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**Broomhill Hyndland  
Parish Church**

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*"Lighting the Way"*

**for Sunday 6 December 2020**

Welcome to another Sunday in this Advent time.

In anticipation that the Scottish Government moves us out of tier four, the Naseby sanctuary will be open again for worship at 10.30am next Sunday and should be booked on the Friday before as normal. (07851 591 503)

That service will be led by our Session Clerk as the Manse family have to isolate for 14 days due to a positive Covid test. Can I, in anticipation, thank Gordon for taking the service and encouraging the opening up of our sanctuaries and also the Revd Bruce Sinclair of Jordanhill who stepped in to conduct the funeral of Margaret Steven this coming Wednesday.

Two other funerals are pending: the funerals of Isobel Letham and of George Whyte may be moved beyond the 14 days of isolation to allow me to conduct these services, God willing. I have also to announce the death of the Revd Tom Houston of Baillieston St Andrews who died on Sunday 29 November. Please remember all the families in your prayers.

Paula Pinda, the Heart for Art manager, has emailed me to let you know that the Heart for Art online shop is now live. The link to access it is <https://shop.crossreach.org.uk/acatalog/Heart-for-Art.html> and merchandise can be found on line.

The Moderator of the General Assembly, the Rt Revd Dr Martin Fair, is inviting people to send a sprig of rosemary, to represent their own personal experience of 2020. These sprigs will be incorporated into a giant rosemary wreath, a symbol of the nation's lament for a sorrow-filled year, so that we can look forward to happier times. The art installation, called 'Scented Lament', which will be 5ft 9inches (the average height of a Scot) in diameter, will be created by Rev Peter Gardner and Heidi Gardner. A television programme on the installation will also be broadcast on BBC Scotland. Rt Rev Dr Martin Fair will be presenting 'Resolutions' on New Year's Day, telling the story of the work of the 'Scented Lament' installation. We would ask that the cut sprig of rosemary is sealed inside a sandwich bag, then placed in an envelope and posted to:

Gardner & Gardner, Studio 118, The Briggait,  
141 Bridgegate, Glasgow G1 5HZ

The rosemary should be posted around Thursday 10 December, so that it will arrive at the Gardner & Gardner studio between Monday 14 December and Friday 18 December, as fresh as possible.

In all Advent hopefulness,  
George



## **Sunday 6 December 2020 - Second Sunday of Advent (Year B)**

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: Isaiah 40; 1-11; Psalm 85: 1-2, 8-13; 2 Peter 3: 8-15a; Mark 1: 1-8.

For those who miss the hymns I have added them in. Sunday's hymns are: 234 'Tis winter now; 363 We have a gospel to proclaim; 286 Tell out my soul, the greatness of the Lord; 334 On Jordan's bank the Baptist's cry.

Our Sunday reflection will be based on Isaiah 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**

Can you hear?

A voice is heard in the darkness, the voice of one crying out in the wilderness:

Make way! Level the valleys! Straighten the paths!

Prepare the way for his coming: The coming of the Lord!

God, your servant cries out to us: Repent; turn and be restored.

Can you hear?

God, open the ears of our souls to hear your word of salvation.

God, on the second Sunday of Advent,

Open wide our hearts and our minds

To see, feel, hear, and know the salvation of our God.

### **OUR ADVENT CANDLE**

Take this light, let it shine:

call of God, love divine,  
summons old Abram's line,  
hope for all the nations  
gift of God's salvation.

*Shine, O candles, shine,*

*Burn with love divine,*

*to the night,*

*comes the light*

*of the Father's glory.*

Take this flame, let it burn:  
prophets called: "From sin turn,  
come to God, evil spurn:  
God will love and pardon,  
bear away your burden."  
(Now, light your candle)



### **INTROIT**

'Tis winter now; the fallen snow  
has left the heavens all coldly clear;  
through leafless boughs the sharp wind blow,  
and all the earth lies dead and drear.

