

Giffnock: the Park Church *Sunday 10th April 2022*



Easter — the Greatest Story Ever Told
... Always Was And Always Will Be !



Good Morning,

Welcome to our Easter/April Devotional as we look forward in this next week to the good news story of Easter and its significance for all of us at this time where life is so unsettling and unnerving. For the First time in two years, coming to church no longer has a mandatory requirement to wear a mask as we have been gradually easing up restrictions, whilst learning to live with the threat of the Corona Virus. I know that for some, this has been a long day coming while for others there may be a degree of uncertainty and even fear for what that means in terms of the risk of infection. I think it is important to reassure everyone that should you wish to continue to wear your mask in church, that you be reassured and encouraged to be comfortable with that and know that even if you need to retain a degree of distance from those around you, then that too is something that you can be reassured of. For the first time since the Easter of 2019 we will be able to Host Joint Church services again and more information about that is enclosed in the immediate pages that follow.

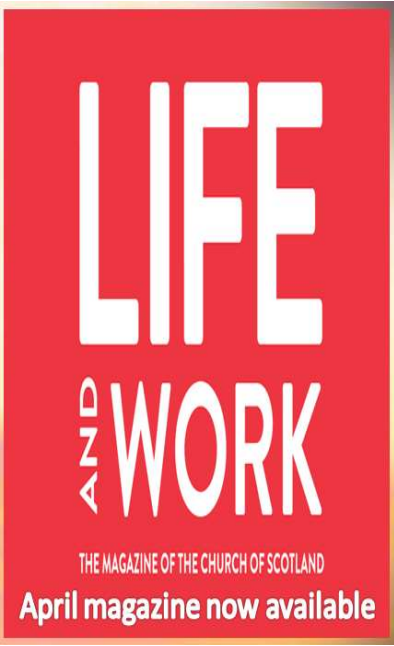
It has been a hard two years since the March of 2020 and you would have thought that in these difficult days where we saw the people at their best looking out for their neighbours via street Whatsapp groups so that elderly residents on their own did not feel too isolated, where many were involved in looking to assist those in the front line of health care providing PPE when it was in such short supply, seeing the scientific community come together with a unity of purpose seeking a cure and appropriate treatments to save lives. Contrast those moments where have seen Humanity at its most Noble to that of the Scenes of the Mass graves and systemic wholesale slaughter of Civilians in the Ukraine Conflict with Russia revealing Humanity's Worst traits there for all to see in a world of 24 hour news cycles. It truly is a mad, mad, world and yet isn't that the point of the Easter Story? We see the world at its most cruel in the crucifixion of "He who had no sin", While at the same time seeing Jesus of Nazareth who, with hindsight and understanding, we conclude is the Very Son of God Himself at his most Noble for "He Who had no Sin became Sin for us all" - the ultimate sacrifice. The Film producer and director George Stevens was right when he titled his classic 1965 Film about Jesus - the Greatest Story Ever Told. It always was and always will be.

Happy Easter

Calum D. Macdonald



Join us for
coffee and
Fellowship
after the
Service in
the
Jubilee
Hall

Holy Week Services
Maundy Thursday
Communion Services
Park Church
Thursday 14th April
At 7pm
Good Friday Service
in Giffnock URC
At 7 pm



**Celebrating Communion
Easter Sunday Morning
Sunday 17th April 2022 at 11am**

All are invited to join us as we host an
Easter Breakfast , our first since
Easter 2019.
Should You wish to Join us that
morning , could you please leave your
name and any specialist dietary
requirements.
This helps give an idea of what the
catering requirements will be. Thank
You!



**Sun 17th April
From
9.30am – 10.30am**

Duty Rosters

As things are now beginning to really ease up and open up again, we will need to have your assistance once again please.

Could you let us know if you are willing to assist in the role of :-

Door Duty

Flowers and their Distribution

Serving Tea and Coffee after the Service.

