope Francis' encyclical, *Laudato Si'*.

The Lord's Prayer

**Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name.**

*Lead us to worship only you, Lord, and not
money,
to put people before profit
and 'being' before having'.*

**Thy kingdom come.
Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.**

*Inspire us to work together to change the
world
so that everyone has enough
and all can live life to the full.*

**Forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us,
and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.**

*Create in us the desire
to live in harmony with creation
so all people may flourish
and your kingdom come.*

Amen.

Adaptation Catherine Gorman/CAFOD

The Offering & prayer

Generous God,
you have offered us everything in your Son, Jesus
Christ.

Through him, we offer you our gifts and our lives,
that they, and we, might be transformed by your
love.

Amen.

THE DISMISSAL

Hymn: StF 465 – Guide me O thou great Jehovah

- 1. Guide me, O thou great Jehovah,
pilgrim through this barren land;
I am weak, but thou are mighty;
hold me with thy powerful hand:
Bread of heaven, Bread of heaven,
feed me now and evermore;
feed me now and evermore.**
- 2. Open thou the crystal fountain
whence the healing stream shall flow;
let the fiery, cloudy pillar
lead me all my journey through:
strong Deliverer, strong Deliverer,
be thou still me strength and shield;
be thou still my strength and shield.**
- 3. When I tread the verge of Jordan
bid my anxious fears subside;
death of death, and hell's destruction,
land me safe on Canaan's side:
songs of praises, songs of praises,
I will ever give to thee;
I will ever give to thee.**

William Williams

Tr Peter Williams

Prayer & blessing

Go forth into the world in peace:
Be of good courage
Hold fast that which is good
Render to no one evil for evil
Strengthen the fainthearted
Support the weak
Help the afflicted
Honour all people
Love and serve the Lord
Rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit

And the blessing of God,
Source of All, Word of Truth and Breath of Life
Be among you and remain with you forever
Amen.

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StF 82 – O Lord my God when I in awesome wonder

Stuart K Hine

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StF 65 – Sing of the Lord's goodness

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StF 470 – Lord for the years your love has kept and guided

Timothy Dudley Smith

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Hymn: StF 465 – Guide me O thou great Jehovah

William Williams. *Tr* Peter Williams

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