

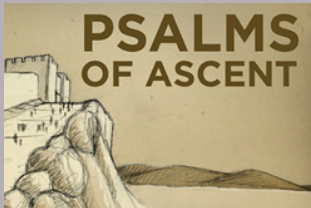


Cheadle
PARISH

In Touch

February 2024

Sunday Evening Sermon Series



What should God's people sing as they travel to worship?

It's a great question to consider because heart preparation is vitally important and necessary. Meeting with God's people calls us out of

the regular activities of life, and it reminds us what is truly meaningful. Each gathering is unique because the circumstances of our lives changed since our last gathering. We need frequent spiritual reorientations in our life-long journey.

As we focus on a new beginning, with the arrival of a new rector, in our evening services we will be walking through the Psalms of Ascent (Psalms 120-134). We'll use these psalms as a way to help us slow down, prayerfully learn, and recalibrate our hearts.

Here are three things to know about the Psalms of Ascent:

- For centuries, the Israelites used these fifteen psalms as they travelled to Jerusalem during one of the annual festivals (e.g., Passover, Pentecost, and Tabernacles).
- The psalms take their name from the geography of Jerusalem. The City of David is built on a plateau on top of some hills. As they approached Jerusalem, travellers would begin walking up a long, steep incline as they approached the city.
- The pilgrimage and ascent were important opportunities for spiritual reflection. The Psalms of Ascent provided a variety of spiritual perspectives and biblical truths. "I lift up my eyes to the hills. From where does my help come? My help comes from the Lord, who made heaven and earth." (Psalm 121:1-2)

The Psalms of Ascent aid our discipleship even though our journey to corporate worship looks quite different than the people of Israel. The writer, Eugene Peterson, puts it this way:

'There are no better "songs for the road" for those who travel the way of faith in Christ, a way that has so many continuities with the way of Israel. Since many (not all) essential items in Christian discipleship are incorporated in these songs, they provide a way to remember who we are and where we are going'.

And so, it seems fitting that these psalms should become our own. We're not literally walking up an incline to worship. But the last year, with all the changes that have happened, has not been entirely easy. These psalms help us know what to sing on the often long and up-hill journey of life.

- Stan Tomalin

St Mary's 'Filling the Gap – Children's Activity Time' February Half Term Update



Having delivered the 'Children's Activity Time' slot throughout the August Summer Holidays, and the October half term, we feel we have now established this new initiative as part of our 'Filling the Gap' focus in the café supporting our community. Our next 'Children's Activity Time' slot will be delivered during February half term, when free meals for children will be available throughout the week in the Upper Room Café.

Please pray for relationships with all those who come along and enjoy the fun, both children and adults and the long-term impact of 'Filling the Gap' in the community. Please also pray that those relationships built during the 'Children's Activity Time' in the summer holidays and October half term, will continue and develop.

During the daily sessions in the Mornington Lounge there will be table top games, a craft area, table football, the children's slide and climbing frame and some puzzles to occupy the children.

At 11.30pm & 1pm on each of the three mornings there will be a Story Time slot of about 20/25 minutes, which will include a 'Way In' thought or activity (to help the children to have a bridge into the main story), a 'Bible Story' focusing on Jesus and 'Love', and a 'Song' delivered by JUICE Puppets.

Please continue to pray for me, the team and the Café staff.

- Mark Tomlinson (Children's Outreach Worker)

Focus Weekend Away

The 9th-11th February is our Focus weekend away. Please be praying for that weekend, for safety, and encouragement in their faith as they head to Yorkshire Camps for lots of faith, fun and fellowship!

- Amy Killingbeck

Üdvözlük Jázmin – Welcome Jázmin



We are pleased to give a warm welcome to Jázmin who is a congregation member of Associate Mission Partners András and Hajnalka Zábó in Budapest Hungary where she has been a leader of one of the older youth groups and playing guitar in one of the music groups – Jazmin is coming to work as a volunteer in the Upper Room Café until the end of April – during her stay she will be kindly hosted by Ian and Lesley Ashworth.

Do look out for her and perhaps consider inviting her out for a meal or including her if you plan a visit out to the countryside – Bramhall, Lyme, Dunham or Styal might be possibilities, even shopping trips to the Manchester or the Trafford Centre might be fun. Please speak with Ian or Lesley or myself to arrange things.

- Graham Lowcock

Café News



Filling the Gap - free picnic lunches for children Monday 12th- Friday 16th February.

