

Blairdaff and Chapel of Garioch Parish Church

Sunday 9th August 2020

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

May we hear God's Word and be filled with his Holy Spirit.

Call to Worship: Psalm 107: 1

*Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good;
his love endures forever.*

Song: [Come now is the time to worship](#) [Click on the link](#)



Prayer of Praise, Confession, Assurance of Forgiveness and Lord's Prayer

Gracious Father, your might is beyond measure, your wisdom beyond all knowledge, your love beyond all telling. You have put eternity into our hearts and made us hunger and thirst for you. Satisfy the longings you have implanted that we may find you in life and find life in you.



You made us in your image with a mind to know you, a heart to love you and a will to serve you; but we have failed you and fail to grow in your likeness. We have been careless in our thoughts, cruel in our words and shameful in our actions. We are indifferent to a world made sad by want and wastefulness; we pass by on the other side when we see our neighbor in need; we wander from the way that leads to peace, along paths of our own pleasing. God of life grant us your forgiveness and renew us.

Lord of life, we thank you that you have called us together in the name of Jesus Christ and that through faith in him you count us worthy to be adopted as your children, and to stand in your presence and to receive your inheritance of eternal life.

We thank you for all your goodness and love towards us; for the joy of family and friends, the activities that fulfill our lives, for your strength that supports us and your love that comforts us, both in times of our sadness and in times of our joy.

We thank you that through Jesus death on the cross our sin is forgiven and that by faith in him we are renewed, made worthy to be counted as your children and receive your inheritance of eternal life. By his cross and resurrection he has set us free and opened the gate of glory. Jesus Christ is the Saviour of the world; our hope is built on him alone.

We thank you for the Holy Spirit at work in the church and in our hearts revealing your truth, renewing our lives and bringing us to your eternal kingdom.

To you O Lord, be all honour and glory, power, majesty and dominion. Praise be to you, may the whole earth sing your praise, one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen.

In the name of Jesus we pray. Amen.

A Prayer for this time of Coronavirus

Loving God help us to recognise that the coronavirus remains a threat to people's health.

Help us to be careful with the way we go about our daily lives.

Help us to recognise that our individual carelessness can have enormous repercussions.

Help us to continue to keep our NHS from unnecessary pressures, so that it may be able to address the number of non-COVID related procedures that have accumulated over these past months.



Be in those places where people live close together, in the favelas of Brazil or the shanti town districts of Delhi, Calcutta and Mumbai. Bless, protect, and guide WHO staff and all who are seeking to protect and heal.

Grant wisdom, insight and understanding to those seeking vaccines. We thank you for all participating in trials. Help us to find a means of protecting one another from this virus.

Loving and healing God it is difficult for us to grasp the enormity of the implications of this pandemic, and so we place it into your hands. We ask that you will guide and equip the human race to work co-operatively and sacrificially together enabling us to live safely on this beautiful and amazing planet you have given us, and to treat it, and one another, with dignity and respect.

Bible Passages

Our Old testament reading is part of the story of Joseph, the one with the mazing technicolour dream coat. What he eventually achieved by securing food during seven years of plenty prevented Egypt starving through seven years of famine. That was a miraculous achievement. Our Gospel reading recalls another miracle as Jesus, and Peter, walk on water.

Genesis 37:1-14

Jacob lived in the land where his father had stayed, the land of Canaan.

²This is the account of Jacob's family line.

Joseph, a young man of seventeen, was tending the flocks with his brothers, the sons of Bilhah and the sons of Zilpah, his father's wives, and he brought their father a bad report about them.

³Now Israel loved Joseph more than any of his other sons, because he had been born to him in his old age; and he made an ornate robe for him. ⁴When his brothers saw that their father loved him more than any of them, they hated him and could not speak a kind word to him.

⁵Joseph had a dream, and when he told it to his brothers, they hated him all the more. ⁶He said to them, 'Listen to this dream I had: ⁷we were binding sheaves of corn out in the field when suddenly my sheaf rose and stood upright, while your sheaves gathered round mine and bowed down to it.'

⁸His brothers said to him, 'Do you intend to reign over us? Will you actually rule us?' And they hated him all the more because of his dream and what he had said.

