

Cupar Old Parish Church

Where Everyone Matters

Newsletter 7 August 2020

Dear Friends:

Our Kirk Session has approved the plans for our return to gathered worship. If the St Andrews Presbytery supports our plan, we will have our first services on Sunday 23 August, at 11:00am and 4:00pm, and on Thursday, 27 August, at 10:30am.

The elders are delivering a newsletter to each household that explains all of the details of the services and our hygiene measures. **We ask the favour of a reply to your elder by Wednesday 12 August if you intend to join in one of the services.** This is not a reservation for a seat, but it will help us to anticipate the number of worshippers we may expect. Because of distancing constraints, we are limited in the number of people who are able to gather in one place for worship. Your reply will be a very helpful contribution to the success of our efforts to gather again in worship.

I'm grateful to the teams that continue to work through myriad details to make it possible for us to worship together again. As the weeks go on, we will continue to refine and improve our procedures and our patterns of worship to encourage ways that open us more fully to the presence of God and the fellowship of one another, with practices that are both hygienic and hospitable.

Kind regards, Jeff

From Our Prayer Team

An estimated 5.9 million people in Ethiopia will be in need of food assistance from July through December. Please pray for this situation.

Please pray for the areas in Britain where there has been an increase again of Covid-19 cases and where restrictions have been restarted.

If you would like to pray with someone or have a prayer request then please contact

Jeff Martin

01334 656181 or jmartin@churchofscotland.org.uk

or

Janice Geddes

01334 652957 or janice.geddes2@btinternet.com

The prayer group continue to meet weekly through zoom to pray for our congregation and the town of Cupar.

"Mercy, peace, and love be yours in abundance." Jude 1:2

Reflection from Peter Meager

Since my last Reflection, we've been on holiday to Keswick in the Lake District. While there, five members of the family joined us for a day and we were able to share a socially distanced meal in a restaurant. This was all going very well until we were told we had to leave immediately. When our grand daughter had booked the table, she had failed to notice that the reservation was only for two hours. So, we had to down the last of our drinks and leave without our puddings. Sometimes it's important to be clear on the small print.

In February 1919, King George V invited the Chaplain General (CG) to see him on the occasion of the 'Royal' prefix being conferred on the Army Chaplains' Department. The King was interested to know

what the Department's motto would be. 'In hoc signo vinces,' answered the CG, quoting the battle cry of the first Christian Holy Roman Emperor, Constantine I. The King was concerned that soldiers might not understand what it meant and asked, what it was in English. 'In this sign – the sign of the cross - conquer,' said the CG. 'Then, why don't you say that?' enquired the King. So it is that those words are on the cap badge of all Christian Army chaplains to remind them, and everyone they meet, that the crucified Jesus can be their Saviour and Friend in every situation, to help them to stand firm and win through. Understandably, this motto has always been very important to me.

Some mottoes have an element of fun in them. I love the unofficial motto of the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers, created by soldiers, using doggerel Latin. It is 'YouBendum, WeMendum.' I'm just having a pair of very comfortable old shoes repaired. I couldn't find anyone locally to do it, so went on line. The firm I eventually located is called 'Sole Savers'. Maybe not a bad motto for a church if we change the 'Sole,' to 'Soul'.

The Church of Scotland sometimes uses the emblem of the Burning Bush on its stationery - taken from the story in the book of Exodus, when God appeared to Moses. The story is told in chapter 3:2 "the Angel of the Lord appeared to him (Moses) in a flame of fire from the midst of a bush. So he looked, and behold, the bush was burning with fire, but the bush was not consumed." God then reveals Himself to Moses; assures him that He knows all about his people's situation and promises to be with them and deliver them. Moses is given a divine hope that guides and enables him through the turbulence of the rest of his life. The emblem used to include the Latin for, 'But not consumed.' Now this has been dropped, its significance might not be so clear to those who see it for the first time.

The Kirk has encountered many situations over the years that might have diverted it from its *raison d'être* – saving and sustaining souls - and might even have threatened its very existence. Some may feel uncomfortable with the use of military language but the Bible is in no doubt that we are involved in an ongoing struggle: whether it be

personally with doubt, fear or loss or with external threats like the one from those in society who would remove the right of people of faith to express views that are sincerely held. As we think of the flame Moses encountered, we think too of the flame of the Holy Spirit; described as tongues of fire swirling around, alighting on each of the disciples at Pentecost; changing them but not burning them physically; burning off the dross, purifying them and guiding them on how to engage with threats and equipping them for personal or corporate battles.

Last week we watched several of the Virtually Keswick sessions, from this year's online version of the annual Convention. The theme was Hope – looking at Psalms 1-4. It was inspirational. We need hope to carry on and we believe that hope placed in Jesus is the best hope we could have. A hymn that expresses this idea is, 'My hope is built on nothing less than Jesus' blood and righteousness.' Here are the words in full:

1 My hope is built on nothing less
Than Jesus' blood and righteousness
I dare not trust the sweetest frame
But wholly lean on Jesus' name

CHORUS

On Christ the solid Rock I stand
All other ground is sinking sand
All other ground is sinking sand

2 When darkness hides His lovely face
I rest on His unchanging grace
In every high and stormy gale
My anchor holds within the veil

3 His oath, His covenant, His blood
Support me in the whelming flood
When all around my soul gives way
He then is all my hope and stay

4 When He shall come with trumpet sound
Oh may I then in Him be found
Dressed in His righteousness alone
Faultless to stand before the throne.

