

Cupar Old Parish Church

Where Everyone Matters

Newsletter 10 June 2022

Dear Friends:

Technology often outsmarts and confounds me. I'm terrified whenever the computer says it needs to do an 'update' to 'improve' service, and I find that this more often means that things don't work as smoothly as they did, and sometimes I think it rearranges and hides things just to make it more challenging for me.

On the other hand, when I remember the first computer Lynn and I bought after we were married, and how primitive--and slow!--it was by comparison, I'm grateful for the advances that have taken place.

When the world around us is changing, and our personal situations are sliding into new, unfamiliar territory, it can be easy to bewail and bemoan every change, and act as though change itself were an inherently bad thing.

But the Bible, in both Old and New Testaments, affirms that God is one who brings about change:

'Do not remember the former things, or consider the things of old.

I am about to do a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?'

~ Isaiah 43: 18-19

'Behold, I am making all things new...'

~ Revelation 21: 5

God's Spirit is a presence of renewal, and of making things new. The unchanging part is God's faithful, loving, and empowering identity. Because we can rely on God's constant love, we're able to meet the changes of life, persevere, and reflect that love into a changing world.

Warm regards,
Jeff

From Our Prayer Team

Janice: janice.geddes2@btinternet.com

The United Nations has warned that the March to May 2022 rainy season in the Horn of Africa – in Ethiopia, Uganda and Kenya – is likely to have been the driest on record. This follows four successive years when the rains have failed. The situation in Ukraine, where wheat exports have been blocked, is further adding to the crisis. Please pray for immediate international action to supply food to people in need, and that the next rainy season will not fail.

Please continue to pray for the Lighthouse and all the staff and volunteers who work there.

The Prayer Team continues to meet weekly through Zoom. If you would like to join us, have a prayer request, or would like a member of the team to pray with you, then please contact either Jeff Martin or Janice Geddes.

12 June: Worship

Please join us for gathered worship this Sunday, at 11:00 in the sanctuary and at 4:00 in the Old Parish Centre. We will celebrate the sacrament of Holy Communion at both services. Our reading comes from Luke 7: 36-50. A recording of the morning service will be uploaded to our YouTube channel by Sunday afternoon:

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCdOxFrZ_kg94DYogyIFAVEQ

15 June: Coffee and Chat

Jill: [07929 444 246](tel:07929444246)

Everyone is welcome to join in a morning of friendship and fellowship at our Coffee and Chat gathering, each Wednesday from 10:00 to 11:15.

Reflection from Peter Meager

Peter: meager52@btinternet.com

Who would have thought that two of the highlights of the Jubilee celebrations would have been a 'marmalade sandwich' and a reference to 'Her Majesty still being in the saddle'? I chuckle every time I think of the Queen opening her handbag and producing her sandwich. I wonder if the Archbishop of York realised that the main thing the media would take away from his sermon in St Paul's would be his horse racing analogy, which illustrated Her Majesty's untiring commitment to discharging her royal duties for more than seven decades.

Expressions of respect, admiration and gratitude have come from around the world and from across the political spectrum, even from some who are not royalists. It has been a fitting commemoration of all she has achieved as a woman of faith at home and abroad. Her radiant smiles and her message at the end of the festival weekend show how much she has been touched by the thousands of expressions of gratitude and love.

It got me thinking about the meaning of Jubilee and, in particular, what the Bible has to say about it. In the book of Leviticus (chapter 25) we find the first reference to Jubilee, as part of the law given by God to the Israelites. Melody Murton, writing for Tear Fund Australia said, 'The Jubilee year – occurring every 50 years – is an economic, cultural, environmental and communal reset, when the land and people rest, and all those who are in slavery are set free to return to their communities. The Jubilee laws are essentially concerned with social relationship, economic security, stability and the wellbeing of the community. They seek to ensure that people live in ways that reflect good relationships with God, with each other, and with creation.'

