

Giffnock: the Park Church



Sunday 16th May 2021

Good morning everyone,

Welcome to another Sunday Morning Devotional, our 60th week since the beginning of lockdown in March of last year. It's hard to believe so much time has passed since then and the story still continues. However, we carry on as best we can in the verdant hope that the sage words of an old minister ring true for all of us that "this too will pass".

This last week has seen all sorts of tragedy unfold before our eyes with the news of near civil war in Israel and an out of control rising death toll in India as it becomes the epicentre of the spread of the Covid nightmare in the world today. Meanwhile in our own country and even in our own city, we too have stuff going on and I am left wondering more and more at times where the principle in all these situations of "Let Right be done" lies. I am not convinced people know any more what right is at times. Someone in a TV debate speaks of how we should speak "your own truth" to a situation. Truth has become a somewhat relative term and is no longer an absolute in many eyes. A former president declares something to be Fake News because he doesn't like to be confronted with something he doesn't want to hear. Nations suppress the voices of dissent violently for fear the status quo is changed and the grasp of power and authority is lost. Meanwhile politicians distort the truth of things here in the UK and all it Spin where they offer a new narrative, an alternative truth even. In reality it is none other than a distortion of the truth- dare I say - it is a lie. This has been a mode of operation permeating every level of the Local, National and Devolved at times. In all this I have been reminded of the words of Malcolm Wild and Alwyn Wall, two songwriters who summed the solution in a song written way back in the late 70's called 'The World needs Jesus'. If anything, events here and abroad have validated that song title beautifully. The words of Jesus come to mind also in John 8: 31&32" *Jesus said, "If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. ³² Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."* Have a great week.

Please note
What is happening



Church Flowers

Flowers this week were kindly donated for the church by Mrs Wilma Macdonald in fond memory of her Mother - Maggie ..



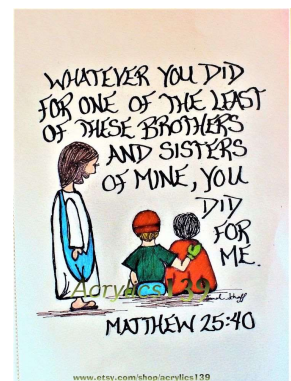
As we move form Tier 3 to Tier 2 we see things are gradually being relaxed. Our churches still have quite tight restrictions on what we can and cannot do and so While I Understand and in many ways share the frustration all this has placed on church life, I ask for your patience again as we look to see things begin to return to what we might see appropriately as a Normality we can enjoy. If you need any guidance about the state of restriction at the moment, please speak with the minister.



Carnwadric Church

Foodbank Update

The Food bank is proving its value in the increasing numbers of those availing themselves of such a service. Such has been the demans that supplies are running low in **Peas, Carrots, Pasta sauce, Custard , Rice Pudding. Tins of Potatoes, Toiletries, etc**
As always your help in this is most appreciated at the Foodbank Team at Carnwadric Church.





*In Our
Thoughts
and Prayers*

The Sad News of the Death of Mrs Chrissie Waddell

It is my sad duty to inform the Congregation that Mrs Chrissie Waddell passed away peacefully in Oxton House Care Home in Queen's Park last Thursday.

Funeral Arrangements have not yet been finalised at this time and I will confirm the detail of this next Sunday. In the meantime can I commend all in Chrissie's family to your prayers at this time of sorrow.

Meeting of the Kirk Session By Zoom

(Wed 26th May @ 7.30pm)

If possible please, could all elders be available for a time together on the date above by zoom. As usual I will send an agenda along with invitation to join the video conference with the requisite codes

Many thanks
Calm D. Macdonald



**Then you will call on me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you.
(Jeremiah 29:12)**

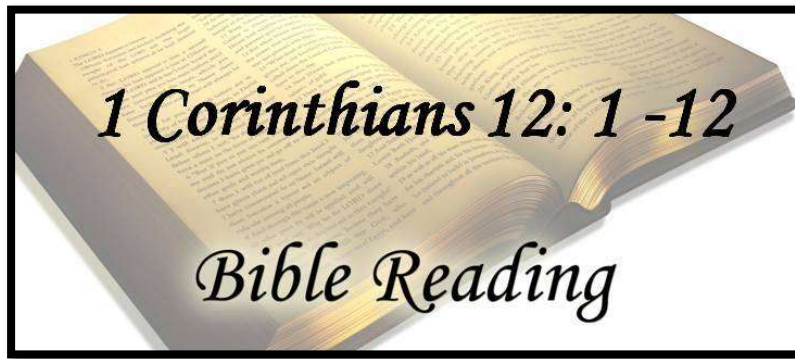
Let us Pray...

Our Father, we gather again in your presence as we have faithfully done each week Sunday by Sunday, sometimes in the privacy of our homes, sometimes able to enjoy the company of our Brothers and Sisters in Christ in your House, always looking to celebrate our Faith in You our Father in Heaven. As the Creator of all things and the Sustainer of all life, you have given us that rare privilege of direct access through the gift of Prayer. Through Your Spirit we can draw on You for Strength through your power and goodness to us. It is our prayer this day that you will see again our sense of Devotion along with our faith and trust in your Son and our Saviour Jesus whom we have come to love and to whom we offer our lives in service. See within us that heartfelt desire to respond to your great love to us we pray and as we acknowledge your love of us, we pray that you also would see our love for You.

