



**Broomhill Hyndland
Parish Church**

“Lighting the Way”

for **Sunday 30 May 2021**

Dear Friends,

Welcome to another Sunday time of worship and, unbelievably, the last Sunday in May. May has been a particularly wet month but on Thursday perhaps there was a hint of things to come!

Next Sunday is our June Communion service and, as intimated over the past few weeks and agreed by the Kirk Session, we can celebrate the Lord's Supper in the Naseby Park Sanctuary. Once again, though there is no numbers cap, you still have to book, but please come along, as we make progress in our having fellowship together. Remember to bring your own bread!

We have continued the tea fellowship at the close of worship, allowing quiet communication, as long as you remain in your seat and be served! This Sunday is also the last Zoom service in the evening. We will be using Zoom in different ways but the Kirk Session feel it is time that we make further steps towards the gathering of more worshippers on a Sunday. As recorded at the recent Kirk Session, we give thanks for the tremendous technological support from Amanda Heather keeping us on the ball.

Our Newsletter is out now, for June, July and August but it is our intention to return to the Church Magazine hopefully in September. This Wednesday coming, Helen Munro's funeral takes place. As always, please remember all the Munros in your prayers. Likewise, I have to announce the death of Anne Mathieson from Randolph Hill Nursing Home, Dunblane, who died on Wednesday, please hold her family and friends in prayer also.

Today is Trinity Sunday, may you know the blessing of God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit this day,

George

Bookings for 6 June are open next Friday from 10am until 3pm.

Telephone 07851 591 503. Each week thereafter please phone to book.

Although seats should be available, we still need your details for the Scottish Government's Test and Protect.

Sunday 30 May – Trinity Sunday (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 6: 1-8; Psalm 29; Romans 8: 12-17; Acts 2: 1-13; John 3: 1-17.

For those who miss the hymns I have added them in here: 561 Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine!; 601 Look upon us, blessed Lord; 522 The Church is wherever God's people are praising; 251 I, the Lord of sea and sky

You'll find in the Zoom services the words on the screen – in the safety of your own home, sing along!

Our Sunday reflection will be based on John 3: 1-17 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

(together, we say)

Blow, wind of God.

Blow away the tight rules that hold me back from trusting, risking, loving.

Blow away my sin that stands in the way of encountering my neighbours.

Ready me for birth. Prepare me for risk.

Equip me with courage and vision the new thing that waits around the corner.

We cannot choose the stories we have inherited,

but we can choose the stories that we become.

PRAYER OF APPROACH AND LORD'S PRAYER

We have heard about you, God of all power.

You made the world out of kindness,

creating order out of confusion;

You made each one of us in your own image;

Your fingerprint is on every soul.

So we praise you.

We praise and worship you.

We have heard about you, Jesus Christ:

the carpenter who left his tools and trade;

the poor man who made others rich;

the healer who let himself be wounded;

the criminal on whom the soldiers spat

not knowing they were fouling the face of God;

the saviour who died and rose again.

So we praise you.

We praise and worship you.

We have heard about you, Holy Spirit.

You broke the bonds of every race and nation,

to let God speak in every tongue;

You made disciples drunk with grace;

You converted souls and emptied pockets;

You showed how love made all things new

and opened the doors to change and freedom.

So we praise you.

We praise and worship you.

Almighty God, Your Spirit swept over the waters of creation;

You are sweeping over us now, creating something new.

Forgive, us we pray,

for those times we have squandered with aimless disregard

our capacity to create,

and for those times we have used our creativity

as a force for destruction rather than reparation.

Help us truly to live in appreciative awe of the creativity that you have planted within.
Give us the patience and courage to nourish that creativity, and the strength and persistence to express it.

Call us away from the distractions of the world to experience what You are doing now, in us, and through us, and in our world.

Open us to a new awakening, a new beginning, where we look through the lens of the goodness of Your creation, experiencing all possibilities in You.

Turn us away from the negative lens, and lead us to the light. In the name of Jesus, who leads us into life, we pray:
(The Lord's Prayer - together we say...)

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 John 3: 1-17.
'This is the Word of God. Thanks be to Him.'
And now a hymn. Choose one from our opening page...

PRAYER OF ILLUMINATION

O God, the Three in One, you draw us into the community of love with people across the ages and around the world. By the same Spirit that binds us together, speak to us, that what we read and ponder, may enliven us and stretch us to trust and follow you, through Christ our Saviour. AMEN

REFLECTION

I was watching the news regarding the vandalism in George Square.

The damage seems to have been carried out by over-exuberant celebrations of the supporters of the Premier League winners. Poor Queen Victoria astride her horse! According to the TV report, Queen Victoria had to experience what is known as a 'topple test', to assess whether she would fall from her lofty position.

The thought came to mind how the Church of Scotland might cope were the national institution tested in the same way!!

The defacement and destruction were caused by an undefeated season by the

boys in blue, such was their victorious achievement.

I wonder if you realise that the name Nicodemus means 'people of victory'? He is a Pharisee and a member of the Sanhedrin, who acknowledges and accepts that Jesus is a teacher sent by God. I want you to think about Nicodemus. We know of him arguing with the Sanhedrin against the arrest of Jesus and bringing spices for Jesus burial but we know him also from the passage in John chapter 3, our Gospel reading for today.

Nicodemus acknowledges Jesus – but 'he comes at night.'

The image of Nicodemus visiting Jesus 'at night' has intrigued me. He secretly, surreptitiously believes but not out in the public domain. Yes, at the later stages of Jesus' life he has made a faith journey and is willing to comment and question the motives of fellow rabbi but here, in the early chapters and the discussion about being born in the Spirit, Nicodemus meets Jesus on the sly.

