**New Kilpatrick**

**Podcast**

**22nd August 2021**

**Nehemiah**

**Opening**

Hello, I’m Roddy Hamilton, the minister of New Kilpatrick Parish and thank you for the invitation to join you today.

Our invitation to you is to join us at table as we gather to share communion today but rather than bread and wine, I invite you to gather with grapes and wheat, the raw materials of our communion, signs that point to potential. We don’t actually taste the bread and wine today. Instead we live in the bigger story of the future banquet that communion traditionally has always pointed to. And we do that by taking the gifts from creation and seeing in them the potential for that heavenly banquet.

Now, you may not have grapes and wheat so perhaps you may wish to create a space today with images of these, or any fruit and grain, such as oatmeal or flour: signs of potential, signs of what these might become. Or just imagine them, for we are in the not yet, so please pause here if you wish to gather these and create a space for gathering together round table.

**Gathering**

When the table was set at the supper

Did the disciples remember the baker of the bread

Who kneaded the flour and left it to rise

Did the baker remember the miller

who chose the flour to grind and set the mill going

Did the miller remember the farmer

Who nurtured the land and grew the seed

Did the farmer remember the grain from last year

Whose abundance shared last years harvest for this years field

Did the field remember the sun and the rain

And the soil and the nutrients

And did anyone remember a creation

Whose generosity and love began with a promise

A promise to give of itself

In a story of love that has given its all

We take seed for the table

Filled with the promise of God

**Music Let us talents and tongues employ**

**Gathering**

When the table was set at supper

did the disciples remember the vintner, the wine merchant

Whose patience housed the bottles for the table of promise

Did the vintner remember the vine-keeper

Who tenderly loved the vines and nurtured the grapes

Did the grapes remember the sun and the rain

And the angle of hill in the summer light

Did the hill remember the heat and the water

And the soil and the nutrients

And did anyone remember a creation

Whose generosity and love began with a promise

A promise to give of itself

In a story of love that has given all

We take grapes for the table

Filled with the promise of God

**Music Let us talents and tongues employ**

**Gathering**

Today we set a table of potential

Not yet complete

Not yet with bread and wine

But gather in the promise of it

We set a table of potential

With the raw materials of the feast

Still to be completed,

bread to rise and wine to ferment

We set a table of potential

For what we do not yet taste

For bread and wine are not ends in themselves

These are where we being

Like love and grace

Not ends in themselves

But building blocks

Gifts to share

To recreate the world

We set a table of potential

To be shared, soon,

But not yet

We gather in the yet unfulfilled promise of this table

**Music Let us talents and tongues employ**

**Invitation to the table**

This is a table of stories. It’s always about the story.

So please feel welcome, not because you understand

but because you want to hear the story

Gather now, not because you know the ending

But realise there is no ending in this story

Gather now, not because you can explain what happens here

But because you cannot explain what this table means

Gather now, not because you are a member of a church

But because you want to belong in God

Gather now, not because this is a habit and ritual

But because you are dare something unexpected to happen

Gather now, not because this is an ancient tradition

But because it is the newest moment of life

All are welcome here

Of every faith and none

An open table for all those

Who seek love, wonder about God

Belong to a journey

Who sense we have not arrived

All are welcome

Of every age, gender, culture, language

A place of peace and generosity

Of belonging and love

All are welcome

For today we share in the promise

In the hope

In the potential

In the ‘not yet’

In the ‘soon to be’

In the way of God

The future tense

We gather round symbols and stories

That leave us only with the rumour of bread and wine

Living in the ‘not yet’

But we gather round us the great story of faith

The pattern of God in the world

From the first breath of creation

Through wilderness years and red sea crossings

To the sermon on the mount and the table of bread and wine

So let us tell these stories

Gather then near

Live within their promise

And their direction

To the great banquet of heaven

Set for all in the ‘not yet’

**Reading: Verses from Nehemiah 9**

A:

And Ezra said: “You are the Lord, you alone; you have made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host, the earth and all that is on it, the seas and all that is in them. To all of them you give life, and the host of heaven worships you.

B:

You are the Lord, the God who chose Abram and brought him out of Ur of the Chaldeans and gave him the name Abraham

A:

You are the Lord, And you saw the distress of our ancestors in Egypt and heard their cry at the Red Sea. You divided the sea before them, so that they passed through the sea on dry land

B:

You are the Lord: you led them by day with a pillar of cloud, and by night with a pillar of fire, to give them light on the way in which they should go.

A:

You are the Lord: you made known your holy sabbath to them and gave them commandments and statutes and a law through your servant Moses.