Tuesday 13th- Shrove Tuesday, pancakes available

Wednesday 14th - Valentines special bakes

Thursday 15th - Inspiring Women's Ladies coffee and cake evening 7-8.30pm

1st March - St David's Day- Welsh Cakes and Bara Brith

John Turkington's retirement

John Turkington our caretaker in the Upper Room is retiring at the end of March. John has faithfully served the church in this role for 8 years. His hard work and consistent willingness to help has been a huge benefit to all our groups, ministries and events that happen in the Upper Room.



We want to say a huge thank you for John's service here in Cheadle and wish him all the best in his retirement.

If you know of anyone who may be interested in this vital role of caretaker in the Upper Room, please ask them to speak to Jon Drayton.

Six Stories of Hope

Following Hope Explored we are trialling the use of the 6 Stories of Hope, looking at encounters Jesus had with people during his ministry and what we can learn about God, Jesus/Holy Spirit, people and ourselves. We are going to be using the Discovery Bible Method (looking only at the passage) using those questions and allowing the Holy Spirit to reveal things to the group. We know it works and He always speaks!

The group will meet at St. Cuthbert's each Wednesday evening for six consecutive weeks.

Please pray for those attending (we have around ten possibles) who are looking for Jesus and who don't yet know much about who He is or how to get to know Him. We are praying for revelation, spiritual fruit, and some who will learn this really really simple study method so they then go and disciple others.

- Dave and Iris Challis

Women's Ministry

As I am writing this, it is still January – it seems to have been January for a very long time. When I was thinking and praying earlier this morning, the sky was grey and dull and I was feeling fed up. Like many other people I have a cough which doesn't want to go away! However, as I was looking out of the window, I saw a strip of blue sky and now the sun is actually shining. Winter will end and spring and summer are on their way. I saw snowdrops in a churchyard in Cumbria last weekend and plan to visit Dunham Massey to see the winter garden in all its glory.

We need to change our focus from the winter around us and our own circumstances and look towards God and his amazing provision for us. Psalm 42 does this with a refrain which appears twice in this psalm and a third time in Psalm 43:

*Why, my soul, are you downcast?
Why so disturbed within me?
Put your hope in God,
for I will yet praise him,
my Saviour and my God.*

The psalms are such a comfort to us: the writers do not shy away from the reality of our human experience. Sometimes we are sad, or angry or oppressed by the thought of our continued failure to deal with a besetting sin. Sometimes people are nasty to us; or we are bereaved, or we find ourselves in any number of difficult and painful situations. There is a psalm for all of them. And psalms which celebrate the joy of the Lord – such as Psalms 146 to 150 which all start with the phrase “Praise the Lord”. So no matter how you are feeling today, let us “Put our hope in God” and “praise him” because he is “my saviour and my God.”

God Bless

Trish Wells
Women's discipleship worker



Dates for February

Saturday 3rd - Hard of Hearing Support Group, 11.30am in the Ashfield Room in the Upper Room

Wednesday 7th - Monthly Prayer Meeting, 8pm in the Upper Room

Friday 9th - Sunday 11th - Focus Weekend Away at Yorkshire Camps

Saturday 10th - Cheadle Board Room, 9.30am - 9.30pm in the Upper Room

Tuesday 13th - Thursday 15th - Filling the Gap activities, 11am - 2pm in the Upper Room Café

Tuesday 13th - Rooted Pancake and Film Night, 7pm in the Upper Room

Thursday 15th - Ladies Coffee and Cake Evening, 7pm-8.30pm in the Upper Room Café

Saturday 17th - Men's Breakfast, 8am in the Upper Room Café

Tuesday 27th - Open Door Prayer Meeting, 7.30pm at the Southgate's house

Dates for March

Friday 1st - World Day of Prayer, 10.45am Gatley URC

Saturday 2nd - Hard of Hearing Support Group, 11.30am, Upper Room

Wednesday 6th - Monthly Prayer Meeting, 8pm in the Upper Room

Thursday 7th - Holiday Bible Club leaders training evening, 7.30pm in the Upper Room

Saturday 9th - Cheadle Board Room with market, 9.30am - 9.30pm

Thursday 21st - Men's Breakfast, 6.45am at the Upper Room Cafe

Tuesday 26th - Open Doors Prayer Meeting, 7.30pm

Friday 29th - Good Friday

Sunday 31st - Easter Sunday

World Day of Prayer

Friday 1st March 2024

The World Day of Prayer is a worldwide prayer event planned by women in different countries and using a service prepared by the women of a particular country each year. This year the service has been planned by the women of Palestine. The service was planned many months ago under the heading "I beg you, bear with one another in love" and is particularly poignant in view of what has happened in recent months in Palestine, Gaza and Israel.

