



Broomhill Hyndland
Parish Church

"Lighting the Way"

for Sunday 6 September 2020

Dear friends,

Welcome to another Sunday service and a new month - September.

We have now had two services back in the Naseby Park Sanctuary and for that I am so grateful. I appreciate wholeheartedly your care for each other by showing a great deal of consideration and the putting of others first but your selflessness is also affecting the numbers who are attending!

By hanging back and not phoning to allow others a 'turn', we are having to re-send e-mails and make calls to fill the 40 allowed for our Sunday morning service! Please don't hang back. If you wish to come, phone. Whilst I don't want anyone turned away, I also don't want the opportunity to be missed of attending.

If there are no spaces you will be told. Please phone first and see.

The Zoom services are still continuing and as you can see the Reflections are still being sent out. If there are other ways we can help please let us know.

Can I also ask parents, grandparents, carers, to contact Sarah. The children at the moment can only attend as part of the 50, so in order to keep your children or grandchildren connected to the Church, please talk to Sarah about how their spiritual needs can be met. Remember the children would have been back by now like the schools, they too are missing out.

I wish you well on another Sunday and ask you to remember Crawford and Andrew Gray. Their Dad's funeral took place on Friday. Keep them in your prayers at this time.

George

Pentecost 15A Sunday 6 September 20 (Proper 18)

For those who like to follow all the lectionary readings for the Sunday and dip into the Old Testament and Epistles, the readings are: Exodus 12: 1-14; Ezekiel 33: 7-11; Psalm 149; Romans 13: 8-14; Matthew 18; 15-20

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.

.... read, reflect, rejoice...

CALL

O Living God of past and future,
we praise you for this present moment.
Fill us with your joy and empower us with your Holy Spirit,
that our strength may be renewed
to sing a new song of your glory
in a world which longs for your justice and peace.
All this we ask in the name of Jesus,
in whom we become your new creation.
AMEN

The Grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

INTROIT

Make me a channel of your peace.
Where there is hatred let me bring your love;
where there is injury your pardon, Lord;
and where there's doubt true faith in you.

*Oh, Master grant that I may never seek
so much to be consoled as to console;
to be understood as to understand;
to be loved, as to love with all my soul.*

Make me a channel of your peace.
Where there's despair in life let me bring hope;
where there is darkness, only light;
and where there's sadness, ever joy.
Chorus

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

PRAYER

Blessed are the Peacemakers, you said,
but peace is not always on our minds.
We could choose to live in peace,
to seek harmony,
to be synchronised like swimmers in a pool,
at one with each other and with you Lord God,
but we choose to do wrong to them.
We could welcome those we don't know
but that takes extra effort to learn about the other,
to cross bridges,
to open yourself up to scrutiny,
so we choose to close our hearts.
We could make new friends in strangers,
but choose the safety of a clique.
Forgive us, Generous Love,
for our foolish choices.

Whisper your grace among us, your hope to us,
so that we can stop cursing enemies.
Polish the roughness of our arrogance
so that we become smooth enough to hold.
Help us put aside the stumbling blocks
that prevent others from seeking and knowing Christ.
Help us seek the peace, not just any peace,
but the Peace of Jesus,
the Shalom that encourages us to stand up for what is right
so that all know,
and all will believe.
AMEN

And now we turn to Scripture. First to Romans 13: 8-14
and then to Matthew 18: 15-20. Let us listen, read and
hear the Word of God ...
... this is the Word of the Lord, thanks be to Him.



PRAYER OF ILLUMINATION

Sometimes, O God, your word is hard for us. Sometimes, O God, we don't want to hear from you. Sometimes, we'd rather pray our own prayers and turn away from what you require. Send your Holy Spirit, that we may turn to you, in the word read and proclaimed, that we may listen, understand, change and obey.
AMEN

REFLECTION

The scene was my first charge.

It was a pretty packed church, and even more so because there was to be a baptism during the service. For those of you who wonder why your minister carries out the Sacrament of Baptism nearer the end of the service, let me explain.

There are two reasons. The first is a theological and liturgical one – the Baptism is a response to the reading and preaching of Scripture. For me there is an order: read God's word, reflect on God's word and then respond to that word in action.

The second is based on being a minister wet between the ears. On this particular Sunday, after the opening part of worship I baptised the young baby and walked up and down as proud as punch, with the quiet and sleeping child.

After the congregation had vowed to support the child in Christian upbringing, the next hymn was announced and as, I headed into the pulpit, the family and guests all got up and left. To say I was furious was an understatement.

I was angry that the service as a whole was missed, as well as the fellowship of a congregation who had re-committed themselves to this responsibility. The family had just promised to bring their child up in a Christian way but departed before the Scripture had been read and preached.

Imagine leaving during a service!!

Imagine getting up and walking out!!

Imagine the audacity and the bare-faced cheek!!

Earlier on in Matthew's Gospel, in chapter 5, where Jesus is talking about anger, he says this, 'So if you are about to offer a gift to God at the altar and there you remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar, and go at once and make peace with your brother...'

