



**Sunday 31<sup>st</sup> January 2021**

**Revd Nico Hilmy-Jones, Ruth Lucas, and Kirsty Le Couilliard**

*“Great are the works of the Lord”*

*This short act of worship has been prepared for you to use whilst we are unable to use Methodist Church premises. We invite you to spend a few moments with God, knowing that other people are sharing this act of worship with you.*

**Call to worship &  
Lighting of Candle**

Come, let us praise God together in the company of his gathered people. For the works of our God are unparalleled. Everything He does reveals his glory and majesty.

Our God is full of grace and mercy, and his righteousness never fails. So come and worship, all you who revere the Lord, for reverence and awe is the foundation of true wisdom.

**Amen.**

**Hymn**

**Made to Worship by Chris Tomlin**

Before the day, before the light,  
before the world revolved around  
the sun, God on high stepped  
down into time, and wrote the  
story of his love for everyone.

He has filled our hearts with  
wonder, so that we always  
remember:

*You and I are made to worship,  
you and I are called to love,  
you and I are forgiven and free.  
When you and I embrace  
surrender, when you and I choose  
to believe, then you and I will see  
who we were meant to be.*

All we are and all we have, is all a  
gift from God that we receive.  
Brought to life, we open our eyes,  
to see the majesty and glory of  
the King. He has filled our hearts  
with wonder so that we always  
remember:

*Chorus*

Even the rocks cry out,  
even the heavens shout,  
at the sound of his holy name.  
So let every voice sing out,  
let every knee bow down,  
he's worthy of all our praise.

*Chorus*

*Chris Tomlin, Stephen Sharp & Ed Cash  
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## Opening Prayer and The Lord's Prayer *(Ruth Lucas Local Preacher)*

Holy and Gracious God, we come this morning to offer You our worship. We come because we love You and we need You. We come because You are Almighty God and worthy of all worship and honour and praise.

We bring our worship knowing that we are loved by You and that You delight in the praises of your people. You are an Awesome God and nothing is impossible for You. Nothing happens in our world that you do not care about, and nothing happens that is beyond Your control. We we freely acknowledge that You are perfect and just in all Your ways. All creation speaks of Your greatness faithfulness and love.

Thank you Father for who You are. Thank you Jesus for Your saving Grace. Thank you Holy Spirit for Your promised Presence with us.

Lord, Your blessings are new every morning. Thank you for the many beautiful rainbows we have seen in the sky so often recently reminding us of Your faithfulness. In our world that is sick and sad, we thank You for all that is good,

just and right, for those who show love and compassion to others whoever they may be. Help us Lord to play our part in Your work here on earth bringing glory your Name.

Lord we also want to say sorry for times when we fail to be all you want us to do or be. So often we intend to do what is right but somehow we fail to do it . We are truly sorry for all that we have done or left undone that causes you to grieve. Forgive us cleanse us and renew us , not because we deserve it but because of Jesus who died for us. Thank you for the cross and the assurance of sins forgiven.

Help us Heavenly Father to worship You today, and every day in Spirit and in Truth. Make us more like Jesus in whose we come. **Amen**

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

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 thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

**Psalm 111** (*Kirsty Le Couilliard -  
Lay worker for Ebenezer*)

Praise the Lord. I will extol the Lord with all my heart in the council of the upright and in the assembly.

Great are the works of the Lord; they are pondered by all who delight in them.

Glorious and majestic are his deeds, and his righteousness endures forever.

He has caused his wonders to be remembered; the Lord is gracious and compassionate.

He provides food for those who fear him; he remembers his covenant forever.

He has shown his people the power of his works, giving them the lands of other nations.

The works of his hands are faithful and just; all his precepts are trustworthy.

They are established for ever and ever, enacted in faithfulness and uprightness.

He provided redemption for his people; he ordained his covenant forever—holy and awesome is his name.

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom; all who

follow his precepts have good understanding. To him belongs eternal praise.

**Message** (*Rev. Nico Hilmy-Jones*)

It will be nearly a year since I last saw any of my friends or my son, Patrick, in person. I know for some of us this is our reality and we have not seen people we love for a very long time and perhaps we grieve as we have felt disconnected and just flat from the whole experience and a continuing pandemic that is raging in our world without an end in sight. I am aware that my second attempt at a Sabbatical is looming and I may not be able to go back home to Edinburgh and see the people I love the most and be around places and experiences that bring me peace and that have held me and centred me when I needed to be around something familiar. I can be sad at times and find it difficult to see the blessings and things to be thankful for, because I am human and it hurts to be separated.

