

6 March 2022 First Sunday in Lent Service led by Rev. Scott Guy, Locum Minister

Welcome - Good morning!

Welcome to our morning worship on this the first Sunday in Lent.

It is my great pleasure and privilege to lead us in worship as we journey together towards the sadness of the Cross and the wonderful joy and triumph of the glorious Resurrection of Jesus Christ our Saviour and Lord!

Call to Worship - 'Shout for joy to the Lord all the Earth. Worship the Lord with gladness.

Come to Him with joyful songs. Know that the Lord is God.

It is He who made us and we are His' - Psalm 100 v 1 - 3a.

Hymn 449 - Rejoice! The Lord is King

1. Rejoice the Lord is King
your Lord and King adore
Mortals give thanks and sing
and triumph evermore
*Lift up your heart lift up your voice;
rejoice again I say rejoice*

2. Jesus the Saviour reigns
the God of truth and love;
When he had purged stains,
he took his seat above
Lift up your heart . . .

3. His kingdom cannot fail;
he rules o'er earth and heaven
The keys of death and hell
are to our Jesus given
Lift up your heart . . .

4. He sits at God's right hand
till all his foes submit,
And bow to his command,

and fall beneath his feet

Lift up your heart . . .

5. Rejoice in glorious hope,
Jesus the Judge shall come,
And take his servants up
to their eternal home:

*We then shall hear the archangels' voice;
the trump of God shall sound: Rejoice!*

Charles Wesley (1707-1788)

Prayer and Lord's Prayer (Traditional)

Lord God, Our Father it is so good to gather together as Your people on this day.
This is the day that You have made, so let us rejoice and be glad in it.
We come into Your presence with thanksgiving and with praise.
For we know that You are loving and good and that your love endures forever.
Your faithfulness continues through all generations.

Today may we sing Your praises, Lord.

May we recall all of the wonderful things that You have done for us.

We thank You most of all for sending us Your only Son, Jesus.

To be born as one of us, to live a life of example, love and forgiveness.

To give up His life in our place on the Cross.

To be raised to life, so that we too might be raised, through putting our faith and trust in Him.

Lord, on this first Sunday in Lent, may we prepare ourselves to journey with Jesus and to understand all that He endured on our behalf, because of His great love for each single one of us.

Lord, forgive us for the times we have ignored You and ignored those around us, especially those in need in our families and in our communities. May we look to Your Son, at the ways in which *He* dealt with those around *Him* and learn from Him how we must treat all of those whom You will bring us into contact with in this coming week.

Father God, receive now our offerings, as a thanksgiving for all that You are and all that You mean to each one of us. And receive each one of us as we seek to serve You in our lives in this week which lies ahead.

And hear us Lord as we pray together in the words which Jesus taught us:

Our Father, who art in heaven,

hallowed be thy name.

Thy Kingdom come,

thy will be done,

on earth as it is in heaven

Give us this day our daily bread.

And forgive us our trespasses,

as we forgive those who trespass against us.

And lead us not into temptation,

but deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kingdom,

the power and the glory,

for ever and ever.

Amen

Old Testament Reading - Genesis 7 v 1 - 10 New International Version (Nora Hunter)

⁷ The LORD then said to Noah, “Go into the ark, you and your whole family, because I have found you righteous in this generation. ² Take with you seven pairs of every kind of clean animal, a male and its mate, and one pair of every kind of unclean animal, a male and its mate, ³ and also seven pairs of every kind of bird, male and female, to keep their various kinds alive throughout the earth. ⁴ Seven days from now I will send rain on the earth for forty days and forty nights, and I will wipe from the face of the earth every living creature I have made.”

⁵ And Noah did all that the LORD commanded him.

⁶ Noah was six hundred years old when the floodwaters came on the earth. ⁷ And Noah and his sons and his wife and his sons’ wives entered the ark to escape the waters of the flood. ⁸ Pairs of clean and unclean animals, of birds and of all creatures that move along the ground, ⁹ male and female, came to Noah and entered the ark, as God had commanded Noah. ¹⁰ And after the seven days the floodwaters came on the earth.

Hymn 470 - Jesus shall reign where're the sun

1. Jesus shall reign where'er the sun
Does His successive journeys run
His kingdom stretch from shore to shore
Till moons shall wax and wane no more

2. People and realms of every tongue
Declare His love in sweetest song
And infant voices shall proclaim
Their early blessings on His Name

3. Blessings abound where Jesus reigns
The prisoners leap to lose their chains
The weary find eternal rest
And all who suffer want are blessed

4. Let every creature rise and bring
The highest honours to our King
Angels descend with songs again
And earth repeat the loud Amen.

