**New Kilpatrick**

**Podcast**

**Luke 24:36-48**

**16th April 2023**

**Gathering**

In the echo of resurrection

God seems to be everywhere

There is no place now

God is not

There is no limit now

The great barrier has been crossed

Footprints in the dew

Were certain death for death

God is everywhere

And there is no place God is not

Those reliable truths about death

Now have a niggle of doubt

And that is all it takes

For faith to slip through the crack

All you need is a question:
Is he…?: the women’s question

Can he…?: the doubters question

How…?: the disciples question

Is that…?: the fisher’s question

The adventure comes in saying ‘Yes’

An adventure of resurrection

For there is no place now God is not

God is everywhere

**Introduction**

Hello… I’m Roddy Hamilton the minister of New Kilpatrick Parish… and thank you for the invitation to be part of this resurrection adventure… We tell stories… it is all we have… and that is all we can do… for stories hold the truth… the emotions… the questions… to explore what this means… It will not explain… it will invite… welcome to the invitation into renewed life…

**Prayer**

This place

This resurrection place

This hope-filled place

Is our meeting place

And in such a place

May we know you again, O Love,

Fresh in the world

And renewed in life

Ever that optimistic hope

That colours our day

And refreshes our faith

May this be the gift we share with the world

And each other

May we live as the people of hope

Creating a community that lives into the future

Dares it to unfold

In its natural, hopeful colours

And when it does not

Because we have limited our imagination

Feared what we did not know

Looked after ourselves first

Forgive us

Renew us

Call us again

And when we have hurt each other

When the world has cheapened life

And power has persuaded us

Or silenced us

Forgive us

Renew us

Bring us to new life again

May we pause here today

Draw breath

And decide on the words we will use from today

Fresh words of life

And imagination

That speak into the future

With all the colours of resurrection

Hear us as we pray

As we share and live out

The prayer Jesus taught us

Lord’s Prayer

**Reading**

**36**While they were talking about this, Jesus himself stood among them and said to them, ‘Peace be with you.’ **37**They were startled and terrified, and thought that they were seeing a ghost. **38**He said to them, ‘Why are you frightened, and why do doubts arise in your hearts? **39**Look at my hands and my feet; see that it is I myself. Touch me and see; for a ghost does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have.’ **40**And when he had said this, he showed them his hands and his feet **41**While in their joy they were disbelieving and still wondering, he said to them, ‘Have you anything here to eat?’ **42**They gave him a piece of broiled fish, **43**and he took it and ate in their presence.

**44**Then he said to them, ‘These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you—that everything written about me in the law of Moses, the prophets, and the psalms must be fulfilled.’ **45**Then he opened their minds to understand the scriptures, **46**and he said to them, ‘Thus it is written, that the Messiah is to suffer and to rise from the dead on the third day, **47**and that repentance and forgiveness of sins is to be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. **48**You are witnesses of these things.

**Reflection**

After every service… you sit down and reflect on all the things that go wrong… or what you could have been done better… if you had a second chance… Most of you know that already… Don’t come to the manse on a Sunday afternoon… its not particularly cheery…

I did the same, of course, after Good Friday and Easter Sunday too… and apart from all the things that we could have done better or different… and there were a few of them… I came to the conclusion that what we did was quite simple… all we actually did was… we told the story… and not much else…

And I think… for what it is worth… that is a good thing… managing to tell the story…

In fact… might I dare say that that is closer to the kind of worship that makes sense to me… worship that is at its root… an experience of the story… because, my friends… despite the clever clerics and centuries of theology… and fighting over what any of our faith means for whatever tradition we were brought up in… the story… is all we’ve got… especially with resurrection…

I’ve never been one to listen to sermons… and I have to admit… even my own at times… I find myself switching off… especially when the sermon becomes a teach-in… where the success of worship is leaving after an hour… having learned something…

