



**Broomhill Hyndland
Parish Church**

“Lighting the Way”

for **Sunday 2 May 2021**

Dear Friends,

another service and the month of May!

A week ago the heat was in the air but this week, caused by Artic winds, the heating was on in the Manse again. It reminded me of the old saying 'Ne'er cast a clout till May be oot'. For those a bit confused, 'don't shed your winter clothes until May is out' which is even worse!!

Now that the 50 cap has been lifted we are hoping for a slightly larger congregation in Naseby this Sunday. Then, it will be assessed in the hope that we may be able to increase the numbers again! It will take time but at the moment please keep booking the usual way on a Friday.

We are also making progress in a couple of other ways: Junior Church will return in the hall on 9 May and we are looking at ways of having fellowship in the Sanctuary after the service, over a cup of tea, whilst the children are, at the moment still separate. Of great joy was that WD40 returned last Wednesday with 18 worshippers - what a privilege to lead the service once more despite the restrictions.

As intimated previously, the celebrations of Christian Aid will take place next Sunday, the 9th and it will be streamed. Therefore, there will be no Zoom service that evening.

Welcome to today's worship and remember Christ abides with and in you.

Every blessing,

George

***Bookings for 9 May are open next Friday from 10am until 3pm.
Telephone 07851 591 503.***

Sunday 2 May- Easter 5 (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: Acts 8: 26-40; Exodus 19: 1-6; Psalm 22: 25-31; 1 John 4: 7-21; John 15:1-8.

For those who miss the hymns I have added them in here: 457 All hail the power of Jesus' Name; CH3 354 O Love, how deep, how broad, how high!; 636 Baptised in water; 512 To God be the glory.

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

Our Sunday reflection will be based on Acts 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

I Am, woven.
Woven through the earth.
Woven through your veins.
Woven through the Son.
The one who bore our pains.
Woven through existence.
In minds, in sweet remembrance.
In future and in an instant.
I Am, never distant
I Am, Peace.
When feelings overwhelm you
And disappointments tell you
That you are less in value.
I Am, Hope.
When all you know is sadness
And talking makes you nervous
And your mind does you a disservice.
I Am, Trust.
I never leave you wanting.
I satisfy your longing
I carry you beyond your limits
Onward to a new existence.
I Am, woven.
Woven through the earth.
Woven through your veins.
Woven through the Son.
The one who bore our pains.
Woven through existence.
In minds, in sweet remembrance.
In future and in an instant.
I Am, never distant

PRAYER OF APPROACH AND LORD'S PRAYER

As we focus our minds,
it is easy for our minds to shoot off in so many directions.
We find it hard to slow down,
to remove all the clutter and concentrate on You, Lord.
In the stillness of this place,
this time,
take from us the strain and stress as we feel ourselves rest in Your eternal love,
in the everlasting arms.
Then quietly,
the small beginnings of praise well up as we remember
what we have in Jesus Christ.
That we have one who is with us,
who guides and strengthens us.
Who holds us through every storm of life,

who leads us to everlasting life.

We confess that sometimes the storms we endure are of our own making.

A foolish word,
a thoughtless comment,
a misguided action,
a quick judgement.

Then we have to live with the consequences and the guilt.

Take all that stress from us too and replace it with Your forgiveness and peace.

Heavenly Father,
in Your hands we are safe and secure –
we rejoice in Your eternal love
and all sufficient grace.
Through Jesus Christ our Lord.

(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 Acts 8: 26-40

'This is the Word of God. Thanks be to Him.'

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

PRAYER OF ILLUMINATION

Risen Lord, teach us, that the journey of life goes on, a stepping stone as a foretaste to eternity and to the treasure that can be found along the way, today, tomorrow and every day. AMEN

REFLECTION

I was walking to Church a couple of Sunday's ago – walking down Abbey Drive.

It was a beautiful Sunday morning: the sun was shining, the sky was blue, the birds were singing, Spring was in the air.

I was walking to appreciate God's creation,

I was walking because it was healthy,

I was walking and, being Christian, leaving the car behind for my beloved.

As I was halfway down the Drive, a car stopped and hanging out the window was one of my Elders, the bold Gary McQueen. He chatted briefly about the weather and sport and then, revving up the beast-of-a-vehicle that he drives, left with the words,

'I would give you a lift George, but you know the COVID restrictions.'

Off he shot, polluting the environment with exhaust fumes.

'I would give you a lift, but...'

'I would invite you in but...'

To be fair to Gary, we did the same thing to Jill and Anne and the Robertsons and anyone else who lives in our direction. We did the same to Carol last Sunday who saved our face by saying, 'I'm just going to walk home, Gordon has the car.'

'We would give you a lift Carol but...'

Not being able to invite people indoors has been hard over this year. Not being able to give people a lift is difficult when it is part of your nature to be kind. We are cautious and frightened to offer our help not because it might not be needed but because it puts people in an awkward position with social distancing and contact and touch.

'I would invite you in but...'

were not the words that left the mouth of the Ethiopian eunuch...