But, then I chat with those I love on the phone and occasionally see them on video and for a moment I am connected again and I am aware that my heart is filled in

those moments and that in wondrous ways God is with me in those conversations and phone calls, in the text messages, softly saying, see there is good here and those you love are still there. I look at a photo of my son and some of his art work that adorns my walls and it reminds me of his love for me, how he makes me laugh when we talk about silly things, how he shows his love by checking on me and asking if I am okay. when he says how thankful he is that I am safe and I am his mum and that even though we are so far away, we are still close and in here. My son holds me at times when I need to be held and so I look at the image of him and think how lucky I am to have him in my life and that he is so good and so loving.

When we look at verse 2 in our Psalm it says: Great are the works of the Lord; they are pondered by all who delight in them. In much the same way I look at a photo of my son and see the love and goodness, God is saying when we look and see God's works, it is like a photo of God and what He does in our lives. The whole reason that God shows His works in nature is for us to see that God is good.

In verse 4 it says: He has caused his wonders to be remembered so the writer of the Psalm is talking about celebrating the presence of God in our lives and how we worship him is our way of remembering and honouring him. From the very first verse where it says : "Praise the Lord!" and it is meant to be a joyous song of praise and seeing the amazing creative works all around us.

The Psalms can be viewed as a book of human emotions in which it showed the Israelites how to approach and receive God in their midst. This means that the attitude in which we conduct worship and even participate in these acts of worship, whether we are together in person or online will make the difference between worshipping God, because that's what we do, and worshipping God, because we want to connect and open our hearts and become transformed and changed people. When we encounter God in a profound and beautiful way, we are responding to God and what He is to us. We are acknowledging that God is important to us and through grateful hearts we are saying to God, we are here, we are ready and we want you to be with us.

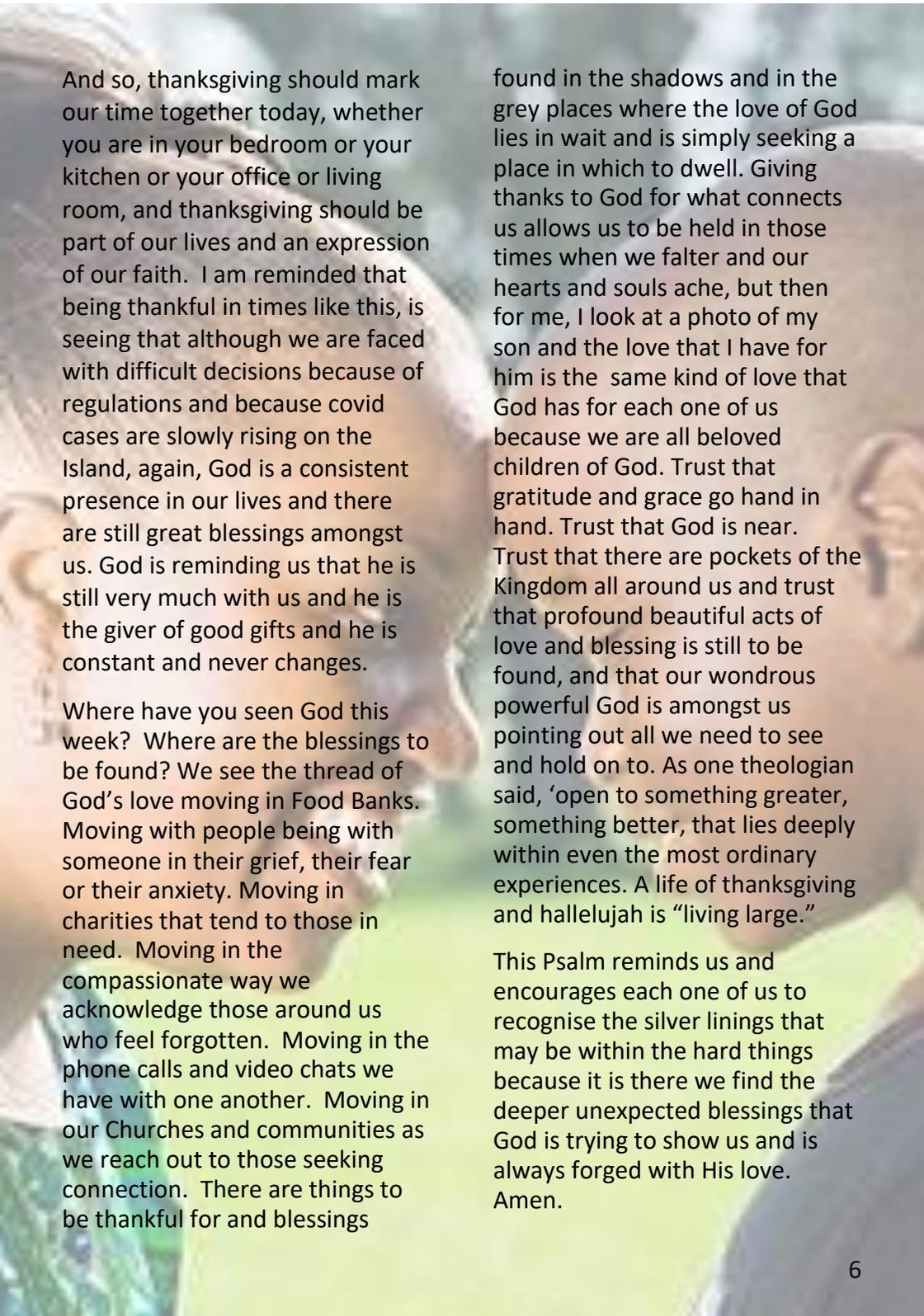
God says see the wonders, see that even in these times, I am with you and holding you, even when you falter. He gently prods us to see beyond the mess and to see the things around us and then our praise, our Our Hallelujahs go from being words on our lips to the words of our lives.

