



**Broomhill Hyndland
Parish Church**

"Lighting the Way"

for **Sunday 10 January 2021**

Dear friends, welcome to another Sunday service.

The Christmas trees are packed away though some keep their decorations on display to Candlemas on February 2nd, marking Jesus being presented in the Temple. Others, searching for light in the coldness of January, have kept them burning longer too.

We are in another lockdown but we hold on to the knowledge that the vaccines are being rolled out and in the near future we will be on top of the virus. In our thoughts this week of course are the riots on Capitol Hill in America. We do pray for peace there and calm.

Since we are in lockdown we are offering a smaller, lower key version of helping in the community once more regarding messages and prescriptions. If you need help phone the number you would normally use to book a place in the sanctuary, 07851 591 503, and Angie will pair you up with one of the volunteers. Alternatively, phone the Session Clerk and we will arrange something.

If my diary is correct, though I can't get out to buy a re-fill for my filofax, the Kirk Session have a virtual meeting on the 20th January.

In our prayers we remember Anne and Alice for the funeral of their Mum, Frankie Linton, that took place last week.

Take care in this wintry weather. We sang 'In the bleak midwinter' last week: we might be singing it for a few Sundays yet!!

Every blessing,

George

Sunday 10 January - Epiphany 1 (Year B)

For those who like to follow all the lectionary readings for the Sunday, the readings for this Sunday are: Genesis 1: 1-5; Psalm 29; 2 Acts 19: 1-7; Mark 1: 4-11.

For those who miss the hymns I have added them in here. The congregation in Naseby and in Kingsborough, 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:

123 God is love: let heaven adore him; 335 Out of the flowing river; 336 Christ is our light! the bright and morning star; 461 How sweet the name of Jesus sounds.

Our Sunday reflection will be based on Mark 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

God of Light, light of light,
true God of true God,
we bless you.

God of new beginnings, hope of hope,
as we reach for this new year,
we bless you.

God of joy, delight of delight,
as we give thanks for all that is good,
we bless you.

PRAYER OF APPROACH

Dawn breaks forth from darkness,
from stillness, from what was.

It teases and beckons:

a piper of melody and fractured notes
dancing into what lies ahead.

We give thanks for the path behind,
rejoice in its blessings, grieve its piercings,
and lift our eyes to what calls us forth.

Time has flown –

one year has become the next,
Christmas babies become child Jesus
and then Jesus the man in ministry.

New chapters are opening,
the New Year has begun and we wonder
did we miss something,
did we miss the child ?

May we gather round the hope that what we found in that crib
was the truth that remains with us all into this year and beyond.

That though we have put away the decorations
and our dwelling places now look sparse,
our lives remain full with the presence of Christ.

Let us be the wise ones now
and travel from the season
into the world with new hope, new possibilities.

May the worries of that faded year
become the places of faith in this birthing year,
offering strength and vision to what is to come.

This breaking time we sing as one,
sigh as one,
rest in silence as one beating heart of believing
that all is being made new.

(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 Mark chapter 1: 4-12
'This is the Word of God. Thanks be to Him.'



PRAYER OF ILLUMINATION

From wild dreams and whispered reminders, we have woken this day with you, all-embracing Presence. Nudge us towards these moments where the promise of heaven can spill into life. Nestle us in the midst of people who should be reminded of Christ's love. AMEN

REFLECTION

I opened the Manse front door and sitting on the doorstep was a package.

'What kind person had left a gift for me?' I thought.

Overjoyed at the kindness, I brought the parcel inside and after washing and sanitising my hands and leaving the gift for an appropriate time... you know the rules... I opened the package and it was from an Undertaker!

I might pause here and let you think what an Undertaker may give.....

..... it was... a calendar, the type that you can stand up in the shape of a Toblerone. On the calendar are pages for each day of the year with a phrase, a fact, or a word of wisdom.

On the 6th, Epiphany, as I sat in my study the phrase of the day was :-

'If you do what you've always done, you'll get what you've always gotten.'

Edward Young, writing in the 18th Century, in his poem Night Thoughts, suggests that each one of us "in all magnanimity of thought, resolves, and re-resolves."

We start the New Year full of promises, resolutions and new beginnings, knowing that, for the most part, we are going to fail. Wouldn't we be better each day to decide and to be the best that we can be right now? Why not resolve to be yourself, for a year is too far to contemplate, but a daily resolution is much more manageable.

We put too many pressures on ourselves and set unattainable goals, especially in the current crisis. Think back to what your goals were last year. In our church, for example, there were a few 'big numbered birthdays' that fell by the wayside; the holidays abroad were shelved; our Pentecost in the Park was ditched. All the best laid plans of mice and men.

For Mark there is no story of Christmas, of wise men and shepherds and an infant birth. There are no dancing angels singing a proclamation of the coming of the one for whom all creation waits and, unlike a novel that we might have read over the Festive period, he tells us the answer to the story that will unfold in his

Gospel – ‘the Good News about Jesus Christ the Son of God.’

The baptism of Jesus is the beginning of his ministry and if you glance at the other recommended lectionary readings in Genesis and Acts, you will find the beginning of the world from its formless void and Paul baptising Ephesian disciples – these readings are about beginnings, new starts and the resolution to be better people.

