



Broomhill Hyndland
Parish Church

"Lighting the Way"

for Sunday 3 January 2021

Dear friends, a Blessed New Year to you all.

We enter a New Year full of hope and optimism that there are more vaccines available and that this virus, which has caused so much heartache, will eventually come to an end.

Since we are still in the Christmas season, Epiphany not until the 5th or the 6th depending on your tradition, I want to thank all those who helped make our Christmas services so special. We were fortunate to have our first two streamed services before Level 4 was re-introduced on Boxing Day. The Nativity Sunday was a great joy, particularly from Junior Church and their News Item Story of the Birth.

How they managed to produce something so inventive in such a short period of time was truly remarkable. Well done to the children and the staff for the production. Our second streamed service was Watchnight and I understand from Gordon that there were innumerable hits, indicating much success there, from the comfort of your homes. Again, my thanks to the Communications Team and the Heathers who organised how we would stream the services.

Level 4 means that our next streamed service will possibly be the 24th but we cannot guarantee this. It would be good to gather once more on the 17th in Naseby but we will await the advice from the Scottish Government.

In our prayers please remember the Whyte family for the funeral that took place recently for George Whyte, and Mary Linton whose funeral will take place on Wednesday 6th.

With much thinking about streaming, the words 'time like an ever rolling stream' came back into mind. Time marches on and we must look forward for better times this New Year.

As always, I thank all of you who have journeyed with me and worked so hard at doing your best for Broomhill Hyndland and Jesus Christ Himself.

To Jesus, the Alpha and the Omega, and the beginning of new things to come, every good wish,

George

Sunday 3 January - Christmas 2 (Year B)

For those who like to follow all the lectionary readings for the Sunday, the readings for this Sunday are: Jeremiah 31: 7-14; Psalm 147: 12-20; 2 Ephesians 1: 3-14; John 1: 1-18

Sunday's hymns are: 317 Before the world began; 316 Love came down at Christmas; 305 In the bleak mid-winter; 326 As with gladness men of old.

Our Sunday reflection will be based on Luke 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

On this edge of years,
the crossroads between past and future,
we come as who we have been
and offer you who we might yet be

Take this offering of ourselves
a new promise to be your people here
holding a renewed vision of your reign here.

Take this,
take us,
that we might be light
and follow you anew
as we journey across borders of time
and find new years,
new places,
to be your renewed people. Amen.

PRAYER OF APPROACH

O Star-flinging God,
whose light dances across eternity,
dazzle us into your presence
this new year.
Open our hearts to the mystery of your love.
Awaken us to your presence,
knit to the ordinary.
Reveal to us what is possible, but not yet present.
Heal us, that we might be healers.
Reconcile us to you and to ourselves,
that our living might be reconciling.
Stop us often, we pray
with news that is good
with hope that holds
with truth that transforms with a Word
tailored to this trail we are on.

May the word of your grace guide our steps
like the sun by day
and the north star by night,
as we travel into the gift of a new year.
Lord God,

the coming year is full of uncertainty and hope. Whatever the year holds for us, though, we trust You, and we place every day of this year in your care knowing that, as in the past, You are with us, caring for us with constant love.

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 1: 1-18
'This is the Word of God. Thanks be to Him.'



PRAYER OF ILLUMINATION

Eternal God, you call us to ventures of which we cannot see the ending, by paths as yet untrodden through perils unknown. Give us faith to go out with courage, not knowing where we go but only that your hand is leading us, and your love supporting us.

REFLECTION

I wonder if you remember a message preached last Christmas?

In fact, I wonder if you remember what the message was last Sunday??

I jest!!

Last year, during the Lessons and Carols Sunday, I asked if you were a re-gifter, that you re-direct the gifts you receive to someone else. Some of you were black-affronted at the very thought and 'claimed' that you had never done that in your life.

The subject of re-gifting came back into mind this Christmas too, not because someone gave me a scarf I didn't need, or a book that I had already but because I re-read the wonderful, deep, philosophical chapter 1 of John's Gospel. 'Some' it says, 'did not receive him... (but others) did receive him and believed in him, so he gave them the right to be God's children.' (v10)

Let's think about gifts.



How do we receive Christ, God's present to us?

Do we receive as kindly meant but irrelevant? Interesting, to be put on the shelf, on the back burner, just in case? Or with every fibre of our being, welcoming Christ as the only one who can wake us to our true selves?