**Psalm 111** reminds us that our stories intertwine with those of God's people throughout the history of those who came before us and paved the way from the beginning of Exodus and beyond. In faith, we are connected to believers in every time and every place. When we read this Psalm, or any Psalm we are connected with all who believe in God. This Psalm is about focusing on God and God's character, God's actions and God's promises. When it says in verse 3: Glorious and majestic are his deeds, and in verse 9: holy and awesome is his name, the language and meaning is that our God is powerful and transcendent. But, even though God is transcendent and therefore holy and awesome, full of majesty and honour, God is equally and most importantly immanent and close by, because God is gracious and merciful, ever mindful and providing. Even

though Gods works are "great", those works are also faithful and just and trustworthy and God can be known by us.

Verse 10 says this: The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom; all who follow his precepts have good understanding. To him belongs eternal praise. These words are not about being frightened of God, no, they mean see and revere God's redemptive acts in our world and see and remember our Covenant with God and trust that God is good and will provide as he did with the Israelites so long ago. It is this never ending journey of faithful response to God, that is highlighted and is stressed so heavily in the book of Psalms and is central to our faith today.

A United Methodist Bishop Robert Schnase once said this: " Every congregation, large and small, is a tapestry of hope and hurt, a collage of experience and anticipation, a patchwork quilt of gifts, needs, fears and aspirations. People come to connect with God and one another as well as to feel restored, reminded, remembered and refreshed". Psalm 111 is our loving response to all of that.



And so, thanksgiving should mark our time together today, whether you are in your bedroom or your kitchen or your office or living room, and thanksgiving should be part of our lives and an expression of our faith. I am reminded that being thankful in times like this, is seeing that although we are faced with difficult decisions because of regulations and because covid cases are slowly rising on the Island, again, God is a consistent presence in our lives and there are still great blessings amongst us. God is reminding us that he is still very much with us and he is the giver of good gifts and he is constant and never changes.

Where have you seen God this week? Where are the blessings to be found? We see the thread of God's love moving in Food Banks. Moving with people being with someone in their grief, their fear or their anxiety. Moving in charities that tend to those in need. Moving in the compassionate way we acknowledge those around us who feel forgotten. Moving in the phone calls and video chats we have with one another. Moving in our Churches and communities as we reach out to those seeking connection. There are things to be thankful for and blessings

found in the shadows and in the grey places where the love of God lies in wait and is simply seeking a place in which to dwell. Giving thanks to God for what connects us allows us to be held in those times when we falter and our hearts and souls ache, but then for me, I look at a photo of my son and the love that I have for him is the same kind of love that God has for each one of us because we are all beloved children of God. Trust that gratitude and grace go hand in hand. Trust that God is near. Trust that there are pockets of the Kingdom all around us and trust that profound beautiful acts of love and blessing is still to be found, and that our wondrous powerful God is amongst us pointing out all we need to see and hold on to. As one theologian said, 'open to something greater, something better, that lies deeply within even the most ordinary experiences. A life of thanksgiving and hallelujah is "living large."