Isaac Watts (1674-1748)

Music adapted from Ralph Harrison (1748-1910)

Prayer - (Elissa Jones)

Prayers for others.

All knowing God we bring our shared prayers to you as citizens of our entire world.

All knowing God, even as we meet to worship You, we are gripped by anxiety and shame that Your world faces destruction by the actions of fellow-humans and the inhumanity of man to man.

Wherever we look, we see the evidence of this destruction.

We see the irreversible effects of climate change, bringing drought, flood, fire and the permanent disruption to the livelihoods of whole populations.

All knowing God, we ask that You touch the hearts of all those who can bring about the change in the policies of governments, those who have the skills to develop new technologies, and those who can pioneer change in our wastefulness of the world's resources.

All knowing God, we see the catastrophic effects of those who seek power over others, and we struggle to find the words to express our outrage and fear that such cruelty can be inflicted on innocent people.

We pray in particular for the people of Ukraine. We pray for all those in leadership, that they have wisdom and statesmanship in finding a solution to this, and all the other crises around the world.

Help each of us to reach out with compassion, to be seeds of hope in whatever ways are possible, so that Your love and peace is felt by those who are suffering.

All knowing God – we are part of a world which is inter- connected in the distribution of resources. As these are threatened help us find ways to help and support those who are vulnerable to price rises and shortages. We pray for those in our own locality for whom life is going to become even more of a struggle in the months ahead. Help us to support those organisations which set out to provide advice, food and money to those in need.

All knowing God, we are still reeling from the effects of the Covid 19 pandemic, and it is continuing to ravage lives of people all around the world. We ask You to be with all those mourning those who died so tragically, those who care for victims of long covid and those who work in hospitals providing care and support to those who are still falling ill.

All knowing God, we name before You those known to us who are sick, those who mourn, and the lonely and isolated. Be close to all those who cry out to You in their anguish.

All knowing God, we bring Your breaking world to You in our prayers.

We ask You to reach out to each of us and show us how to be Your healing hands in our daily lives.

We cry out to You to fill us with love so we can work for peace and reconciliation.

Awaken us, O God, to be people of action.

As we follow the example of Your son Jesus, help us to be bringers of hope in the world.

As we respond to Your unfailing love, help us to share the joy that only knowing You can bring.

We ask all of our prayers in the name of Your son, Jesus Christ, who walked in this world, who suffered the inhumanity of this world, and who died that we may be forgiven. Amen

Hymn 506 - All I once held dear

1. All I once held dear, built my life upon,
All this world reveres and wars to own;
All I once thought gain I have counted loss -
Spent and worthless, now compared to this.
*Knowing you Jesus, knowing you,
there is no greater thing:
You're my all, you're the best,
you're my joy my righteousness;
And I love you Lord.*
2. Now my heart's desire is to know you more,
To be found in you and known as yours;
To possess by faith what I could not earn -
All surpassing gift of righteousness.
Knowing you . . .
3. Oh to know the power of your risen life,
And to know you in your sufferings.
To become like you in your death, my Lord,
So with you to live and never die!
Knowing you . . .

Graham Kendrick (b.1950)

Bible Teaching - 'Don't miss the boat!

Everyone knows about Noah.

We all know the story of Noah and the ark, the animals coming in two by two, the resulting flood and the rainbow in the sky.

Perhaps your mind takes you back to your days in Sunday School, when you may have sang:

Mister Noah built an ark, the people thought it such a lark.
Mister Noah pleaded so, but into the ark they would not go.

Down came the rain in torrents, down came the rain in torrents, down came the rain in torrents, but only eight were saved.

A friend of mine has just retired from Torrance Parish Church just outside Glasgow and he used to insist that the chorus was: Down came the rain in Torrance!!!

Jesus also knew the story of Noah. He would have listened to it many times in the Synagogue when he was growing up.

Let's look together at what Jesus says to His disciples and to you and me about Noah.

(Read out: Luke 17 v 26 - 35 from 'The Message')

²⁶⁻²⁷ "The time of the Son of Man will be just like the time of Noah—everyone carrying on as usual, having a good time right up to the day Noah boarded the ship. They suspected nothing until the flood hit and swept everything away.

²⁸⁻³⁰ "It was the same in the time of Lot—the people carrying on, having a good time, business as usual right up to the day Lot walked out of Sodom and a firestorm swept down and burned everything to a crisp. That's how it will be—sudden, total—when the Son of Man is revealed.

³¹⁻³³ "When the Day arrives and you're out working in the yard, don't run into the house to get anything. And if you're out in the field, don't go back and get your coat. Remember what happened to Lot's wife! If you grasp and cling to life on your terms, you'll lose it, but if you let that life go, you'll get life on God's terms.