Please remember that the more who help with this means that our volunteers are not constantly on duty all the time which I am sure you would say is unfair if you were one of the constant volunteers.

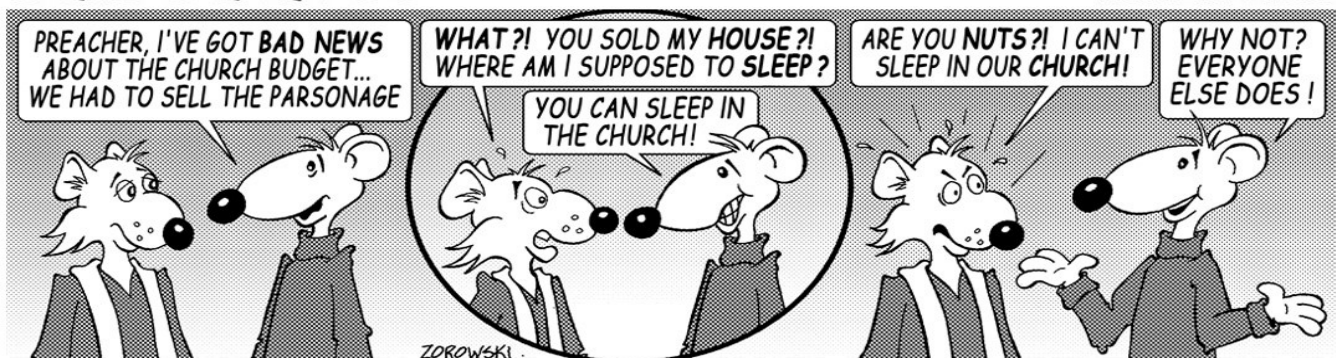
Our Track & Trace Volunteers



With Requirements for Track & now formally concluded. It is important to express our thanks and appreciation to three individuals in particular. I speak of course of Sandra & Bert Dickov & Alison Richardson who have unstintingly been there most Sundays since the early days of Covid Sanctions easing up allowing Church to open again. They not only took responsibility for Track and Trace Recording but also wiped the church down after each church service. Thanks are also is to be expressed to Anne Hamilton and Val Richmond who on occasion when they were away, stood in for them. We are grateful for their diligence and commitment throughout these times .

Church Mice

Karl Zorowski



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DATES FOR THE DIARY

Sunday 15th May Missionary Aviation Fellowship

Inclusive of this day will be the opportunity to see inside an actual 4 seat Cessna plane ... date

Yet to be Confirmed.

Park Church's 80th Anniversary and the Queens Jubilee

We are exploring to jointly celebrate our Church's Belated Birthday with the Queen's Platinum Jubilee with a Congregational Meal after church one Sunday in June at a venue yet to be decided.

We would like to know if this is something you would feel you would like to come along to. To that end there will be a sheet in which you can leave your name, telephone number and email with the confirmation of this. Thank You



"How's the Psalms' title-page coming along?"

**ARE YOU SWEATING
WHILST PUTTING
PETROL IN YOUR CAR
FEELING SICK WHEN
PAYING FOR IT, YOU
YOU HAVE GOT THE
CAROWNERVIRUS**

*"The greatest tragedy of life is not unanswered prayer, but unoffered prayer".
(F B Meyer)*

A Prayer for Palm Sunday



Adapted from a Prayer for Palm Sunday by Very Rev Dr James A Simpson
Sunday 9th April 2017

Let us Pray ...

God our Father we pray to you this day seeking your Blessing upon us once more as we enter into another celebration of Easter. We want to give you our thanks and praise today as we celebrate the Greatest Story ever told, the greatest life ever lived and the best of your promises fulfilled.

Lord Jesus, We remember today the timeless story of how when you rode into Jerusalem on a donkey, your friends threw their clothing in your path and children waved palm branches welcoming you with their shouts of Hosanna.

