



Broomhill Hyndland
Parish Church

"Lighting the Way"

for **Sunday 15 November 2020**

Dear friends

Welcome to another Sunday service.

Can I begin by saying a word of thanks to those who helped us mark Remembrance Sunday. Whilst it was different we had a display on the Communion Table, wreaths at the war memorials and the Colours in place. These visual things helped us focus on the sacrifice made in the search for peace.

Dare I mention the word 'Christmas', the word and the festival that some politicians believe we are cancelling! This is the second Sunday before Advent, so we are only six weeks away. Thank you to all who have been in touch with Andrea re Crossreach Calendars. The Lodging House Mission has a Christmas Appeal by sponsoring a Winter Weather Pack at £12 or simply make a donation to their Christmas Appeal for those who are isolated and without a home for the festive period. Their tagline of 'help us share some warmth this winter' couldn't be more appropriate.

In the same way that the St Mungo Festival in January has sought for a few years now to be more inclusive by focussing on the life of Mungo's mother, St Enoch, something similar is taking place this year with respect to St Andrew's Day. So that instead of the usual St Andrew's Day event, GCT (Glasgow Churches Together) have decided to celebrate St Margaret of Scotland as well. Her Feast Day is on 16 November, and so - splitting the difference - it has been decided that this joint occasion will now take place online on the afternoon of Sunday 22 November.

Despite coronavirus the annual 'Blessing of the Crib' in George Square will take place near the beginning of Advent, on Wednesday 2 December. Much reduced in terms of participants this year, if you do happen to find yourself in Glasgow City Centre at that time, and are able to maintain the requisite physical distance, then do please feel a part of what is happening.

In our prayers, as part of Glasgow Presbytery, we are asked to remember the twinning arrangement with the Diocese of Hyderabad. They will still welcome donations for the Kunri Hospital. At present, the Presbytery has raised £1686.

According to the Presbytery meeting, Christian Aid raised an amazing £3.5 million during Christian Aid week. The Presbytery reported that seasonal cards and advent calendars are available from Traidcraft (www.traidcraftshop.co.uk) and from many other Mission charities. Church members and their families have enough unwanted Christmas gifts. Why not surprise them with a charity gift? Give a goat, a tree, a beehive or...??... Check out Christian Aid, World Vision, Tear Fund, Blythswood, Barnabas and others. "Pick your congregation's favoured charity and promote their gifts."

Amanda Heather is in the process of organising a Digital Trivia Night on Saturday 5 December via Zoom. Speak to Amanda but the trophy is only going in one way!

Lastly, WD40 is on this Wednesday at 2pm and will be lead by Julie.

Every blessing this week,
George

Second Sunday before Advent 15 November 2020

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:

Judges 4: 1-7; Psalm 123; 1 Thessalonians 5: 1-11; Matthew 25: 14-30.

For those who miss the hymns I have added them in here. The congregation in Naseby, whilst unable to sing them, have enjoyed following the words: giving them an opportunity to think more of what they mean and how they tie into the theme of the service. It also gives me the chance to 'slip in' some newer ones so that we can learn them for the future!!

Sunday's hymns are: 210 Awake my soul; 465 Be thou my vision; 501 Take this moment; 286 Tell out my soul.

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

Rest in His arms read, reflect, rejoice...

CALL

There are blessings meant for you to hold onto
clutched like a lifeline

carried like a candle for a dark way

tucked into a pocket like a smooth stone
reminding you that you do not go alone.

This blessing is not those.

This blessing will find its form only as you give it away

only as you release it into the keeping of another

only as you let it leave you

bearing the shape the imprint the grace it will take

only for having passed through your two particular hands.

INTROIT

Lord, in the midst of your love is shining,
in the midst of darkness, shining;
Jesus, Light of the world, shine upon us,
set us free by the truth you now bring us.
Shine on me, shine on me.

*Shine, Jesus, shine,
fill this land with the Father's glory;
blaze, Spirit, blaze,
set our hearts on fire.*

*Flow, river, flow,
flood the nations with grace and mercy;
send forth your word, Lord,
and let there be light!*
(CH4 448)

PRAYER

When you had enough of chaos, Creating God,
you cried out in love and the world burst forth in joy and jubilation.
You shaped us in images of you, for we were the children of light,
connected to you
but seeking power and prestige we were drawn away from You,
and left the wonders of Eden.
Then you sent the prophets,
you sent the likes of Deborah to call us back,
but we chose our paths and our ways.
Then you sent Jesus
who came to fill us with love and hope
and experience our living.
Father, forgive us that we miss the meaning in each moment.

Lord God, some of us are exhausted by restraint,
subdued by loneliness,
disorientated by diagnosis,
dumbfounded by incompetence,
hurt by casual prejudice,
dismayed by politics,
bewildered by bereavement,
imprisoned by fear.
We name them to you now honestly and candidly in the silence of our hearts.

Smooth away our fears so that we can find blessings
in the circumstances we live in.
Teach us to count our days that we may gain a wise heart.
Remind us that with You the future is always full of possibility.
Help us make the most of the strange opportunities lockdown may be offering,
that when it is over we will not merely hand back our 'talent' of this time
but in our thanksgiving give back to You abundant gifts with interest.
In frustrating time, give us patience
to let the richness of your time show through,
that we may be:
humbled by courage; amazed by generosity; touched by affection;
moved by empathy; surprised by neighbourliness;
inspired by ingenuity; healed by gratitude; enlivened by hope.
In your name we pray...

... The Lord's Prayer...

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name,
thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread
and forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors
and lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil
for thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory, for ever, AMEN

And now we turn to Scripture from the Book of Judges
4: 1-7

Let us listen, read and hear the Word of God ...
... this is the Word of the Lord, thanks be to Him.



