



**Broomhill Hyndland
Parish Church**

"Lighting the Way"

for **Sunday 30 August 2020**

This week George has prepared a "View from St Kilda"
which you will find in the Newsletter.

Pentecost 14A Sunday 30 August 2020 Proper 17

For those who like to follow all the lectionary readings for the Sunday and dip into the Old Testament and Epistles, the readings for this Sunday are:
Exodus 3: 1-15; Jeremiah 15: 15-21; Psalm 26: 1-8; Romans 12: 9-21;
Matthew 16: 21-28.

Our Sunday reflection will be based on Matthew but please read and ponder the suggested Scripture and see how it connects and what it says to you.

Welcome to our time of worship in homes and in hearts.

CALL

Loving God,
you call us to turn away from our own selfish interests,
to take up our cross and to follow you.
To find our lives,
may we live them in service of your mission.

As we come before you this morning,
give us open hearts and open hands.
Make us eager to hear your voice
and seek your guidance.

Open our minds to your ever-present spirit
that is always moving within and around us
Open our spirits to your nudging
and open our lives to your love.

INTROIT

'Take up your cross,' the Saviour said,
'if you would my disciple be;
take up your cross, with willing heart,
and humbly follow after me.'

Take up your cross; let not its weight
fill your weak soul with vain alarm:
his strength shall bear your spirit up,
and brace your heart, and nerve your arm.
(CH4 – 402)

PRAYER

God who is,
God who has been,
God who will be;
faithful God,
journeying God,
God with us;
You are our God,
beyond us in mystery,
with us in struggle,
and guiding us onwards.

Your faithfulness we praise.
Your name we call upon.
Your presence we worship.
We are here,
on this holy ground,
in this time,
offering our lives
and ourselves to You.
We come open to Your Spirit,
and trusting in the love of Your Son, Jesus.
God of Abraham, of Isaac, of Jacob,
Your faithfulness echoes down the centuries,
yet too often our commitment is much less certain.
Forgive us, Lord.
God of Moses, of Mary, of Peter,
Your call invites us to follow Your way of love,
yet too often we seek excuses and an easier path.
Forgive us, Lord.
God of Israel, of Palestine, of all nations,
Your concern is for justice and peace,
yet too often we ignore the cries of the oppressed.
Forgive us, Lord.
Forgive us, Lord,
for there is work to do and our help is needed ;
to set people free,
to abandon our placid security,
to let the bush burn in our heart and in our eyes
until we stand before the Pharaohs with the hard news.
Help us take up our cross

not as a burden to be carried but as a joy to behold.
May we this day
be enflamed,
be ablaze with the Gospel.

In your name we pray saying,
'Our Father... ' AMEN

And now we turn to Scripture, to Matthew 16:21-28
Let us listen, read and hear the Word of God ...

... this is the Word of the Lord, thanks be to Him.



PRAYER OF ILLUMINATION

Lord, grant us patience to endure, faith to trust in you, joy to see you at work, and hope to believe that all will be well. AMEN

REFLECTION

Open the Kleenex...

Get the handkerchiefs at the ready...

I'm going to tell you a story of personal trauma. It's about a girl. A girl who was my beloved a long time ago, as a teenager. She and I were dating, going out, hingin-about the'gether.

(For those reading these Reflections – my apologies for my poor spelling of the Scots language!)

We were an item.

Now you need your hankies... we broke up! Blow your nose hard.

The whys and wherefores are not important, suffice to say my tender heart was broken.

I know, you're thinking, how could this girl be so cruel!!

Then, one night, whilst watching Starsky and Hutch, I received a phone call. It was the said girl, who wanted to meet up at Bellahouston Park. I rolled over the bonnet of my car and jumped in (I made that bit up) and missing out in the end of my detective programme, I arrived like David Soul with an open leather jacket on, singing 'Don't give up on us baby,'

(I made that up as well)

... after getting off a Number 34 bus...

we met and agreed to re-ignite the romance. (Hankies at the ready again ...)

We broke up. Why could such a devastating thing happen again, I hear you ask? Because her father told her that you should never go back. You should not make U-turns.

Why am I revealing all this emotion? I want you to think of that 'father' who commented about U-turns. Boris Johnson is facing a backlash over his U-turn on face-masks in schools. One backbencher told him to get a grip on 'our scientists.'

It doesn't need to be face-masks.

It could be rules for one about travelling in a certain radius not applying to the other.

It could be the Government's ability to turn round and blame Care Homes for their inept decisions.