I have watched and listened to some parts of the General Assembly this week and the planned changes to the way the Church works but it was the statistics in the Assembly Trustee Report that jarred with me. The Report recorded the following:

963 Professions of Faith and 9655 Deaths.

We all know the famous quote about statistics, 'lies, damned lies and statistics' but these figures stunned me. I don't have an answer to the difficulties the National Church faces and I trust wholeheartedly the work of the Holy Spirit but there, in these numbers, lies at the heart of what the Church is about. The Church has always been about people, no matter how we try to dress it up in different ways and talk until we are blue in the face about structures, plans and buildings. 'The Church is wherever God's people are praising' – we know the words of the hymn but we have problems in believing them.

These numbers are unsustainable.

How did we get to these statistics? I think the answer may lie in the actions of Nicodemus and his furtive meeting in the cloak of darkness all those years ago. Nicodemus was not willing to publicly profess his faith in Jesus. And, as the Church in today's world, are we?

We meet for an hour on a Sunday, or in the current climate, through technology, and like I did as a boy, we say our prayers kneeling at our bedside and we may read our Scripture but how many of you profess your faith not in these quiet, reflective and meditative moments in 'the cover of darkness' but in the daytime as followers in the light?

As recorded in the Old Testament passage in Isaiah, how many of us, on hearing God's call are responding, 'Send me'? When asked to go and make disciples, or chat about your faith to your neighbours, or live the life that make others ask you what is it all about, how many have of you have reacted like Isaiah, 'There is no hope for me! I am doomed because every word that passes my lip is sinful, and I live among a people whose every word is sinful.'

We have watched the numbers in our congregations diminish and stuck our heads in the sand. We have filled our buildings with community events and pretended that we are doing church work but we have been in denial. We have ignored the Great Commission of Jesus to go 'to all nations and baptise in the Name of the Father and of the Son and the Holy Spirit.'

We will move the deckchairs coming up with different strategies but we have

stopped being a people with a mission. We, as the Church, have stopped being missional. So the faithful older and loyal generation are called to the greater life above and the number of people committing themselves to the way of the Kingdom reduces and reduces.

Why? 'One night he went to Jesus' – records John about Nicodemus.

However the Church changes, and change it must, the Church is about people, God's people. As the National Church doesn't look particularly stable and ready to fail the topple test, we do really need to be born again.

And without going into the deep theological debate about what 'being born in the Spirit' really means maybe, Nicodemus, in his misunderstanding, is right in the sense that we need to learn to walk again, grow again, learn the language of the world again, be nourished and fed by the Spirit again.

I see Nicodemus as a reflection of where the Church is. I think the task has always been clear. As the Very Rev Martin Fair said in his address, 'there is work to do.' There has always been work to do but we need the people to do it. I hope, I pray, if Nicodemus in the early chapters of John is the image in our present times, that we were and are Christians in a quiet way, then knowing how he changes gives me belief in the possibility for us all.

'He met Jesus at night.'

Now is the time to meet Jesus in the daylight.

To meet Jesus where he is.

To react to his calling.

To be his people with people; neighbours, workmates, friends. I balk at these numbers – 963 Professions of Faith, 9655 Deaths.

Let's get out there, as the apostles did at the birth of the Church! Were they not changed? Were they not born anew? Were they not filled with the Holy Spirit? I pray that the Church stops arguing over the minutia and remembers that unlike the team from Govan, we are the 'people of victory' in and out of season!

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

OFFERTORY PRAYER

Holy God, above us, among us, within us:

we rejoice this day that while you might have chosen to be unknown to us, you have revealed yourself in many ways.

Each encounter with you calls us to return blessings with worship, compassion, and service.

So, when we give this day,

we do so in gratitude for all your parental care for us through your creation.

When we give this day,

we give because, in love, you gave us Christ, that through him we might find eternal life.

When we give this day,

your Spirit leads your church to reach out in compassion, mercy, and grace to all your children everywhere.

In gratitude, we celebrate you, three and yet one. AMEN

PRAYER POINTS

The funeral, on Wednesday, of Helen Munro. The General Assembly, now ended, is guided by the Holy Spirit. COVID. California Railroad shooting. Congo volcano warning and eruption. Boat sinking in Nigeria. Mottarone cable car crash near Lake Maggiore in Italy.

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

You ask us, Lord, to walk in the light,
to walk in the light of you but we prefer the darkness.
Though light guided kings at your birth,
and the light of a new day shone in the joy of resurrection,
the nook and crannies, and recesses, is where we place our faith,
stored away until needed.
We prefer the back seat so that we can slip out.
Up front, near the microphone, on stage, on the chancel,
that's not where we want to declare our faith.
Faith, we believe, is a private occupation between the penitent and God.
Religion is a killer of conversation and so our lips deny
more than the three of Peter.
And the cockerel crows for us too.
Like the prophet Isaiah when called.
Our lips are sinful our tongues unreliable, our speech mumbled at best.
Almighty Father, as we pray for our world this day
encourage us not only to walk in the light but to share the joy of the Gospel.
When asked 'Do you believe?'
Motivate us to speak in the affirmative and with the positive
give an open hand and an open invitation
to those near and far to come and see and know Jesus Christ, our Saviour.
AMEN

SENDING HYMN

I, the Lord of sea and sky

BENEDICTION

Just as God's Word was sent into the world to heal and redeem,
so God sends you into the world this day to be light and love, healing and hope.
Go now to be light for the world!
And may the grace and peace of God the Creator,
the Redeemer, and the Sustainer come upon you this day
and remain with you always. AMEN

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