This Psalm reminds us and encourages each one of us to recognise the silver linings that may be within the hard things because it is there we find the deeper unexpected blessings that God is trying to show us and is always forged with His love. Amen.

## Hymn

### **Blessèd be your name** by Tree63

Blessèd be Your name  
In the land that is plentiful  
Where Your streams of  
abundance flow,  
Blessèd be Your name.  
And blessèd be Your name  
When I'm found in the desert  
place, - Though I walk  
through the wilderness,  
Blessèd be Your name.

*Every blessing You pour out I'll  
Turn back to praise.  
When the darkness closes in,  
Lord, Still I will say:  
Blessèd be the name of the  
Lord, - Blessèd be Your name.  
Blessèd be the name of the Lord,  
Blessèd be Your glorious name.*

Blessèd be Your name  
When the sun's shining down on  
me, - When the world's  
all as it should be',  
Blessèd be Your name.  
And blessèd be Your name  
On the road marked with  
suffering, - Though there's  
pain in the offering,  
Blessèd be Your name.

You give and take away,  
You give and take away.  
My heart will choose to say:  
Lord, blessèd be Your name.

*Matt & Beth Redman © 2002 Thankyou Music  
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## Prayers of Intercession

*(Kirsty Le Couilliard Lay worker for Ebenezer)*

Almighty God, we live in a world  
that is full of pain and discord and  
people weeping for change. We  
pray that we may be people that  
offer others hope and when we  
are harsh with one another we  
ask you to melt our hearts of  
stone. May we be willing to take  
risks and eager to walk our  
journey of faith with our eyes  
fixed on Jesus.

When we read and see the news  
and it overwhelms us, nudge us to  
not lose hope and see what can  
be and not what can not be.  
When Churches and Governments  
are in disarray, be present with  
them so they find peaceful ways  
to communicate with one  
another. Breathe your values into  
all our thinking, tear down divisive  
barriers and renew us to lead the  
world into loving.

When tempers flare, patience is  
wearing thin, give us space to  
collect our thoughts and to try  
again. When we are faced with  
too little time, too much  
responsibility, too many demands  
of friends and family remind us of  
our own limitations and help us to  
minister graciously. When when  
we feel weak and inadequate,

teach us to have humility and to forgive others whom have angered us.

When people are in pain, are grieving or exhausted give us peace, calmness and a feeling of hope amidst overwhelming situations. We pray especially for those who are struggling to see the blessings that are around them. Those moments when you are quietly there, watching over us as we deal with all that is happening in our world.

We pray For those on our hearts whom we know need your loving touch in their time of need. We lift them silently up to you, now.

We ask that your strong arm that strengthens those who are weak and in need of healing, be offered to all those whom are struggling.

Lord in your mercy.....

### **Hear our prayer**

Gracious God, we offer these prayers to you for all those people and those situations in need. Give us the strength to help where we can and fill our hearts with mercy and love as we minister to those close by and those whom are far from us. We ask all this in the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Saviour.

**Amen.**

### **Hymn: Tell out my soul**

Tell out, my soul, the greatness of the Lord! - Unnumbered blessings, give my spirit voice; tender to me the promise of his word; - in God my Saviour shall my heart rejoice.

Tell out, my soul, the greatness of his Name! - Make known his might, the deeds his arm has done; his mercy sure, from age to age the same; - his holy Name, the Lord, the Mighty One.

Tell out, my soul, the greatness of his might! - Powers and dominions lay their glory by. Proud hearts and stubborn wills are put to flight, - the hungry fed, the humble lifted high.

Tell out, my soul, the glories of his word! - Firm is his promise, and his mercy sure.

Tell out, my soul, the greatness of the Lord - to children's children and for evermore!

Timothy Dudley-Smith (1926-)

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### **Blessing and Benediction**

Go from this place as children of light. Take the love and comfort of God with you wherever you go. Trust that God's goodness and mercy shall follow you and the light of the Lord will be upon your path. **Amen.**

May the blessing of God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, be among us and remain with us always. **Amen.**