⁹Then he had another dream, and he told it to his brothers. 'Listen,' he said, 'I had another dream, and this time the sun and moon and eleven stars were bowing down to me.'

¹⁰When he told his father as well as his brothers, his father rebuked him and said, 'What is this dream you had? Will your mother and I and your brothers actually come and bow down to the ground before you?' ¹¹His brothers were jealous of him, but his father kept the matter in mind.

¹²Now his brothers had gone to graze their father's flocks near Shechem, ¹³and Israel said to Joseph, 'As you know, your brothers are grazing the flocks near Shechem. Come, I am going to send you to them.'

'Very well,' he replied.

¹⁴So he said to him, 'Go and see if all is well with your brothers and with the flocks, and bring word back to me.' Then he sent him off from the Valley of Hebron.

Matthew 14:22-33 (ESV)

²² Immediately he made the disciples get into the boat and go before him to the other side, while he dismissed the crowds. ²³ And after he had dismissed the crowds, he went up on the mountain by himself to pray. When evening came, he was there alone, ²⁴ but the boat by this time was a long way from the land, beaten by the waves, for the wind was against them. ²⁵ And in the fourth watch of the night he came to them, walking on the sea. ²⁶ But when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were terrified, and said, "It is a ghost!" and they cried out in fear. ²⁷ But immediately Jesus spoke to them, saying, "Take heart; it is I. Do not be afraid."

²⁸ And Peter answered him, "Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water." ²⁹ He said, "Come." So Peter got out of the boat and walked on the water and came to Jesus. ³⁰ But when he saw the wind, he was afraid, and beginning to sink he cried out, "Lord, save me." ³¹ Jesus immediately reached out his hand and took hold of him, saying to him, "O you of little faith, why did you doubt?" ³² And when they got into the boat, the wind ceased. ³³ And those in the boat worshipped him, saying, "Truly you are the Son of God."

Song: [My lighthouse](#) *Click on the link*

Walking on Water

Even the writers of our best TV soaps couldn't have dreamt-up a storyline like our Old Testament reading. A large family, run by a patriarchal father, a favourite son who winds-up all the others. They want to kill him, but one of them can't stomach it, so they sell him into slavery. That, enables him to return in a later episode. We empathise with Joseph; we feel he's been treated badly. His whole world has collapsed. He used to be part of a great family, now he's nothing. We can imagine him calling in desperation "Where's that God of Abraham now?".

The world can be a difficult place. We only have to read our newspapers to find out. This week we have seen and read about that devastating explosion in Beirut and blazing fires in the Amazon. Whilst the world struggles to save lives from the destruction of COVID-19 people still continue to take life in the war-torn areas of the Middle East and Africa. We see the broader picture but in each there are human lives. We can only try to imagine the impact on individuals as they try to cope with loss, living lives around chaos and insecurity.

I expect each of us could tell of times when God seems to have left us.

Jesus had just fed five thousand people. He sent the disciples ahead of him. They crossed the lake in the boat while Jesus went off to pray. He was going to follow them on foot walking around the northern end of the lake.

A nasty squall came up. The disciples, experienced fishermen, respected the sea, but at times it frightened them. Last time this had happened Jesus had been in the boat with them – he calmed the storm, but now they were on their own. Or were they? They may have **felt** alone, but Jesus was looking down on them, he saw them from the hillside. They were never out of his sight. Jesus saw them in trouble. The boat was buffeted by the waves, and in Mark's account Jesus saw them straining at the oars. Jesus might have recalled that time when he stilled the waves for them and so he came across the stormy waters to meet them, walking on the water.

Of course, no one would expect to see someone walking on the water and so the disciples were afraid. If we read the story carefully, we notice that the disciples were afraid of what they thought was the appearance of a ghost, an evil spirit, coming towards them in the night. They feared the spirit would bring imminent disaster. Had they forgotten Jesus??

But, this miracle emphasises Jesus' divinity. The God of the Old Testament is pictured as coming through the waters; Psalm 77 speaks of God walking through the waters bringing his people through the Red Sea and out of slavery. The disciples cry out in fear but Jesus calls out "It is I" again alluding to the cry of the OT God.