Be honest you could put your gifts in an order of priority, or of preference. There are, are there not, whilst appreciating everything you got, gifts that give you more pleasure and tickle your fancy; gifts that you can't wait to open. Think back to the days when you were a child and your face fell because it was clothes! Think back to the embarrassment when an Aunt brought a gift to your child or grandchild only for the child to say, 'I've got one of those!'

Think back to the well-meaning relation who has sent a jigsaw to your child but has misunderstood the age and the jigsaw is for someone much younger and that jigsaw ends up in a charity shop, only to be bought by a parent for their child whose eyes are bright with excitement, whose hands play and probe, sort and seek, her mind unlocking, unblocking her heart, releasing grace, calling her to herself.

I ask again, how do you receive the gift that God has given you?

Receiving and believing.

Many received God's gift but, as John told us, the gift was there but some received and believed. I believe in many things: I believe that centipedes have a hundred legs, I believe that Gigi Buffon was the greatest goalkeeper ever, I believe that a certain takeaway is disgusting, I believe that small is beautiful, I believe that Italian is the most romantic language in the world and I believe that God has the low-down on how the world began.

I believe in Jesus. I didn't just receive him but I believe in him in the same way a child would do to the perfect parent, trusting that he will always be there when I need him but giving me space to grow, would inspire my loving and my longing to warm the cockles of my heart, my following not ordered but won.

And because the Gift is both received and blessed, you and I become children of God.

This speaks of unthinkable closeness, intimacy, holding and being held, beholding and being transformed, knowing that whatever a New Year brings and throws at you, you are safe forever in those everlasting ever-loving arms.

So think of the gifts you have been given... and the ones given away. Were they bought with thoughtfulness in mind or was it a 'that will do' attitude? I do recall a family member of mine who did all her Christmas shopping in one supermarket – a lot of thoughtfulness there!!

The 'In the Bleak midwinter' hymn comes to mind.

'What can I give him, poor as I am..' if I was a shepherd, a lamb, something cared for protected, nurtured, even loved. 'What can I give him... give my heart.'

There's the challenge for us all as we face 2021 – ask yourself how you have received the gift and what have you done with it (him)? How important was that gift, do you look at it now and again or has it lit up your festivities that God, from the beginning of time spoke and brought light to the darkness and then in a new creation spoke through the Word made flesh and gave him to the world, and gave him to you and me?

What a gift!

John proclaims to us that Jesus was the living, breathing, very human, creative, and life-giving power of God. John shows us God on one side and humanity on

the other and Jesus in the middle as the word which God spoke to us about Gods' love and purpose for us all.

I look at my gifts, now unwrapped – a book bought to add to my collection, a Roma T-shirt, some of my favourite foods and wines – what kindness, what thoughtfulness, what intimacy.

And of Christ? What will you do with Christ unwrapped?

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

OFFERTORY PRAYER

Holy God and Parent of us all:

we have moved through this season

of family and Christmas joy and Christmas heartache too,

and we are reminded that beyond our earthly families,

you have brought us into your redeemed family.

Through the saving, redeeming work of the Incarnation,

we have become heirs,

and our redemption is the magnificent gift of salvation.

We give our gifts,

but we give ourselves as the only fitting response.

Lead us in your way into this New Year. In Jesus' name, we pray. AMEN

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Thank you, scandalous God,

for giving yourself to the world,

not in the powerful and extraordinary

but in the weakness and the familiar;

in a baby,

in bread and wine.

Thank you

for offering a journey's end, a new beginning,

for setting, in the poverty of a stable,

the richest jewel of your love,

for revealing

in a particular place,

your light for all nations.

Thank you,

for bringing us to Bethlehem, House of bread,

where the empty are filled

and the filled are emptied,

where the poor find riches

and the rich recognise their poverty,

where all who kneel and hold out their hands

are unstintingly fed.

May we this year,
use this gift wisely,
love this gift truly,
and praise the Holy Giver in all that we do.
It is better to give than receive...
we have received,
now let us share the glorious Gospel
in these in-between times
of virus and vaccine,
Christmas and Epiphany,
life and eternal. AMEN

BENEDICTION

Eternal God,
You sent Mary on a journey to Egypt
and led Hagar through the desert.
You lit the wilderness way for Moses
and produced manna for his family.

Send us into this New Year
with fire to see by, bread to live by,
and family to travel with,
as we follow your voice in the world.

Where you go, O Lord, we will go;
and where we lodge, you will lodge,
for we are your people,
and you are our God.

Let us look for Christ wherever we go
Let us never stop seeking
Believing that there is a light that shines in the darkness
Which the darkness shall not overcome
And may the love of the Creator
The joy of the Spirit
And the peace of the Christ-child
Be with you this New Year, and evermore.

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