This is an ecumenical event and an opportunity for people from St Mary's and St Cuthbert's to stand in prayer with people from all over the world and in person in our local area. This year the service is being hosted by Gatley URC on Elm Road in Gatley. The service will be held at 10.45am with refreshments to follow. Please do join us if you can.

- Trish Wells

Free live music evening:

Caroline Abblitt will be sharing Christian songs she has written and testimony from her life at Coach House Church in Stockport (222 Wellington Road SK4 2QN) on Friday 9th Feb at 7.30pm. All are welcome!

For more information or a Zoom link to join online, email carolinejaneabblitt@googlemail.com

Ladies Coffee and Cake evening

**THE UPPER ROOM
THURSDAY 15TH FEBRUARY
7-8:30 PM**

To ladies young and old and every age in between. Come and join us for informal chat, fellowship, hot drinks and cake!

No need to pre-book, just put the date in your diary and pay on the day in the cafe for what you would like

Hope to see you there!



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Big Church Festival

25th - 26th May 2024

Big Church Festival is a large Christian music festival which takes place on the Wiston estate in West Sussex. There is a group going from Cheadle and if you want to come along too you can use the group sign up link below to get discounted tickets. The more people who sign up the cheaper the tickets!

<https://bigchurch.group/2024/cheadle>

The deadline to sign up for the group discount is 31st March

For more info, speak to Maddy Prescott



Creation

“In the beginning, the universe was created. This has made a lot of people very angry and been widely regarded as a bad move.”

You may, or may not, relate to Douglas Adam's opening line to his brilliant Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy. Many people are cynical about the world we live in, and many seem to believe that everything is just getting worse and will continue to get worse unless we 'sort it out' fast.

'Sort it out' can mean anything from alleviating climate change, to forcing the billionaires to share their wealth, to working towards the extinction of humanity! Seriously, there are people who think we should just wipe ourselves out and let the planet recover and flourish in our absence.

As a Parish, both of our churches are currently working through the book of Genesis, which presents a slightly more optimistic picture of our universe and the good God who brought it all into being.

We read, right at the beginning of everything, that as God completes his work of creation, he declares it to be 'very good.' This sounds a bit tame in English; we describe lots of things with an offhand 'very good' when what we mean is 'I'm a bit busy, can you show me later?'

In the original language, when God had completed his creation, it was brilliant. Not just in the sense that it all looked beautiful and worked well. There's a moral dimension to the 'very good' as well – creation was 'in tune' with God, there was (as yet) no sin or badness of any kind. It was how it was supposed to be.

Right at the beginning of everything we find, not random chance or some vague intelligent force, but a good God who makes a good world and fully intends to interact with it and bless it.

As we read through Genesis, we are reminded that this 'very good' state of affairs didn't last. And so, the world is as we now see it – so often broken, full of war and violence, divided and painful.

However, God has not finished with us. The Bible is the story of God's promise to restore the entire cosmos and redeem men and women from the darkness we invited into the world when our first ancestors turned their backs on God. It is the story of how God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. It is a story which builds towards a glorious New Creation at the end of this age, in which those who have given themselves to Jesus will live forever.

The Bible ends with a world re-made, 'very good.' Not in a garden this time, but a city, where God will finally live with his people, and things will work how they should, and all will be as it should be.

The world is hard now. But remember how it started and remember how it ends. Take hold of Jesus and find hope as you travel into that amazing future with him.



Ian Chidlow

Associate Minister (St Cuthbert's)

Mission Partners - Paula and Dean Finnie



Paula was PA to the head of the Covenanter movement. After marrying Dean, the couple decided to go onto the mission field, first to Zimbabwe with Crosslinks and later, when they were expelled from Zimbabwe, to Cape Town South Africa, where they have recently completed 20 years in southern Africa. They are now supported by Christians Overseas. With two sons Joel and Eli, they minister in one of the poorer areas, where they are hoping to buy the church premises they currently rent. As well as Sunday services, they run a mid-week soup kitchen and homework clubs for local children.

Contact Information

GENERAL ENQUIRIES: Church Office, The Upper Room, 11 Wilmslow Road, Cheadle, SK8 1DW
churchoffice@cheadle.org.uk 0161 428 8050 (Open weekdays 9am-3pm)

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