

Blairdaff and Chapel of Garioch Parish Church

Sunday 26th April 2020 The Fourth Sunday of Easter

To be able to access the links, go to the bottom of this page and left click on the date. This will download the pdf in a new window, then simply click on the links as indicated.

Welcome

Sadly, we cannot meet together today. However, we are able to worship together by using the devotions below. Today is the third Sunday of Easter and so we continue to focus on the events that followed the resurrection of Jesus.

Leviticus 26: 12 & 13

*I will walk with you.
I will be your God, and you will be my people.
I am the Lord your God....
I have set you free;
now walk with your heads held high.*

Prayer of Praise,



Praise be to you God of heaven and earth.
In our own places we worship you together.
We rejoice in this great day,
joining with our brothers and sisters across the world
and with the whole of your creation as we continue to celebrate Christ's resurrection.
Whatever our situation, we know that you are our constant companion.
When life's journey is difficult and challenging you take us by the hand and lead us.
At the crossroads in our lives you show us which way to go.
When the path is dark, you light the way.
When we are worn-out, weary and can go no further, you lift us up and carry us on your back.

We thank you for your Son our Saviour, Jesus, who is the way, the truth and the life.
We thank you that by his death and resurrection he has open the gates of eternal life that we may walk through in faith.
We give you thanks and praise for raising him from the dead,
that no door is locked to him, no entrance barred.
Open the doors of our hearts, that we may seek the good of others
and walk the joyful road of sacrifice and peace,
to your praise and glory.

Glory be to you O God.

We praise you, we bless you, we worship you, we glorify you,
for you only are Holy;
you only are the Lord the Most High. Amen.

Song [Blessed be the name of the Lord](#) *Click on the link*



**Prayers of Confession,
Assurance of Forgiveness and Lord's Prayer**



Loving and merciful Father forgive us that our lives are so busy and we feel that what we have to say is so important we fail to recognise your Son, our Lord Jesus, walking the journey of life beside us.

Forgive us that we are too focused on ourselves, our own needs and desires.

Forgive that we are too often anxious about our doubts and fears and so fail to share them with you, keeping them locked up within us.

Forgive us that we fail to recognise the needs of others, their doubts, their fears, their anxieties. Forgive that we fail to care for them, offering a listening ear.

Forgive that we fail to praise and thank you for sending Jesus and for what he has done for us upon the cross. Forgive that we fail to allow him that space to speak to us, enlightening and guiding our journey. Forgive that we too often fail to introduce him to those who walk with us that they too, may hear your voice, and know of your saving love.

We pray in the name of Jesus our Saviour who gave us this prayer...

Our Father, in heaven, holy is your name. Your Kingdom come your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us today our daily bread and forgive us our sin as we forgive those who sin against us, and lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For yours is the Kingdom the power and the glory for ever. Amen.

A Prayer for this time of Coronavirus

Father God, you are the ultimate healer. We lay before you the needs of those infected with this virus. We ask that there will be no lasting effects in their bodies from this illness. Father, please heal them inside and out, and spiritually, so that they may live life abundantly.



Father God be with all who live with worry and fear; free them from the bondage that anxiety creates within. Help those who are living in unease to trust you at this time and in times to come.

We pray for those all who are caring for the sick, and those most vulnerable needing daily care. We thank you for their kind and selfless hearts and ask your protection upon them. Be their place of rest, fountain of refreshment, and their source of hope, in these overwhelming times. Every blessing you grant these care givers we turn back in praise.

Grant those providing advice to government insight and judgment. Grant wisdom and courage to our Prime Minister, First Minister, and their teams. Give us all patience.

As Jesus walked beside Cleopas and his companion on that first Easter afternoon lifting their hearts as he unwrapped the scriptures for them, may his presence walking beside us lift our eyes to your glory and a new tomorrow. Amen.

(Based on a prayer from crosswalk.com)

Bible Passage:

Today's New Testament reading takes us back to the evening of the Day of Resurrection and forward to about a week later.

Luke 24:13-35

That very day two of them were going to a village named Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem, ¹⁴ and they were talking with each other about all these things that had happened. ¹⁵ While they were talking and discussing together, Jesus himself drew near and went with them. ¹⁶ But their eyes were kept from recognizing him. ¹⁷ And he said to them, "What is this conversation that you are holding with each other as you walk?" And they stood still, looking sad.

