

Sunday 27th February 2022 To God be the glory!

WELCOME God welcomes us to worship today as we meet here in the church and online. We meet with many different emotions yet it is our privilege to worship the God who *Revelation chapter 4:11* reminds us is the One who is *Our Lord and God. You are worthy to receive glory, honour and power. For you created all things and by Your will they were given existence and life.*
As people of the risen King we therefore come rejoicing to bring Him our praise.

HYMN Come people of the Risen King

Come, people of the Risen King,
Who delight to bring Him praise;
Come all and tune your hearts to sing
To the Morning Star of grace.

From the shifting shadows of the earth
We will lift our eyes to Him,
Where steady arms of mercy reach
To gather children in.

Rejoice, Rejoice!
Let every tongue rejoice!
One heart, one voice;
O Church of Christ, rejoice!

Come, those whose joy is morning sun,
And those weeping through the night;
Come, those who tell of battles won,
And those struggling in the fight.

For His perfect love will never change,
And His mercies never cease,
But follow us through all our days
With the certain hope of peace.

Rejoice, Rejoice!

Let every tongue rejoice!

One heart, one voice;

O Church of Christ, rejoice!

Come, young and old from every land

Men and women of the faith;

Come, those with full or empty hands

Find the riches of His grace.

Over all the world, His people sing - Shore to shore we hear them call

The Truth that cries through every age:

“Our God is all in all!”

Rejoice, Rejoice!

Let every tongue rejoice!

One heart, one voice;

O Church of Christ, rejoice!

Words and Music by Keith and Kristyn Getty and Stuart Townend Copyright © 2008 Thankyou Music

PRAYER OF ADORATION AND CONFESSION

Father in heaven whose love profound a ransom for our souls has found, before Your throne we sinners bend grant pardon life to us extend.

We are not worthy to come into Your Presence Holy, Almighty God yet we hear Your voice beckon us, by name to come and sit with You awhile. We come to sit at Your feet allowing Your love to bring healing and wholeness to our very being. We praise You Lord God that in the midst of this turbulent world, in these changing times, You remind us of Your overwhelming, overarching love for us and all of Your creation. **Almighty Father - in humility we worship You.**

That love which reached out into the world in a particular time and place so that You would be known as Emmanuel, God with us Your people. Lord Jesus for Your willingness to come, to show us the way back to our Father in heaven, for your humbleness, Your sacrificial love, Your patience with all who found and find Your way hard to understand, Your dogged determination to do Your Father's will, in Gethsemane and on to the cross we thank You from the bottom of our hearts.

Saving Son - in humility we worship You

That power of love there from the beginning of time allowed You to rise from the dead in order that You might provide a way back into heaven for us who love You, also providing us with the gift of Your Holy Spirit at work in our world from the time of creation to our time when He comes to help, encourage, challenge, comfort and lead us. Thank You that we are never left alone to face the problems of our world and our relationships. **Ever present Holy Spirit – in humility we worship You.**

Almighty God as we remember your faithfulness we are made more conscious of our faithlessness. Forgive us for the times when it is so much easier to ignore you, to hear your voice and yet not respond, to see what we can do and yet fail to do it. Lord God as we live our lives here in Ashkirk, Ettrick & Yarrow and Selkirk there are times when we know that we hurt others by our actions and sometimes too Lord by our inaction. Lord God Almighty in your mercy please hear our prayer for forgiveness. Help us to turn from the wrong that we do and set our hearts and minds once more on following your way. Help us to hear your words of forgiveness which we find in the Bible. “Your sins are forgiven,” Jesus says, “Go in peace to love and serve me now and forever.” Help us be willing to seek forgiveness from those we have wronged. As a token of our willingness to be Your people in this place, for this time, we give you ourselves; our time, our talents and our money. Take them and use us to shower our community and world with the life-changing love You alone offer. In Jesus’ name we pray saying together the words He taught Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours, now and forever. Amen.

READING Philippians 1:18-22

Read by Ethel Lynn (Ashkirk)

18 It does not matter! I am happy about it—just so Christ is preached in every way possible, whether from wrong or right motives. And I will continue to be happy, 19 because I know that by means of your prayers and the help which comes from the Spirit of Jesus Christ I shall be set free. 20 My deep desire and hope is that I shall never fail in my duty, but that at all times, and especially right now, I shall be full of courage, so that with my whole being I shall bring honor to Christ, whether I live or die. 21 For what is life? To me, it is Christ. Death, then, will bring more. 22 But if by continuing to live I can do more worthwhile work, then I am not sure which I should choose.

REFLECTION For What is Life?

