



## *Giffnock the Park Church*

*Thou wilt shew me the path of life:  
in thy presence is fullness of joy.*

Psalm 16:11



*Sunday 23<sup>rd</sup> August 2020*

Good morning everyone,

I present to you once again another Sunday Reflection as Church across the land remains among the last to formally be brought out of restriction as we gradually relax from Lockdown. As always, I trust you are contending with the stresses and strains that such a time brings upon us and our hope is that God in his goodness will sustain you and ourselves through it. This morning's reflection comes on the back of the week of Prayer for Church and Country.

I feel that as we see schools re-opening for the new term, where pupils across Scotland and the UK are coming to terms with exam results and are looking to see what is to happen now, there will be many challenges for those who have just left school and have become the next intake of apprentices, college or university students as well as for those who will become their tutors and lecturers. This younger generation need our prayer for them now more than ever, as we all contend with Covid19 still dominating and dictating what is to happen next, while those looking to head the up the fight against this dreadful illness look nervously on as constraints are relaxed.

The staff in our hospitals, community care and nursing home Care, remain under significant pressure, to some degree or another as they endure fairly rigid constraints still, about who can visit and when and as they not only deal with Covid19 but now start to engage with all the other medical situations, previously put on hold, that now need to be addressed such as cancer care and treatment and major elective surgery.

There are those whose lives have been impacted more directly by redundancy as furloughs come to an end, the High Street is struggling to recover, they say. There is still much to pray for, many who need God's steady hand on and in their lives as they are impacted by the news of ill health upon them, illness in their family or uncertainty for their employment.

In this litany of woe you might be tempted to say, "Where is the Hope in all this?" and I could understand why you might ask that. God's word reminds me that the "Joy of the Lord" can be our strength (Nehemiah 8:10). Nehemiah was a reluctant leader who God used to restore Israel and rebuild the city of Jerusalem.

The lesson then and for us even now is that we can be strong today because **the joy of the Lord is our strength**. It is Him who loved us that will keep us and watch over us as we go through dark moments and hard times. Often It is only after having come through such times that we see how He has kept us and watched over us.

I look out my study window today as I prepare this reflection and see how busy Rouken Glen Road has become again. Through the months of April, May and June, when driving out of the driveway to come to the church, I would drive straight onto the road without hindrance and often be one of only a few cars on the road. Today I have to sit and wait for a suitable gap in the traffic because it has become a busy road once again. There is scope for hope after all. The Hope of the Gospel extends beyond that of the practical routines of everyday life to that of the promises of Eternity with our Father in Heaven through our faith in Jesus, cause for us to rejoice and be strong in the Joy of the Lord who is our strength.

I hope you will know God goes with you in the week that is yet to come and that He has been with you even in the week that has past regardless of whether it was good or bad.

With best wishes from us at the Manse to you at home.

Calum D. Macdonald

**Please Note  
Kirk Session Meeting  
Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> August  
7.30pm**

**CALUM MACDONALD is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.**

**Join Zoom Meeting**  
**<https://us04web.zoom.us/j/77046879607?pwd=K2hyWndVYmxUMGJOZTZUaDFjSDd5Zz09>**

**Meeting ID: 770 4687 9607**  
**Passcode: 9AymYC**



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*Our Prayer this morning is taken from  
the Week of Prayer for Church & Country*

### **CALL TO PRAYER: SUNDAY 23rd August 2020 Prayer @ 7pm**

*How well do we respond to a challenge? The answer we give will, no doubt, depend on many different factors. Whatever our answer, we know that our response is strengthened when it is made in the company of others. Our response to the challenge of living out our calling as a member of the body of Christ is one that depends, in principle, on our response being a shared one. Living out our calling, in response to the mercy of God, lies at the heart of what it is to worship. Within the body of Christ, we have shared gifts and a shared identity. (Romans 12: 1-8) At the same time, living out that calling in these strange and challenging times is by no means easy. We do so in the assurance that we are not alone and acknowledging our continuing dependence on the mercy of God.*

*(Rt. Rev. Dr Martin Fair, Moderator of the General Assembly)*

### **Let us Pray**

#### **A Prayer for Church and Country**

*Living God, whose name is mercy,  
We acknowledge that we live in dependence on your mercy.  
Hold us, and all whom you call, In your gentle keeping.  
Lord, in your mercy, Hear our prayer.*