¹⁸ Then one of them, named Cleopas, answered him, "Are you the only visitor to Jerusalem who does not know the things that have happened there in these days?" ¹⁹ And he said to them, "What things?" And they said to him, "Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, a man who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, ²⁰ and how our chief priests and rulers delivered him up to be condemned to death, and crucified him. ²¹ But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel. Yes, and besides all this, it is now the third day since these things happened.

²² Moreover, some women of our company amazed us. They were at the tomb early in the morning, ²³ and when they did not find his body, they came back saying that they had even seen a vision of angels, who said that he was alive. ²⁴ Some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said, but him they did not see." ²⁵ And he said to them, "O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! ²⁶ Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?" ²⁷ And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.

²⁸ So they drew near to the village to which they were going. He acted as if he were going farther, ²⁹ but they urged him strongly, saying, "Stay with us, for it is towards evening and the day is now far spent." So he went in to stay with them. ³⁰ When he was at table with them, he took the bread and blessed and broke it and gave it to them. ³¹ And their eyes were opened, and they recognized him. And he vanished from their sight. ³² They said to each other, "Did not our hearts burn within us while he talked to us on the road, while he opened to us the Scriptures?" ³³ And they rose that same hour and returned to Jerusalem. And they found the eleven and those who were with them gathered together, ³⁴ saying, "The Lord has risen indeed, and has appeared to Simon!" ³⁵ Then they told what had happened on the road, and how he was known to them in the breaking of the bread.

³⁶ While they were still talking about this, Jesus himself stood among them and said to them, "Peace be with you."

Poem: Walking The Road to Emmaus by Royston Allen

Their eyes were downcast and the pace was slow.
Why these things had happened they did not know.
On their shoulders they bore grief's heavy load
as they walked that long Emmaus Road.

A stranger joined them as they walked that way.
Slowed his pace to hear what they had to say.
Step by step he walked along with them there
and from the scriptures he began to share.

Grief stricken and saddened they did not know
who it was that joined them walking so slow.
In fellowship sweet he expounded God's word
and their hearts glowed at everything they heard.

From Moses through the prophets he made known
of an open tomb and a heavenly throne.
They listened carefully while this man talked
as together the Emmaus Road they walked.

"Did not the Christ have to suffer," he said
"and after to be raised up from the dead?"
As they approached the place they were staying.
He acted as though he would not go in.

"The day is far spent, stay with us," they said
and He entered their house and broke some bread.
At once their eyes were opened and they knew
it was Jesus, but he vanished from their view.

"Did not our heart burn within us," they said
and up they got and off to Jerusalem sped.
Found the disciples and said, "It is true."
"The Lord has risen and we've seen Him too."

The Journey

Have you managed to get out at least once a day? Do you go for a walk? Walking is my prayer time. If you happen upon me you might find me talking to myself; well actually I'm talking to God, out loud. Yes, that's what I do. It is amazing what God says when you walk. Often he helps with the sermon, (not often enough I hear you say!) or reminds me to see or call someone. He might even challenge me.

One of the most popular songs at the moment is about walking. It's sung in schools and is popular at weddings and funerals; "One more step along the world I go" by Sydney Carter. It doesn't mention God, or Jesus, but Christians understand that, "keep me travelling along with you" is a prayer. We see life as a journey, to be taken step by step. God is there taking each step with us; his word a "lamp to our feet and light to our path" (Psalm 119:105).

The road from Jerusalem to Emmaus is one all faithful people walk. It's a journey that begins with not recognising Jesus, and then takes us through the landscape of understanding what the scriptures say about him, past the landmark of believing the witness of others and recognising Jesus for who he is, until we reach our destination, inviting him into our lives and developing a personal relationship with him.



As we take one more step along the journey of life often, just like Cleopas and his companion we, we fail to look up. Like them we become focused on our own trials, challenges, hopes and fears. It is easy to forget that Jesus walks life's journey with us. When times are good and all is well, it is easy to forget that God is with us. When we face disappointment, or receive bad news, when our world is falling apart, it can seem as though God has abandoned us; that we walk alone. Our heads go down, and we discount what God has done, simply because we cannot explain or comprehend it. However, when we "walk through the valley of the shadow of death" we find that God *is* with us and that, if we care to look up, his rod and staff comfort us (Psalm 23:4).

