

Issue 15
28th June 2020

For these days ...

Lectionary Readings

Genesis 22.1-14

Psalm 13

Romans 6.12-23

Matthew 10.40-42

Hymns

'Let us build a house'

'Christ be beside me'

'To God be the glory'

Dear friends, we are now into our 15th week since this newsletter began and there is increasingly light at the end of the tunnel! We are now in Phase 2 of the Government's route map out of Lockdown and today non-essential shops opened. All going well, there will be further easing of restrictions as July unfolds and we hope and pray that things continue in this way. As always, please keep safe and do not hesitate to be in contact if there is anything you need – even if it's just to hear another voice at the end of the phone. For those online there are different ways to stay connected – through Sunday worship, Zoom catch ups, a fortnightly quiz and quiz sheet, mini youth group and messy church fun and a weekly prayer meeting on a Thursday. Indeed, the link for this weeks prayer gathering is at the bottom of the page. In addition to Facebook and our dial-a-service, there is also the opportunity to watch the service on Youtube (link below) and DVDs are available for those who do not have internet access – please spread the word. If you would like any information about anything I have mentioned, give me a call or drop me a line – I'd be delighted to help. With love and blessings, Ruth

Prayer

Hospitable God,
Your welcome is not cautious,
Nor measured,
Nor half-hearted,
But warm,
And open,
Ready to reach out and embrace all.

For your love is higher and wider,
Than we can ever imagine;
there is nothing we can do to make you love us less or more –
In your love we are always welcome and wanted,
In your love there is always space.

Space for the shame filled and sorrowful,
 Space for the doubting and the unsure,
 Space for the prophets and pioneers,
 Space for the desperate and struggling,
 Space for the least and the lost.
 Space for everyone in your love.

May that love inspire us to worship,
 and lead us to seek you with open hearts, minds and spirits
 ready to hear all that you would say,
 And receive all whom you will send our way,
 Not with a cautious,
 Measured or half-hearted welcome,
 But with a love that is as warm and as spacious as yours.
 We ask it all in the name of Jesus,
 Whose outstretched arms on the cross,
 Remind us of the wideness of your grace and mercy,
 Amen.

Reading

Matthew 10:40-42 New International Version (NIV)

⁴⁰ “Anyone who welcomes you welcomes me, and anyone who welcomes me welcomes the one who sent me. ⁴¹ Whoever welcomes a prophet as a prophet will receive a prophet’s reward, and whoever welcomes a righteous person as a righteous person will receive a righteous person’s reward. ⁴² And if anyone gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones who is my disciple, truly I tell you, that person will certainly not lose their reward.”

Reflection

There are some things that are always welcome –
 Water on a hot day.
 A hug of encouragement or a hello, it’s good to see you.
 A word of kindness or a touch that says, ‘it’s going to be OK.’
 A cup of coffee first thing in the morning.
 A phone call out of the blue to ask how you are doing.
 A joke with a funny punchline.
 A compliment.
 A bit of chocolate just when you need a sugar fix – or anytime really!
 A friendly face.
 The laugh of a child.
 A memory that makes you smile,
 And good news,
 Good news is always welcome.

This week,
 Amidst some sad phone calls,
 And bad news –
 especially events on Friday in Glasgow –
 There has been good news.

Good news,
 As the First Minister announced on Friday,
 That there had been no covid related deaths registered,
 For the first time since the 20th March.

Good news indeed,
 And that wasn't all,
 For it was the week when further easing of restrictions,
 And the steps out of lockdown,
 Were announced.

On Monday,
 Most non-essential shops,
 And places like zoos and playgrounds will be open.

On Friday,
 We can travel more than 5 miles.

By the following Tuesday,
 We can meet outdoors in extended groups,
 And if it is wet two households can meet indoors.

And then,
 On the 15th,
 Pubs, restaurants, museums, cinemas,
 And the one we have all been waiting for – hairdressers –
 Will be open!

Hallelujah!

I've already got my appointment booked for the following week,
 And it can't come soon enough!

This is all good news,
 And it is welcome.

It is welcome that is at the heart of our very short reading today.

It comes at the very end of the chapter we have been thinking about
 over recent weeks,
 As Jesus,
 As prepared his disciples to go out,
 Share in his ministry,
 Share the good news.