CH4 234 ( tune O Waly Waly)

## **PRAYER**

Even if we cannot gather in person

Emmanuel, God with us

Even if some Christmas traditions have had to go

Emmanuel, God with us

Even if we might not get to hug family and friends

Emmanuel, God with us

Even if we cannot sing carols beside each other

Emmanuel, God with us

Even if Christmas cheer is harder this year

Emmanuel, God with us.

Lord God, Your word is not distant,

Your love is not rationed, Your grace is at hand,  
for You are present with Your people as we call upon You.

We come to bless You as our Creator.

We come to honour You as our God.

You are our heavenly Father, revealed through Jesus Christ Your Son,  
and we have come to delight in Your word and be transformed by Your love.

As we look forward to your coming

let us hear the name 'Emmanuel' once more:

you are with us, yes, you are with us, as we wait, you are with us now.

God of passion and power, insistent, immediate,

challenging, compelling us with your story's breathless beginning:

walk us into the wilderness to hear your voice where silence reigns.

Give us insight, the vision beyond all seeing,

so we may look upon heavens torn open

and know that the time of good news for all creation

is always now for you are with us now.

(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

Let us turn to God's Word, found in the prophet Isaiah chapter 40, verses 1-11, 27-31

'This is the Word of God. Thanks be to Him.'

## **MUSICAL INTERLUDE**

### **PRAYER OF ILLUMINATION**

In this uncertain season of Advent, we wait.

Hoping, hoping God is coming to us.

In the vagueness of these days, we try to listen.

Hoping, hoping the Word will be whispered to us.

In the weariness of our times, we wait, we listen, we watch.

Hoping, hoping the Spirit will be found in our midst. AMEN



## REFLECTION

I want to tell you about wee Joan.

She was quite a formidable character in many ways and cared deeply about her faith and the church. She was involved in everything, and as I look back, a great supporter of me.

Wee Joan moved from her small flat to a sheltered housing complex and there she got involved with outings, quiz nights and encouraging as many residents as possible to come to church and the church to come to the housing.

I made her Elder, and along with her friend Betty the two were not to be messed with and were loyal through and through. I think of them often, as I do of many members and parishioners of my first charge who play an important part in my heart, some of whom are still friends to this very day.

On the night of my induction to a new church, one of my previous elders came to tell me that wee Joan had died and at her funeral I chose the reading from Isaiah that is part of our lectionary readings for today.

Wee Joan's surname was 'Herd' and all I could think of was the prophet's words, 'Have you not heard...'

'Have you not heard?'

Advent, we know, is about watching and waiting for the Incarnation of Christ: the Son of God takes flesh. We wait. We look forward with expectation but... but...

'Have you not heard?' 'Have you not heard?' says Isaiah, not just of how the world was brought into being by God long ago, or that the sky was stretched out like a curtain, the stars glimmering within, or that the Sovereign Lord is coming to rule with power, but have you not heard that Christ is already with us?

We are waiting for Christ but he is already here. The one who comes to save is with us in our midst, through his word, his sacraments, the community of faith, his Spirit breathing within us. It was only two Sundays ago, reflecting on the sculpture outside the Tron church in Glasgow, that we remembered to look for Christ in the hungry, the homeless, the heartbroken – 'What you do for them, you do for me.'

Advent, in Latin, means 'coming' and 'arrival' and whilst it is correct to focus on the celebration of that coming in two or three weeks time, Advent encourages us to look at the different ways Christ comes into our lives. We know about the stable and the magi and the shepherds; we are aware of the coming of Christ in glory in the end times but he is present with us here and now every day –

'Don't you remember?' 'Don't you recall it?' 'Have you not heard?'

As the summer has passed by I, like many others, warmed myself by thinking back to the holidays we as a family have had before. Despite my love of Italy, we spent three years in Spain at the Taurus Park hotel in Pineda De Mar. The first year the children had gone to the outside pools but when I looked out from the balcony I couldn't see them. In a panic I went down, walked around the sun-beds, but still they could not be found. Eventually, with a look of exasperation from Pam, she pointed out that there was more than one outside pool area.