We have a dashboard camera in our campervan. It gives a continual video

record of our journeys. It works by a loop recording of two hours. At the end of each period, it begins again. The aim is that, should we be involved in an accident or other incident, we would be able to produce evidence of what actually happened. Last week I became suspicious that it wasn't recording. This fear was confirmed when I connected it to my computer and discovered that I could not access the video files held in the device. An internet search revealed that I could attempt a 'factory reset'. This would restore the device to the condition it was in when it left the makers. After a bit of trial and error I was able to completely reformat the camera and, I'm glad to say, it seems to be working perfectly now.

The Jubilee year was aimed at restoring communities to the blueprint that our creator intended. CB Samuel comments that it appears that the law was never actually implemented. He says, "The assumption is that it was not practised. But that does not mean it is not an important law... The law was given to the people of Israel so that they would know the intention of God, the heart of God. – Jubilee was a recovery of identity, especially for the poor. It is not about simply correcting economic problems, which is very important; not even just caring for the poor because they're poor; but it is restoring identity, which is a part of their history and very important for them. Jubilee operated as a corrective because people were tight-fisted and hard-hearted. When we talk about Jubilee now, people are reluctant – it's a problem of the heart, not a problem of economics."

And this is what we see throughout the rest of the Old Testament: God's heart of grace and vision for restoration persisting, despite the Israelites' failure to follow the laws that would bring them life. God takes action through prophets like Jeremiah, Isaiah, Amos and others, who bring messages that speak to the consequences of forgetting the law, but also to the promise of One who will enable God's original vision for his people to be restored and for all creation to be renewed. That person, of course, is Jesus.

'In Luke's gospel we see Jesus, at the beginning of his ministry, announcing that he is the one foretold by the prophet Isaiah (Isaiah 61). This passage, found in Luke 4:16-22, often called Jesus' manifesto or mission statement, directly references Jubilee ('the year of the Lord's favour', verse 19). Jesus illuminates Jubilee to his listeners, drawing a thread from the Pentateuch,

through the prophets, into his moment, and beyond: “Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.” (verse 21). Here, Jesus is identifying himself as the Messiah and the fulfilment of Jubilee. Jesus would have seen himself as standing clearly in the progression of the prophetic. When he says ‘Today this scripture has been fulfilled’, he’s saying not just every 50 years, not just every seventh year, but every now, every today – when you come across injustice, when religious systems shut people out – this is where Jubilee is fulfilled.”
(Merryl Blair)

‘The essence of Jubilee is God’s inspired vision to interrupt the status quo. A reset, embedded in the way of life for God’s redeemed and liberated people, emphasising the relationships between humanity, creation and God. Within the reality of life in a world of broken relationships, Jubilee is an expression of God’s desire for all of creation to flourish. It is radical and countercultural, and it is prophetic – then and now. It is a model for a community living well according to God’s will so that they can thrive as individuals and as a community and, in so doing, shine as light to the rest of the world.’ – (Melody Murton)

[In this reflection I have largely followed and freely quoted an article by Tear Fund, Australia, ‘Reset Faith’, which was put together by Melody Murton, the Content Lead at Tearfund Australia. In addition, conversations on the theology of Jubilee between Merryl Blair and CB Samuel helped shape the article. Merryl is an Adjunct Lecturer at Stirling Theological College (Melbourne). CB Samuel is a longtime friend of Tearfund Australia and current Associate Fieldworker in India.]

Song: These Are the Days of Elijah

We sing this regularly but perhaps haven’t paid enough attention to the reference in it to ‘the year of jubilee.’

<https://youtu.be/6p94OEiQw2s>

These are the days of Elijah,
Declaring the word of the Lord:
And these are the days of your servant Moses,
Righteousness being restored.
And though these are days of great trial,
Of famine and darkness and sword,

Still, we are the voice in the desert crying
'Prepare ye the way of the Lord!'

Chorus

Behold he comes, riding on the clouds
Shining like the sun, at the trumpet call!
Lift your voice, it's the year of jubilee
And out of Zion's hill salvation comes!