Well there’s a conversation stopper if ever there was. Imagine being at a party and someone throwing that question into the arena. And yet it is a question that many people today are asking. What is the meaning of life? Is there any meaning to it, what purpose does it have? Why are we here? What happens at the end of life? Some of us have a very optimistic view of life others are not so sure.

We've spent the last six or seven weeks thinking about the Marks of Mission – trying to answer the question – where does God want us to be as we share His way of life and living? Last week we pondered the question of living life in the likeness of the Man of heaven. What does that mean and how does it affect the way we live our lives in the here and now?

As I prayed about what my final message would be God seemed to suggest I went back to the beginning – I preached on this passage when I took the service as Sole Nominee for Ashkirk and Selkirk.

Most of us would spell life, l-i-f-e. Paul writing to the Philippians, probably from jail in Rome during his last imprisonment, spells it differently as he sends his letter to them. He spells it C-H-R-I-S-T. **For Paul life is Christ.** “For what is life?” he asks. “To me it is Christ,” he says. Looking at his writings to many of the different churches his one theme is how Christ has changed his life, how Christ has been there from the very beginning, even though Paul was not aware of it. He certainly became aware of Christ during that long hard and tiring journey on the Damascus Road. For Paul life is Christ in the past but also in the present. He is there with him in prison, actively working in and through him. But most of all for Paul life, Christ, is to be seen with a future dimension. The pull of the love of Christ is so strong that all Paul wants is for this life to finish so that he can be with his Saviour, Master, Friend. Death is not something to be frightened of, to be worried about, rather it is to be welcomed. But he realises that his work here on earth is not complete and at least for the moment he must content himself with Christ in the present.

What does that mean for Paul? What does it mean for his listeners, ourselves? He tells us that our way of life should be as the gospel of Christ requires. Life means Christ.

Life spelt Paul's way means

CARING, *caring without counting the cost*. He never fails to remind himself and others that this is a mega part of being a Christian. Christ himself showed us the way. Not in a door mat sort of way, not in a way that says yes to everything, but in a way which seeks to search out the priorities of life and living and give these the care which they need. Quality care, you know like quality time with our children. Putting all your energies into certain things which need doing, rather than doing too many things badly.

The churches in Ashkirk, Ettrick & Yarrow and Selkirk are in good heart. Within the cluster there are many people willing to give of their time and their talents. As you seek to move forward, prioritise what you would do so that it will be done well. **Caring, being prepared to listen to what Christ would have you care for, listen to how he would have you care.**

Life spelt Paul's way means

Honouring the Holy God. Honouring God with our hearts as well as our minds. We talk a lot or maybe I should rephrase that, the minister talks a lot, we use a lot of words. Words in themselves are not a problem but they tend to make us rely on our minds. They increase our knowledge. They have little to

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do with emotion, with relationship. God calls us to honour his name with all our heart, our mind and our soul. I would suggest that this means that two thirds of our worship, our honouring of His name, should be emotional and relational. We honour God by learning about him. We honour God by allowing him into our lives as friend and Saviour. We honour God by allowing him to have free reign in all that we do and say and think, in allowing him free reign in all our relationships. **As we seek to understand the meaning of life, what is God saying to us about how we honour him. Are there areas of our lives which need changed, relationships which need healed or broken off?**

Life read Paul's way means

RESPONDING to God's call. Recognising that His call is to have first priority in our lives. There must be no other God than me He says. His way often seems so different from our own. When we put God first in our lives that often means making difficult decisions, but when we do we can know with 100 percent certainty that He will be with us, that His way is the best for all. But we need to take the first step.

After Paul was blinded on the road to Damascus, Ananias was asked to go and heal him. How do you think he felt knowing he was going to the very person who had set out to kill him? Like a lion going into a lion's den I suspect. But he did what God had ordered and so God's will was fulfilled. **Is there something that you feel God is asking you to do but you are filled with trepidation? Take heart from many stories in the Bible and know that God will honour his call to you by His presence with you.**

Caring, honouring responding, Paul's next step in holding out the word of life is

INTRODUCING individuals to Him. Gossiping the gospel. Taking every opportunity to speak to the folk around us about what God is doing in our lives. That assumes that we are aware of God at work in our lives. It is so easy to go along life's road and not really think about our relationship with God. As we consciously get to know more about him, we find that our love for him deepens. As our love deepens for anyone we find that our behaviour changes and we long to tell others what we have found.

