

Cupar Old Parish Church

Where Everyone Matters

Newsletter 1 October 2021

Dear Friends:

Thanks to all who have helped in so many different ways to get us back into the sanctuary for worship. Thanks to the people who have worked to get various ministries of our congregation up and running. Thanks to those who make a regular financial commitment and those who have already made Gift Day offerings in the springtime to help us keep paying our bills and commitments.

And thanks to those who are now considering how to be involved and how to support the work and ministry of our congregation in prayer, finance, and participation. Our Gift Day offering kicks off this Sunday, but our ministry is year-round, and I am grateful for the ways in which you choose to live out your relationship with Christ through the ministries of our church.

Warm regards,
Jeff

From Our Prayer Team

It has been over a month since the earthquake in Haiti. Please pray for people who are experiencing trauma and stress in the aftermath. Pray for peace, comfort and renewed strength and hope.

Please pray for The Lighthouse and the staff. It is closed at the moment for repairs. Pray that it does not need to be closed for long and that the repairs will be finished quickly and efficiently.

The prayer group meets weekly through Zoom. If you would like to join us, have a prayer request, or would like one of the team to pray with you then please contact either Jeff Martin or Janice Geddes.

Reflection from Peter Meager

Wasn't it great to be back in Church on Sunday; either in the flesh or online? The Sanctuary was looking pristine, which maybe shouldn't have been surprising because, as Jeff remarked, it had been cleaned to within an inch of its life. To top it off, the sun was streaming through the stained glass, reminding us that 'saints are people the light shines through'. I posted a photo on social media and got this response from one of my 'friends', 'Looks so lovely and welcoming. Created a feeling of peace and comfort for me.'

During Sunday's service we heard how God speaks to people in the midst of their daily routine; calls them by name and informs them that there is work to be done in the world that only they can do.

God of course speaks to us too in the wonders of creation. Romans 1:20 says, 'since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that people are without excuse'. The opening verses of the Book of Hebrews (1:1-4) point out that it has always been God's way to speak to people.

If you like puzzles, you'll love Hebrews. We're not sure if it's a letter or a sermon. We have only a vague idea of when it was written and the jury's out on the author, the recipients, and its place of writing. If we go right through the book we learn that the readers are second generation believers who are living in an environment that is hostile to people of faith. We can empathise with them since we live in an age where the church has lost its former status and where there are

elements in society who at best would marginalise and at worst criminalise those who hold the teachings of the Bible dear.

When we ask, 'Why was it written?' The Sri Lankan theologian Ivor Poobalan suggests that these opening verses summarise the solution to the readers' problem. If that is the case, then their problem is that they have become unclear about the core Christian message. 'As a result they have lost their nerve and their enthusiasm.' Ivor then takes us back to Genesis 3:1 where Satan asks, "Did God really say?" The tempter sows doubt about the message. It was his first and remains his most reliable tactic for leading people astray." (Ivor said this at Keswick in 2017)

When people stop being absolutely clear about the message, they lose heart, they lose focus, and they lose direction. The opening verses of Hebrews are a concise and concentrated pocket guide to the essentials of the Christian faith. Barclay puts it like this, 'The basic idea of this letter is that Jesus Christ alone brings to people the full revelation of God and that he alone enables them to enter into his very presence.' (Commentary on Hebrews, The St Andrew Press)

The letter begins with God: God has revealed himself in many and varied ways throughout history. The Bible never attempts to prove God's existence. Charles Spurgeon, the 19th century Baptist preacher said, "Deity is not to be explained, but to be adored; and the Sonship of Christ is to be accepted as a truth of revelation, to be apprehended by faith, though it cannot be comprehended by the understanding."

Before Jesus, God gave many insights into his own nature and about the plan of salvation through the Old Testament prophets (verse one). These insights are like pieces of a puzzle that was lacking a key to unlock it. Jesus is that key. In him all the other pieces fall into place and the whole story makes sense. In verse two, we read that Jesus is the son who rightfully inherits all of the Father's divine nature. The universe was created through and for him. He is the revealer who says that when you look at him you see

what God is really like. In verse three: He sustains the universe and each one of us by the power of the Holy Spirit. He is the perfect priest who made the perfect sacrifice to heal our broken relationship with the Father. Having defeated death and the devil he now sits at the Father's side as the ruler of space and time. And in verse four: He is the supreme being in all of creation and yet, as Ivor Poolaban puts it, 'the eternal Son of Man is the fraternal son of man.' He is God with us, our friend and brother.

