

# Cupar Old Parish Church

*Where Everyone Matters*

## Newsletter 21 January 2022

Dear Friends:

Winter in Northeast Iowa is beautiful, but it can be harsh: as I write this, we're expecting overnight windchills of  $-15^{\circ}$  [And that's in the Fahrenheit scale. It's  $-26^{\circ}$  Celsius!]. Yesterday my mother and I defrosted her freezer, and while we worked, we were able to store the food in the garage, where's it's colder than the old freezer normally is. We could have done the task when I was in Iowa last July, when there were days when the thermometer went above  $90^{\circ}$  [ $32^{\circ}\text{C}$ ]. The freezer ice undoubtedly would have melted quicker, but we wouldn't have been able to store the frozen food outdoors in the garage!

The writer of Ecclesiastes said, 'For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven.' Whether it's defrosting a freezer, beginning a new project, challenging a social injustice, or bringing something to a good conclusion, timing can be very important, and sometimes we need to wait and prepare with patience, that we're ready at the opportune time.

But sometimes there's not going to be a 'good' time to do the right thing. There will always be opposition or nay-sayers, and waiting only depletes energy and commitment. The Holy Spirit, who blesses us with patience, sometimes instead anoints us with restlessness, that we do not become complacent or passive, and instead we rise up now to speak, to act, to serve.

May the Spirit bless us with good timing, with patience and commitment for the waiting, and with passion and creativity for the serving.

Warm regards,

Jeff

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PS Thank you for your messages of concern and support. You'll be glad to know that my mother's covid test was negative.

### **From Our Prayer Team**

Janice: [janice.geddes2@btinternet.com](mailto:janice.geddes2@btinternet.com)

Afghanistan is in the grip of a catastrophic food shortage; millions of people are going hungry. Please pray that the relief agencies will be able to reach even more people in need.

Please pray for all those who have recently been bereaved in our church family and in our community. Please pray for peace and God's love to uphold them.

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

### **Fairtrade at The Lighthouse**

Sally: [fairtradecupar@gmail.com](mailto:fairtradecupar@gmail.com)

The Lighthouse is now holding some of the Fairtrade stock for sale, as they're not able to hold stalls as in the past. Please go in and have a look while supporting The Lighthouse. The main products that are on display this time are tea and coffee. The tea has been awarded stars in the Great Taste Awards, so is well worth checking out if you have not already tried it. If you don't want to make your own marmalade this year, try the Fairtrade marmalade, Hot chocolate, cocoa, Zaytoun oil, Kilombero rice, gift items, including socks and of course chocolate are also available. If there are any of the usual Fairtrade items that are not there, that you would like to buy at The Lighthouse on a regular basis, please contact Sally.

### **23 January: Worship**

This Sunday falls during the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, a time when Christians around the world, especially in the Northern Hemisphere, renew our commitment to honour one another and work more closely with one another. Our reading this week is First Corinthians

12: 12-31, and the focus will be 'living for the common good.' Peter Meager is the guest preacher at both the 11am and 4pm services.

You may also watch a recording of the morning service, which will be uploaded to our YouTube channel sometime that afternoon:

[https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCdOxFrZ\\_kg94DYogyIFAVEQ](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCdOxFrZ_kg94DYogyIFAVEQ)

## **25 January: Tuesday Memory Cafe**

The Tuesday Memory Café celebrates Burns Night in the afternoon, from 2:00 to 3:30, with a song-along of Scottish songs. This gentle gathering is intended for people with dementia and their carers.

## **28 January: The Chosen**

Movie nights resume in the Old Parish Centre on Friday 28 January. We'll pick up the story of Jesus' ministry with episode seven of season one of **The Chosen**. Tea and coffee begin in the lounge at 7:30 and the movie is shown on the big screen in the hall at 7:45. Even if you haven't come along before, you're welcome to join in; there are no surprises in the plot, but you'll be amazed to see the effect Jesus has in people's lives, and the realism and depth in the portrayal of his ministry.

## **Reflection from Angus Allan - First Love**

Peter: [meager52@btinternet.com](mailto:meager52@btinternet.com)

Jean and John (names changed) worked on opposite sides of the street. John worked in a gent's outfitters and Jean worked in the paper shop. John went in regularly to buy a daily paper, and spoke to Jean before coming out. They struck up a friendship and were soon holding hands and going out together. The friendship progressed to the extent that marriage was on the horizon. The minister was contacted and a date was arranged. The night before the marriage Jean had some hesitations. However it all continued according to plan and they had two of a family (girls). However after a time the flame of romance began to flicker and fade. Unfortunately the couple broke up and were divorced.

John is writing to the church at Ephesus when says "*you have forsaken your first love.*" (Rev. Chapter 2, verse 4). Now here he is not speaking about romantic love but Christian love.

The apostle Paul writes about: *“Love that is patient and kind not-self seeking, not envious, boastful or proud but persevering and trustful”* (1 Corinthians chapter 12 and 13). There can of course be an overlap between the two but in Greek there are two words eros (romantic) and agape (Christian). He refers to the latter as “the most excellent way”. (1 Corinthians chapter 12 verse 31 b).

Jesus points us to the two greatest commandments to *“Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind”* and to *“Love your neighbour as yourself.”* (Matthew Chapter 22 verse 37-40). Ephesus had an excellent harbour and was on a major trading route to Rome. It was to this group of Christians that Paul was writing from his confinement in prison (Ephesians Chapter 1 verses 1 and 2).

John Birch, a Methodist local Preacher, writes “I’ve walked through this ancient city and even in a crowd of tourists It feels like a place of importance. Within its narrow streets are remains of shops, cafes, brothels, a huge amphitheater and temples to the gods of those times, particularly Diana, whose temple was one of the seven wonders of the ancient Age”. (Fresh from the word 2021 page 245).

The church is complimented for its hard work and perseverance in the face of opposition but it has forsaken “its first love”. We can only guess as to what this first love was. It may have been a love of God revealed in Jesus Christ. In this alien environment there was a church, a gathering of people who were totally devoted to the Christian way. Or it may have been a love of the brethren, a real Christian concern for one another or it may have been a bit of both. Whatever it was, is now flickering and failing.

Today we are probably facing the same problem. Worldwide Christianity is still a growing cause based on the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. However in this country the mission of the church has been softened. The buildings are significant as are the people. But the spark of the "first love" has been diminished and needs rekindling. How this happens is a difficult and challenging question which is put to the church of today.