Leave the service?? Leave it early?? Get up and walk out??

In Jesus' day no one would consider leaving in the middle of worship. The act of offering a sacrifice was a solemn act. But here, Jesus encourages that which enflamed a young minister in Paisley, to leave worship and sort out the relationship.

I wonder, would a challenging word from Scripture, a pointed comment from the pulpit, stir you so much, move you so much, invigorate you so much, that you could not wait to deal with what was on your mind and in your heart?

I've known folk to leave for other reasons! One person in the recent past left because the Children's Address was too jolly! I also had a colleague who made reference to the Iron Lady losing power and a woman of that political persuasion marched up the aisle and slammed the door behind her!

'Go and make peace,' Jesus said. No matter the fault, the mud-slinging, the blame, and seek reconciliation. Whether we like it or not, when relationships break down, Jesus puts the burden on us to mediate and find some common ground.

Whether it's neighbours arguing over a garden fence about a garden fence; a bump or a scrape in a supermarket car park; a family member who has ignored your birthday (or even worse, your children's), 'go and seek peace' says Jesus.

Why?

The bottom line? The hard truth?

Because Jesus has done it for you, reconciling you to God through his death.

We know that through Jesus the gap between Creator and created has been closed, and because of Christ and his love we have to live that reconciliation out in our own lives. Quite simply, when you ask, 'Why should I forgive him, why should I forgive her?' Jesus' answer is 'because I forgave you.'

The behaviour that Sunday around the Sacrament frustrated me but the Sacrament of Communion is a reminder to me and to us all how far God through Christ is willing to go. Christ takes the steps, though not his fault, to bring us closer, sacrificing his life so that we would be nearer to God.

The words of Pastor Martin Niemoller ring true. Niemoller protested against Hitler's anti-Semitic measures and was arrested and imprisoned in Dachau. His words – 'It took me a long time to learn that God is not the enemy of my enemies. He is not even the enemy of His enemies.'

Go and make peace. If there were ever the need to hear these words, it is now. In the USA, for example, division between the police and rioters. In Belarus, division between protestors and a leader who refuses to listen. If there ever was a need to stop political scoring and seek a vaccination to a virus that has devastated the world and world economies it is now.

Paul is straight to the point – our duty is to love one another: end of.

Jesus is up front – if there is a problem seek to sort it, for your benefit and the benefit of the other, rather than having it keeping you awake at night, deal with it so everyone can know peace.

I think we've all been there, putting off something we would rather not face, which is disrupting the rest of our day but when we deal with it, sometimes it hasn't been as bad as we thought, it was our imagination that ran riot – the brother, the sister, the boss, appreciated the effort and some agreement was found.

These Gospel stories should give you clarity that everything was not always hunky-dorey in the early centuries. The church was finding its feet. As Paul often reminds us, some were Jews having difficulty letting go of their Jewishness: whilst others were Gentiles and offended those who were the earliest Christians because they had met and saw Jesus in person. So you find, not just in Paul but with Matthew too, questions about disagreements, anger, division and the need for reconciliation.

That's the way it was then...

... and that's the way it is now, the need to listen to the other, to stand or sit where they are, to appreciate where they are coming from, to see from their perspective.

I say again – imagine walking out because ... well, you took to heart what Jesus says!!

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

And now our thoughts turn outwards to our world in prayer.

PRAYER

'We need to talk,'

says the girlfriend to her boyfriend.

'Can I have a word in the kitchen?'

says the spouse to her husband.

'A word', says the boss to the employee.

We have all heard phrases like this, Lord.

Not a chat about the weather,

or the weekend's football,

or the latest gossip about the Soaps or a celebrity.

We need to talk –

it sounds serious...

something is broken,

something is pulling us asunder,

there is division in the ranks.

Almighty Father,

we need to talk to each other –

for the depth,

for the health,

for the recovery of our world,

we need to talk.

In colour and creed,

in theology,

in the have-nots with the haves
we need to engage with each other.
Lord Jesus,
you teach us that the principles of love and respect
should undergird all that we say and do.
Help us not to allow a relationship
in church, in community, in nations
to wither away into the shadows
or be swept under the carpet
but to take the risk of healing.
Help us seek the authenticity and realism
and genuineness to bring peace and harmony.
And Lord, we need to talk to you,
for through you, as Peacemaker,
common ground can be found
bringing conflicting sides and opinions together.
'We need to talk',
help us do so with brother and sister,
united by blood,
united by the mud we were created from,
united by our God who, loving,
made us for his company,
and the need to talk.
AMEN

BENEDICTION

From whatever binds us,
from that which holds us back,
from the fear of change that traps us,
release now to go in faith,
to step forward with your grace,
and to live the gospel of love,
in our community
and in our world
Go in Peace...
and may the Blessing of God Almighty, Father, Son and Holy Spirit,
be with you all.
AMEN