**New Kilpatrick Parish Church**

**YouTube**

**16th January 2022**

**John 2:1-11**

**Welcome**

Hello, I’m Roddy Hamilton, the minister of New Kilpatrick Parish, and, once more, thank you for creating community with us today.

We really ought to be in our glad rags today, dressed up even though we do’t have an awful lot of places to go as we are attending a wedding in the town of Cana. It’s a family do, but the whole village will be in attendance. So remember, bring the food as is the culture, to have the whole village invited and helping out. And some wine too. We don’t want the to run out.

**Reading**

On the third day there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there. **2**Jesus and his disciples had also been invited to the wedding. **3**When the wine gave out, the mother of Jesus said to him, “They have no wine.” **4**And Jesus said to her, “Woman, what concern is that to you and to me? My hour has not yet come.” **5**His mother said to the servants, “Do whatever he tells you.” **6**Now standing there were six stone water jars for the Jewish rites of purification, each holding twenty or thirty gallons. **7**Jesus said to them, “Fill the jars with water.” And they filled them up to the brim. **8**He said to them, “Now draw some out, and take it to the chief steward.” So they took it. **9**When the steward tasted the water that had become wine, and did not know where it came from (though the servants who had drawn the water knew), the steward called the bridegroom **10**and said to him, “Everyone serves the good wine first, and then the inferior wine after the guests have become drunk. But you have kept the good wine until now.” **11**Jesus did this, the first of his signs, in Cana of Galilee, and revealed his glory; and his disciples believed in him.

**Setting the Scene**

A wedding is a village affair. Everyone is involved and everyone is there. Much is provided by the hosts but we, the village, takes a share in that too. Now we are here, we’ve discovered the wine has run out. Shame on us.

It’s not that too many of us have drunk too much. It means that our host has a shameful lack of friends, who were the ones who were meant to bring enough wine for the feast. That’s us, or we have shamed ourselves, and our host, by failing to provide sufficient wine.

Thankfully the mother of Jesus is here. I don’t know what kind of relationships she has with her son, but something is going on, and you’ll have noticed the servants carrying those ridiculously large pitchers of water. There seems to be some contretemps between the two of them. His mother certainly doesn’t want to bring shame of the host or themselves. Jesus doesn’t seem to be too concerned about those social rules.

But now the wine flows again. The feast is possible. Balance has been restored. In fact it is feels like and and looks a picture of, the great feast, the great banquet, we’ll all be part of once day, come the time.

Anyway, now glasses have been changed, let me introduce the first speaker, ladies and gentlemen, please welcome your groom.

**Groom’s Speech**

On behalf of my wife and I

Let me say thank you, to you all, for being here,

And thank you for your generosity towards us both.

There is a plethora of gifts,

And your generosity knows no bounds.

We have more towels than we’ll be able to have baths,

And with the number of vases received,

I’m going to go broke trying to keep them filled with flowers

For my lovely wife.

I hope you are enjoying this community wedding.

All our friends from near and far,

From different times in our lives,

Are all here to celebrate. Thank you.

Though I’m a little frightened that those who knew me when I was younger

Might get into conversation with those who know me now I’m respectively employed;

And those who were are university with me…

Please avoid any interrogation by my father-in-law!

 But before I say any more

I want to say thank you for such a wonderful feast.

It really is a sign of what we should do more frequently:

A place for everyone from our lives,

Sharing together.

It is a picture of how we would like our lives to be from now on:

Making space, and giving space, to everyone.

One great weaving of people together

Into a diverse and generous community.

And I have to thank my host

Who has not only provided everything today,

But provided kept best wine until now.

You may have heard the rumour a few moments ago

That we had run out of wine.

But no!

Let us lift our glasses,

And toast us all,

This great community ,

This open and generous community,

That is a sign of things to come.

**Prayer 1**

Loving God

May our being together

Be a sign

Of that great feast

That great community

Of hope and truth and love

May our desire for you

Be the sign

Of the kingdom yet to be

Shaped by justice and peace and grace

May we turn towards each other

In a more caring way

May we find the compassion we need

In sharing that with our neighbour

May the promise of God

Be lived here in word and act and faith

And may we be here

A sign

That points

Proclaims

Is a prediction

Of what your kingdom means

And will become

Loving God

Hear us

And forgive us

And renew us

And reaffirm us

As your community

Your signposts

To love

So be it

Amen

And now, ladies and gentlemen, may I introduce your best man who will reply to the groom.

