

Giffnock: the Park Church



Yesterday is history

Tomorrow is a mystery

Today is a gift

That's why they call it the Present



Sunday 28th June 2020

Good morning everyone,
a warm welcome to you all on this hot and sticky weekend, the final weekend of June. Is it just me that thinks the months are passing all too quickly? To use the well worn phrase, it seems to be a story of two halves. I can't believe we are now half way through 2020 and of course, it is also the case that for half that time we have all essentially been cooped up in our homes.

The Good news on the horizon is that things are beginning to change and we can actually begin to prepare for coming out of Lockdown and move towards a resumption of being able to meet together again. It is still a wee way in the distance yet but there is now light at the end of the Tunnel and before anyone else says it - no- it is not an oncoming Covid Express Train (at least I hope not). Next week we will undertake a deep clean of the Church halls and Sanctuary with help from our new found friends of the Nifty Home Sewers in preparation for people being able to come in to church again. I anticipate that with that being done we will be able to open the church at 11am each Sunday from Sunday 5th July for Private Prayer and Reflection as the first step towards coming out of the Lockdown.

The **Nifty Home Sewers** group used the Halls for the last time on Thursday and the halls have now been cleared of all the PPE that was made and sadly we will miss their company, on Tuesday,

Wednesday and Thursday mornings. I want to pay tribute to them in particular.

What began as a desire on the part of a few, mushroomed into a small cottage industry of many more willing volunteers who provided at little or no cost, Personal Protective Apparel at a time when there was so little available and it was difficult to come by. They did a remarkable job of producing literally thousands of Sets of PPE for those in our National Health Service and Social Care Service Sectors providing scrubs, washbags & masks, distributing to children's hospitals and hospices, mainstream hospitals, Health Centres and nursing homes as well as community Health and Social Care workers. I am told that even the Scottish Care Inspectorate at one point sought to make a request. The Park Church became one of a few Distribution Hubs where materials came in and went out for production and final distribution and it has been our privilege here in Park Church to have had a role in that and we would wish them well in whatever new ventures arise for them.

As we begin the process of coming out of lockdown, there will be a checklist of things we need to do, one of which is to seek the Kirk Session's permission to open the church for worship among other things and so I am going to arrange for **our first online Zoom Meeting of the Kirk Session on Wednesday 1st July at 7.30pm.** It will be a short meeting no longer than half an hour just to rattle through some of the procedural things we need to observe. Next week as part of the Weekly Devotional we will include an update of the work that has been carried out on the buildings of the Church.

I will update you with more information as things begin to unfold. In the meantime, let me say again that I hope everyone keeps well and remains safe and in good health.

With Best Wishes

Calum D. Macdonald

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It matters little what form of prayer we adopt or how many words we use. What matters is the faith which lays hold on God, knowing that He knows our needs before we even ask Him. That is what gives Christian prayer its boundless confidence and its joyous certainty.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer

Our Gracious God and Father we are privileged this day to come into your very presence to seek you face, to thank you for the blessing that has brought us through times of challenge and sustained us through moments of difficulty. You word tells us to be 'constant in prayer' and be 'thankful in all circumstances'. So, to that end, we pray you would hear us now in these quiet moments in our own homes as we come with a thankful heart.

Thank you for your amazing power and work in our lives, thank you for your goodness and for your blessings over us. Thank you that you are Able to bring hope through even the toughest of times, strengthening us for your purposes. Thank you for your great love and care. Thank you for your mercy and grace. Thank you that you are always with us and will never leave us. Thank you for your Son's incredible sacrifice so that we might have freedom and life even eternal life through Faith in Him and Him alone. Forgive us for when we don't thank you enough, for who you are, for all that you do, for all that you've given. Help us to set our eyes and our hearts on you afresh. Renew our spirits, fill us with your peace and joy. This day and every day as we give you our thanks in this way, we would also

want to remember before you those who also need you the most at this time.

We pray for those who have finished school and will be looking to begin their career in the world of Work and Employment as well as those going on to further education, seeking your hand upon them at this time. We pray for the summer recess that it is truly a time for rest and recuperation for teachers and pupils alike. As School begins in August, we pray for those starting school for the first time and those going on to Secondary Education praying that it is a time in which they will adapt well and flourish.

We remember before You Gracious God all who still struggle with the impact of Covid19, those who are working in our National Health Service, those working in Care Homes and as Homecare Workers. May their skills along with the care and concern they show, see the fruits of their labours. We pray for those in Hospital about to undergo, who are undergoing or have come through surgery or treatment - may they know your healing touch in their recovery. May those in full time nursing care be assured of your ever abiding presence with them and in the event of all that has happened this weekend in the centre of our city, we pray especially for those who have been Stabbed with a knife in this deranged incident of madness. We remember them and their families at this time, as well as those in the Police who seek to fulfil their duty as they investigate the incident all the while worried for their colleague. Help us to see past the fury and violence of the moment to see the hurt and the pain of all seeking your comfort, strength and presence and that even now they might see You at work in their lives at this time for we know that You can do immeasurably more than we could see or do ourselves at times and that is what makes you so Worthy of our praise and our thanks, and that in You alone can we put our trust now and always - In Jesus' Name,