*Living God, through whom we receive mercy,  
We respond to your gracious gift  
And offer our lives into your service and the service of others.  
Accept us as we are and embrace us in your love.  
Lord, in your mercy, Hear our prayer.*

*Living God, as the one who inspires mercy,  
Make us ever merciful to others.  
As we respond to the challenge of these times,  
May we live out our calling ever conscious of the body of Christ.  
Lord, in your mercy, Hear our prayer.*

*Living God, who wills to be merciful to all,  
Renew our calling to worship you.  
In the place where we are, whether in shared company or in our own company,  
Receive our worship through Jesus Christ our Lord.  
Lord, in your mercy, Hear our prayer.*

*Living God, whose name is mercy,  
May your name be known throughout the world.  
As those who have received mercy,  
May your name be known in the place where we are.  
Lord, in your mercy, Hear our prayer in Jesus name.  
Amen*

A prayer Signed by:

- Rt. Rev. Dr Martin Fair, Moderator of the General Assembly, Church of Scotland
- Most Rev. Leo Cushley, Archbishop of St. Andrews and Edinburgh, Roman Catholic Church
- Most Rev. Mark Strange, Primus, on behalf of the College of Bishops, Scottish Episcopal Church
  - Rev. John Fulton, Moderator, United Free Church of Scotland
  - Rev. Dr David Pickering, Moderator, United Reformed Church (Scotland)
  - Rev. Martin Hodson, General Director, Baptist Union of Scotland
  - Rev. Mark Slaney, District Chair, Methodist Church (Scotland)
  - Rev. May-Kane Logan, Chair, Congregational Federation in Scotland
  - Lt. Col. Carol Bailey, Secretary for Scotland, Salvation Army
  - Adwoa Bittle, Religious Society of Friends (Quakers)
- Rev. Jim Ritchie, District Superintendent, British Isles North District, Church of the Nazarene
- Pastor Chris Gbenle, Provincial Pastor, Province of Scotland, Redeemed Christian Church of God



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*Sunday 23<sup>rd</sup> August 2020*

**Psalm 16: 1 - 11**

**New American Standard Bible**

***The LORD the Psalmist's Portion in Life and Deliverer in Death.  
A Mikhtam of David.***

<sup>1</sup> *Preserve me, O God, for I take refuge in You.*

<sup>2</sup> *I said to the LORD, "You are my Lord;  
I have no good besides You."*

<sup>3</sup> *As for the saints who are in the earth,  
They are the majestic ones in whom is all my delight.*

<sup>4</sup> *The sorrows of those who have bartered for another god will be multiplied;  
I shall not pour out their drink offerings of blood,  
Nor will I take their names upon my lips.*

<sup>5</sup> *The LORD is the portion of my inheritance and my cup;  
You support my lot.*

<sup>6</sup> *The lines have fallen to me in pleasant places;  
Indeed, my heritage is beautiful to me.*

<sup>7</sup> *I will bless the LORD who has counselled me;  
Indeed, my mind instructs me in the night.*

<sup>8</sup> *I have set the LORD continually before me;  
Because He is at my right hand, I will not be shaken.*

<sup>9</sup> *Therefore my heart is glad and my glory rejoices;  
My flesh also will dwell securely.*

<sup>10</sup> *For You will not abandon my soul to Sheol;  
Nor will You allow Your Holy One to undergo decay.*

<sup>11</sup> *You will make known to me the path of life;  
In Your presence is fullness of joy;  
In Your right hand there are pleasures forever.*





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### *A Pause for Reflection*

Good morning,

I cannot help but feel that throughout this time of national and even world-wide health crisis, when looking to see how we can be inspired and challenged, encouraged and upheld in our Christian faith, that we have consistently been drawn to the book containing all these wonderful Psalms, one of a number of books in the Old Testament that have been referred to collectively as Wisdom Literature. It is my hope this morning that that these words may perhaps offer some wisdom and certainly an encouragement to hang on in these difficult, uncertain perhaps even fearful times.

