

Cupar Old Parish Church

Where Everyone Matters

Newsletter 5 August 2022

Dear Friends:

Next week our congregation will begin a new partnership with a local charity, Community in Cupar, and support them with their Community Café that will take place each Saturday from 12:00 until 2:00pm in the lounge of the Old Parish Centre.

The charity began during the pandemic as an outreach and support for people who were vulnerable, isolated, and marginalised. When restrictions eased, the organisation set up a weekly café as a gathering place for immigrants, people who are isolated, those who struggle with mental health issues, families that are new in the community, those who suffer from food insecurity, and anyone who would like to gather for social connections.

Community in Cupar also provides care packages for people who need additional food support; they organise a monthly support and fellowship group for the LGBTQ+ community; and they have an international ministry connection with an orphanage in Romania. They receive regular donations from M&S and Morrison's for the café.

You are welcomed and encouraged to come along any Saturday, beginning 13 August, to be a friendly participant in the Community Café. As we grow into this relationship, we'll explore other ways that we can offer our support for those who gather, from assistance in the kitchen to leading activities for children or adults. The gift of friendship is always welcome.

Warm regards,
Jeff

From Our Prayer Team

Janice: janice.geddes2@btinternet.com

Parts of Port au Prince, the capital city of Haiti, are currently controlled by gangs. When opposing gangs fight for territory, entire districts can become inaccessible and dangerous, with people forced to move from their homes and look for somewhere safer to live. Please pray for this to stop.

Please pray that as we hear more and more about droughts, flooding and severe weather conditions that those in power throughout the world will act together with passion and a purpose to combat climate change.

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.

7 August: Worship

Please join us for gathered worship this Sunday, with a traditional service at 11:00 in the sanctuary and an informal service at 4:00 in the lounge in the Old Parish Centre. A recording of the morning service is available at our YouTube channel from mid-afternoon on Sunday:

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

11 August: Coffee and Chat Outing

Jill: 07929 444 246

The Coffee and Chat fellowship group will have an outing on Thursday 11 August to Caulders Garden Centre. Please call Jill to confirm your attendance so the restaurant is prepared, and to request transportation if needed.

Coffee and Chat is always a great opportunity to catch up with old friends and to get to know others better. Normally the group meets in the Old Parish Centre, but they enjoy monthly outings to have an adventure and support the community.

13 August: Community Café

We welcome the Community Cafe to the Old Parish Centre for a weekly place of fellowship and connection. The cafe is run by Community in Cupar, a local charity that centres its mission on bringing people together, especially those who are marginalised in our society. Immigrants, people who are socially isolated, those with mental illness, and people just wanting to make connections with others are all welcome. The café meets in the lounge each

Saturday from midday until two. If you would like to support this ministry partnership, please speak with Jeff.

21 August: Sunday Club Resumes

Jeff: jmartin@churchofscotland.org.uk

Our Sunday Club ministry commences again on 21 August. Children age three through P6 are welcome as participants, and older youth are always gladly received as helpers. We will gather for a time of family worship at 4:00pm in the hall of the Old Parish Centre, then the children will go to their time of learning whilst the worship continues. We'll close the afternoon with the ice cream treat that we didn't get to enjoy at Craigtoun in June because of the rain.

Reflection from Peter Meager

Peter: meager52@btinternet.com

You have probably heard of the two wee laddies who had bought a big bag of monkey nuts. They decided to go into the cemetery to share them out. The bag was filled to the brim and just as they were going through the gate a couple of nuts fell out. 'We'll get them later,' said one to the other.

They sat themselves down behind a headstone and began their task: 'One to you. One to me. One to you. One to me.' Precisely at that moment a man from the town who had been enjoying a liquid lunch in the pub passed the gate and heard the two voices. 'One to you. One to me,' and so on. He was jolted back into sobriety and rushed to the nearby manse. 'Minister, minister, come quick. Jesus and the devil are in the cemetery dividing out the bodies between them!'

The minister tried to pacify the him but eventually agreed to accompany him to the graveyard to see what was going on. As they neared the entrance they both clearly heard the voices, 'One to you. One to me. That's the last in here. I'll race you for those two at the gate!'

The Gospels often describe Jesus' return as a time of reckoning when his followers receive all the wonderful rewards he has promised, but those who have rejected him find themselves excluded, perhaps one of the more difficult aspects of Christian teaching. But we are reminded in Second Peter that God does not wish anyone to miss out on the utopia he has prepared, and only delays his return to give everyone the opportunity to opt into his family. (*'But do not forget this one thing, dear friends: With the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day. The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. Instead he is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.'* Second Peter 3: 8-9)

In our Gospel reading this week from Luke chapter 12, we hear of a wedding. The groom is a householder with many servants. He has gone off to the wedding feast which can go on for days. His servants can only guess at when he will return. If they are ready to welcome him when he appears he will be very pleased and will actually take care of them. Should they have fallen asleep or not have everything ready for his return, they will experience his severe displeasure. So, they had to be prepared: *'Be like those who are waiting for their master to return from the wedding banquet, so that they may open the door for him as soon as he comes and knocks. Blessed are those slaves whom the master finds alert when he comes; truly I tell you, he will fasten his belt and have them sit down to eat, and he will come and serve them.'* (Luke 12: 36-37) This had already been stated in verse 35, *'Be dressed for action and have your lamps lit.'*

In 'The Story of Baden-Powell', written in 1900 by Harold Begbie, the author tells how on one occasion the War Office in London asked B-P how long he would need before starting on a commission abroad. His answer was, 'I am ready now.' Every essential he needed for himself and his horse was packed and ready for use in a room in his mother's house. Baden-Powell lived each day alert to the possibility that he might be called to active service at any moment.