Forgive us heavenly Father as we confess our need again of our Saviour. We know there is nothing we can do in our own strength to merit your goodness and that it is by the grace of our Lord Jesus that we come into your presence rightfully. In your grace and mercy, teach us how we might remain on the path that you have called us to follow. Draw near to us and speak to our hearts of our deepest needs. Teach us by Your Word and through your Spirit's lead and guidance how we might serve You better as your Ambassador in this broken and fallen world today.

As we remember those in the world today who need you the most, we seek your blessing on those who need you at this time. Be with those who mourn today - grant them your comfort. Be with those who need healing today - restore their health and strength we pray. Be with those who need your Peace today - grant that contentment that goes beyond explanation. Be with those who need to know You more and trust You Better - grant to them your Forgiveness and Grace. Be with your Church throughout the world going through persecution and be with our General Assembly as it meets - grant them wisdom in the decisions they reach, discernment in how they reach it, Grace and commons sense in how they expedite any and all that has been decided.

For now in this moment, we simply seek that you would draw near to us as we would draw near once more to You in Jesus name we pray.... Amen.



1 Corinthians 12:1-12

Concerning Spiritual Gifts

12 Now about the gifts of the Spirit, brothers and sisters, I do not want you to be uninformed. ² You know that when you were pagans, somehow or other you were influenced and led astray to mute idols. ³ Therefore I want you to know that no one who is speaking by the Spirit of God says, “Jesus be cursed,” and no one can say, “Jesus is Lord,” except by the Holy Spirit.

⁴ There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit distributes them. ⁵ There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. ⁶ There are different kinds of working, but in all of them and in everyone it is the same God at work.

⁷ Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good. ⁸ To one there is given through the Spirit a message of wisdom, to another a message of knowledge by means of the same Spirit, ⁹ to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by that one Spirit, ¹⁰ to another miraculous powers, to another prophecy, to another distinguishing between spirits, to another speaking in different kinds of tongues,^[a] and to still another the interpretation of tongues.^[b] ¹¹ All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he distributes them to each one, just as he determines.

Unity and Diversity in the Body

¹² Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ.



Good morning,

As we come to this reflection with only one week remaining before we come to celebrate the time we refer to as Pentecost and what some church traditions refer to as Whitsun where we look again at the coming of the promised Holy Spirit in the aftermath of Jesus' resurrection, our focus this week is to centre on the that of Paul's earliest letter to the Corinthians where he is looking to tackle a whole raft of difficult issues going on in this fledgling congregation. It had been reported to him that there was a sense of cliquishness with some following one faction led by those who favoured the Apostle Peter while another group followed Apollos. This early church was also blighted by a Jew/Gentile divide while there were also arguments over Communion and other facets of Worship including the use of spiritual gifts. Some had even become somewhat Antinomian in their views of life (those who thought that their faith stood them above any obligation to be morally upright and therefore felt they could do what they liked, if they liked, when they liked having no sense of a need for repentance - a bit like people in the Scotland today, he says cynically). In a town that was already renowned for its licentiousness, some Christians thought they could do likewise. Questions also arose about the Resurrection and Marriage which all meant the Apostle Paul needed to offer some guidance and being a distance away in Ephesus.

In 1 Corinthians chapter 12, Paul writes with a view to addressing two of these great issues, one being how God endows us all with gifts of one kind or another while also looking to see how these gifts might be used both in the individual setting but also with a corporate benefit for the whole church and the Work of God in particular. Chapters 12 - 14 deals with how people can use the God given talents they have and Church unity. ? It also deals with the "most excellent way" of God's love before looking more closely at the mindset and use of spiritual gifts, how they are applied and who they are to benefit. For our purposes there are 4 simple thoughts to explore today which while

fairly obvious nevertheless remain central to the life and worship of the Church.

1. We all have different Gifts
2. We all serve in different ways
3. We are all part of the Same body
4. We all have the same primary mission

We all have different gifts (1 Corinthians 12: 4)

I know that this is fairly obvious but sometimes we need to revisit these simple principles. Some have argued in the past that the Gifts (particularly the spiritual gifts) we have are gifts that we all possess. This is clearly not the case evidenced by the fact that we are not all equally gifted in everything. Not everyone is naturally creative and similarly not everyone is gifted with that ability to logically and methodically process things. We all have different gifts and our skill base is often varied too. That is true in our natural talents as well as our God given Spiritual gifts that we have been endowed with. I have met Professors who have been so well educated having several degrees under their belt but yet couldn't change a light bulb. They fitted the category of being so academically minded at times but they were of no earthly use. Similarly I have met some ministers and theologians who have been so heavenly minded they were also of no earthly use. Perhaps the greatest Spiritual gift of all has been that of Sanctified Common Sense at times.