These are the days of Ezekiel,
The dry bones becoming as flesh.
And these are the days of your servant David,
Rebuilding a temple of praise.
These are the days of the harvest,
The fields are as white in your world!
And we are the labourers in your vineyard,
Declaring the word of the Lord!

There is no God like Jehovah!

Behold He comes, riding on the clouds
Shining like the sun, at the trumpet call!
Lift your voice, it's the year of jubilee
And out of Zion's hill salvation comes!

Reading: Luke 4:16-22

He (Jesus) went to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, and on the Sabbath day he went into the synagogue, as was his custom. He stood up to read, and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was handed to him. Unrolling it, he found the place where it is written:

'The Spirit of the Lord is on me,
because he has anointed me
to proclaim good news to the poor.
He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners
and recovery of sight for the blind,
to set the oppressed free,
to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour.'

Then he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant and sat down. The eyes of everyone in the synagogue were fastened on him. He began by saying to them, 'Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.'

Prayer

Gracious God, whose nature is perfect harmony; we praise you as Father, Son and Holy Spirit, one God, living in relationship and wishing us to live as your children, safe and secure in the knowledge of your love and care. Lord, we freely admit that we do not always reflect your generous, open-handed spirit. We are often self-centred and tight fisted, reluctant to take you at your word. Forgive us, reset us, and help us to trust you and risk living wholeheartedly – modelling your unstinting care for one another.

Give us the courage to challenge systems that prevent people from achieving their true humanity and confine them to poverty, hunger, insecurity and second-class citizenship.

May this time of Jubilee inspire us to strive for a society which conforms to your original plans for creation. May we do so in the knowledge and confidence that your Spirit is with us supplying the power to endure all things and achieve all things, for Jesus' sake. Amen.

Reflection from Angus Allan: A Royal Picnic

It was summer holidays once again and we travelled to Gigha to spend time with parents and friends. Seumas and the late Margaret McSporrán made us most welcome in their chalet. Seumas was a school friend, and you may remember was the man with fourteen hats (that number of jobs). One afternoon we decided to take a run in the car to the North end, to Garbh Eilean, a peninsula, with lovely sandy beaches, where we could have a quiet picnic. All went fairly well until we saw what appeared to be a fairly large ship approaching and dropping anchor offshore. Then we recognised it, the royal yacht Britannia. An advanced party came ashore and politely invited us to move along a bit, the Queen was coming. We agreed of course and at a distance saw the Royal Party coming ashore to have, no doubt, a more exotic picnic beside the beautiful sands. Much has happened in Royal circles between then and now, some happy and some very sad. The Queen has come through it all and

has been an inspiration to everyone, making thankfully, her Platinum Jubilee.

In Isaiah 6:1 we read: "In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord seated on a throne, high and exalted and the train of his robe filled the temple."

The suggestion is that there is a lot more robe to be spread around in the world. In Jesus we see all his done. The robe of his life spreads out to fill every corner and space that is free. We can shelter under it or be part of it. He was reprimanded by Jews for healing a man on the Sabbath. He asked them, "Which is lawful on the Sabbath to do good or to do evil, to save a life or to kill". They had no answer.

We see his Lordship expressed in different ways, in preaching, in healing. In service and ultimately in the way of the cross.

Ch4 443.

1 He is Lord, He is Lord;
He is risen from the dead and he is Lord;
every knee shall bow, every tongue confess
that Jesus Christ is Lord.

2 He love, He is love.
he has shown us by his cross, that he is love,
all his people sing with one voice of joy
that Jesus Christ is love.

3 He is life, He is life;
he has died to set us free and he is life;
And he calls us all to live evermore
for Jesus Christ is life.

4 He is King, he is King;
he will draw all nations to him, he is King;
and the time shall be when the world shall sing
that Jesus Christ is King.

Author and Music unknown.
Arranged Norman Warren (1934).

Prayer.

We thank you O Lord and King for the beauty of the creation around us.

We praise you for revealing yourself in your Son Jesus Christ.

We thank you for the gift of Queen Elizabeth and her Platinum Jubilee.

Bless your people seeking to spread your gospel robe around the world through
Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.