God always has a plan, although we are not always privy to it. When things don't turn out as we expect, or hope, instead of giving up, defeated, perhaps we should try to see things differently, to see if God is working in ways we simply cannot imagine or understand.

In conversation on the road to Emmaus, Jesus (although unrecognised) helps Cleopas and his friend begin to make sense of all that happened in Jerusalem.

They speak of Jesus as a prophet, that God had been working miracles through him and had been in his teaching. They were in no doubt this Jesus was God's chosen one, the one who would redeem Israel. They had hoped that Israel would be freed from Rome's ungodly, domination and tyranny, and freed to serve God in the ways Israel understood God had commanded.

The followers of Jesus were so devastated at Jesus' crucifixion not only because they had seen their friend die; not simply because their hopes and dreams for Israel now seemed dashed; but because the person God chose to redeem Israel should have defeated the pagans not have them nail him to a cross. They failed to understand that the cross was a victory not a defeat, that God had redeemed Israel *through* suffering, not *from* suffering. As Jesus had said to Nicodemus; "Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the desert, so the Son of Man must be lifted up, that everyone who believes in him may have eternal life." (John 3:14-15)

[The reference to Moses can be found in Numbers 21:4-9.]

So, on the road, Jesus, beginning with Moses, explained the story of God's relationship with the world. Jesus gave Cleopas and his friend insight into how God's plan had unfolded to its climax when God's Son took on the sin and suffering of the world and died; and how he rose that very day to new life. It was a new creation in which everyone could share, and live at one with God for ever.

As we walk the journey of life, step by step, God's goodness and mercy follow us, each and every day and we will live in the house of the Lord for ever (Psalm 23:6).

Song [I know that my Redeemer lives](#) *Click on the link*



The Meal

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. There was light and life, beauty and order. Once all was finished God looked and saw and "it was very good". (Genesis 1:31.) Then,

"the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate. ⁷ Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked." (Genesis 3:6-7)

The man and the woman had disobeyed God. The first meal of creation led to the Fall. God's good creation was tainted, becoming subject to darkness, disharmony and death.

The meal Jesus has with Cleopas and his companion in the late afternoon of that first Easter Day, is the first meal of the new creation. Death itself had been defeated. There was a new creation, green shoots, new possibilities; growth replaced decay, joy replaced sorrow, life replaced death. The symbolism of these two 'meals' must not elude us.



Jesus responded to Cleopas and his companion's invitation to stay for tea. Jesus took bread, blessed it and broke it, and gave it to them. Does that sound familiar? Jesus had done this before, at what we call his Last Supper (Luke 22:19), and when he fed the 5,000 (Luke 9:16). It was only through these actions that his two followers recognised Jesus and realised who had been walking the road with them.

As they walked Jesus had unlocked the scriptures. He gave them a Bible Study, and their hearts burned within them as they listened and learned. The Word of God was revealed by the Word of God incarnate raised from the dead. The Word of God was revealed by symbolic action. Scripture and sacrament, word and meal - feeding on Christ is at the heart of Christian living, sustaining us on the journey.

Prayer

Father of all, we give you thanks and praise,

that when we were still far off
you met us in your Son and brought us home.
Dying and living, he declared your love,
gave us grace, and opened the gate of glory.
May we who share Christ's body live his risen life;
we who drink his cup bring life to others;
we whom the Spirit lights give light to the world.
Keep us firm in the hope you have set before us,
so we and all your children shall be free,
and the whole earth live to praise your name;
through Christ our Lord. Amen.



The Witness



Seven miles was the distance from Jerusalem to Emmaus, the same as that between Chapel of Garioch and Kemnay. Imagine walking that distance, twice!

Cleopas and his companion did just that. It probably took them most of the afternoon to reach Emmaus from Jerusalem. It was most likely hot and dusty. They would have been tired, but having recognised Jesus, their only thought was to go back to Jerusalem and tell the others. There is no hint that, 'we'll pop back to Jerusalem first thing in the morning.'

There was an urgency to spread the news, "Jesus is not dead, he's alive. What the women said about the tomb is true."

Are we as excited, as concerned, that others should know Jesus is risen?