I had been searching but my children were there all the time.

We all have searched but Christ is with us already. I hadn't been paying attention in the hotel. Are we at the right waterside area? Are we paying attention to



where Christ is now?

The ancient people of Israel longed for a God that would come and heal and save the nation from tyrants and foreigners and inevitably bring them home, especially when they were in exile. The prophets of old, like Isaiah, warned the people of the consequences; of how they treated the widow and the orphan, welcomed the stranger into their homes, but they chose to be selfish and self-centred, excluding those who had less and little, making scrupulous profits and worshipping other gods.

The Babylonians sent them into exile in a foreign land and they dreamt and they prayed that God would come and take them home. 'Comfort my people, comfort them,' said Isaiah.

We've all been asking, 'Where is God?' Many things we took for granted have been taken away. 'How long will we wait before we can hug a grandchild, sing hymns in a full church, have that holiday in the sun, shake hands with those we meet?

'Comfort my people,' says God.

Isaiah tells us in verse 9 not just that God is coming but he is here. Not just in the future, not just marked on December the 25th, but he is here, now. This is the message from a long time ago, 'Have you not heard?'

The people of Israel had lost much but God had not gone anywhere, they had wandered from him. They had ignored him. Even John the Baptist, who tells us to prepare for the Messiah's coming, didn't realise that for 30 years the Messiah was already there, living in Nazareth. Isaiah's promise is to tell us not to concentrate on the past, though the celebration of Christ in the world is a great joy, nor the future, but to know and experience him now... in the ordinary, in, well yes, human form.

Here is your God.

Wee Joan would be embarrassed but she, like many others I have had the privilege to know, in her living spoke of, for and with God. Yes, she could be a nippy sweetie at times but she had a heart of gold and her faith said day and daily 'God is here, can you not hear him, have you not already heard?'

We have already heard. We need to believe.

She wasn't shy about proclaiming the Good News...

... neither should we be. In the foreign land of Covid, God has been with us. And here, he repeats the words that Isaiah used for him all those years ago, 'Comfort my people... do not be afraid.' Surely through these difficult times our world needs to hear anew the joy of that birth, the Good News of the Gospel and that God is with us now.

And if they have not heard?

This is our responsibility. This is our Christmas gift.

'Come and I will tell you about this happening over two thousand years ago in Bethlehem.'

'Oh, you don't know. Have you not heard?'

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

## **PRAYER**

'Comfort my people,' you say Lord God, be a comforter and cushion life's bumps and bruises, like the Holy Spirit who is called 'The Comforter', and,

like the spring on a car  
softens the broken surfaces in life's highways.  
Be a voice of comfort – not blame;  
be a voice of hope – not doom;  
be a voice of warmth – not coldness.  
Tell those whom you meet, show those whom you greet,  
that you Lord will be and are one of us.  
You see our struggles, you know our stumbles,  
you feel the sharpness of life's bitter chills.  
Born as a child,  
you were aware of both the wonder and the weariness of the world  
and so you came as prophesied and predicted by Isaiah of old,  
to bring comfort and joy: to bring tidings of comfort and joy.

Help us listen to your words of comfort,  
that hills and valleys of money and power will be levelled;  
mountains of privilege and exclusion,  
unreachable heights, unsurmountable summits –  
You, God, surmount them.  
The glory of God is not for the few, the gated, the elevated,  
but for all people when, no longer separated by hills and gullies,  
we are finally together.  
Together. 'Comfort my people,' says the Lord.  
Comfort each other, with the knowledge of his coming and his presence now.  
AMEN

## **ANTICIPATION**

CH4 334 On Jordan's bank the Baptist's cry

## **BENEDICTION**

As you look towards the coming of Christ...  
may your mind be curious,  
your sense of injustice be furious,  
and your heart as vulnerable as a child's.

May your eyes be as wide,  
and your room for joy and hurt inside,  
and your trust in God be as deep as a child's.  
Go in peace...  
and may the Blessing of God Almighty, Father, Son and Holy Spirit  
be with you all.