It could be exam results that would have been easier to mark by throwing them up in the air and the heaviest given the top mark. They are all U-turns. But if you want to see a classic U-turn – look at Peter.

Once Peter discovers what Jesus expects in following him, in taking up his cross to run the gauntlet to Jerusalem and be humiliated, suffer and die, Peter changes his tune. You know the story well. He scolds Jesus for his doom and gloom predictions and Jesus returns with an ace, 'Get behind me Satan.'

Peter likes the idea of military revolution. He likes the idea of being free of the Roman oppressors. He has stood back in admiration at the growing crowds listening to every word, the miracles that are astounding all the disciples – this was a new kingdom. This was the cherished dream of all the Jewish people – liberation, release, deliverance.

Let's turn back to where we were before we had this conversation and little disagreement, Jesus.

Too late – like the father who didn't give me a second chance, Jesus doesn't believe in U-turns. He doesn't believe in going back. I have sympathy for Peter. I live in a country that doesn't torture people for their Christian faith. The country might ignore Christians, or if you read September's Life and Work article from Ron Ferguson, this country has done a U-turn on how those who are Christians are looked upon. In the past going to church was seen as a respectable, decent and upright thing to do: now, if you claim to have faith people think you are odd.

How do you and I, in our communities, deny self and take up our crosses? And if we are honest, how much changing in direction have we done too? Remember when we stood up front in the sanctuary and made a profession of faith – where are we now? Have we stepped back into the scenario of Peter realising that Jesus is asking too much of us?

Whilst reflecting over the past week on the readings, a phrase stuck in my mind and wouldn't let go. The writer talked of 'spectator Christianity'. What she was meaning was those of us who have turned away from the harsh demands of the Gospel to hold on to the alluring thoughts of Peter.

'Don't take this faith thing seriously.'

'Don't give up on your privileges.'

'Don't do the hard thing.'

'Don't give up on your comforts.'

'Despite what Jesus says, you don't have to die.'

There is a pretence that what we call Christianity is what Jesus calls us to. It is a game of charades where we point to our ear and say 'it sounds like '. It sounds like Christianity, it looks a little like Christianity...

... but is it?

Sitting in 121 George Street I was having a discussion with a psychologist, after applying to work in Italy. Opening up, I told him as a boy I used to pretend to be a minister. There, in my bedroom, I announced the hymns to Drew Busby, a Hearts player on my wall. The psychologist told me that my behaviour was not unusual!!

People still think I pretend to be a minister! But then there is a lot of pretence about – those claiming to be in loving relationships; teachers who dislike children; those who shout for equality but discriminate readily; and politicians who deflect the blame away from themselves.

Of course Christianity is about love, 'God is love and love is God' but it is quite a commitment. The world is so tempting. It is so enticing and appealing. We are supposed to be joyful, 'happy are those...' and all that, but that does not deny the reality of what Jesus expects. When he calls us forth, as God called to Moses all those years ago to find the promised land, we know the journey will have difficult moments. Even after being fed with manna and quails the people of Israel, finding it hard, wanted to make a U-turn back to slavery because it seemed a better option.

'Don't give up on us,' sang David Soul.

'Don't give up on us,' I sang as she headed back home on a number 17.

'Don't give up on us,' the disciples said when they saw the frustration of Jesus.

Don't give up on Jesus.

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

PRAYER

Abandon the illusion you're a self-contained individual.

Abandon the idea that it's just you
and only you.

Be a part of this wounded world,
and find yourself with Christ.

Set aside your own desires,
give yourself fully for others;
take up the cross,
not only yours, and follow on and
be the hands and heart of Jesus.

Renounce self-protection,
accept your brokenness,
and reach out for love.

Let go of your own plans.
Join in the healing of the world.
You will not be alone
for we are in this together –
the storm of Laura
and the storms of racism,
the storms of division,
the storms of poverty,
the storms of Bob, Jane, Morven...
our own storms...

Follow your soul, not your ego.
Follow it right into people's suffering.
Follow it right into the heart of God.
Follow the arrows.
Follow the footprints...
no U-turns here.

Pour yourself out;
let the world pour in;
then you are one with the Beloved,
you are one with God.

BENEDICTION

Lord Jesus,
give us the wisdom to follow you,
the strength to carry our cross,
and the hope of your kingdom –
Here we are
Send us!
Go in Peace...
and may the Blessing of God Almighty,
the Father,
the Son and the Holy Spirit be with you all.