No wonder we want to go to church to offer our praise, worship, thanks, adoration and devotion. Let's never be confused about the core message. We know going to church is risky because we are likely to be taken out of our comfort zone as God speaks directly to us giving us fresh vision for our future but this is the kind of risk that gives life its meaning and purpose. I wonder what new things God will have to say to us this Sunday?

Reading: Hebrews 1:1-4

Long ago God spoke to our ancestors in many and various ways by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by a Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, through whom he also created the worlds. He is the reflection of God's glory and the exact imprint of God's very being, and he sustains all things by his powerful word. When he had made purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, having become as much superior to angels as the name he has inherited is more excellent than theirs.

Song

Here is a link to the Graham Kendrick praise song 'Meekness and Majesty': <https://youtu.be/X1I5NSvGo2I>

Meekness and majesty, Manhood and Deity,
In perfect harmony, The Man who is God.
Lord of eternity, Dwells in humanity,
Kneels in humility, And washes our feet.

O what a mystery, Meekness and majesty.
Bow down and worship, For this is your God, This is your God.

Father's pure radiance, Perfect in innocence,
Yet learns obedience, To death on a cross.
Suffering to give us life, Conquering through sacrifice,
And as they crucify Prays: 'Father forgive.'

Wisdom unsearchable, God the invisible,
Love indestructible, In frailty appears.
Lord of infinity, Stooping so tenderly,
Lifts our humanity, To the heights of His throne.

Prayer

Lord our God, we wonder that you should wish to speak to us and yet you assure us that you do. 'Words are powerful - to express love or hate, to inspire or depress, to build up or destroy, to join us to God in prayer. Jesus is the Word made flesh. The Word who created the universe, who brought life and light to all, who told us of God and the Father's love, who speaks for us at God's right hand. May our words never obscure the word which God has spoken in Christ. Father, we thank you that our sins are forgiven in him; that through him we shall be saved. Therefore, with all the angels we shout for joy and praise your name today and forever' (slightly adapted from Companion to the Lectionary, Volume 6, by Michael J Townsend, Epworth Press)

Father, we ask that we may always be careful with our words that they never undermine another's faith nor discourage their endeavours. Above all may we never shut our ears to your voice. May we be open and responsive to your word of challenge, or correction, comfort or encouragement. May we always put ourselves in the place and in that frame of mind where there is nothing to impede our hearing you clearly and may we always revel in your word which is new every morning. For Jesus' sake. Amen

If you would like to get in touch, I am at
meager52@

Befrienders Training

Our Befrienders ministry will have an organisational meeting from 10:00 to 11:30 this Saturday 2 October, in the lounge, with fellowship from 9:30. This week we'll discuss how the ministry will function in our congregation.

Gift Day

We will receive our Gift Day offering this Sunday 3 October. Your special gifts will help us through this time of transition, as our ministries, old and new, are starting up. You may share a Gift Day offering anytime during the month of October.

Guild

The Guild meets next Wednesday 6 October at 2:30 in the lounge. Gwen Paterson is the presenter. All are welcome.

Coffee & Chat outing

Date for your diaries - Thursday 14th October 10.15am at Caulders Garden Centre

After a very successful outing in September we are planning for our next one. What a great way to catch up with friends new and old. Lifts are available.

Please let me know if you plan to come along so I can confirm numbers. Will we beat the 40 we had at Muddy Boots!!

Jill Logan [01334 655528](tel:01334655528)

Worship In-Person

Please join us for gathered worship:

11:00am on Sunday, in the sanctuary

4:00pm on Sunday, in the Old Parish Centre

Sunday Club meets during the 4:00 service.

Worship Online

The service will be available on Sunday afternoon at our YouTube channel:

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

Sanctuary First, an online faith community of the Church of Scotland, has a live stream service each Sunday afternoon at three, which is available to view afterward:

www.sanctuaryfirst.org.uk

Each and everyone of can play a part.