

Worshipping together (Gathered and Separate)
A Short Reflective Café Service
Sunday 30th January 10.30 @ Thatcham URC

Announcements/family news – Elder

Welcome and Introduction

Welcome to our Café service either here in Church, online or reading at home. It is good that we can come together to Worship God: Today we will be looking at "COMMUNICATION" How do we communicate? Communication is important which avenues do we use? How does God communicate with us and how do we communicate God to other people?

Call to Worship: Psalm 145:1-13

I will extol you, my God and King, and bless your name forever and ever. Every day I will bless you, and praise your name forever and ever. Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised; his greatness is unsearchable. One generation shall laud your works to another and shall declare your mighty acts. On the glorious splendour of your majesty, and on your wondrous works I will meditate. The might of your awesome deeds shall be proclaimed, and I will declare your greatness. They shall celebrate the fame of your abundant goodness, and shall sing aloud of your righteousness. The Lord is gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love. The Lord is good to all, and his compassion is over all that he has made. All your works shall give thanks to you, O Lord, and all your faithful shall bless you. They shall speak of the glory of your kingdom, and tell of your power, to make known to all people your mighty deeds and the glorious splendour of your kingdom. Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and your dominion endures throughout all generations.

Prayers of Approach, Praise, Thanksgiving, Penitence, The Lord's Prayer:

Lord God we come together as your children, united together in Christ. We come as those who are called, not for our own sake only but for the sake of all our fellow human beings. We come to be challenged, judged, forgiven; we come to worship and praise you. Living God, our Father; to do justice as far as we are able, to your great love and goodness so richly revealed to such glorious effect in Jesus Christ our Lord.

Thank you, God, for all men and women who have been true, who have known themselves unworthy of the responsibilities you have laid on them, but have obeyed your command and been given your grace to stand for the right and to speak out for the truth even though it has meant persecution for them or rejection by their neighbours and friends. Thank you for those who have been sure that nothing mattered more than their obedience to you; for those who left everything to follow Jesus and to take the Gospel and its effects into our people's lives.

Now forgive our fearfulness which makes us put up barriers against the demands of you're your vlove. Forgive us all the excuses we have made for keeping silent when we should have spoken out; for staying at home when we should have been out giving support to other people in their needs or aspirations. Forgive us for leaving the risen Christ out in the cold, for carrying on as though he were still dead in the grave and not our living Lord. Forgive us and make us worthy at last. Fulfil your purpose in us with Jesus Christ our Lord who taught us when we pray to say together:

Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy Name; thy Kingdom come, thy will be done; on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For this is the kingdom, the power and the glory, for ever and ever. **AMEN.**

Hymn: (R&S 553)
To Abraham and Sarah

The call of God was clear
"Go forth and I will show you
A country rich and fair.
You need not fear the journey,
For I have pledged my word
That you shall be my people
And I will be your God".

From Abraham and Sarah
Arose a pilgrim race
Dependent for their journey
On God's abundant grace;
And in their hearts was written
By God this saving word:
That "You shall be my people
And I will be your God"

We of this generation
On whom God's hand is laid
Can journey to the future
Secure and unafraid,
Rejoicing in God's goodness
And trusting in his word,
That "You shall be my people
And I will be your God"

Judith Fetter 1984

Dedication of our offerings: Almighty God, as part of our worship accept our gifts of money, given by various means. As we offer them in thanksgiving for your gifts and provision to us. May they be wisely used and well for the sake of your kingdom, through the work of your church, to be a blessing to others. **AMEN.**

Readings: (God communicating)

Exodus 3:1-6:

Moses was keeping the flock of his father-in-law Jethro, the priest of Midian; he led his flock beyond the wilderness, and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. There the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a flame of fire out of a bush; he looked and the bush was blazing, yet it was not consumed. Then Moses said, "I must turn aside and look at this great sight, and see why the bush is not burned up." When the Lord saw that he had turned aside to see, God called him out of the bush, "Moses, Moses!" and he said, "Here I am." Then he said, "Come no closer! Remove the sandals from your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground." He said further, "I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look at God.