Father in Heaven, loosen today the Hosannas that often stick in our sophisticated throats. Let the child in us come alive that we too may joyfully honour you. May our blinkered eyes catch something of who you really are - the Way, the Truth and the Life.

As the holiest of weeks in the year begins, help us to examine our commitments, our loyalties, our priorities and assumptions. Do not let us be deceived as to where we would have stood had we been in Jerusalem that first Holy Week, we who constantly betray you with our lurking grudges, prejudices and reluctance to forgive.

Lord Jesus, Our prayer this Palm Sunday is that the events of that first Palm Sunday and the week that followed would pass silent judgement on our lives today. Help us by your Spirit to be like You, to have the courage to stand for the hard right against the easy wrong, and to share something of your passionate concern for justice and peace, for Gospel Hope and Gospel Faith. Help us as we are confronted by the big questions, Help us look to Your Word for some of the big answers by as we join today with the crowd that surrounded you on that first Palm Sunday, declaring that the answer to many of life's biggest questions lies in You and through You In Jesus name we pray ... Amen.

John 13: 1-17



John 13: 1-17

Jesus Washes His Disciples' Feet

13 It was just before the Passover Festival. Jesus knew that the hour had come for him to leave this world and go to the Father. Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end.

2 The evening meal was in progress, and the devil had already prompted Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot, to betray Jesus. 3 Jesus knew that the Father had put all things under his power, and that he had come from God and was returning to God; 4 so he got up from the meal, took off his outer clothing, and wrapped a towel around his waist. 5 After that, he poured water into a basin and began to wash his disciples' feet, drying them with the towel that was wrapped around him.

6 He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, "Lord, are you going to wash my feet?"

7 Jesus replied, "You do not realize now what I am doing, but later you will understand."

8 "No," said Peter, "you shall never wash my feet."

Jesus answered, "Unless I wash you, you have no part with me."

9 "Then, Lord," Simon Peter replied, "not just my feet but my hands and my head as well!"

10 Jesus answered, "Those who have had a bath need only to wash their feet; their whole body is clean. And you are clean, though not every one of you." 11 For he knew who was going to betray him, and that was why he said not every one was clean.

12 When he had finished washing their feet, he put on his clothes and returned to his place. "Do you understand what I have done for you?" he asked them. 13 "You call me 'Teacher' and 'Lord,' and rightly so, for that is what I am. 14 Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet.

15 I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you. 16 Very truly I tell you, no servant is greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. 17 Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them.



Have you ever known anyone who is a good story teller? I have always felt that good Film Directors and perhaps even ministers should always be able to tell a good story. I read of one occasion where Steven Spielberg was flying home from a long trip with his family when his young son when still very young sitting on his knee asked him to tell him a story. What happened next was quite remarkable because as He began to tell this tale from his own imagination, a strange thing happened, the other passengers, all one by one, went silent as they turned to listen to the master storyteller at work. It was not just his young son who became enthralled but everyone within earshot.

George Cooper Stevens has gone down in history as another film director who has gone down in the annals of the movie making world as one of their greats and one of his last films to be made was - the *Greatest Story Ever Told*, a biblical epic about the life of Jesus. It was not deemed to be his greatest work and in fact the movie received some criticism. There were some errors made in Casting. For example, they cast John Wayne in the role of the Centurion who declared in the crucifixion scene declared "Surely this was the Son of God". You didn't actually see it was John Wayne because it was that moment of the ninth hour where darkness had descended upon the earth but there was no mistaking the drawl of his voice.

George Cooper Stevens was however very clever in marketing the movie for the Title was what made it a must to see. It was the *Greatest story ever told*. G.C. Stevens had tapped in to something.

Like Spielberg, our Saviour was a master storyteller, he had that ability to hold people's attention and gain their trust very quickly. He had that Charisma and warmth that drew people to him. It was not just what he said though. It was also what he did, that ability he had to bring Healing to people's lives in a miraculous way, his power over death, and his power over

nature. And sometimes his gestures were the most significant of all in teaching terms.