Worship… surely… in its truest form… is going away having *experienced* something of the story… some of the emotions… loss… fear… hope… that that encounter with God brought those who gave us the story to share their experience in the first place… It is their story… and in telling it… they invite an encounter with God through the telling of it…

Of course, within that… we learn things… we hear the story from different points of view… living in someone else’s shoes for a while… and yes… we can come away having learned something about the culture… the experience… the way the story was heard in other times and cultures… which help us hear it anew…

Words and meanings have changed over the centuries… and to rediscover their original meanings can help… and we learn things… such as how to hear the story…

Unfortunately… church isn’t really set up for worship like that… It is actually set up so we are taught something… Most reformed churches are like big lecture theatres… and… indeed… our whole tradition has grown from the principle that all God’s people should be allowed to read the bible… and ministers became experts and teachers on what it all meant… we fell into a worship based on teaching rather than encounter…

I’d like to suggest that the next reformation… which may not be that far away… will be around the ability to tell stories again… our faith stories… in such a way that people can experience them… encounter the love… the pain… the injustice… the hope… they are designed to share with us…

In other words,… let us not prioritise explaining a story… that is not the point of them… It is the experience of them… and my question from now on… is going to be… how can we tell this story better… whatever story we have each week… and let the story itself speak about what it was trying to describe…

Let me explain what I mean through a story…

Once there was a great explorer… she had left her village many years ago to go out into the world… She had decided to go to places she had only ever heard about… and some places she never knew existed… She was gone for years… sending back notes and pictures of what her exploration was like… She became quite a personality… her postcards were hung up in the village hall for all to see and wonder at…

Eventually she returned home… and the whole village organised a homecoming… She was now well known… for her adventures had made many newspapers and books… and a whole wall was covered in her adventures…

On the day of her return… the banners were out… the villagers were cheering… and they had organised a great banquet in her honour…

And she was asked to tell them all about her travels… what she has seen… how she felt… what she had ecountered… and so she began… but people didn’t understand… her words weren’t enough… they had no connection with what she told them… there was nothing familiar… because none of them had seen the animals and mountains and rivers she had seen… it was like a foreign language to them…

And so, she drew them a map… so they could go there themselves… and experience what she had tried to explain…

The village elders pounced on the map… and hung it up in the village hall… They framed it… they added her name… People came to see it from far and wide… people wrote treatises on it… a whole school was set up round the explaining of what this map meant… people analysed it and wrote books about it…

But no one ever used it as a map… and when they wanted to ask the explorer a question about it… suddenly she was nowhere to be seen… she was back out on her adventures… sad that no one was willing to follow the map…

The map remained on the wall… and the villagers continued to honour it… and worship it… but not one of them ever followed it…

Sometimes… especially with resurrection… we can’t explain it… We’ve tried to… but nothing is convincing… We have to live it… explore it… experience it… to have any worthwhile insight… Too often we leave it to the experts… we create doctrine round it… and write endless books on it…

Resurrection is not a university course… or even a Sunday School lesson… It is an encounter… We can only have stories about it… But as we tell these stories… we begin to experience what it was like… the feelings, wonder, confusion those who first shared them wanted to tell us… because they didn’t have the words… only pictures to express what it was like…

And what we have… is all these different stories… because each offers a different encounter with resurrection… a different way of touching it… encountering it… experiencing it…

Let’s not leave resurrection to some creed… lesson… or sermon… Let us speak of it… by telling the stories of it… that we might encounter it… and live it… For us… in this post-church era… it may be the biggest adventure our church can take…

**News**

**Prayers for Others**

May our words become acts

Of faith and resurrection

May peace for Ukraine and Syria and Israel/Palestine

Be a promise for the future

May freedom in Myanmar

Be soon for those who protest

May a safe home be possible now

For migrants in unsafe boats

May our environment be cared for

Through a renewed love for creation

May those who are hungry

Be fed good news and justice today

May resurrection be a truth

That brings alive the moribund hopes of the world

May we live into that resurrection

In our words and deeds each day

So be it

Amen

**Benediction**