

New Kilpatrick

Worship

22nd March 2020

Reflective worship to bring us closer than our pews normally would during social distancing. Welcome to the new home of New Kilpatrick Parish Church.

Welcome to our online time for reflection. While we may be listening on our own today, there are a whole bundle of folk listening alongside us but in different sitting rooms or kitchens that together make up our congregation today so welcome to our new home.

The word 'we' is used throughout this 20 minute liturgy to constantly remind us that while we worship in our individual places today, we still create a worshipping community.

Setting the space

You may wish to light a small candle, or open a bible, or make a cross with some wood, or paper or household items. You could be quite creative here!

These symbols simply help shape a special space in the knowledge others are doing the same around this same time from New Kilpatrick and further afield.

A prayer said out loud:

Loving God,
in such a place as this,
without the stained glass
and marble pillars,
without the filled pews
and the organ playing,
but in this simple, homemade space,
we meet,
and trust,
your love holds all of us
through all things,
and holds us all here
right now.

Amen



Reading:

A familiar and well known reading could be read now: something that encourages us, that has those words we know deep down in our souls, that feel at home in us. Some suggestions are offered here but you'll know yourself passages that encourage and support us.



Psalm 23

The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.

He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters.

He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.

Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.

Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over.

Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.

I Corinthians 13

If I speak in the tongues of mortals and of angels, but do not have love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. If I give away all my possessions, and if I hand over my body so that I may boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing.

Love is patient; love is kind; love is not envious or boastful or arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice in wrongdoing, but rejoices in the truth. It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

Love never ends. But as for prophecies, they will come to an end; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will come to an end. For we know only in part, and we prophesy only in part; but when the complete comes, the



partial will come to an end.

When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child; when I became an adult, I put an end to childish ways. For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then we will see face to face. Now I know only in part; then I will know fully, even as I have been fully known. And now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; and the greatest of these is love.



Isaiah 40:28-31

Have you not known? Have you not heard?
The Lord is the everlasting God,
the Creator of the ends of the earth.
He does not faint or grow weary;
his understanding is unsearchable.

He gives power to the faint,
and strengthens the powerless.

Even youths will faint and be weary,
and the young will fall exhausted;

but those who wait for the Lord shall renew their

strength,
they shall mount up with wings like eagles,
they shall run and not be weary,
they shall walk and not faint.

Prayer

Loving God,
it is hard at times
to find our feet
when we feel the ground,
that was once so familiar,
shifts so rapidly;

may we take time to pause
in this moment,
without having to say a word,
or to explain,
but simply seek your presence
your company,
your familiar love...

(pause)

And when we can no longer meet for worship,

those basic instincts of our faith
seem fragile
and tissue thin;

may we take time to pause
in this moment,
in this unexpected place of worship,
to simply find you again
in word or in silence,
familiar with your presence
in this unexpected place of worship.

(pause)

And even as we say these words on our own today,
we know they are repeated in homes
around this parish,

and in such a comfort,
may we pause,
and know,
your presence
is greater than our distancing,
your love
greater than all our fears.

(pause)

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 this day our daily bread,
and forgive us our debts
as we forgive our debtors.
Lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil,
for thine is the kingdom,
the power,
and the glory for ever.
Amen

A Bible Story (A retelling of John 9:1-41)

Jesus was moving now from town to town and along one road he saw a man who was blind from birth. The man was sitting aware all were looking at him and that he had suddenly become the centre of their conversation. He turned his face one way and the

other to the sound of voices as the disciples, unaware of his feelings, questioned Jesus about him.

“Who sinned to make him blind,” they asked, “this man or his parents?”

Jesus listened but didn’t look at his disciples. He looked at the blind man as he moved towards. He muttered, “Yet again you ask the wrong question!” Directing his comments to the disciples he went on, “You imagine behind everything there is someone to blame. That’s a very limiting way to live in the world. Instead ask a faithful question such as: what can God do here?”

And as he spoke those last words he had reached the man, and was holding the man’s face in his hands, looking at him. Suddenly Jesus turned and spat onto the ground and made some paste with the mud, smearing it on the man’s eyes.

The man struggled but Jesus held him tight.

“Now, go and wash in Siloam’s Pool.”

He watched the man struggling blindly to the pool. Everyone followed but no one seemed to help. The man lent over the edge, cupped a hand-full of water and rubbed the mud from his eyes.

He turned. Sharply. Almost losing his balance. His mouth fell open, drips of water fell from his face, his forehead stretched, but what everyone noticed were his eyes: they were open and clear and filled with colour and movement and surprise.