³⁴⁻³⁵ "On that Day, two men will be in the same boat fishing—one taken, the other left. Two women will be working in the same kitchen—one taken, the other left."

Jesus talks about when He, the Son Of Man, will return to the Earth (what we call the Second Coming).

When He will come back to take His people (all those who believe in Him) to be with Him in Glory, in Heaven.

Not one of us knows when that day will be - not even Jesus knows - only God the Father!

You must be ready for that day, Jesus tells us.

Noah was ready, so we're his wife, his three sons, Ham, Shem and Japheth and their wives (the eight who were saved).

They all went into the ark with the animals and were saved from the flood, while everyone else perished!

So, I believe that what Jesus is saying to us here is this:

DON'T MISS THE BOAT! - DON'T MISS THE BOAT!

If you miss the boat it will be too late, you won't be able to do anything about it.

That ship has sailed and it's not coming back!

DON'T MISS THE BOAT!

So what does Jesus mean?

How can we make sure that we don't miss the boat?

Those who were in the boat, in Noah's ark, were those who believed in and trusted In God to save them.

The rest of the people only believed in themselves.

They only thought about themselves and what they wanted to do.

They were buying and selling, eating and drinking, building, working, marrying and so on - oblivious to the great destruction that was soon to come!

They didn't believe Noah when he told them that God had had enough and was going to send a great flood which would destroy everything.

They laughed at Noah and at his advanced age, they thought he was senile when he started to gather wood and began to build a huge boat which was to become a floating zoo.

You're mad they told him. We're miles from the sea and you're building a boat on top of a hill!

It'll never float, You've lost it Noah!

What a complete waste of time, effort & money.

And so they just got on with their lives and eventually they completely ignored Noah, they dismissed him as an old crank.

They knew better, or so they thought, until the first few drops of rain came and became heavier and heavier, until it really was coming down in torrents!

Some of us may have had the misfortune to have endured such heavy rain - here in Scotland or perhaps abroad, particularly in countries where monsoons are prevalent.

The worse I have witnessed was in Uganda in Africa, about ten years ago, when the heavens opened and everyone ran for shelter as it came pelting down!

It was spectacular but at the same time, very scary!

So, the rains came down and the flood waters began to rise.

The doors of the ark were slammed shut and then it began to rise in the water and float, with Noah & his family & all the animals safely inside

Jesus tells us that, one day He is coming back!

We don't know when - it may be today or tomorrow or next year or in 10 years time!

But He is coming back - for definite!

For those who know The Terminator series of films - it was Jesus who first said: "I'll be back!"

Jesus will, one day, come back in glory!

It will be a huge event, the greatest and most spectacular event the world has ever witnessed.

There will be no mistaking His spectacular return!

“Coming soon - Jesus!”

And we need to be ready, you and me.

We need to be prepared for that glorious day.

I’m reminded of the old song:

Living, He loved me, dying, He saved me

Buried, He carried my sins far away

Rising, He justified, freely forever

One day He’s coming, O glorious day!

We need to be ready if we want Jesus to take us with Him to Heaven!

We need to be like Noah and his family and not like those who dismissed him as a crank and just went about doing their own thing regardless.

Jesus outlines just how sudden it will be when He returns:

“When the Day comes and you are out working in the garden, don’t run into the house to get anything.

And if you’re out in the field, don’t go back and get your coat.”

It’s a bit like the stern warnings we are given when there is a fire in our homes or place of work:

In the event of fire, don’t stop to collect your belongings, don’t go to get anything, just get out as you are, straight away.

If you want to be saved - nothing else matters!

Jesus will come suddenly, when we least expect Him!

So we need to be ready, if we want to go with Him to Heaven!

But how can we be ready?

How can we make sure that Jesus will take us with Him?

Noah took all of those who were part of his family.

And Jesus will take all of those who are part of HIS family!

And who are part of His family?

All those who believe that Jesus is the Son of God, who died on the cross for them.

All those who have accepted Him as their Leader and Guide (their Lord).

John Chapter 1 says of Jesus:

He came into the very world He created, but the world did not recognise Him.

He came to His own people and even they rejected Him!

But, to everyone who believed in Him and accepted Him,

He gave the right to become children of God.

He welcomed them into His family!

Are you part of His family?

Do you believe that Jesus is the Son of God who died on the cross for YOU, to take away your sins?

Have YOU accepted Jesus as your Leader and Guide, to help you through life?

Listen to His words again:

“On that Day, two people will be in the same boat fishing, one will be taken, the other left behind.”

Two people will be working in the same kitchen, one will be taken, the other left behind.”

Don't get left behind! Don't miss the boat!

Remember that not one of us, not even Jesus Himself, know when He will return.

