



**Broomhill Hyndland
Parish Church**

“Lighting the Way”

for **Sunday 15 August 2021**

Welcome to another time of worship.

What a week it has been with the deluge of rain. It used to be a joke that the manse could do with an extension. A couple of weeks ago I was tempted to ask for air-conditioning and now, when I look out, I have a swimming pond in my garden! The Scottish weather – all seasons in one day.

Today is the first Sunday when no booking for a space will have taken place. Whilst we cautiously remind the congregation to keep a degree of social distance, this is another opportunity for you all to gather in the Kirk once more. I want to thank both Angie and Carol for keeping the phone lines open on a Friday and longer. That hard work was appreciated.

A reminder that articles for our Magazine, which makes a return in September, are due today in the hands of our Editor and the Church Office.

Sadly I have to announce the approaching three funerals:

Wai Kin Yip of Crow Road; Colina Desport, Beechwood Drive; and one of our own members, Robert Limond, Churchill Drive. Please remember Christine and all the families at this time.

Every blessing on this new day and new week, with new opportunities to know God better.

George

***No more bookings! Please just come!
We will be asking for your contact details for the Test
and Protect Scheme once you are seated.***

Sunday 15 August – Pentecost 12 (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: 1 Kings 3: 3-14; Psalm 111; Psalm 34: 9-14; Proverbs 9: 1-6; Ephesians 5: 15-20; John 6: 51-58.

Sunday's hymns are: 132 Immortal invisible, God only wise; 604 Holy wisdom, lamp of learning; 686 How happy are all they who hear; 588 Praise the Spirit in creation

Our Sunday reflection will be based on 1 Kings 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

We see God's face through Christ's unflinching eyes,
and Christ through those that give his Spirit room
to breathe that vision, lit with Love's surprise.
"I am the light," – our darkness lightens there.
"I am the way," and life becomes that walk.
"I am the bread," and so our hungry hearts
are fed abundance far beyond the talk.
Let us worship God.

PRAYER OF APPROACH AND LORD'S PRAYER

Sacred, elusive, hidden God,
encountered in darkness and dreams,
in moments of emptiness and joy,
in the warmth of friendship
and the tenderness of intimacy,
in faith shared and Scripture read,
in the stillness of the soul:
with love we praise you.

Lord speak to us
in living echoes of your tone.
Help us Lord:
so many voices,
so many signs,
so many choices and opinions
all promising wisdom
and the life it brings.

The world speaks
and it is tempting to listen,
tempting to try these well-worn principles
especially when there seems so much at stake.
But then we remember
wisdom is not an idea,
not a method or a technique,
not a formula to buy or sell:
it's much simpler
and much more difficult than that.
It requires the unpredictable,

the time-consuming,
the vulnerable work of relationship with you,
Lord God.
So this day, as you speak to us,
help us lose ourselves again in you and let your wisdom find us.
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 1 Kings 3: 3-14
'This is the Word of God. Thanks be to Him.'

And now a hymn. Choose one from our opening page.

PRAYER OF ILLUMINATION

Lord may your presence un-gird our days, sustain us in hope, encourage us in faith. May we find freedom and room to breathe when the space is narrow. May we know, deep in our bones, that we delight in your presence and you delight in us. AMEN

REFLECTION

The founder of Dulux paints was found dead on a mountain top. A police spokesperson said, 'He could have been wiser and done with another coat.' Sorry about that!

There have been hill walkers lacking the right equipment and caught by the changeable Scottish weather, questioned for their lack of wisdom after a rescue. Unfortunately there have also been, in the recent spell of hot weather, deaths in lochs and lakes: those caught by under-currents and reeds and rushes and the coldness of the water – again, lacking a little bit of wisdom to avoid such activity.

We have warned our youngsters about travelling late at night on public transport; to stay in groups; to keep their phone charged; and yes, like the Dulux founder, to take another coat!

'Oh, to be street-wise' we say to our children,
Oh, to be worldly-wise, to have the 'wisdom of Solomon'.

We are all aware of the famous story of Solomon, judging a difficult case as two women fight over a child. Later on in the chapter we read from this morning, we find out how, with insight into the human psyche, he susses out which mother had a legitimate claim.

Solomon, when asked by God what he wanted, did not choose wealth and honour but the gift of understanding,

a listening heart and the ability to rule wisely.

In recent weeks we have been searching for the 'wisdom of Solomon' from our leaders both in the Church and in Government. We have questioned the decision-making process in particular, in the wearing of masks in worship. On Wednesday past, those in the higher echelons of 121, along with other faith groups, had a meeting with Professor Jason Leitch to point out the anomalies between the regulations applied to worship compared to hospitality, cafes, night clubs and sporting events.

Yes, what we are seeking is a great degree of common sense and fairness – what we need is the 'wisdom of Solomon'.

All we need today is to take a look around at our topsy-turvy spinning world and see doubt, idleness, confusion, intoxicated foolishness and a lack of proper praise, fear and awe of God. As the Psalmist wrote, 'The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom: all those who practice it have a good understanding. His praise endures forever.' Ps 110

Interestingly, though we talk of, 'the wisdom of Solomon', by the end of Solomon's reign we know that all has not gone so well.

