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**Broomhill Hyndland  
Parish Church**

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“Lighting the Way”

for **Sunday 12 September 2021**

Welcome to another time of worship.

Today is our Harvest Service. It can be difficult, in a city like Glasgow, celebrating the work of the land and the sea and appreciating God's creation. Singing 'we plough the fields and scatter' in the West End doesn't always have that ring to it but remember, years ago, where we live and worship would have looked quite different.

Besides, in this seemingly smaller world where we are more connected (at least technologically), we have to give thanks when we do work together. I have used in the past a tin of soup in my talks with the children, to emphasise the number of people and communities we have to thank for that tin of soup being opened and warmed for our sustenance: growers, pickers, delivery companies, shop staff to name but a few. So today, though we might not have sheep outside and the aroma of the countryside inside, we have much to think about in our world: from climate change, wars and famine to the division between the haves and the have-nots.

In our prayers today, besides globally remembering our responsibility of looking after the world as stewards, we should remember:

Wed 15th September, 10.30am at Clydebank the funeral of Robert Limond

Mon 20th September, 1.15pm, Naseby, the funeral of Mary Mitchell

Wed 22nd September, 2.30pm, Clydebank, the funeral of Shirley Gilmour.

The other dates in your diary should be noted- WD40, 2pm in Kingsborough on Wednesday 15th and later that evening, our Kirk Session meeting, at 7.30pm.

Every blessing, *George*

**Sunday 12 September – Pentecost 16 (Year B)**

**Order of Service**

Call to Worship

Intimations

HY 103 Fill your hearts with joy and gladness

Children's Address

The Lord's Prayer

HY 137 All things bright and beautiful

Prayer of Approach

Readings: Psalm 19

James 3:1-12

HY 155 Think of a world without any flowers

Gospel: Mark 8:27-38  
HY 319 Of the Father's love begotten (v1-2, 4-5)  
Sermon  
Offering and Offertory Prayer  
HY 352 O for a thousand tongues  
Benediction and Threefold Amen  
Uplifting of Scripture

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

**CALL**

Abandon the illusion you're a self-contained individual.  
Be a part of this wounded world,  
and find yourself with Christ.

Set aside your own desires;  
give yourself fully for others;  
be the hands and heart of Jesus.

Renounce self-protection,  
accept your brokenness,  
and reach out for love.

Let go of your own plans.  
Join in the healing of the world.  
You will not be alone.

Follow your soul, not your ego.  
Follow it right into people's suffering.  
Follow it right into the heart of God.

Pour yourself out;  
let the world pour in;  
then you are one with the Beloved.

**PRAYER OF APPROACH AND LORD'S PRAYER**

'In the beginning was the Word...'  
The simplest word,  
easy to say and quickly forgotten,  
can leave a legacy of pain,  
or a long-lingering joy.  
'Sticks and stones may break my bones  
but words...'  
but words do hurt.  
Yet we fill the air with our words,

oblivious, or simply dismissive,  
of their impact, of the lives changed,  
for better or worse,  
for richer or poorer,  
by our careless chatter.  
Forgive us, gracious and creative Word of God.

Teach us the wisdom of careful speech,  
the power of blessing,  
the healing of forgiving,  
the gift of truth-telling;  
and give us the courage to speak out,  
to do our part in filling the world with words of life.

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

### **PRAYER OF ILLUMINATION**

Thank you, Lord, that we can know the presence of Christ Jesus by our side.  
When we forget, or shut him out, forgive us. Help us to be recognised as one of  
Jesus' companions. AMEN

### **REFLECTION**

I was having a laugh with some colleagues the other day, over a socially-  
distanced coffee time, and we were talking about what people in congregations  
say to their minister:-

One said, "A rather deaf gentleman in my congregation said to me, 'I think  
that was a very fine sermon today, but I didn't have my hearing aid in, so I'm  
not so sure.'"

Another cleric said, that a nominating committee managed to engineer a few  
moments with, in this case, the female spouse and asked her, 'Tell us your hus-  
band's faults.'

Oh, the tongue, the tongue!!!

'In a previous charge one of the elders used to tell me how dreadful my ser-  
mons were.'

Another said, 'I don't care what they say about you, I think you are OK.'

Up piped another, 'I had a wonderful 90 year old man who each week would fall

asleep before we even had sung the second hymn. Yet every week he shook me by the hand and thanked me for the sermon, concluding with, 'You really made me think.'

The tongue – James is correct, it is like a horse that runs out of control and needs the reins, to keep it under control.

We all have been there, blurting out comments, inappropriate language, and then wishing the ground would swallow us up, or take back what we have said. That's why the famous Children's Address is so good about toothpaste, squirting it out and then asking the child to put it back – it just isn't going to work. It might be anger and frustration that makes you explode into expletives and you say words that perhaps you don't really mean, but, as the opening prayer recognises, words actually do hurt.