It is very rarely that we can manage to keep our love life secret. It's so exciting we want everyone to know. The same should be true for us as Christians. And yet we find it so hard. But just think, if the disciples had kept the good news to themselves then we would be without our faith. There would be no church. Our society today is searching for a spiritual meaning to life. For the most part they are seeking in the wrong direction and so not being fulfilled. **Who does God want you to tell about his love? Not in an overbearing way, but in friendly conversation?**

Paul tells us that **STANDING FIRM** is what the gospel of Christ requires of us as we live our life.

People see by our actions how we keep going through the times of trial that we face. It is not only by our

speaking but also by our actions that we hold out the word of life. Paul was in prison. He longed to die so that he would be with Christ but he was prepared to battle through adversity to show others the love of Christ. **Is there a situation in your life which tempts you to throw in the towel? God gives us the grace to stand firm and come out the other side.**

TRUSTING THE CROSS All our actions as a Christian are governed by what Christ did for us on the cross. The cross involves us turning **away** from our own selfish desires and putting God before all else. The cross involves us turning **to** God with our temptations, our transgressions and knowing that as we place them before Christ on the cross we will be forgiven, allowing us to go and live life to the full. It is only as we live life to the full in God's way that we can provide the true answer to those who question us as to what is life.

For what is life? Paul says Christ. He is what gives life its meaning and purpose its activity. Let us respond to his call and live our lives to the full in his way. Amen

PRAYER OF INTERCESSION

Nora Hunter (E&Y)

Prayers of Intercession – Nora Hunter

In our prayers of intercession this morning, when you hear the words: - 'Lord in your mercy' you are invited to say: 'Hear our prayer'.

Our Father and ever living God, joyfully we find in Jesus what it means to be fully human. You give us hope that one day we shall be like him.

Give us strength to trust you to reveal your true glory to us in time. We ask that you hear our prayers.

As world events become more and more terrifying, we pray that you will stand with world leaders, speak to them and through them, encouraging them to lead us to peace rather than war.

Give our own leaders the wisdom and strength to take the best decisions for everyone as we move through difficult times. We bring before you, in particular, the Queen, affected by Covid, and pray that she returns to good health very soon.

Lord in your mercy

Hear our Prayer

We pray for people who are hungry or thirsty, in need of food and drink, for strangers hoping for a welcome, for people without proper clothing, for those who are ill at home or in hospital, and for people in prison and all of those affected by crime.

Lord, these are our sisters and brothers too, help us to do what we can to care for them and to ensure adequate support.

Lord in Your mercy Hear our prayer

We pray for the climate crisis that the world's governments may not falter in their commitment to reduce global temperatures. We pray for the work of NGOs, charities and faith groups raising awareness and lobbying governments.

Lord in Your mercy Hear our prayer

Lord God, we pray for a better sharing of the world's resources, for an end to poverty and inequality, and we pray for the work of Covax, the World Health Organisation's body tasked with the sharing of vaccines. Lord in Your mercy Hear our prayer

Lord today especially we bring before you Margaret our minister who begins a new chapter of her life in a few days. We pray that her retirement is long, happy and fulfilling. Please bless her and keep her in your loving care as she adjusts to the newness of life in retirement. We are so grateful you brought her to us. She has cared for us over many years and gently encouraged us at whatever stage we are in our journey of faith.

Like Paul in the reading from Philippians earlier, we ask that we, in our three linked parishes, will be "full of courage, so that with (our) whole being (we) shall bring honour to Christ". As we face the future changes that are going to occur within the church may we remember the answer to Paul's question – and our own questions – is Christ.

Lord in your mercy

Hear our prayer

We now bring to you people known to us and in need of your comfort and blessings. In moments of quiet we pray for them.

Silence

Lord in Your mercy Hear our prayer

Lord God, as we come to the end of this worship service, we ask now for your loving kindness and comfort for ourselves. Encourage us in our faith, bless us all and keep us safe till next we meet in worship of You.

Amen

HYMN Holy Spirit living breath of God

Holy Spirit, living Breath of God,
Breathe new life into my willing soul.
Bring the presence of the risen Lord
To renew my heart and make me whole.

Cause Your Word to come alive in me;
Give me faith for what I cannot see;
Give me passion for Your purity.
Holy Spirit, breathe new life in me.

Holy Spirit, come abide within;
May Your joy be seen in all I do—
Love enough to cover ev'ry sin
In each thought and deed and
attitude,

Kindness to the greatest and the least,
Gentleness that sows the path of peace.
Turn my striving into works of grace.
Breath of God, show Christ in all I do.

Holy Spirit, from creation's birth,
Giving life to all that God has made,
Show Your power once again one earth;
Cause Your church to hunger for Your ways.

