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Broomhill Hyndland  
Parish Church

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*"Lighting the Way"*

for **Sunday 11 October 2020**

Dear friends

Welcome to another Sunday service. Many thanks to those who worshipped last week in the morning in Naseby and in our Zoom Communion at 2.30pm. I appreciate all the effort you make to worship in so many different ways.

As I indicated last Sunday, I have started a 'prayer picture' sent out on a Saturday with a line from Scripture. The idea is to look around at what we see and think of a Biblical line that connects with that picture. In our world we should see the spiritual - so there is a challenge for you! Unfortunately only those with a certain type of phone will be able to receive the picture.

Soon we will be able to welcome our Junior Church back - but only to the halls.

Various restrictions will apply: a maximum of 30 (children and staff) following the guidelines from our Risk Team. The Junior Church will not be allowed in the Sanctuary because that will affect the number 50 - the maximum for worship. The Risk Team will also work out a dropping off and picking up point for parents and grandparents - more information will follow later.

WD40, our Wednesday Worship, should return on Wednesday 21 October in the Kingsborough Gardens Sanctuary. Again, various restrictions will apply.

I will be on 'holiday' this week but will be conducting next Sunday's service. Any urgent pastoral problems should be directed to our Session Clerk, Gordon, or the Revd Bruce Sinclair of Jordanhill Parish Church. Bruce can be contacted on 959-1310.

In our prayers we not only remember the McLintock family, Fiona and David in particular - John died on the 3rd of October but also Nan Blackstone from Clarence Court who died on the 5th.

Every Blessing,

George

**Pentecost 20A Sunday 11 October 20 (Proper 23)**

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 32: 1-14; Isaiah 25: 1-9; Psalm 23; Philipians 4: 1-9; Matthew 22: 1-14

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

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

## **CALL**

Come – because you are invited  
Come – because you hunger  
Come – because you will be fed  
Come – for healing  
Come – for forgiveness  
Come – to this place, to this space  
Come – to me, says Jesus – Just come!

## **INTROIT**

If you believe and I believe  
and we together pray,  
the Holy Spirit shall come down  
and set God's people free,  
and set God's people free,  
and set God's people free,  
the Holy Spirit shall come down  
and set God's people free.  
(CH4 771)

## **PRAYER**

How wonderful is your world, Lord.  
Land, sea and air all are yours,  
so too, the vast galaxies of space.  
All creation rests in the palm of your hand.  
Nothing is beyond your reach,  
no one is beneath your notice.  
Lovingly,  
you provide for each one of us.  
You meet every need,  
steady us when we stumble,  
lift us when we fall.

You provide, Lord, but we don't always respond.  
God of Grace,  
you invite us to a banquet,  
you set us a place at the table,  
but we find excuses not to come.  
You lovingly prepare for our arrival  
yet we ignore your efforts.  
Forgive us, O God.

God of creation, you give us a world capable of abundance,  
but we act as if it is a world of scarcity.  
You give us the resources and the intelligence to provide for all,  
yet we lack the will and the vision to feed all of your children.  
Forgive us, God, for filling our plates while others go hungry.  
God of love, you call us to be the body of Christ in the world,  
but we hoard the blessings of communion for ourselves.

Instead of loving our neighbours, we are consumed by the love of self.  
Instead of loving you, we bow before idols of our own making.  
Forgive us, God.

God of hope, we avert our eyes when we see hunger and need;  
we close our ears to the cries of the poor and the oppressed;  
we refuse to let our minds be opened to the realities of our world;  
we refuse to let our hearts overflow with love and compassion.  
Forgive us, God.

God of mercy, as you once again call us to your table,  
help us to respond in faith.  
Forgive our failures and help us to learn from them.  
Change our hearts and minds as we hear your good news proclaimed.  
Help us to taste and see the goodness you have prepared for us,  
and for the world.  
For you are our Shepherd  
and our cup runneth over.

And now we turn to Scripture from Matthew 22: 1-14  
Let us listen, read and hear the Word of God ...  
... this is the Word of the Lord, thanks be to Him.

## **MUSICAL INTERLUDE**

### **ILLUMINATION**

Lord Jesus Christ, by the power of your presence, open the  
mind of God to us, that in your light we may see the light and in your strength  
be strong. AMEN

### **REFLECTION**

Guess the film?

'Revenge is a dish best served cold.'

'The only wealth in this world is children. More than all money and power on  
earth.'

'Never hate your enemies. It affects your judgement.'

Any idea what the film might be? No?

What if I put cotton balls in my cheeks and spoke gruffly and said,  
'I'll make you an offer that you can't refuse'?

You've got it now, haven't you? Everything has clicked into place.

The wheels have turned! They might look like Proverbs but, yes, they are from  
my favourite film trilogy, 'The Godfather.' The film I get accused of watching  
constantly.



