

Issue 10
25th May 2020

For these days ...

“To those who wonder what Ascension is about, it’s the day when Jesus started to work from home.”

Lectionary Readings

Acts 1. 6-14

Psalms 68. 1-10, 32-35

1 Peter 4.12-14, 5. 6-11

John 17.1-11

Hymns

458, ‘At the name of Jesus’

446, ‘Lift up your hearts, believers!’

251, ‘I, the Lord of sea and sky’

Dear friends, as we enter our 10th issue of this newsletter, I just wanted to remind you of a few things that are on the go! As part of the *Thy Kingdom Come* initiative (<https://www.thykingdomcome.global>) we are invited to pray The Lord’s Prayer everyday at midday and to help us in that, a video is posted most days before 12pm, so that we can say that prayer with at least one other person. Many thanks to those who have so willingly recorded.

Gillian, our Children and Family Worker, has now returned from furlough, and we are delighted to have her back and working closely again with families in both our parishes.

On Wednesday evening at 8pm I will be starting a time of prayer on Zoom and the link for this is posted at the end of the newsletter.

On Sunday 31st May, we will be joining in worship with the whole Church of Scotland, as our Moderator leads us in praise on Pentecost at 10am. This has become a joyful day for both our congregations over the years and we would normally wear something red in celebration. We obviously cannot meet this year, but it would be great if you could pop something red on and record a little video. Perhaps waving, or saying hello or sending a short Pentecost message that can be edited together and enjoyed later on Pentecost Sunday. Videos can be sent to RMorrison@churchofscotland.org.uk or sent via Whatsapp or text to 07557657079 by Thursday at the latest.

Lastly, if you would like to participate in the weekly worship videos – readings, prayers, music, dancing (I’m open to all suggestions!) – then please get in touch and please do check Facebook and your e-mails regularly for other updates.

Prayer

Jesus said,
 'I will be with you always, to the end of time.'
 Let us pray ...

Loving God,
 On this the last week in the Season of Easter,
 We come,
 To worship you.

For you are the Creator,
 there in the beginning,
 bringing all things into being.

You are the Son,
 Living, dying and rising again,
 So that all might know that your love is strong and eternal.

You are the Spirit,
 The one in whom we live and move and have our being,
 and who gives us the power to live and witness to your glory.

You are Lord,
 You are light,
 You are love,
 And you alone are worthy of all our adoration and praise.

And so,
 As we listen,
 And sing and pray together,
 Help us to focus on you and your ways,
 You and your time,
 You and your Kingdom,
 And give us purpose and patience and perseverance,
 As we pray thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.
 We ask it all in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord,
 Amen.

Reading

Acts 1:6-14 New International Version (NIV)

⁶ Then they gathered around him and asked him, "Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?"

⁷ He said to them: "It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority. ⁸ But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in

Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”

⁹ After he said this, he was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid him from their sight.

¹⁰ They were looking intently up into the sky as he was going, when suddenly two men dressed in white stood beside them. ¹¹ “Men of Galilee,” they said, “why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven.”

Matthias Chosen to Replace Judas

¹² Then the apostles returned to Jerusalem from the hill called the Mount of Olives, a Sabbath day’s walk^[a] from the city. ¹³ When they arrived, they went upstairs to the room where they were staying. Those present were Peter, John, James and Andrew; Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew; James son of Alphaeus and Simon the Zealot, and Judas son of James. ¹⁴ They all joined together constantly in prayer, along with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brothers.

Reflection

As we enter into our 10th week in lockdown, there was a glimmer of hope on Thursday as the First Minister released a route map out of lockdown. For sure, I think we have a long way to go. There are four different phases to work through, each dependent on keeping Coronavirus at bay, but we are heading in the right direction. It was encouraging to see talk about some places re-opening, including schools and child-care provision, and being able to spend a little longer in the park and the resumption of some sports, and, of course, the one that is important to lots of us – being able to spend time with those we love. In phase 1, which we aren’t in yet, that means one other household (and at a distance), but it’s a step in the right direction. Of course, none of us know when this will happen. We are all in the dark about the time frame and, for now, we are wise to stay safe and err on the side of caution, trusting that the time will come and hopefully it will be right.