Whether Peter recognised these OT links or whether he simply recognised Jesus' voice we do not know; but what we do know is that he did recognise Jesus and wanted to be with him. Peter fixes his eyes on Jesus, jumps out of the boat, and also walks on the water. That was his miracle. But we are told he looked at the wind and the waves and began to sink. He'd taken his eyes off Jesus.

Life on earth is not plain sailing. We do get blown off course from time to time. We strain at the oars of life, to try and get ourselves back on course. - If we forget that Jesus is with us, that, can be scary. Just like Joseph we can sometimes feel totally unloved – no one cares. Sometimes we get so low that we don't even recognise Jesus. Like the frightened disciples, all we may be able to see is imminent disaster.

We are never alone. Jesus looks on. He even comes across the stormy waters to meet us. And it's great if we can recognise Jesus when life is stormy, when life is hard and when it's frightening. We may **think** that we are invincible, that we achieve what we achieve because of our **own** efforts. But look at Joseph. He was the favoured one, he was the one full of self-confidence – confident enough to tell his family that he would rule over them and that they would bow down to him. Not the best way to win friends and influence people. But we also know the end of his story and how God was with him all the time – his miracle was that he saved thousands from starvation.

If, like Peter, we keep our eyes fixed on Jesus and step out in faith God **will** perform miracles through us. But woe betides us if we think these miracles are of our own making, or if we take our eyes off Jesus and focus on the storms of life. It's then that we will sink, drowning in our sorrow and fear, drowning in the trust we place in ourselves.

Remember Jesus has been there before us. He's been concerned for his family and friends. He has been frightened – frightened for his life. He has been unjustly accused, humiliated. **He** is the one who was sacrificed - for **our** sins. Yet through that sacrifice he provides the bridge over troubled waters that if we take it will lead us from slavery into the promised land.

As St Paul said in his letter to the Romans:

“If you confess with your mouth, ‘Jesus is Lord,’ and **believe** in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.”

Song: [When you believe](#) *Click on the link*



Prayers of the People for the People

Father God we bring to you the needs of those whose lives are like boats being tossed around on a stormy sea.

Loving God we thank you that even through this time of Coronavirus we have had plenty to eat, warm homes and the assurance of our NHS.

We bring to you the needs of people where each day is a struggle for survival. We pray that we might eliminate all that causes people to go hungry, sleep rough or in the squalor of a shanty town without sanitation or clean water. Lord, come to us across the troubled waters of our lives.

We pray for those who live on a sea of violence and conflict. We bring to your Fatherly care the political situations in Africa, the Middle East, and in northern South America and people who live each day in fear of war, violence, death and the consequences of loss – of loved ones homes and livelihoods. Lord, come to us across the troubled waters of our lives.

Be with all now struggling with the aftermath of the explosion in Beirut. Comfort, strengthen and uphold all who mourn the death of family, friends and work colleagues, and those who mourn the loss of homes and businesses. Lord, come to us across the troubled waters of our lives.

Father God we lay before you the needs of families, like that of Joseph's, caught up in their own storms. Where love has grown cold and family relationships have broken down, where children are caught up in family disputes, where drug, alcohol or gambling abuse has created hardship and hurt, we pray that bridges will be built. Lord, come to us across the troubled waters of our lives.

We pray for those who are sick, or infirm, for those who provide care, help and support. Bring healing and wholeness. Lord, come to us across the troubled waters of our lives.

Father God, we pray for all who mourn the loss of loved ones. We ask you will grant your love and comfort and peace and the reassuring certainty of everlasting life lived with you for all your faithful people. Lord, come to us across the troubled waters of our lives.



Father God, sometimes our lives seem all at sea. We strain at the oars and get nowhere. Help us to set our eyes on you, and when we fall into sin stretch out your hand that we can grasp it and be lifted up to be with you now and forever more.

And so, Father God we bring all our thoughts and prayers together in that prayer which Jesus himself gave us;

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.

Psalm 77:14 & 19

“The waters saw you, God,..... Your path led through the sea, your way through the mighty waters, though your footprints were not seen.”

Benediction and Blessing

Let us go in the peace of the Lord with our eyes fixed on him, our hands grasping his, and step out of the boat to allow him to perform all kinds of amazing works through us.



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

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One of the consequences of us not being able to worship together is that the church anticipates a fall in income. However, we will 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.