... quite the opposite in fact, when he addressed Philip. 'Climb up in the carriage.' he said, 'stay close and explain the Scripture to me.' You see Gary, what you were missing, we could have chatted about the Bible all the way to Church!! Similar to the Emmaus Road experience, Philip is encouraged to 'go over to that carriage and stay close' and what happens is the interaction of two men talking, enquiring and sharing their thoughts of Scripture, particularly Isaiah 53. Here was a court official, with an inquisitive mind reading the Jewish texts despite the fact that the book of Deuteronomy forbade a eunuch to enter the Temple.

Whatever the reason, whether on the fringe of Judaism, whether he was a Gentile, or a follower of his own religion from his own region similar to that of Egypt, here is a man asking questions, wishing to know more and, inviting Philip into his carriage.

Philip is a key person in the Jerusalem Church. He is an evangelist.

Now we know that this is the beginnings of the Early Church. Before this story, Philip has been working with two other followers, Peter and John, spreading the Good News of Jesus in Samaria. You'll remember Jesus' encounter with the woman at the well and how the Jews and the Samaritans were traditional enemies. So, due to the work of Peter and John, barriers had been broken down and already some Samaritans were part of the Jesus movement. Philip has now been directed by God to a road, a desert highway which goes from Jerusalem down to Gaza. Yes, these are the early beginnings but there is a key point to be made –

Philip wasn't inviting the Ethiopian in – the Ethiopian was inviting Philip in!!

I don't know what to make of where our National Church is today. I don't think we would want to go back to the past. It can't be just about us, as the Church, inviting people in. We have done wonderfully well technologically and there is a place, a new place on how we use it beneficially but if the story in Acts teaches us anything, it is, as the Holy Spirit guided Philip, 'to come along side those travelling and be invited in by them.'

Like the Emmaus Road, it is about journeying with people, talking and sharing together; it is about, as the new disciples found out, inclusivity, Good News for all, wherever they are. I think the Pandemic has taught us that the way we worship is not the only way and that we have had to adapt to different ways of being the Church. It has taught us that there are 'wilderness' roads to travel and that is where we should be.

For Philip, as the Church grew in infancy, he, and the rest of the disciples, discovered that the Jesus movement was one that included Gentiles, Jewish con-

verts, and Samaritans. On that road to Gaza, Philip realised that to be a follower your skin could be a different colour and as a eunuch, your sexual orientation likewise was also included, as long as you declared 'Jesus as Lord.'

It is easy for us to say come 'inside our carriage' but not so easy to step into the carriage of another. What the Philip story teaches me is that if we are going to travel and journey with people, then it is on their paths, their destinations, their 'carriages' we must be on and in.

For too long we, as the church, have sat back and said, 'If you want to know what the Scriptures are saying then come inside. If you want to worship God, then come and we'll show you how. If you want to meet Jesus, then he is here.'

Philip, the missionary, is indicating to a growing church, and to our situation, a changing church, that we have to be out 'there' on the wilderness roads. He is indicating that we should be prompted by the Holy Spirit who will send you and I into places and to people often not sure why.

Anthony de Mello tells a good story in the book 'The Heart of the Enlightened.'

There was a Rabbi who lived in a village on the Steppes of Russia. Every morning for twenty years he crossed the village square to go to pray in the Synagogue and every morning he was watched closely by a policeman who hated Jews. Finally, one morning, the policeman walked up to him and demanded to know where he was going.

'I don't know,' said the Rabbi.

'What do you mean, you don't know? For the past twenty years I have seen you go to that Synagogue across the square and now you say you don't know? I'll teach you a lesson!' And with that he grabbed the old man by his beard and dragged him off to jail. As the policeman was turning the key on the prison cell, the Rabbi looked at him with a twinkle in his eye and said, 'See what I mean when I said I didn't know?'

The Spirit calls us out into the world, to those travelling on their own individual journeys.

'Where am I going?' Philip asks the Holy Spirit.

'Come into my carriage', says the Ethiopian.

In the vernacular, 'Do you want a lift?' and both are lifted and make inroads in their life and their faith.

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

OFFERTORY PRAYER

God of the far-flung universe

and God who is closer than our own heartbeat:

we long to dwell in your closeness,

abiding in you and you abiding in us.

However, the call to abide in other places is strong:

to abide in the world of popularity and acceptance

or in the world of increasing wealth and power

centred around our own wants and desires.

As we offer our gifts and ourselves to you,

help us turn away from other calls

and abide in that place of heart's deepest desire:

in your Son, Jesus, and he in us. In Christ, we pray.

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

You call us outside, Lord.

Call us outside the bricks and mortar,
outside the barriers that we build,
outside the structures and the safety
to the world, the world outside.

And there, away from spires and steeples,
away from sleepy sermons you call us inside.

Yes, Lord, like Philip on the road to Gaza,
like Peter and John, you call the church in action,
outside to be inside:

inside people's homes and hearts;

inside conversations between friends and families;

inside strangers who enquire and ask and would like to know more
about the Living Lord.

You call us outside to be inside

to travel with those who seek and search for meaning,
and to share Scripture, and to tell that He is the Way.

As we pray for the world beyond these walls

help us remember that your Son broke out to offer new life
through his resurrection.

Encourage likewise,

not to be comfortable with the inside

not to be satisfied with what we know contained by what we hold dear
but to take the message mission from inside, what it means to us,

Outside

to all.

BENEDICTION

Beyond hearts and roses,

let us go into the world

with a love that moves us into life,

into justice,

into grace,

and to love others before they love us,

for this is of God.

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