MUSICAL INTERLUDE

ILLUMINATION

Entrusted with all your gifts we become fearful once again of misusing them, missing the chance to be a blessing for others. Invited to dance in the light of your love we keep company in the shadows with our old friend, sin. Have mercy, journeying God. Open our eyes to your kingdom in our midst so that we might discover that your day of hope and grace has already come in Jesus Christ, our Lord and Saviour. AMEN

REFLECTION

My boy plays football on a Saturday morning.

He has played recently on the AstroTurf parks in the shadow of Hampden Park. The parks are lined, and goal-nets are firmly fixed at either end. He kicks a ball that moves and swerves with boots that are coloured, promoted by Sergio Aguerro and his name is printed on the back.

In my day – it was different.

Grass was something in your imagination.

Broken bottles, dogs' excrement, ash parks were the norm, boots from nineteen canteen and the ball, the ball was absolutely solid! And when it rained, you couldn't get the leather ball off the ground... and when you blocked a shot, you had the imprint of the design, or the laces, on your legs for a week.

The ball was sore. No wonder there is now a movement to look at heading a ball and dementia. For that ball, which took on the weight of the water, was sore.

It is with these memories that I shook my head in disappointment at the comments made by the now former Football Association chairman, Greg Clarke referring to black players, and women who didn't like being hit by the ball. I didn't like it either.

My peely-wally legs had the big red mark and when you went to school with shorts on, everyone knew and shared your pain.

You know, I wish people would just treat each other equally: race, gender, whatever – we are all God's children, why can't we see that? It is, however, important that we recognise the tradition we have been brought up with. Our Scripture, and probably most, if not all faiths, come from the domination of males: they come from a patriarchal society.

When we read the Scripture, we have to recognise the cultural issues that our Biblical stories come from which should help us discern how these words speak

to us today. They are marked, shaped, coloured by humans recording the details of that time. We know, for instance, of the explanations of Jewish practices for the early Christians who were Gentiles and not Jews.

We are aware of the divisions in the early church regarding certain types of food.

What are contained within our Holy Book are sociological comments as well as religious ones. It is important that we recognise this, and in that light allow the Holy Spirit to lead us to see how God's Word speaks to us anew.

While it is right that we should recognise that inequality in race is an issue, particularly within structures and organisations, within ancient literature most women were, to various degrees, ruled by men. That's why the challenge of the woman to Jesus and the comment 'even the dogs' is important: why Jesus' conversation at the well, the supportive roles of Mary and Martha are essential. We are fortunate that in our church women and men play such significant parts. How we have changed and developed, just like youth football I suppose, we have moved away from the men making the decisions and the women making the tea.

As I said at the beginning, it is critical that we treat people equally and why we need to understand how the Bible was written before we jump on a hobby horse and claim divine justification for power and privilege.

That's why I want you to focus on the story of Deborah, found in the Book of Judges. The story is about a victory of Deborah and Barak over King Jabin. The people of Israel were being punished by God for their evil and so they cried out for help.

And there, in Judges 4: 4, you will find the line:-
'... at that time Deborah was judging Israel.'

Yes, Deborah.

There, in the seat of power, is a woman and men come to her to be judged. She is the leader, she is the prophet, she is the judge and the jury.

With the help of Barak she wins a victory to help the oppressed people.
'... at that time, Deborah...'

... and in our time, we have been blessed by many women fighting for justice, fairness, equality. We have had missionaries abroad, we have had deaconesses, women moderators, women in the session, women in political positions, women bosses, women Bishops.

But this is not a sermon about women per se, it carries the connection with the Gospel reading because it is about power and privilege in general and those who bury their heads in the sand. The reading of Matthew, I am going to argue, is about people not standing up to those in power and in prestige but sweeping things under the carpet, and burying what is valuable under the ground.

When we don't stand up for racial bigotry – we are burying our head, our talent in the sand;

when we do not empower women – we are burying our head in the sand;

when we know the world is unfair and unjust and like the steward who is fearful of a negative reaction, we are burying, burying, burying.

When we deny that women, men, children, all of us, are made in God's image – we are burying the gifts that God has given us, in the ground.

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

PRAYER

'... so I went off and hid your money in the ground.'

Imagine that, Lord, digging a hole,
a large hole to hide such a quantity and covering it up!

Who would hide something of value?

Who would hide their talent?

We're not really sure we want to admit it, God, but we are people with gifts.

Oh, we're not these super-talented, can-do-it-all, people,
but there are things we are good at,
things that might even be useful to You and others.

But, here's the problem – if we admit it,
then we have to do something; then there are no more excuses;
no more comfortable inadequacies to hide behind,
no more bushels to hide our light under,
no more trees to stand behind,
no more holes to dig.

If we acknowledge the abilities and strengths You have placed in us
we are going to have actually use them;
we are going to have to serve, and be accountable,
and maybe even make commitments and stick to them.

But, if we pretend that we are not gifted at all, we lose something of ourselves,
we allow ourselves to be less than we really are,
to experience less, to learn less, to give less, to serve less, to be less alive.

So, thank you, God, for making us gifted people,
and thank you that our gifts can make a difference: can, in some small way,
help to make Your dream for our world a reality.

So, Lord, help us with the self- modesty.

We have the gifts and talents given by you
to make this place fairer and more equal,

AMEN

BENEDICTION

Go in peace; love and care for one another in Christ's name,
and may God bless you with every gift needful for His work,
may the Spirit grant you the willingness to risk yourself
completely for the sake of the gospel,
and may the love and the compassion and the hope and the faith
of Jesus dwell richly within you till the time of his coming.
both now and forevermore.

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