Let the fragrance of our prayers arise.
Lead us on the road of sacrifice
That in unity the face of Christ
Will be clear for all the world to see.

Holy Spirit, Living Breath of God words and Music by Keith Getty and Stuart Townend 2006

SACRAMENT OF HOLY COMMUNION

Come and dine! The Master calls, come and dine! You may feast at Jesus' table all the time. He who fed the multitude, turned water into wine, says to hungry thirsting sinners, to you and me, come and dine!

Look up for God is here, waiting to feed you through bread and wine; waiting to nurture your faith and nourish your soul.

Look in for he wants to meet YOU, not the mask you wear for the world but the person you are with all your beauty and ugliness your potential for good and evil.

Look around for you are not alone – your family is here, your brothers and sisters in Christ, sharing the same loaf bound by the same faith serving the same God.

Look out for the world is calling aching under a weight of sorrow, a burden of sin that destroys and deprives, robbing people of dignity denying them life.

Look back for Jesus is speaking tears in his eyes a tremor in his voice, “This is my body broken for you do this in memory of me; this is my blood shed for many, go on doing this to recall my presence with you. “

Look forward for Christ will come again, the king of kings, the Lord of lords, returning to fulfil his purpose, to establish his kingdom and to draw all things to himself.

Look now the bread is broken the wine poured out, eat drink and be thankful.

The Apostle Paul reminds us that, On the night on which he was betrayed and as they were sitting at a meal Jesus took a piece of bread and broke it. He gave it to the disciples saying, “This is my body. It is broken for you. Do this to remember me.” Later after they had eaten, he took a cup of wine and said, “This cup is the new relationship with God made possible because of my death. Drink this all of you to remember me.”

As Jesus gave thanks to God, let us follow His example. Let us pray

As we partake of this bread and fruit, we honour Creator and creation. As we invite His blessing and share these gifts, we celebrate the table-fellowship of Jesus. All are worthy, all are welcome! As we receive the fruit of Spirit, we celebrate the communion of all things. Creator, Christ, and Spirit dance as one. We worship and adore You Three in One God, thanking You for Your creative, saving, reconciling power available to us Your people. Come, Holy One, come. Bless and prosper this meal; bless and prosper this fellowship; bless and prosper our lives, that justice and love may be the measure of our common witness. Amen.

After giving thanks Jesus took bread, broke it and said This is my body broken for you.

ALL With this bread we will remember Him, Son of God broken and suffering, for our guilt, innocent offering as we eat we will remember him *Eat bread*

After supper Jesus took the cup of wine saying This is my blood shed for the forgiveness of your sins. As you drink remember Him.

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ALL With this wine we will remember him on the cross paying the price of sin, blood of Christ cleansing us deep within, as we drink we will remember Him *drink wine*

The peace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with you

Prayer

Let us pray. Lord Jesus Christ you have put your life into our hands, now we put our loves into yours. Take us, renew us and remake us. What we have been is past, what we shall be through you still awaits us. Lead us on take us with you Amen.

HYMN 512 To God be the glory

To God be the glory, great things he has done!
So loved he the world that he gave us his Son,
who yielded his life an atonement for sin,
and opened the life-gate that all may go in.

*Praise the Lord! Praise
the Lord!*

Let the earth hear his voice!

*Praise the Lord! Praise
the Lord!*

Let the people rejoice!

*Oh, come to the Father,
through Jesus the Son,
and give him the glory!*

Great things he has done!

O perfect redemption, the purchase of blood,
to every believer the promise of God;
for every offender who truly believes,
that moment from Jesus a pardon receives.

Praise the Lord! Praise the Lord!

Let the earth hear his voice!

Praise the Lord! Praise the Lord!

Let the people rejoice!

*Oh, come to the Father, through Jesus the Son,
and give him the glory! Great things he has done!*

Great things he has taught us,
great things he has done,
and great our rejoicing
through Jesus the Son:
but purer, and higher,
and greater will be
our joy and our wonder,
when Jesus we see.

Praise the Lord! Praise the Lord!

Let the earth hear his voice!

Praise the Lord! Praise the Lord!

Let the people rejoice!

*Oh, come to the Father, through Jesus the Son,
and give him the glory! Great things he has done!*

Frances (Fanny) Jane Crosby (1820–1915) *(alt.)* Reproduced from *CH4 CD-ROM edition, number 512*

BENEDICTION

The mighty God, who brought our Lord Jesus Christ back from the dead, protect you through His power, enfold you in His love and direct you on your journey. Go, knowing the blessing of Almighty God Father Son and Spirit at work in your life and through your life today and everyday Amen.