And he has made it very clear that they aren't in for an easy time.

They are going to be like sheep among wolves,

At best folks will ignore them,
 At worst,
 They'll have to run for their lives,
 For what they say and do will not always be well received,
 But nevertheless,
 They've not to be afraid,
 For God loves and cares for them.

And then we come to the final 3 verses of chapter 10 –
 And the keyword is welcome,
 Something that is mentioned earlier in the chapter,
 When Jesus says,
 'if anyone will not welcome you or listen to your words,
 Leave that home or town and shake the dust off your feet.'

Now,
 He's talking about what happens,
 When his disciples *are* welcomed and *not* turned away –
 'Anyone who welcomes you welcomes me,
 And anyone who welcomes me welcomes the one who sent me.'

And then he goes on to show us,
 Not only the wideness of God's welcome,
 Talking about prophets,
 And righteous folks,
 And little ones -
 But how interconnected we all truly are –
 And how welcome is a two-way thing –
 We offer a welcome,
 And in doing so we too receive.

I could really tie myself in knots with this today,
 But I think what I really want to say is this –
 If we say that we welcome Jesus into our lives,
 Then that means that we are also welcoming all whom God welcomes
 –

Not just those who we like,
 Not just those who are like minded,
 Not just those who belong to our own congregation,
 Not even those whom we think are deserving!

It is so much wider than any of that!

It includes the prophets,
 Those whose words are hard to hear,
 And are often rejected.

It includes the righteous,
 Whose lives shout justice and are a challenge to our cosy living.

It includes the little ones –
 The least,
 The marginalised,
 Who are often overlooked and forgotten.

If we want to welcome Jesus,
 And the God who sent him,
 Then we must welcome all.

And that was brought home to me this week,
 When I arrived home to a voice message –
 The person had left their name,
 Their number,
 And asked me to call them back.

I did,
 And on the other end of the phone,
 Was someone who had worshipped in one of our congregations before
 lockdown.
 They had enjoyed it,
 They had appreciated the chat over coffee,
 But just wanted to know if they would be welcome,
 Among nice people.

It was a joy to say,
 100% you are welcome,
 Because God loves you,
 There is no one who comes to church who is perfect –
 That's part of the reasons why we go,
 To remind ourselves of the one who is,
 The one who loves us,
 Sent Jesus into the world to show us,
 And lived and died and rose again so that we might be free –
 Free to become the people who we are created to be,
 reflecting God's image,
 and living lives of welcome and justice and love.

They were grateful,
 Glad that they had called,
 And so too was I –
 For I was reminded of God's gracious welcome to all.

Today,
 May you be too,
 And be both givers and receivers of good news that is welcome.

Prayer

Eternal God,
 Thank you for good news -
 Thank you for the wideness of your mercy,
 Thank you for the depth of your love,
 Thank you for the warmth of your welcome,
 Thank you for Jesus who spent time in the company of many whom
 others shunned.

We pray, this day,
 For those who feel like outsiders,
 And who long to belong.

For those who are rejected,
 Because of their past deeds,
 And who long to be forgiven and start again.

For those whose are struggling,
 With mental health or addiction,
 And who long for help to see them through.

For those who are sick,
 And long for healing.

For those who are worrying about themselves or a loved one,
 And long for peace.

For those who seeking asylum and refuge,
 And long for safety.

For those who are grieving,
 And looking for comfort and hope.

Lord, in the silence, hear our prayers,
 Especially as we remember
 all those caught up in events in Glasgow on Friday ...

Silence

May the wideness of your mercy,
 The depth of your love,
 And the warmth of your welcome reach all who need it this week,
 And may we your church,

Do our part in making that so.
 For we ask it all in the name of Jesus
 who taught us to pray together 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

Dalmuir Barclay Youtube channel

https://m.youtube.com/channel/UC_BhuF4R1qhDDEbopduSgHA

Clydebank Waterfront Youtube channel

https://m.youtube.com/channel/UCf0B0U_dcvICN7UrSHS7ghQ

Topic: **A time to pause for prayer ...**

Time: Thursday 08:00 PM London

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86893255704?pwd=RXFKdGdQT0RwRk9FckhrRUdKeEp3dz09>

Meeting ID: 868 9325 5704

Password: 572265