In our reading for our April Devotional John Chapter 13 captures a moment which I have always thought sums up the event of the Easter Story. John doesn't focus so much on the sharing of bread and wine in the way that the other gospel accounts do. As important as the Act of Communion is and has come to sit at the heart of every Christian Denomination in its understanding of Worship and liturgy, John tells a story of Jesus immediately following this precious moment we call the Last Supper. It typifies the way Jesus Responded to so much. He would do what was least expected. Coming into the city of Jerusalem, he does not declare himself to be a military Redeemer who will rid them of the accursed Romans. He confounds the pharissess and the sadducees when he acted so violently in the temple seeing the wanton corruption and abuse of the money lenders and stall holders in "His Father's House", He thwarted their most difficult questions posed by the academic elite of the Sanhedrin and He has enthralled the thousands who listened, hanging on to every word he had to say and having had that precious moment with his disciples of explaining the symbolism of bread and wine he now does something unexpected.

Perhaps with Jesus realising his time of ministry was drawing to its ultimate conclusion and perhaps also having heard some of the disciples debating who would be the greatest, he felt there was another lesson still to teach and so he divests himself of his outer garments and begins to do perform the action of a lowly servant who would have the task of washing the dirt off people's Feet. In this act he has demonstrated again the reversal of things, how the least become the great and the great become the least.

Do we think for a minute that a head of state like the US President, or the Russian President or even our sovereign Queen were she not in the frailty of her later years, would ever do something like offer to wash the feet of their subjects... I don't think so. No Head of State would ever do such a thing and I am pretty sure that judging by Peter's reaction that was his view too.

Now take this one step further and consider that this Jesus, who is the very begotten Son of God Himself offering this gesture of service to his Disciples. The one who was with his Father in Heaven at the very outset of Creation, who flung stars into space and brought mountains, seas and forrests into being, that he would do such a menial task. Why ?

Perhaps it is because it is able to reflect something of the bigger picture of what the story of Easter overall reveals, how He who had no Sin

had become Sin that we might be liberated from our Sin, The one lesson that certainly sticks out is captured beautifully in his remarks to the disciples in verse 14-17, “¹⁴ Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another’s feet. ¹⁵ I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you. ¹⁶ Very truly I tell you, no servant is greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. ¹⁷ Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them.”