Psalm 16 is our reading for today and it is a psalm to treasure, one of 6 such psalms referred to as a Mikhtam of David. This Hebrew word is thought to be used to describe a special kind of psalm. Used only 6 times, such psalms recount David's most harrowing experiences as one who trusts in God and follows him even through those times where his life was in immediate peril and where only a miraculous intervention by God could save him. CH Spurgeon in his great work the Treasury of David (A Commentary on the Book of Psalms) refers to this psalm as "the Golden Psalm". He goes on to say it begins **"with prayer, and implies trouble, abounds in holy confidence and closes with songs of assurance as to ultimate safety and joy."** In the very last verse of Psalm 16 we find a lovely summation of the situation for King David,

**"You will make known to me the path of life;**

**In Your presence is fullness of joy;**

**In Your right hand there are pleasures forever." (Verse 11)**

Another commentator says, **"this is a wonderful Psalm relating how David found the secret of contentment and great gladness even in pressing times;"** It's thought that this may have been written while on the run from King Saul and hiding in a cave, or when a prisoner of the Philistines, taken at

Gath or perhaps when fighting the Edomites, each a different but nevertheless perilous situation and time. Singularly this is a time when he is still trusting in God unlike other times in his life when he shows great weakness. We can take heart in these words then because he is inconsistent in the following of the Maker of the Heavens and the Earth, surely a standard we all fall short in. What can these words say to us then?

To illustrate that, let me tell you that today Wilma and I celebrate our 36<sup>th</sup> Wedding Anniversary which given current trends in relationships today is a remarkable feat. (Perhaps more amazing is the thought that in all that time Wilma has not yet murdered her husband - but maybe we should move that thought swiftly on because I can hear Wilma's voice in my head saying - "There is time yet!") Even more remarkable is the true story I read of in my Daily Readings this week that told of a Couple from Korea separated from each other for 55 years on account of the Korean War leaving them on either side of the 38<sup>th</sup> Parallel, the Boundary separating North from South all these years. It is said their reunion was joyous, that words could not express the emotions they felt in being reunited after so many years.

While this happy reunion is definitely a cause for joy, the anticipated joy of that moment sustained them through all these years of heartache and disappointment - what a remarkable story of faithful human endurance!

Just imagine the joy we will feel when we come into the presence of our Saviour. King David, the author of this psalm, sums up both his faith and his feelings when he writes these closing words of the psalm,

**"You will show me the path of life.**

**In your presence is fullness of joy.**

**In your right hand, there are pleasures forever more" (Psalm 16:11).** This is a promise for us today to hold on to as we struggle through difficult situations but remain faithful, as we contend with the challenges that fear at times brings and the doubts our minds contend with which might challenge our belief in God, his love and sustaining presence. It is in these moments that we should remember that this will pass and once again we will be able to experience the fullness of joy in God's presence. Let us not allow that which often gets in the way of our being able to meet with God, those moments of crisis that hit us, or the overwhelming need at times to meet our daily obligations at home or at work that can be a distraction from spending time with God.

Being in the church building when no-one else at times has meant that without realising it at times, I would be praying, praying for those stuck at

home, those who are ill or whose loved one is ill and who I could not visit up till now. I have realised that in Christ there is a fullness of life that brings contentment in the best or worst of times but in addition there is a Joy too that keeps the spirit up that reminds me of the Hope of a future secure - no matter what and that I am not alone never have been and now never will be.

In our news today there is increasing talk about concerns about the mental health of our nation. For the Christian there is the reminder that along life's pathways, the easy and the hard pathways, in his presence is indeed "a Fullness of Joy". So today I encourage you to make time to rest from the busy affairs of this world, spend some time in Jesus' presence. You may need to silence your phone or cancel an appointment. But any time spent with Jesus will be more than worth it. In the quiet of His presence you will find a real joy. In closing let me share with you the poetic words of Michael Card the Christian Singer and Songwriter

### **Joy in the Journey by Michael Card**

There is a joy in the journey  
There's a light we can love on the way  
There is a wonder and wildness to life  
And freedom for those who obey

And all those who seek it shall find it  
A pardon for all who believe  
Hope for the hopeless and sight for the blind

To all who've been born in the spirit  
And who share incarnation with him  
Who belong to eternity stranded in time  
And weary of struggling with sin

Forget not the hope that's before you  
And never stop counting the cost  
Remember the hopelessness when you were lost

There is a joy in the journey  
There's a light we can love on the way  
There is a wonder and wildness to life  
And freedom for those who obey  
And freedom for those who obey...



## *A Benediction Prayer*

*May God surround you,  
and those whom you love.  
May God enable you to Rest now,  
in that calm embrace.  
May God let your hearts be warmed  
and all storms be stilled  
by the whisper of his voice.  
And May Love Joy and Peace of  
God the Father, God the Son  
God the Spirit,  
Blessed Three in One  
Now and always*