I wonder if that also applies to Jesus, that even knowing he will be criticised, he feels the pain? When he asks what the word is on the street about who people say he is, the positive is that some recognise Jesus like a prophet, Elijah, or a teacher and preacher, but there must have been others who believed he was a fraud, a trickster, a demon, a madman, a traitor to Rome.

The tongues have wagged...

... and they wag again, when, after the long silence to Jesus' question directed to the disciples, seeking their personal answer not the standard creed or traditions, Peter, you've got to love him, throws himself into the unbearable silence and says, 'You are the Messiah.'

But instead of praising Peter, Jesus tells him to zip it, to keep his mouth shut, and to control his tongue before it gets him into trouble. Why? Well quite simply, this is only a part of Peter's spiritual journey, he has a lot to learn what Messiahship really means, and it is not what he thinks it means.

The tongue can be a nasty piece of work and nowadays, it can be even harder to control.

Sometimes, it seems to me, that you are not allowed an opinion anymore and if you don't agree with the consensus or current trends you are wrong, you are dismissed or shouted down.

And words, words change their meaning and it is easy to be caught in the wrong generation. A couple of days ago I was showing John Luca the rather lengthy, 'Dances with Wolves' film, partly because the theme music is superb. I was summarising the story and couldn't remember whether they were called Native American Indians or Indigenous Americans.

As a boy, I was part of a concert party that used to tour churches and we sang the song, Island of Dreams, 'I wandered the streets and the gay crowded places, trying to forget you but somehow it seems, my thoughts ever stray to our last sweet embraces, over the sea on the island of dreams.'

Meanings change.

Words are hot potatoes.

James knows this and points that though we named every creature in the Garden of Eden and though we managed to have dominion over all these creatures, taming every beast and bird, the only creature we have failed to tame is the forked-tongue inside of us all – 'You bless God and you curse others with the same mouth.' 'Your tongue stains the whole body.'

Today, we mark our Harvest – we note and celebrate God's goodness in providing all that is necessary in our world if we have the ability to share, and what has that to do with words? What we say reveals more about who we are than

the recipient of our speech.

Once our speech and narratives take hold, they have tremendous power for good or evil. They can exclude, humiliate, hate, heal or lift up. Our words can protect, affirm and celebrate the dignity and worth of every human being, or reduce people to labels.

COP 26 is supposed to arrive on our shores soon. There, high ranking people will promise the world in recognition of climate change. Love her or loathe her, Greta Thurnberg looks at these adults and hears the words and then is in despair because the tongues will do a merry dance and that is all.

Promises are made by politicians across the world and sometimes these promises are broken. We only need to look at the promise in a manifesto not to raise national insurance and then see it broken, to know that words don't always carry the weight they should.

Human speech, says James, seems to be innocent enough. After all, the tongue is such a small part of the body. But despite its size, he says, it's much like a bit that controls a horse or a rudder that steers an enormous ship. In fact, the tongue can burn like a raging forest fire, incinerating everything that it touches. It corrupts both the subject and object of speech. What we say to one another, James writes, can be "full of deadly poison" that kills.

As I said to the children, the tongue can be two-sided. The letters we used to make up the words are the same but it depends on the words we create. Our tongues can witness to a God who created the world and gave us the opportunity to steward it. It was a gift, to us our hands and heart, to work the earth and the land, and to sing of his praise because of his goodness.

' I think that was a fine sermon but I didn't have my hearing aid in.'

Tongues can lift your spirits or pull you and the world down.

Tongues can fill a church or it can empty the building.

Tongues can make a difference in sharing more equally or separating that which God has brought together.

' O for a thousand tongues to sing, our great Redeemer's praise.'

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

## **OFFERTORY PRAYER**

You, Lord,

created the earth and the oceans,  
shaped with your hands and your breath.

You raised up the mountains  
and made the valleys low.

The beauty you have captured on the canvas of creation  
we have covered with monuments of our desire  
to consume and acquire

Without regard to your call in our lives  
to be good stewards of the world.

As we offer our gifts this morning,  
may they mark our resolve

to be more faithful stewards  
of the resources of this precious planet.

We pray in the name of Christ,  
our example and healer. AMEN

## **PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION**

Because of your grace and beauty,  
your compassion and truth,  
we offer you our tongues, O God,  
as instruments of praise.

In joy and celebration,  
in grief and despair,  
may we praise you  
for your constant presence.  
With those we love,  
and with those  
whom we find it difficult to love,  
may we praise you  
through words of grace and respect.  
When the world feels safe and right,  
and when the world is made threatening  
through propaganda,  
hate-speech  
and the rhetoric of violence,  
may we praise you  
through words of truth,  
of peace  
and of justice.

And so in all things,  
with all people,  
at all times,  
may our tongues speak  
only praise,  
for the sake of your reign and your glory. AMEN

## **BENEDICTION**

Risen Lord of the harvest,  
as the wild flower scatters its seeds far and wide,  
so may your people scatter the seed of hope in the soils of despair,  
bringing to growth those good things that are your gift and promise.  
Go in Peace this day, and may the Blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the  
Son and the Holy Spirit, be with you all.  
AMEN