So we need to be ready for when He does!

Ready, Aye Ready is the motto for many different organisations, from the Canadian armed forces to the Fire Brigade to Glasgow Rangers.

And, as Christians, it should be our motto too.

We need to be 'Aye ready' for the return of the Lord Jesus!

We need to make sure we are part of His family.

Not just because we don't want to be left behind

Not just because we want to be saved and go with Him to Heaven.

But because we want to RESPOND to Jesus and to the amazing, unselfish love of God the Father who sent Him!

Because we want to ACKNOWLEDGE that Jesus died in our place, so that all our sins would be forgiven.

And that He loves us so much that He was prepared to do all of this for us.

Jesus said: “Greater love has no one but this, that they lay down their life for their friends.”

Such sacrificial love demands a response from us -

“Love so amazing, so Divine, demands my soul, my life, my all”

Jesus died to save us AND He rose again from the dead.

So that you and I & all who believe in Him, would be set free.

Free from sin, free from death and free from Hell!

So that we might have LIFE - eternal life, real life, life in all its fullness!

When we consider all that He has done for us, it would be extremely callous, unfeeling & ungrateful of us to ignore Him and simply get on with our lives, as they did in the time of Noah.

A few years ago, up in Aberdeen, I conducted the funeral of a man called John.

His wife Gladys, told me this story about him, which I included in the service.

When John was only 5 years of age, a news item about him was published in the Press & Journal, the local paper.

It was all about how John had rescued his wee brother Charlie, who was a year or two younger, from drowning in Aberdeen harbour.

Charlie had been playing near the water and had tried to reach a floating matchstick and fallen in.

And John had managed to pull him out and rescue him.

Now, apparently, all that John received for his act of heroism, was a clip round the ear from his mum for playing too close to the water's edge!

But I'm sure that wee brother Charlie was eternally grateful to his big brother for saving his life and never forgot it!

We too have a big brother and His name is Jesus!

HE has rescued us!

Another hymn comes to mind:

He rescued me from the darkest night
And brought me in to His glorious light
To know His presence is my delight
Hallelujah, He rescued me.

So let us be eternally grateful to OUR big brother.
Let us thank Him for saving us and giving us life eternal.

In the words of another hymn:

Thank you for saving me, what can I say?

You are my everything, I will sing Your praise.

And we need to show our thanks to Jesus in a tangible way, by believing that He did all of this for us.

And by accepting Him as the One who will lead and guide us through life.

As our SAVIOUR who died to save us and as our LORD in charge of our lives.

Having Jesus in your life means never being on our own.

It means having Someone with you, who has your best interests at heart and always wants the best for you.

It means having Someone to talk things through with.

It means having Someone to advise you on the decisions you have to make.

It means having Someone who is always with you and who loves you and watches out for you.

Inspiring confidence, boldness and trust in you.

It means having Someone to comfort you when you are down and to lift you up when you need it most.

It means having Someone who can help you to love and care for others, with the same love and care He shows to you.

And much, much more.

It means EVERYTHING to have Jesus in your life!

In the very personal words of the songwriter Graham Kendrick:

Knowing You, Jesus, knowing You

There is no greater thing

You're my all, you're the best

You're my joy and righteousness

And I love you Lord.

Don't miss out on all that it means to have Jesus in your life.

Think about all that He has done for you.

Think about Him now!

Respond to His offer of new life in Him!

"I have come so that you may have life - life in all its fullness."

"Come to Me and I will give you rest."

"I am the Way, the Truth and the Life."

Respond to Him.

Don't leave it until it's too late!

Don't put it off!

Don't leave it for a rainy day!

That's what the people did in the time of Noah -
when it really did rain!

And by then it was too late!

Don't be like them!

Don't be left behind!

DON'T MISS THE BOAT!!!

DON'T MISS THE BOAT!!!

Hymn 481 - Jesus is the Name we honour

1. Jesus is the name we honour
Jesus is the name we praise
Majestic Name above all other names
The highest heav'n and earth proclaim
That Jesus is our God
*We will glorify,
we will lift Him high
We will give Him honour and praise
We will glorify,
we will lift Him high
We will give Him honour and praise*

2. Jesus is the name we worship
Jesus is the name we trust
He is the King above all other kings
Let all creation stand and sing
That Jesus is our God
We will glorify . . .

3. Jesus is the Father's splendour
Jesus is the Father's joy
He will return to reign in majesty
And ev'ry eye at last will see
That Jesus is our God
We will glorify . . .

Phil Lawson-Johnston

Benediction - 'And now may
the Grace of the Lord Jesus Christ,
the Love of God
and the Fellowship of the Holy Spirit,

be with you all, now and forevermore.'

(3 fold Amen)