The riches and honour that Solomon also receives from God, although not asked for, are his downfall. His kingship has become about accumulation, expansion, forced labour and overburdening taxation. As the scholar Walter Bruggemann puts it: "Solomon's accumulation of wealth and honour serves to distort the wisdom God has given him so that his heart no longer 'listens'."

Whilst Solomon gets an international reputation for his knowledge and telling of proverbs, (the books of Proverbs and Ecclesiastes are said to be by him,) he is less concerned about putting his wisdom into practice by ruling wisely. The wisdom that Solomon fails to learn is attentiveness to those for whom God has special concern.

A wisdom that "...is not about successful management, or clever ruling, or a flourishing economy, but rather attentiveness to those who are socially and economically vulnerable." The wisdom that God longs for is the wisdom that is about equity and justice and caring for widows, orphans and immigrants and this wisdom comes before any exercise of power and authority.

What might our world look like if these concerns were truly at the heart of those who lead us?

I think, regarding masks and the wearing of them, that's what we are looking for: equity, fairness. Whilst always recognising the complications with dealing what has become the unknown quantity of this pandemic, we have always been searching for the authority that treats people justly – and that has not always been the case.

We have watched some individuals been supported financially and others not; we have heard some parts of society being praised and other contributions ignored; and we have seen freedoms exercised in some areas, unlike worship where restrictions still exist.

This is not the 'wisdom of Solomon' however flawed he may also be.

Like the people of Israel our lives depend on the 'If' of others where they put their attention; who they listen to and care about, the paths they follow and walk in. In this country we long for government to notice and listen to the needs of the most vulnerable in our society, in social care, in healthcare, in education, in the care of the elderly and the very young: to listen to the voice of those living with disability, for a listening heart to be at the forefront of our fu-

ture with Europe and the negotiations that will always need to take place. We long for our institutions and those who run our economy not to be blinded by the desire for profit and gain and expansion, as Solomon was, at the expense of others, with the consequent undermining of good working practices and instability that zero hours contracts and lack of certainty in where and how we will work bring us, but to have a listening heart for what most brings life, flourishing for all, community, and peace. God's wisdom is available as a deep call to all of us, in whatever field of endeavour we are engaged, to walk in ways of justice, integrity, care and compassion, attentive to others needs.

Solomon is human and flawed.

He is great but he is also a disaster: he loves God but also fails God, he is full of wisdom and knowledge, but forgets to act wisely and care compassionately. His kingly rule is blessed by God, even though he fails.

We are also utterly human and fallible and stumble in our own response to God's call to us to walk with him, but he too blesses us. We are also all capable of living out God's wisdom in generous, healing, productive and fruitful ways that bring life to others.

The Dulux founder could have done with another coat!

'Take your coat, watch how you come home and who you hang about with' we say to our children 'you need to be street-wise.'

There is the thing- for us as a Church that no longer speaks with authority and power: to build our relationship with our community with understanding and a listening heart, we also need to be 'street-wise'.

A newspaper article I read recently about why anti-vaxxers are still refusing the vaccination suggested that people do not listen to those on the outside.

How do we break down the barrier to communicate the joy of the Gospel? Wisdom would suggest that we need to become part of their social grouping too.

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit. AMEN

OFFERTORY PRAYER

Eternal God,

our time in this life is limited, and our days are numbered.

Yet you have reminded us that if we are wise and use that time well, you have an eternity waiting for us that is beyond our imagining.

Help us to focus on what we have, and what we can share, and how the gifts we offer this day can bless others.

In Christ, we pray. AMEN

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

All-knowing God,

we live in a world of information: of websites and databases,

of satellite television and video-conferencing,

of zoom meetings, team meetings, and files in clouds.

Facts and figures are at our fingertips.

Every kind of knowledge is but a moment away.

Yet, Lord, we who know so much

and supposedly can communicate so well

and who live in a 24/7 media extravaganza have so much to learn

in the halls of wisdom.

We are aware of so much in other parts of the world –
of wars, of autocratic regimes, of poverty and malnutrition,
of changing climates and damaged earth and yet,
and yet, Lord,
how unwise we have become.
As my dear father used to say,
'full of knowledge and no common sense!'
The ancients, the sages and the prophets
(though we might think them primitive)
are truly our masters and mentors.
We who are overflowing with information
and can learn so much with a touch of a button
are summoned to a school which charges no fees
but from which we never graduate this side of eternity.
The reverence of you, God, is the beginning of wisdom.
You are the One who is the wellspring
and fountainhead of all learning and all wisdom.
Lord,
help us to put into practice the, 'older we get, the wiser we get.'
That life experience and the experience of living and loving with you
helps us make decisions that are fairer and just
and lead us to a kingdom fit for this world and the next.
AMEN

BENEDICTION

Holy Wisdom,
you granted Solomon's request
for an understanding mind
and the knowledge to discern good from evil.
Fill us with such understanding and knowledge
that we may act as instruments
of your loving desire for creation,
working with you to transform
our conceit into concern for others,
our fear into love,
our violence into peace,
and our brokenness into wholeness.
Go in Peace, and may the Blessing of God Almighty, Father, Son and Holy Spirit,
be with you all.