**Best Man’s Speech**

In this day and age

it is a strange thing for a man to need to reply

on behalf of the bridesmaids.

I know them and they are perfectly capable of replying themselves!

However, I really want to tell you something about the groom,

But everything I was going to say

Has been usurped by this wine.

Have you ever known someone to produce such glorious wine!

Just when you’d thought we would be less aware off it,

When our hosts would think they could get away with,

Shall we say, a lesser red,

No!

They have produced what has been the flavour of the day.

But there is a story behind it.

I don’t want to embarrass anyone

But we ran out of wine about a hour ago.

All of us didn’t bring enough.

As you know our tradition is to bring the wine to the feast.

But we fell short.

None of us were quite generous enough,

But thanks to one of the guests,

The six stone pitchers that were filled with water

Are now filled with wine,

The same wine we are now toasting the day with.

My first response when I heard this was:

How did he do that?

But really I want to know:

WHO is the one who can do that?

WHO is the one who can turn water into wine?

WHO is the one who acts like a messiah,

A game-changer.

And what is this the sign of?

To whom does this point?

My friends

Of this beloved community

Let us raise our glasses

And toast the one who has spared our humiliation.

But more,

To the one this sign points to,

To the one about whom this sign makes us wonder,

To the one this sign encourages us to follow.

**Prayer 2**

Loving God

Sign-maker

May we have eyes to see

Not the miracle

But the one to whom the miracle points

And asks us to wonder

Who is he?

What is he?

What new order of thing

Is this inviting us into?

Wine-maker

May we taste the new wine of the covenant

The taste of new life

Of transforming the old traditions that limit us

To the new way if being in the world

The change to how we understand and engage with God

Now present among us

Now one of us

Sign-maker

May we follow the signs

And find you

Just where we are

So be it

Amen

**Epilogue**

In a world that has reduced everything down to cause and effect, that has lost its imagination to see a better world, and falls back into the old, weddings are a sign that there still are people who see a different future, to believe into the future.

Cana is one such wedding but for an unexpected reason. The miracle that turns water into wine.

But it isn’t a miracle. Or at least the miracle is the least of it. You’ll never see the word printed in John’s gospel. The miracle is not the point or even important.

John only talks about signs.

Everything written and described in the gospel has a singular purpose: to point to who Jesus was. Signs that describe who this man was, what he was about. It is full of pictures that go beyond words to describe Jesus: Messiah, bringer in of the new kingdom.

Let us not lessen him by imagining he is a miracle worker and the best he can do is turn water into wine. That is not Jesus. No, Jesus is the lord of the new kingdom, the one who inaugurates the great feast of life, the one who is the first to bring new life to that which is moribund and ordinary.

Jesus is Messiah. Look at what the sign points to.

Wasting time discussing the sign is like going to a fabulous restaurant and opening the the menu without tasting the food. And in a reductionist society, that has lost its imagination, and perhaps it feels at times, so has the church, we talk too much about the menu and not enough time actually enjoying the feast

As a church may we continue to point, the same theme as last week, but let us be the sign of what we are pointing towards, be the miracle that is less important than what this miracle of the church actually means and offers and leads to.

A radical and generous community, that tastes of a kingdom, where there is enough good wine, fullness of life, radical inclusion. for all.

**News**

**Prayer 3**

Hospitable God

God of the table

God of the feast

God of the beloved community

As we pray

We look for new life

For renewal and replenishment

For our community and parish

And for our world

So may we live out your stories

Retell them

And enflesh them

Right where we are

Live in the hope of abundance

Live in the belief of generosity

Live as a sign of these promises

For all

So in such hope

And within such promises

We pray for our world

In your abundant promise

And your renewal of life

We bring all the worlds refugees

Escaping violence and conflict

Environmental damage and natural disaster

We bring those who cannot escape

Caught up in authoritarian policies

Or extreme poverty

That locks them into a place they do not want to be

We bring all those in conflict

From Tigray to Yemen

Mali to Ukraine

Haiti to inner cities and gang lines

We bring those unable to find vaccines

Or health services or care

For those forgotten by benefits

And services and welfare

Loving God

We pray for a wedding feast

For new wine

For all those whose side you are on

May we bring and be the sign of that

May we point towards the promise you have given

May we be the picture here

Of your kingdom to come

As we bring those we love deepest

Our families and friends

Those we know who are physically and mentally ill

and needing peace

Those who are grieving and hurting

These are our prayers

Our hopes

Those who need your signs

Your promises

Your love, now

May we be signposts to that

So be it

Amen

**Benediction**