Over the length of my time as a minister, a theme often brought out at General Assemblies and Presbytery meetings has been the theological concept of the Priesthood of all Believers where we were often reminded that ministers are not the Priestly Elite but servants of the Church. Indeed our Kirk Sessions are set up to be a team ministry in which the minister is only one among many elders and while his or her calling is to use the gifts of preaching and teaching to assist the Kirk Session and congregation they still are only one elder among equals and even one church member among equals. Our next Moderator of the General Assembly, will be an Elder a story brought about because there was a concern that Moderatorial appointment was the elite domain of the clergy. We all have different gifts - spiritual or otherwise and the big lesson for us in all these things is that **God can use what he has given you to best effect - if you will let Him.**

We all serve in different ways (1 Corinthians 12: 5)

In my previous occupation before training as a minister I came very early on to understand that the Body is a very complex machine involving many parts with all sorts of unique functions allowing the body function as efficiently as it

does. Paul used the analogy of the body to explain this in terms of God's gifting and how it all operates in order for the Body of Christ (the Church) to be able to function effectively. Everyone has a gift that they can offer to God and that God can offer to them in His Service. If our Kirk Session was full of people who were all brilliant preachers, the Kirk Session would not be able to function well. In our Congregational Board we would not be able to function as well as we do if we were all brain surgeons, but because we come from a variety of backgrounds we bring that experience and knowledge to a fuller discussion to be able to make the decision that can best benefit the church, its life and its purpose. People have often said to me that the success of our Children's Summer Mission each year would not be such a success without my input. The reality is, it would not be the success it has been over the years had it not been for all of our input. Those who keep me right in terms of timings for devotions, those who lead the crafts and those who assist in the games and work the tuck shop, register the "weans" and operate the powerpoint. Without our input and skills it would never be such a success. **No matter how small you think your input in the church is whether praying for others or helping out with teas or greeting people at the door with a friendly smile your input has an effect-** No matter how small or insignificant you might think it is.

An interesting story is told of how Polish Prisoners of War (POW's) impacted the lives of an RAF bomber crew. During the last months of the War, the RAF still carried out night bombing raids over Berlin. One night the bombers were attacked by a large group of German night fighters and during the dogfight one of the Bombers got separated from the rest. They watched helplessly as a German Fighter Plane came within range. Bullets whizzed by over and over until five bullets slammed into the fuselage of the bomber near the fuel tank. The crew braced for the explosion, but it never came. Although Fuel poured from the bullet holes, but there was no explosion. After landing safely back at base, a mechanic handed the pilot 5 bullets he had pulled from the plane. The pilot carefully opened the shells. They were empty --- except for a tiny wad of paper with a note that read: "We are Polish POWS forced to make bullets. When guards do not look, we do not fill with powder. It's not much, but is best we can do." Five tiny bullets, made by a few weak and lowly prisoners ... made all the difference for the Crew of that RAF Bomber.

My favourite verse in Paul's letters reflects on how God often chooses insignificant people and events to bring about His great purposes. *"But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong. He chose the lowly things of this world and the despised*

things - and the things that are not - to nullify the things that are..." (I Corinthians 1:27-28). This World War II story shows how the smallest deed can make all the difference. **God can use your service to best effect - if you will let Him.**

We are all part of the Same body

Church Unity is something often spoken of but not often successfully achieved. Theologically there is a difference between Church Conformity and Church Unity. The former tends to seek the removal of Denominational identity while the latter seeks to see how we can best use diversity while still being able to work together. Some Church denominations and individual church fellowships see themselves as distinctive and above working with others in the wider church. In my experience Unity is often best seen in when the church in all its diversity comes together.

For those who love classical music it can be a joy to hear all those in an orchestra playing in harmony with one another. Such an orchestra would not be the same if all the stringed instruments were removed, or the woodwind for that matter. While each musician has an individual talent that can be worth listening to on its own, the power of the orchestra is in its ability to produce music in harmony. Remove the percussionists from the equation and it won't sound the same. Andre Reiu may be a brilliant Conductor and his concerts may be epic but he will not get far without all the other musicians playing together and following his lead. (*"There are different kinds of working, but in all of them and in everyone it is the same God at work. - 1 Cor 12: 6*) The lesson from all of this is that **God can use the Church to best effect - if we all will let Him.**

We all have the same Primary Mission (1 Cor 12: 7)

"Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good."

My final point may be the shortest and simplest. Those of you who like me, love the Mission Impossible movies, will know what the operating catch phrase is - "Your Mission should you choose to accept it...". We are all aware of the central mission of the church to take the Gospel to all the world - how it is a task for us individually and collectively as a fellowship to speak of our faith in the one who gave himself as a Ransom for many and also to demonstrate that said faith on our actions and how we relate to others. For each one of us we need to see again how **God can use our lives as well as the life of the Church to best effect - if we all will let Him.**

Have a great week

Calum



*As we have been together and now
as we part , May the Grace of
God be with each one
of us. May the Peace
of God surround us
no matter where we
go. May the love of
God flow from us to
all whom we meet.
May the strength of
God protect us
through whatever
trials lie ahead .*

*May the Blessing of God
The Father , the Son and the Spirit
be with us Now and Always*

Amen