B:

You are the Lord: For their hunger you gave them bread from heaven, and for their thirst you brought water for them out of the rock, and you told them to go in to possess the land that you swore to give them.

All:

You are the Lord

**Institution**

The story is never complete. We never get to the ending. But we do know the beginning, way back in creation, that moment God breathed the first divine word. “Let it be”.

It is a word of hope, of potential, of promise: Let it be: contains all the longing of a parent, all the aching of an artist, all the yearning of a creator who wondered what might happen.

“Let there be land and sea and rain and light

Let there be seed and soil and grape and vine

Let there be seasons and harvest, bakers and vintners

Let there be tables and company and companionship and communion

Let there be this moment when God’s first Word speaks again,

To his companions: “This is my body, my blood”

This grain that falls to the ground

Reborn as a seed, into new life

A shoot, a stalk, an ear, a loaf

Every seed contains the promise of the kingdom

Every grape the covenant with love

Every grain holds the whole story of God

Every vine, the tale of incarnation and resurrection

The potential is in each

Every word, has the whole story

Every table, is the whole body

Every company, is the whole circle

Every communion, is the whole kingdom

And Jesus, who is the word

Blessed the bread, broke it, and shared

Blessed the cup, lifted it, and drank

Into this hope we live today

We sow the wheat into the future

Ferment the grape into what is not yet

This communion

On the cusp of what is yet to be

**Communion: but not yet**

Today we prepare communion

But, today, do not fully celebrate it

We live in the not yet

Which is what this meal points to

A greater feast

A banquet in the future

Because of Covid, we cannot easily do so altogether

So instead, we reflect, on what this communion community means

That this table is not an end, but a beginning

This table is not a reward, but a way for us to live

That this table is not a conclusion, it is about promise,

A picture of what is yet to come

So in grain and grape

We recognise the promise that will grow into bread and wine

And love and grace

And Good Friday and Easter Day

These are the beginnings

So we bless the promise

Bless the, ‘not yet’

Bless what is to grow from here into what is yet to be

From this grain and grape: not yet fully revealed as bread and wine

From this moment, not yet fully known

This community, not yet fully matured

Let us share the ‘not yet’ communion

When the hungry are fed and the poor given an equal place

When the kingdom is generous and her foundations are strong

When the hope has roots and the truth is set free

When the other cheek is turned and the burden is light

Then

But not yet

When salt is salty and our light shines

When the ‘i’s are dotted and the ’t’s crossed

When we are reconciled to our brother and to our sister

When there is no longer and eye for and eye and tooth for a tooth

When we love our enemy as much as our neighbour

When we store up treasure in heaven and not on earth

When we witness the lily and worry not about tomorrow

Then

But not yet

When we take the plank out our own eye before mentioning the speck in our neighbours

When we ask, seek and knock for the kingdom of God

When we care for creation sustainably, meeting todays needs without compromising the needs of tomorrow

Then

But not yet

This, will be, our communion

Now we are in the not yet

We see the promise

And choose to within it

Fasting for the day the promise is fulfilled

We can almost taste the bread from this seed

Almost smell the wine from these grapes

But today

We live into the potential

The promise

The feast these seeds and grapes will yet grow into

**Video**

The seeds needs to grow: where shall we plant them?

The grape needs to be grafted: on what shall we graft it?

May the soil be rich and ready

The vine clean and ripe

May the land be ready for growth

And the vineyard turned toward the sun

May the seed know it’s potential

And the grape it’s calling

May we sow a promise

for a community yet to be

May we live now

Into what is still a promise

Holy holy holy

God of power and might

Heaven and earth are crammed with your glory

Hosanna in the highest

**Prayer**

Loving God

Of the yet to be

Of all the hope we have

All the longing for justice and right

All the passion for tomorrow

We bring our world

In its diversity and trouble

To this table of not yet

And pray for the possibility of peace

Peace for those in Afghanistan

And Yemen

South Sudan and Tigray

Syria and Israel/Palestine

Where conflict and fear

Are part of the everyday

These are who we will journey with this week

Peace for Haiti

After earthquake and storms

And so many other areas where climate and nature

Have changed our relationship

Wildfires in the US, Australia, Europe and Siberia

Rainforests releasing more carbon than absorbing it

These are who we will journey with this week

For families and friends here

For those losing jobs and those unsure of the future

Worried about physical and mental health

Wellbeing of neighbourhoods and parish

For those tired

Those finding normality

And returning to habits, difficult

These are who we will journey with this week

Hear us

So be it

Amen

**Benediction**