Here is a link to a sung version of the hymn:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ty8tw7ydxB4>

The Keswick Convention resources for all ages are still available. If you missed it you can go to:

<https://vkc.keswickministries.org/>

The following prayer and blessing are adapted from 'A Companion to the lectionary Vol 6' by Michael J Townsend:

Creating God, in Hope you made the world and it was very good.

Sustaining God, in Hope you continue the work of creation, and restoration, and keep making all things good again.

Saving God, in Hope you bring good out of evil, and prove that love is stronger than hate.

We pray for those who face famine and hunger with little hope of crops or food.

We pray for those who are ill and who have lost hope of ever being well again.

We pray for those who have lost jobs and have little hope of finding new work.

We pray for all who work to alleviate famine and hunger; for those who seek to bring healing and wholeness; and for all who work imaginatively to create new forms of employment.

Lord, may you bring hope and new life in place of pain, worry and despair, and heal the humanity that You once shared. Amen'

Blessing: 'Go with faith to join God at work in the world.

May hope inspire you, through difficulties and doubts
for Jesus will be with you in all you do.

Be filled with the Holy Spirit to share God's love with those you
meet.

Amen'

If you want to get in touch, I'm at meager52@btinternet.com

Here is the full text of the Bible reading: Exodus 2:3-12

"3 Now Moses was tending the flock of Jethro his father-in-law, the priest of Midian. And he led the flock to the back of the desert, and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. 2 And the Angel of the Lord appeared to him in a flame of fire from the midst of a bush. So he looked, and behold, the bush was burning with fire, but the bush was not consumed. 3 Then Moses said, "I will now turn aside and see this great sight, why the bush does not burn."

4 So when the Lord saw that he turned aside to look, God called to him from the midst of the bush and said, "Moses, Moses!" And he said, "Here I am."

5 Then He said, "Do not draw near this place. Take your sandals off your feet, for the place where you stand is holy ground." 6 Moreover He said, "I am the God of your father—the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look upon God.

7 And the Lord said: "I have surely seen the oppression of My people who are in Egypt, and have heard their cry because of their taskmasters, for I know their sorrows. 8 So I have come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up from that land to a good and large land, to a land flowing with milk and honey, to the place of the Canaanites and the Hittites and the Amorites and the Perizzites and the Hivites and the Jebusites. 9 Now therefore, behold, the cry of the children of Israel has come to Me, and I have also seen the oppression with which

the Egyptians oppress them. 10 Come now, therefore, and I will send you to Pharaoh that you may bring My people, the children of Israel, out of Egypt.”

11 But Moses said to God, “Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh, and that I should bring the children of Israel out of Egypt?”

12 So He said, “I will certainly be with you. And this shall be a sign to you that I have sent you: When you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall serve God on this mountain.”

Resource for Worship and Study

During the coming year we will use the book **We Make the Road by Walking**, by Brian McLaren, as the basis for all of our worship services. The author invites people to:

- ~ cultivate an honest, intelligent understanding of the Bible and of Christian faith in the 21st century;
- ~ engage with discussion questions designed to challenge, stimulate, and encourage; and
- ~ re-imagine what it means to live joyfully and responsibly in today’s world as agents of God’s justice, creativity, and peace.

The Lighthouse will have paperback copies available for purchase. They are currently open Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday, from 10:30 to 12:30.

If you would like to join in a weekly online book discussion with Jeff, please email him directly and he will coordinate times.

jmartin@churchofscotland.org.uk

A Week of Prayer for Church and Country

Recognising the challenges that the nation and the churches face in these changing times, the Moderator of the General Assembly, the Right Reverend Dr Martin Fair, has invited the Church of Scotland

to join in a Week of Prayer for Church and Country, from Monday 17 to Saturday 22 August. "There will be a short recorded reflection and prayer each morning and an opportunity to gather nationally online each evening. These gatherings will be entirely interactive and there will be ways for individuals and congregations to participate - as little or as much as possible." Specific contact information will be provided next week.

Online Worship Message: Video and written versions
www.cuparold.org.uk

Gifts and Donations

The Cupar Food Bank faces continuing challenges during these chaotic economic times. They would welcome your gifts. You can place a purchased gift in the provided bins at any of the large shops, or you may give a financial contribution via the website:
<https://cupar.foodbank.org.uk>

If you would like your aid to support international hunger relief efforts, Mary's Meals is one of many trusted organisations. You may find out more and make a donation at their website:
<https://www.marysmeals.org.uk>

If you wish to make an online donation to our congregation or to the broader church, you may do so at the Church of Scotland website. After you click on "Donate," you will be directed to a page where you can select the recipient and the amount you wish to give via PayPal.
www.churchofscotland.org.uk