But this waiting for the master to arrive is not just about killing time until he comes. It's about being proactive in getting on with whatever role the Lord has allotted us. A mum and dad went to their son's first Parents Evening at school. They were slightly puzzled by what his teacher had written in his report, 'Freddy is no longer so concerned about being good.' They asked what it meant. 'Well, said the teacher, one day Freddy was sitting looking vacantly into space. I asked him what he was doing. He replied, "I'm just sitting here being good, Miss!" As we wait for Jesus to return we are not meant to spend all our time lying back luxuriating in some rapturous vision of the Saviour. We are meant to be faithful in using all the resources, gifts and abilities God has given us to the benefit of his world and its people to bring honour to his name.

The statue of Eros in Piccadilly Circus was erected at the end of the 19th century in honour of Lord Shaftesbury. He was a very wealthy Christian philanthropist who championed numerous causes from stopping children and women working in mines and ending the practice of children being sent up chimneys to building sewers to improve public health. The monument was erected by many of the thousands who had benefited from his love for them and wanted to show their appreciation. At the top of every letter he sent he would write, *'Even so, come, Lord Jesus.'* (Revelation 22:20) The hope of Jesus' second coming was at the heart of all he did and was a constant spur to remind him to live each day with purpose and urgency in serving his master.

The theme of being ready to greet the groom no matter when he arrived and keeping your lamp burning brightly is taken up by Matthew in chapter 25 in the parable of the five wise and the five foolish virgins. We used to sing about

in Sunday School: 'Give me oil in my lamp, keep me burning. Give me oil in my lamp, I pray. Give me oil in my lamp, keep me burning. Keep me burning till the break of day.' (I don't if we'd be allowed to sing that nowadays – 'Give me a renewable, non-polluting power source in my torch,' isn't nearly as catchy!).

In verse 32 Jesus encourages us not to be afraid, *'Do not be afraid, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.'* So, we are to be ready but unafraid. We don't know when Jesus will return. We may well die before it happens. Whichever comes first our future is assured and we have nothing to fear. As the song, 'Bind Us Together' assured us, we are Made for the glory of God,
Purchased by his precious Son;
Born with the right to be clean,
For Jesus the victory has won.

Reading: Luke 12:32-40

'Do not be afraid, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom. Sell your possessions, and give alms. Make purses for yourselves that do not wear out, an unfailing treasure in heaven, where no thief comes near and no moth destroys. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

'Be dressed for action and have your lamps lit; be like those who are waiting for their master to return from the wedding banquet, so that they may open the door for him as soon as he comes and knocks. Blessed are those slaves whom the master finds alert when he comes; truly I tell you, he will fasten his belt and have them sit down to eat, and he will come and serve them. If he comes during the middle of the night, or near dawn, and finds them so, blessed are those slaves.

'But know this: if the owner of the house had known at what hour the thief was coming, he would not have let his house be broken into. You also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an unexpected hour.'

Song: Give Me Oil in My Lamp

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cGg1s2LtGO8>

Give me oil in my lamp, keep me burning. Give me oil in my lamp, I pray.
Give me oil in my lamp, keep me burning. Keep me burning till the break of day.

Chorus: Sing hosanna, sing hosanna, sing hosanna to the King of kings!
Sing hosanna, sing hosanna, sing hosanna to the King!

Give me joy in my heart, keep me singing. Give me joy in my heart, I pray.
Give me joy in my heart, keep me singing. Keep me singing till the break of

day. Chorus

Give me love in my heart, keep me serving. Give me love in my heart, I pray.
Give me love in my heart, keep me serving. Keep me serving till the break of
day. Chorus

Give me peace in my heart, keep me resting. Give me peace in my heart, I
pray.

Give me peace in my heart, keep me resting. Keep me resting till the break of
day. Chorus

Prayer

Lord God, as we look at the latest pictures from the depths of space we are in awe at the wonder of your creation. Father, you were there when space was a blank canvas. You are here with us through every nanosecond of time. You go ahead of us into an unknown and uncertain future. At the beginning you spoke and creation appeared. You have spoken of how this universe will end. We can be confident that what you have decreed will come to pass. We rejoice that our place in the future culmination of your plans is secure.

'We rejoice in your devotion to us your people and for the way we can know your love for us. Help us to rest secure in your promises.

Lord Jesus, we are waiting for your return. Let us be ready to greet you. As the shadows lengthen may we not grow weary. In the comparative comfort of our lives, how easy it is to become drowsy and forget those we could be serving. Instead, help us to be watchful and alert to those who need us as we strive to be servants of all.

Lord, it is so easy to become complacent about our lives and lose sight of our goal of being active citizens of your kingdom. Help us to be conscientious in never missing an opportunity to serve others wherever we perceive a need where we can step in.

How happy you will be to return home and find us working for peace and justice with love and compassion.

How happy you will be to come home and find us wide awake, and waiting at the door to welcome you. Help us always to be ready to serve you and prepared for your home-coming. For Christ's sake. Amen'

(Section in italics based on **Companion to the Lectionary**, pages 94-95, by Peter Sheasby. Published by Epworth Press)