Baptisms are about new beginnings, even for Jesus at the Jordan, recognising for us all being ‘born in the Spirit’. It is a time to have a new start as part of a community of church people, of believers, a turning away from sin but, as we know, a baptism doesn’t prevent us from breaking our resolve in the same way the promises we make in January do not last even for that month.

Of course we need reminders of our baptism. It is too much of an event to keep in our hearts all the time. We forget what a transformative moment baptism is. We forget that everything old is torn away, like the heavens were rent apart as Mark says. We forget that our orientation is from that moment; our new life is claimed in that moment. We forget that what we are looking for, longing for, is already ours in that moment. We lose our grip; we forget it even happened. We are still running; we are still looking for what we already have.

In Mark, I love the line after the Jordan where the Spirit leads Jesus into the desert. This is a word of comfort and support for us for these gym memberships bought, diet plans started, peloton bikes in the living room, that the Son of God knows about the sense of let down. He enters the troughs and peaks of living and because he is one of us he understands our experiences and doesn’t stand aloof – as others were baptised by John, so too does the Son of Man stand in line to be washed in the river.

Too often we imagine that if we got our faith right then we would be carried along in the crest of the wave which would push all our trials and troubles away. Or, if we struggle with our faith, struggle awaiting for the end of this pandemic, that we should grit our teeth and accept that we have failed as Christians. Can I point out it wasn’t like that for Christ and it is not like that for us either.

Beginnings are hard – they were hard for the family of Jesus who had watched him grow as a child and use his hands so skilfully in carpentry then he leaves the carpentry shop and sets forth to enter his mission and what he was called to do. Prepared for, and expected in some ways. But for others, like John the Baptist who wonders what is going on, and Jesus’ family who are asking deep and meaningful questions, some greet what’s happening with joy, others with hostility.

Perhaps for us there is a message there too, especially when we try something new, patted on the back by some but met with a shake of the head and a look of ‘you’ll never keep that up’. What begins in the water of the Jordan will go on for three years until the Friday of Calvary and the Sunday in the Garden.

Jesus story is also our story: marked by God, spiritual high spots and lows of doubts in a world that can look anything but peaceful and brings many struggles in the living of our faith.

We resolve and re-resolve.

We make promises we can’t keep.

We are baptised and born anew and fall at the first hurdle..... and I think back to the calendar on my desk, ‘if you do what you’ve always done, you’ll get what

you've always gotten.'

What does that little phrase mean in the light of the baptism of Jesus and his new beginning? For us as the church, how we are the church has been turned on its head?

We realise the lesser importance of buildings but also that technology is not the be-all either. We have connected as well as we could with some people and brought new people on line but are still separate from others. We've loved Zoom because we can see each other face to face but miss the singing, a hug and a handshake and social time at the Kirk. If we do the same things we will get the same results, so if Covid has taught us anything, the very harsh lesson has been that we need to be a church in different ways.

New beginnings mean just that - not old promises repeated.

Whilst the seasons turn and the high moments of our Christian calendar come and go we fall into a pattern. Likewise, the church goes through the round of Advent, Christmas, Epiphany, Lent, Easter and Pentecost. As the wise men remind us at Epiphany, the holy family headed from Bethlehem on new journeys. When Jesus comes to the Jordan, again it is a new path that for him will have highs and lows – in a new year, this new year, the different paths need to be applicable to us.

We have to ask ourselves what way is God calling us in the world that we live in today?

The phrase is now in the bin but the words ring in my ear, 'if you do what you have always done...'

Please no – let's resolve to be better Christians.

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

OFFERTORY PRAYER

God of redemption and new life,
we focus once more this day on the greatest gift ever given
– Jesus, our Saviour.

As he was baptized by John in the Jordan,
we were able to share in his baptism
and receive the promise of sharing in Jesus' resurrection.

As we leave a painful year behind
and look with hope to the new year ahead,
help us to live and give of ourselves
as those who know every day
what a great gift we have been given.

May it move us

to give our whole selves more freely!

In the name of Christ, our Saviour and Redeemer, we pray.

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

In the rush to get from A to B,
from January to March,
from virus to vaccine,

from the reality of today
to the dreams of tomorrow,
inconveniences get in the way.
Every second not going forward is a second lost.
Every step to the side is a moment wasted.
In every detour lies an ambush to rob us of our special cargo.
Every diversion steals a vital opportunity
from our desire to obtain, and achieve and amass
all that we can.
But what good is it to gain the whole world
if we lose our soul?
For in every detour,
in every new beginning,
in paths un-travelled,
is the chance to explore new ways,
and each diversion gives us the opportunity to see things
from a different perspective.
You did it God – through a child.
Jesus did it - from building furniture through baptism to building lives,
so, help us this year to meander with you Lord God,
to escape the fast lane
and explore the waysides of life.
Help us learn from the detours and not the old worn roads,
and find the rambling route
and take a chance with You.
Amen

BENEDICTION

May this day, this year, unfold as it should;
may you find solace in scripture and spirit;
and may your journey into this new year
be filled with the hope and promise of God
for the sake and the peace of the world.
Go in Peace...
and may the Blessing of God Almighty, Father, Son and Holy Spirit be with you
all.