The witness of Cleopas and his companion was to the other believers, rather than to the world. Witness and declaration among believers has an important place in the life of faith. This is the way in which the Church is encouraged and built up. On this first Easter evening it enabled the disciples to piece together all that had happened and all that was happening. It strengthened their understanding, of both the events of the past few days and all of Jesus' teaching. It deepened their faith and encouraged them in the mission and ministry to which Jesus had sent them.

It is impossible to over stress the importance of witness. Mary witnessed to the empty tomb and then having met Jesus in the garden. The disciples witnessed to Thomas and now Cleopas and his friend witnessed to them. Indeed, it is witness to which Jesus calls us. "I will make you fishers of men," Jesus tells the disciples at the start of his earthly ministry and

now he was about to send them out to continue the work he was doing telling people about the love God had for them and the sacrifice his son had made for them.

Sometimes we tell ourselves that faith is a private matter. But, this is not what those first disciples thought. The disciples told one another of the revelation they had been given of the living Jesus and what he had done in their lives. Soon they would be empowered by the Holy Spirit to take the Good News of the risen Lord to the world. That's the mission of the Church, all of God's faithful people.

Jesus broke the bread, blessed it and *gave it to them*. The Bread of Life is to be shared not kept to ourselves.

Song: [I serve a risen Saviour](#) *Click on the link*



Prayers of the People for the People

Almighty Father, as the disciples walked to Emmaus they were talking about the events they had witnessed. Help us to talk about your love for us and what you have done for each of us in our lives that we might strengthen one another in faith.



Jesus explained to the disciples all that the scriptures said about him. Help us to study and understand your word and, as you walk with us through life, help us to recognise your presence. May our eyes be opened to the revelations you have for us. In walking with you and studying your word may our hearts, like those of your disciples, burn within us so that we will want to proclaim the Gospel to others saying, 'it is true, the Lord has risen'.

And so Father God we bring to you the needs of the world and bring before you those who live in poverty, in shanty towns or on the streets, amongst disease and squalor, those who have no access to sanitation and walk miles for water, people for whom medical help is a day's journey and school too expensive. Help your church to walk alongside those in need; may we be channels of your love and peace, bringing hope.

Our Lord Jesus was put to death by injustice, false witnesses, and illegal procedure. We pray for those who live in tyranny, for people jailed, persecuted, and abused because of their beliefs, race, or the colour of their skin. We ask for forgiveness, healing and repair for broken communities where people live with political unrest, war and violence; may the leaders of people, factions and nations seek justice, have mercy, and work for the good of all, rather than self-interest.

Gracious God walk beside those suffering poor physical and mental health; be beside people abused, exploited, addicted, or enslaved. Comfort people who are sad, lonely, or with troubled hearts. Lord, grant patience, understanding and strength to families, neighbours, and friends who meet others' needs simply out of love. Give them the knowledge that you are walking beside them too.

Almighty God, the friends and disciples of your Son must have been utterly bereft at the death of Jesus, with their hope and purpose broken and their guilt of denial and betrayal. We bring before you all who live in darkness today; those facing the disappointment of broken hopes, lives damaged by broken relationships and broken trust; and those locked in desperate circumstances beyond their control.

Through his death Christ broke the shackles of sin releasing us into the joy of resurrection. We pray that eyes may be opened to see his glory, that all may experience his transforming power in their lives.

We pray for all who are mourning the loss of loved ones. May they find comfort in their memories and receive peace and comfort in the knowledge of eternal life through faith in Jesus Christ knowing he has gone to prepare a place for us, and that in your house are many rooms.

Almighty God, accept these prayers for the sake of your son our Saviour Jesus Christ, who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever Amen

Benediction and Blessing: Deuteronomy 11: 1 & 19

“Love the Lord your God and always obey all his laws.
Teach them to your children. Talk about them all the time,
when you sit at home and when you are walking along the road.”

[Blessing](#) **click on the link**

One of the consequences of us not being able to worship together is that the church anticipates a fall in income. However, we continue to incur costs, of insurance etc. There will be little financial saving to our not meeting, yet revenues could be severely hit. Please prayerfully reflect on this and, if you are able, continue to put aside your financial offering so that you can make your contribution for the work of the church when we next meet together. Thank you.

Thank you too if you already give by standing order or by bank transfer, that is much

appreciated.