It is time that is on the disciples’ minds, as we turn to the last reading of the Easter season and hear the story of Jesus’ Ascension. It’s not a part of Jesus’ life that is particularly celebrated, but it is really important. Having been around for 40 days following his resurrection

and appearing to his friends in a garden, behind locked doors, on the road to Emmaus and even on the beach for breakfast, it is time for Jesus to go. In Luke's account, we have Jesus gather his disciples round about him. They want to know if it's time, if this the moment that Jesus is going to restore Israel? Just like we are having to do at the moment, Jesus tells them to wait. It's not for them to know God's timetable. They've to go and wait and trust that they will receive power and when they do so, they will be his witnesses where they are in Jerusalem and then to the ends of the earth. Then Jesus is gone from their sight and they are all alone.

I came across a post on facebook this week that said: "*To those who wonder what Ascension is about, it's the day when Jesus started to work from home.*" It made me smile, but it also made me think. Our Apostles' Creed says that Jesus ascended to heaven (wherever that is) and is seated at the right hand of the Father, but Jesus is still working; working through His Church. The story of Ascension is both a story about endings and about beginnings, because with the return of Jesus to the Father, so the work of the church begins. That's what we celebrate next Sunday at Pentecost - the arrival of the promised Holy Spirit - that would empower and equip ordinary men and women to do great things in Jesus' name. Sit down and read the book of Acts and you will see the adventure that unfolds as a consequence of Jesus working from home! So much so, that you are sitting watching this today!

The Ascension was a wake-up call. A reminder that those early disciples and each one of us are not simply spectators, stuck with our eyes gazing upwards at the clouds, but instead called by Jesus, to turn our gaze outwards and around us and trust that God is in charge of the schedule and the timings and then get on with the work of serving, in the power of the Spirit, to bring heaven's will to bear on earth. Making love our purpose, prayer our power and faith more than words, but action. We've been doing that, through our phone calls, texts and letters. Through our prayers and our giving and our serving. Through the grants we have received from Faith in Community Scotland, allowing us to give games, toys and colouring books to help those with anxiety and many families in isolation. Also, in the last week, through the opening of Dalmuir Barclay Church as a hub on a Wednesday to support the work of Maureen and Gordon and their food parcel scheme.

The good news of Jesus is love and we show that love best when we witness to it in our actions. Thus, let us find ways to do that. Donate online, drop a tin in a basket or trolley, keep in contact and find ways to show others that you care. As you do so, know that you are not alone, that this too is the work of the church for the sake of the Kingdom,

because Jesus is working from home, and one day, in God's time, according to his schedule, He will return and make heaven and earth new.

Prayer

Lord Jesus,
 Today we praise you and name you Lord,
 The Head of the Church,
 The one whose ways we seek to follow
 and whose ministry of love we are called to carry on.

Thank you for your Spirit that empowers,
 Thank you for the gifts that equip,
 Thank you for each other,
 All different,
 Yet, in you, one.

As we look forward to Pentecost,
 Save us from worries about when,
 And focus our eyes on who and where,
 That we might be your hands and feet, ears and eyes in the world,
 And play our part in your coming kingdom.

Where there is hunger,
 Show us how to feed.

Where there is fear,
 Show us how to bring peace.

Where there is anxiety,
 Show us how to listen.

Where there is loneliness,
 Show us how to care.

Where there is grief and sadness,
 Show us how to comfort.

Where there is injustice,
 Show us how to be fair.

As we pray for our Governments and all those making decisions,
 As we pray for our NHS staff and all on the frontline,
 As we pray for key workers and all keeping things ticking over,
 As we pray for our loved ones and those in special need.

Lord, in the silence, hear our prayers ...
Silence

Lord Jesus,
 Help us, your church, wait on you,
 Seek you in prayer,

And have enough faith to follow you –
For we are you servants,
Ready us to go where you lead.

We ask and pray it all in the words you taught us, saying:
Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name ...

Closing Thought ...

We've now been in lockdown for enough weeks to be able to know that the expenditure for both congregations greatly outweighs the income. This was to be expected, not least as a consequence of there being no collection of free will offerings. Can I once again encourage you to fill and keep your envelopes and for those who would like to know more about standing orders and gift aid to contact our Treasurers at Waterfront and Dalmuir Barclay.

Minister: Rev Dr Ruth Morrison

RMorrison@churchofscotland.org.uk

0141 941 3317 or 07557657079

Dial-a-service 0141 278 6595

Ruth Morrison is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.

Topic: Prayer Meeting

Time: May 27, 2020 08:00 PM London

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89492114297?pwd=V2tRL3JEcUhQVWhjL0RxNmhQQTU4UT09>

Meeting ID: 894 9211 4297

Password: 136096