Amen

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Bible Reading : Matthew 6: 19 -34

Treasures in Heaven

¹⁹ *“Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moths and vermin destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. ²⁰ But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moths and vermin do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. ²¹ For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.*

²² *“The eye is the lamp of the body. If your eyes are healthy,^[c] your whole body will be full of light. ²³ But if your eyes are unhealthy,^[d] your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light within you is darkness, how great is that darkness!*

²⁴ *“No one can serve two masters. Either you will hate the one and love the other, or you will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money.*

Do Not Worry

²⁵ *“Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothes?*

²⁶ *Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are*

you not much more valuable than they? ²⁷ Can any one of you by worrying add a single hour to your life^[e]?

²⁸ “And why do you worry about clothes? See how the flowers of the field grow. They do not labour or spin. ²⁹ Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendour was dressed like one of these. ³⁰ If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, will he not much more clothe you—you of little faith? ³¹ So do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ ³² For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. ³³ But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. ³⁴ Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.

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I am sure many of us will be left wondering what drove a man to the point of seeking to violently take the life of another who was not responsible for their situation but who nevertheless became the brunt of his desperation, frustration, anger and resentment to name but a few of the emotions no doubts going through his mind at the time. What about the collective madness of so many down south who thought it a great idea to visit the popular beaches in the South of England and elsewhere, (a Number of weeks ago Portobello Beach on the outskirts of Edinburgh was a not too different scenario) where having endured the lockdown measures to keep them safe from infection and disease just thought to simply throw caution to the wind and dispense with social distancing. What kind of a world is it when a President of the most powerful nation in the world seems to endorse and even exhibit a bigotry and bias towards those who have a different culture or skin colour from him or when a nation's dictator pursues an agenda of nuclear weapons development and proliferation all the while neglecting the wider needs of his people for food. What kind of a world is this where an Organisation formed to be the United Nations, whose task was to offset the risk of a world ever entering a world war again but cannot even adequately intervene in a more localised conflict because of the veto power of the more powerful nations whose own agendas trump the greater will and desire for peace.

Forgive my rant please. You see I think that a film producer of the 1960s came up with a perfect title for his film but also

describes the situation for us today. It was a film that starred many of the greats from film history; Spencer Tracey, Milton Berle, Mickey Rooney, Terry Thomas and even Buster Keaton to name but a few. The Film of course was called 'It's a Mad Mad Mad Mad World' and yet there are those who take a different tak. A jazz song written by Bob Thiele and George David Weiss became a world famous hit when Louis Armstrong released his recording of it in 1968 where he sang of 'What a Wonderful World' it was and remains to this day one of the greatest of songs across the world a song that everyone I am sure will have heard at one time or another.

What on Earth has all this to do with Matthew 6 and what Jesus said? This was part of the largest piece of writing encompassing the teaching of Jesus himself known of course as the Sermon on the Mount. In amongst his thoughts on the centrality of prayer and fasting, the attitudes we should adopt in dealing with others, giving to the needy, Divorce, revenge , making oaths, loving your enemies & judging others; almost in the middle of all this Jesus stresses the importance dealing with the story of today and not worrying about what tomorrow may hold. I suspect that behind this whole story, we can see our Heavenly Father who looks upon the world and all that has transpired and who recognised the shortcomings of Humanity as a whole and people as individuals, every one of us, the good and the bad, you and me included. While there is much to condemn us all (*We all have sinned and fallen short of God's glory: Romans 3:23*) there is much that God sees that is worth preserving. (Paul the apostle wrote these words to the church in Rome, "*You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. 7 Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous person, though for a good person someone might possibly dare to die. But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.*" (Romans 5: 6-8)

It may be that we think of this time in History where we see the nonsensical violence of others, the selfishness of the few, the lack

of care and concern for any but themselves; that this truly is a mad mad mad world at times. The teaching of Jesus for us today though is that we should "not worry about what tomorrow may hold but seek God first, to trust that He in his sovereign power will bring all things to a good outcome in the world at the right time and that even though we might not see how that outcome might be reached and why we might have to suffer in the process or that others go through suffering as part of that equation, that we learn nevertheless that God has his Hand on things already. I am sure in the moment of Gethsemane that it was that understanding of the Father in Heaven's sovereign power and purpose that affirmed Jesus decision to endure Calvary ("Not my will But Yours"). And in whatever awaits us whether blessing or trial, we know and trust that God's hand is upon us and that we should not worry about what tomorrow may hold. The Post Lockdown era is going to be different in the time to come, everyone speaks of 'the New Normal'.

Whatever may come we trust that God our Father walks beside us, goes before us, comes behind us, no matter what may befall.

Have a great week folks enjoy the weather while we can and as always I hope you enjoy the blessing of health and strength for each day as it comes.

Calum D. Macdonald



*May your day be
filled with
blessings!*

*May your
Night be
filled with*

*the peacefull dreams of
a good night's sleep
And may God Keep you
and guard over you
through it all*