



**Broomhill Hyndland
Parish Church**

“Lighting the Way”

for **22 March 2020**

Dear Friends,

This will be the major way, at the moment, of keeping touch for regular weekly worship. I'll try and follow the same lectionary readings so that we can worship as 'normally' as possible.

The little Order is here to guide your thoughts and prayers and to keep us focussed on God who is with us through and beyond this crisis. I value everything you are doing for church, neighbourhood and family.

The reflection is written in style to be preached and not read, so apologies for that.

Imagine yourselves, in the Kirk.

You are connected to each other and heaven with earth.

Yours in faith

George

The lectionary readings for this Sunday are:

1 Samuel 16: 1-13, Psalm 23, Ephesians 5: 8-14, John 9: 1-41

Sit quietly and let's have a word of prayer...

PRAYER

Lord God,

come and sit awhile with me.

In these uncertain and frightful days

we all need your company,

your friendship,

your comforting words.

In these unpredictable hours,

anxious hours,

listen to our worries and concerns.

Life- giving Breath

in these days of isolation and quarantine

we know that, through your Lenten temptations

you understand what it feels like to isolate

and long to be fed.

Almighty God,

we reach out as we are able

without touch – but with presence

without contact – but with compassion
without the physical – but the spiritual.
Sit awhile,
sit with me, Amen

REFLECTION

All around

I am drawn to Psalm 23, if the truth be told.

It is the most well known Psalm and as its Mother's Day on Sunday, I can't help imagine, God as a woman, setting the table, so excited and joyful to welcome us, that she lets the wine spill over the edge of the cup.

But there is another reason.

Years ago I asked my mother what she wanted for Mother's Day.

Her answer, "Nothing. I have everything I need."

My Mother's response to that day and to birthday's and Christmas was the same. Materially, she was content and happy generally with her lot. It probably caused an argument or two, resulting in the acceptance of a card. Perhaps the guilt was on our side, having the need to give, to salve our conscience and an inability to think on something ourselves.

I read Psalm 23 once more but jarred at the first verse.

"The Lord is my shepherd; I have everything I need."

If there ever was a line from the book of Psalms that brought the current situation to the fore, it was this one.

My spirits are raised when I hear of community efforts. Our own church, in conjunction with Kothel, is trying to deliver food and other necessary items. We have formed a phone-call co-ordinator for each day who will dip into a pool of volunteers to offer support.

There are other community initiatives locally and nationally like Becky Wass from Cornwall with her print-at-home template for isolated neighbours and we even have had work outs on the roof in Seville, Spain, by fitness instructors and the singing of 'Nessun Dorma' in Italy !

Super!

But what is wrong with some people? Why, when we are told that there is enough for everyone, are the shelves empty? I thank God for the generosity of spirit shown across the globe, but it depresses me to see selfish people stocking up and leaving nothing for anybody else.

Listen to the words of the Psalmist, dear shoppers, "I have everything I need."

Drawn by the cartoonist in the Daily Mail, is a picture of a gentleman entering his house saying, "I managed to get one item from the supermarket..." He is pushing a shopping trolley.....

If I didn't laugh I would cry.

All around the country shelves have been emptied of chicken, mince, tinned goods, pasta, rice, bread.... and for some strange reason, toilet rolls.

We need to be calm and stop overbuying because it is having an impact on the most vulnerable members of society. It has also led to angry scenes.

Pamela, out in a west-end shop that will remain nameless, saw police in the car park because someone had run off with a case of loo rolls and jumped in the car, heading off at high speed.

"I have everything I need," wrote the Psalmist, who sat on the hillside, enjoying God's creation, with a Biblical lunchbox to hand.

You know, Mother's Day is approaching and my Mother was right.

I have everything I need.

I have a family that I love dearly.

I have a church family who matter so much to me and in whom I worry and pray about.

And there's the world-wide family – yes, we all belong together.

And there is God, a God who tells us that through the valleys of disappointment, darkness and disease, He will be with us.

Listen to these words, these comforting words:

"Even if I go through the deepest darkness, I will not be afraid, for you are with me."

We fill our fridges, buy chest freezers so that we can be filled for evermore, but with God, we have everything we need. God promises this.

What more do we want ?

PRAYER

You are 'my' shepherd, Lord,
and you guide me in the right paths.

But Lord,

as sheep, we like to flock together,
and so we lament with the lonely,
the friendly visits, safe social spaces,
lunch club lifelines, coffee and chat,
now out of reach.

We lament with those suddenly needing benefits,
frustrated by pernicious delays.

We cry out with leaders wishing that they could solve things, fix things.
For those who have lost a loved one, through this virus,
we open our hearts.

This Mother's Day,

we grieve with those who wait for a mother's kiss.

We lament with those whose wedding plans are in tatters.

We are distressed with musicians and sports people
who enrich our lives but whose livelihood is threatened.

We long to forget about the preoccupation of this contagion

We long to get back to meaningful work.

We long to eat in a restaurant ,

stand at a bar,

enjoy the cinema and theatre once more.

We long to go out and play.

We long for carefree hugs.

As we do so, God, deepen our respect and sympathy for the people for
whom isolation, poor sanitation, lack of safe space to play, or economic dep-
rivation have been the norm for ever.

Work on our hearts to recalibrate our priorities as a church and as a nation.

Match resistance to disease with openness to each other. In the hurt of en-
forced isolation, in the longing for freedom to interact, in the ache of im-
posed solitude, reveal to us the foolishness of isolationism and individual-
ism, so little questioned when all seems well.

Refresh our confidence that every human being is your precious child;

Help us to see the brothers and sisters you have given us to care for.

The Lord is my shepherd, and my neighbours' shepherd...

and my friends...

Amen.

(Prayer adapted from Revd David Warbrick; Vicar at All Saints Kings
Heath)

LIGHT A CANDLE

There is a call for a National Day of Prayer on March 22nd.

Light a candle at 7pm on Sunday, as a visible sign of the light of the world,
Jesus Christ, our source of hope and prayer.