Matthew 3:13-17:

Then Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan, to be baptized by him. John would have prevented him saying, "I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?" But Jesus answered him, "Let it be now, for it is proper for us in this way to fulfil all righteousness." Then he consented. And when Jesus had been baptized, just as he came up from the water, suddenly the heavens were opened to him and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting on him. And a voice from heaven said, "This is my Son, the Beloved. With whom I am well pleased.

Reflection:

Our two readings are just two of the ways in which God communicated with people and I am sure you could give your own examples from the Bible. In the two readings there is no

doubt as to what God was saying, what his message was. I want us to look at the various ways in which we now communicate with other people. As we, not only, see on the screen but others that spring to mind, especially if you are of a certain age before the advent of modern technology! However, here is where we can run into some difficulty when various abbreviations are used which, over the years have become altered meanings. Today we are bombarded by so many means of communication that we can be confused as to which is which. Using language or illustration is OK as long as the people it is aimed at are on the same wavelength if not then the whole message can be misinterpreted one such occurrence springs to mind from my own experience: I saw the following headlines in a Newspaper: **"Flames burn Oilers – Oilers Extinguish Flames.** What do you think this referred to?

This leads us to think about how we communicate with God – thankfully he will be on the same wavelength but more importantly at times how do we communicate God's message to us to other people, are we using the right means, the right technology etc to ensure that the message is relayed. We have the answer in how we can communicate with Jesus Christ as our next hymn tells us:

HYMN: (R&S 413)

What a friend we have in Jesus

All our sins and griefs to bear
What a privilege to carry
Everything to God in prayer
O what peace we often forfeit
O what needless pain we bear
All because we do not carry
Everything to God in prayer

Have we trials and temptations
Is there trouble anywhere?
We should never be discouraged
Take it to the Lord in prayer
Can we find a friend so faithful
Who will all our sorrows share?
Jesus knows our every weakness
Take it to the Lord in prayer

Are we weak and heavy laden
Burdened with a load of care?
Jesus is our only refuge
Take it to the Lord in prayer
Do your friends despise, forsake you?
Take it to the Lord in prayer
In his arms he'll take and shield you
You will find a solace there. Joseph Scriven (1819-86)

Intercessions:

Living loving God we again turn to you with our concerns as we offer our intercessions this day

We bring to you our concerns for the world in which we live we pray for the situation in Ukraine, the fighting in Syria, the continuing problems in Afghanistan remembering before you all those in these places who feel threatened, those made homeless and those who are suffering starvation especially the children. We pray that those in power the various leaders in these countries and those from outside may come together to seek a just and lasting peace.

We pray for our own country as we continue to work against the Covid virus that the efforts of the scientists etc will bring about a formula that will enable us to live a more normal life and in doing so reach out to other nations in their quest.

We pray for all in authority in our country all who serve in parliament that they will set aside political bias and work together for the benefit of all whom they serve.

Finally we pray for ourselves that as we offer these prayers we may find a way that enables us to be the answer to some of them as we lay them before you in and through the name of Jesus Christ. **AMEN.**

Hymn: (MP 857)

I the Lord of sea and sky

I have heard my people cry
All who dwell in dark and sin
My hand will save
I who made the stars of night
I will make their darkness bright
Who will bear My light to them?
Whom shall I send?

*Here I am Lord
Is it I Lord?
I have heard you calling in the night.
I will go Lord
If You lead me
I will hold your people in my heart.*

I the Lord of snow and rain,
I have borne My people's pain
I have wept for love of them
They turn away
I will break their hearts of stone
Give them hearts for love alone
I will speak My word to them
Whom shall I send?
Here I am Lord.....

I the Lord of wind and flame
I will tend the poor and lame
I will set a feast for them
My hand will save
Finest bread I will provide
Till their hearts are satisfied
I will give My life to them
Whom shall I send?
Here I am Lord.....

Daniel Schutte

Blessing.

Now to you our Church family and friends, as we go forward and communicate with others May the peace of God which passes all understanding keep our hearts and minds in the knowledge and love of God and of His Son Jesus Christ our Lord.

The blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit be upon us and remain with us and all whom we know and love now and forever more. **AMEN**