Love Each other by Graham Kendrick

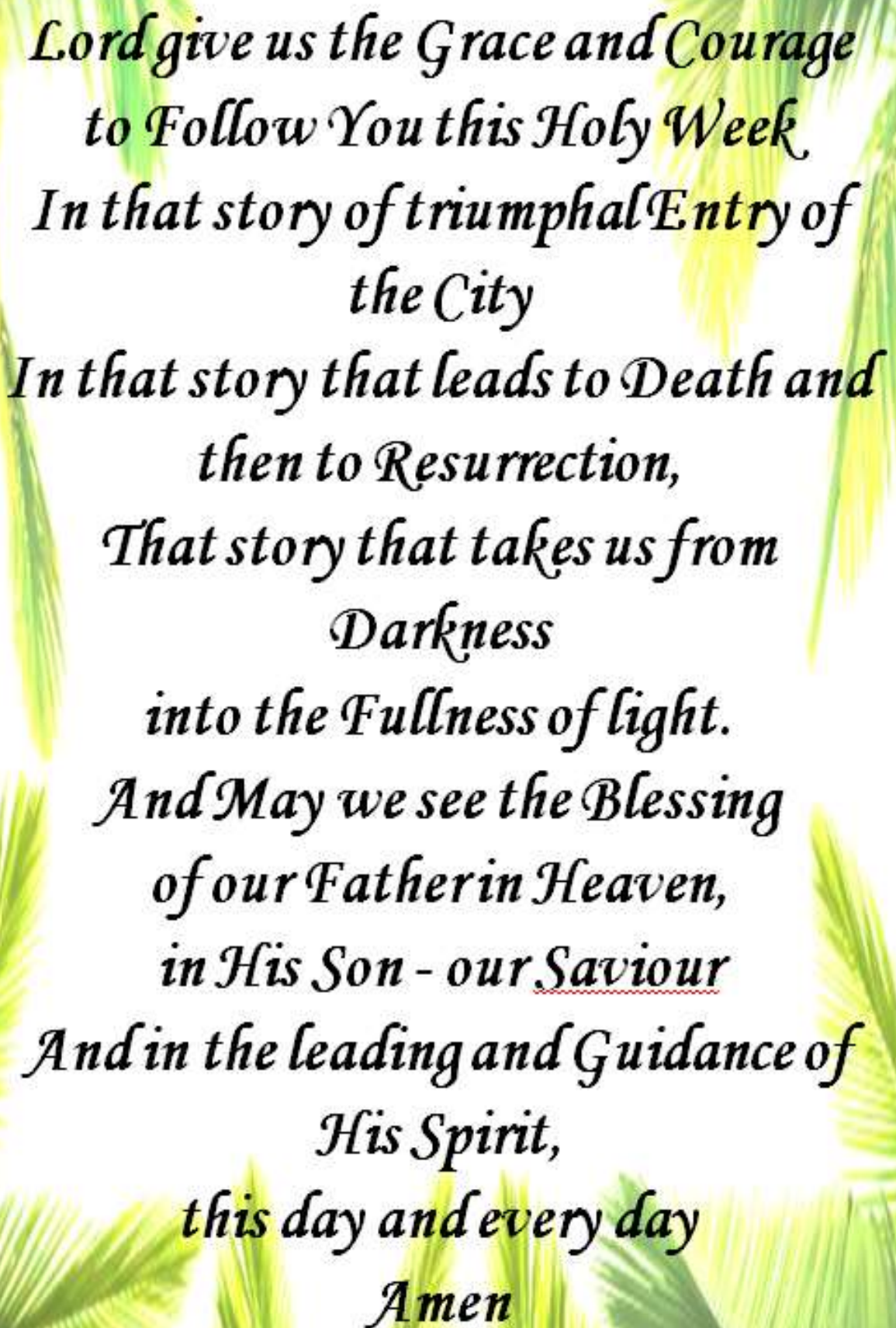
All the room was hushed and still
And when the bowl was filled
He stooped to wash their feet
And when it was complete, he said
This is what I'm asking you to do
This is why I'm kneeling here beside you
This is what I want my church to be
This is what I want the world to see
Who it is you follow
Love each other One another
Love each other
In the way that I have loved you
Walk together
And whatever comes Love each other
In the way that I have loved you
Let the room be hushed and still
Let us go to where he kneels
And join him as he serves
And learn his ways of love

Graham Kendrick has captured this moment on one of his songs which will be one of the mp3 files attached to this email. The Joy of Easter is that despite living in a time when we are seeing the worst excesses of Humanity at work in violence and war, with suffering and inhumanity of one against another The message of Easter is in complete contrast with the Story of God's Son coming into this world - leaving us the question Why?

However we also have answers. Jesus was the only one who could do it. His willingness revealed again that sense of God's deep rooted love for us and promise to us and He in doing all this has shown us what the Apostle Paul

Referred to as a more Excellent Way. George Cooper Stevens may not have made the best biblical epic of Jesus as a movie but He did recognise something about Easter. It truly is THE GREATEST STORY EVER TOLD - always was and always will be. Happy Easter.

Calum



*Lord give us the Grace and Courage
to Follow You this Holy Week,
In that story of triumphal Entry of
the City
In that story that leads to Death and
then to Resurrection,
That story that takes us from
Darkness
into the Fullness of light.
And May we see the Blessing
of our Father in Heaven,
in His Son - our Saviour
And in the leading and Guidance of
His Spirit,
this day and every day
Amen*