“For as long as I am in the world, there is plenty of light. I am the world’s light” said Jesus gently, almost to himself because the disciples were not listening. Surprise got in the way of their hearing.

But then the consternation began. The debates raged. Pious confusion reigned. Some said the man who could see was not the one who was blind. Yes he is. No he isn’t. And it was the Sabbath which just added to the alarm. There was so much religious talk and theological debate they missed not just the miracle, but Jesus too because even once they finally thought about asking the blind man himself what he thought (too long he has been spoken for and someone answered for him) they moved against both the blind man and Jesus.

Finally Jesus found the blind man and the blind man found Jesus.

“Do you believe in the son of man?” Jesus asked.

Finding he could answer the question a way he never thought possible the not-now-blind man say, “Point him out and I will believe.”



"I am he," replied Jesus. "I came to the world so it could be seen in the light of day. Those who have not seen the world like this before, will now see, but there are some who think they see everything, but are, in truth, blind."

The pharisees overheard that remark. "Surely you are not saying we are blind?"

Jesus smirked and left them with their question.

Reflection

In such strange times as these, when everything that was familiar now seems strange, and all we took for granted we can no longer do, what do we draw on? Where do we find the certainties that faithfully hold us and comfort us and guide us?

The man who got mud rubbed in his eyes is familiar to us but perhaps we get a sense of what it was like a little more than normal.

The mud was a traditional remedy. It's just they weren't necessarily expecting it to work so effectively.

And so there were great discussions and debates. People tried to find a reason, some disbelieved it happened, some suggested the now seeing man was not the same one that was blind. We do anything to avoid the truth sometimes.

Does this surreal and unprecedented time feel a bit like that? This can't be happening? This isn't at all familiar to the way the world was meant to work?

But of course it is only our perception that is knocked off kilter. Viruses come and go. Unexpected events reshape the world regularly. Some natural and some man by humanity, from natural disasters to reformations, new discoveries to revolutions.

What we need perhaps in such times is the ability to rethink and reform and renew what gives us strength and confidence. It is something that happens regularly with the bible and belief. Perhaps this is such a time so what is it we need to hold on to, that gives us faith in such times? What words and passages and rituals do we seek to guide us?

Worshiping like this today is case in point. What do you design, or suggest to do when we are separated from one another?

The family of the now-not-blind man and the pharisees and the disciples all had the ground shift beneath them and rethink what they believed.

So let's find the words that bring us together, words like The Lord's My Shepherd. Let's create rituals that make community in new ways, meeting here each week still creating a cross or reading the same words together in our own places but at the same time.

And from there, we begin to grow again, in new ways, trusting new ideas, relying on unexpected consequences, but mostly, still trust into the future, and a love that has gone

through enough changes for all of us, yet still brings light, still brings life, still brings Jesus close to us.

Prayers for others

Loving God
we have seen a different world this last few weeks
see it in ways we never imagined

Yet we have seen our neighbour in new ways
the lonely and isolated
the fearful and worried

We bring them here
in prayer.
Loving God
hear us as we pray for this strange new world

We pray for those who are anxious
who worry about family and friends
who are now isolated
because of illness and fear

and we pray for all those volunteers
who are seeking away to support
and encourage
and work together towards each other

we pray for those in the NHS
for staff and medics
coping in difficult circumstances
putting themselves into vulnerable positions to care for us

for scientists and researchers
working long hours learning about this virus
and seek a treatment

for those how's jobs are threatened
or already finished
and worried about the future

those who continue to care for the vulnerable
the confused
and who daily look after the housebound
for those with children now out of school
and the coping of family life
in this different circumstance

for leaders nationally and globally
seeking ways to work together



and the responsibility of leading nations at this time

and for the least among us
the lonely
the vulnerable
with physical or mental ill-health

Loving God
shaping our prayers in this time
makes us appreciate all we have taken for granted
for the dedication of medical staff and researchers
their willingness to give of themselves

May we play our part
in these times
willing to give up our freedom
and our pride
to work together as a whole community
in responding to covid-19

Hear our prayer
so be it
Amen

More resources on the website and facebook

There you can connect with
growing new ideas of how to
continue being church in this
new way

There are directions to
resources to help those who
need help
and a growing number of good
news stories for us all.

Blessing

*Let us say this together knowing we share the same words around our new form of
congregation and community:*

May we know the light
between us
May we see the love
around us
May we continue the story
we tell
and may we be held by the God
who holds us
all
and always
Amen

Go in peace