The film I get accused of knowing, word for word, the script.

The film came back into mind for today's parable, not just because the Godfather starts with a wedding scene, 'You come to me in the day of my daughter's wedding ...' but because of the invitation given.

There are seventeen parables in the Gospel of Matthew. The Parable of the hired workers paid the same wage is infuriating enough but this parable some scholars call 'beyond comprehension.'

All of Jesus' parables should challenge us because they are meant to.

We are not supposed to think, 'that's a nice story' or more importantly, 'that doesn't apply to me.' Parables are conundrums moving you out of your comfort zones, they have a sting in the tail, a dynamite ready to explode at the end, a punch line with a punch that knocks the wind out of you.

This Parable is a wedding feast. It is not a barbeque in someone's back garden with Covid rules applying – it is a Royal occasion for the king's son. After the elaborate, sophisticated preparations were put in place, the area decorative and ornate, the king sent out invitations. Some people reject the invitations. They come up with excuses – some refused, others were busy and had commitments and some ignored the invitation altogether and paid no attention.

Many years ago, Pam asked me what I wanted to do for my fortieth birthday. Being a quiet and introverted soul, I said 'nothing elaborate' but then nearer the time, dropped the hint that I was quite sure a party was being organised – to which Pam denied any knowledge – because it was true.

On the Friday evening early on, Pam told me that one of our friend's daughter was having a 'wee night' and that we should go. 'No,' I said, 'I'd rather stay in.' Unbeknown to me, Pam had reacted to that hint and gathered people in a cricket club – had sent the invitations out – but I didn't want to attend!!

On an October day in 1918 King George V and Queen Mary summoned Lawrence of Arabia to Buckingham Palace. He thought he was attending to map out new boundaries for the Arabs who had helped liberate the Ottoman Empire.

When he arrived, he was asked to kneel on the stool, so that he could be tapped on the shoulder and an ancient oath be recited. Lawrence refused the honour.

We all can think of invitations that have dropped through our letterbox: some we've stuck on our fridge door with a magnet so that we are constantly reminded and there have been others, perhaps, where we have declared, 'I'm not going to that.'

But here is the amazing thing, this parable has Jesus quoting that wonderful line – 'I'll make you an offer you can't refuse.'

God has made an offer you can't refuse – but people have.

Jesus is telling us that everyone, without exception, is invited to God's banquet. It is a free invitation of excess and extravagance with copious amounts of wine.

But some people refuse Jesus' generosity.

It's hard to believe... but we know it is true.

It's free... but it doesn't come cheap. We come in God's terms. Perhaps that's where the strange story of the man who comes inappropriately dressed lies – it's not your way but God's way.

Think of other stories in the New Testament – wheat and weeds that grow together;

seed that produces varying crop yields;  
the merchant who sold everything to gain the pearl of great price;  
the young ruler who refused Jesus' invitation because it was, for him, the  
wrong time and he went away.

Jesus said, 'Many are invited but few are chosen.'

You have to help me here –

with what God offers,

with what he has done for you and me,

for what he promises in resurrection – why would you turn down the invitation?

I can't understand.

'I've made you an offer you can't refuse', says our God, our Father, but  
strangely, people do!!

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, One God,  
world without end.

## **PRAYER**

The envelope drops through the post.

inside, a card, an invitation

beautifully written

just for me.

And it doesn't even say BYOB (bring your own bottle!!)

Other requirements?

No special qualifications needed;

No particular connections

or exclusive memberships required;

No secret passwords or unique attributes expected;

No campaigning or canvassing,

no examinations or reference checks;

Just an amazing invitation to a feast;

to find our place at your table,

alongside these other unworthy ones,

these other beloved ones;

these others humble enough to accept the invitation  
without asking who else will be there.

Father,

when you make the offer,

how could we refuse?

But we do.

You offer us a deeper love if we follow

but we refuse.

You invite us to sit with those rejected

but we give you excuses.

You send us out  
but we would rather stay in –  
and then you make the greatest offer of all,  
to celebrate at your table  
and some don't come  
and some don't reply  
RSVP you write,  
repondez s'il vous plait.  
The key word `respond'  
respond  
respond  
respond to your call, your invitation, your mission.

Well, Jesus, Lord of the Feast,  
with thankful and open hearts,  
help us respond!

### **BENEDICTION**

Go forth,  
strengthened to do the work of Christ,  
standing in the gap,  
extending the invitation to the eternal banquet,  
rejoicing in God.  
Let your gentleness be known to everyone  
and don't worry about anything.  
The God who created you,  
the Christ who redeems you  
and the Spirit who empowers you  
is with you today and ever more.

Go in Peace,  
and may the Blessing of God Almighty,  
Father, Son and Holy Spirit be with you all.  
AMEN