



Good Morning everyone,  
Welcome to our first Devotional of the year. I would like to begin with the confession that my sense of time is somewhat mixed when I think of the year that has passed of 2021. On the one hand I have felt that the time has passed really quickly while on the other there were moments in the year that just seemed to last forever. However, here we are in 2022 and I wonder whether you see things with the view of the eternal optimist having a glass that is half full, or whether we are going to be like the harsh stereotype of the Scottish soldier, Private Fraser, from Dad's Army, the classic BBC Comedy where he would say, "We're all doomed!", the character's immortal words of deep Presbyterian conviction.

In a sermon one Sunday a minister asked the question - "where is the hope?" I cannot help but think as we come to the end of nearly two years in the midst of this Covid Crisis affecting the world so dramatically with a wee bit still go yet from all accounts before we can begin to see some semblance of normality return, that we need to hold onto that four letter word with both hands. In his letter to the Romans, Paul the Apostle speaks of how "Hope will not disappoint us...".

So as we begin a new year, let me share a few hopes I have:-  
I hope that we will be able to see us lose the need for wearing a mask in church for Worship - what a joy that would be. I hope we will see more people finding that confidence to get out and about again and even feel they might be able to come back to Church again. I hope that the many who have lost any sense of hope might rediscover that there is always hope and that Paul's words will ring true for them and that Hope will not disappoint them. My hope is always centred on the thought that one day many will discover for the first time or re-discover again, what they once knew before, that the hope of God's Love for them is more than just a hope. I hope we all will be able to enjoy a better year than the previous two and we see God's Blessing through it all

Happy New Year

Calum D. Macdonald



# Church News



## Carnwadric Church Helping Hands Community Foodbank

As we say Good Bye to 2021 and Hello to 2022, the work of helping those in need continues and I want to thank everyone yet again - all who have been faithfully supportive of this important work where we are able to assist our neighbours and friends at Carnwadric Church as they help those whose needs are greater than ours.




**Faith and Prayer both are invisible but they make impossible things possible !**

**Tuesday mornings from 10am in the Session house The Powerhouse of Prayer**

## Church Diary

**Monday**  
Craft Club, Eastwood Choral Society  
McCarthy Dance School & Chess Club

**Tuesday**  
Prayer Meeting , Mother & Toddlers ,  
Bible Study , Girl Guides

**Wednesday**  
Mother & Toddlers & Brownies

**Thursday**  
Indoor Bowls, Keep Fit

**Friday**  
McCarthy Dance School

**Saturday**  
Keep Fit

**Sunday**  
Morning Worship




## Church Flowers

Flowers this week have been kindly donated from Mrs Fiona Mackie

## Church Mice

Karl Zorowski

...LISTEN NOW AS I READ FROM THE APOSTLE PAUL'S FIRST LETTER TO THE CORINTHIANS, CHAPTER 15, VERSE 51...




"BEHOLD, I SHOW YOU A MYSTERY: WE SHALL NOT ALL SLEEP, BUT WE SHALL ALL BE CHANGED..."

**1 CORINTHIANS 15**  
my spirit prayeth, but my understand is unfruitful.  
15 What is it then? I will pray with the understanding also: I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also.  
16 Else when thou shalt bless with the spirit, how shall he that occupieth the room of the unlearned say A-men at the giving of thanks, seeing he understandeth not what thou sayest?

WHO IS PAUL TALKING ABOUT HERE?

THE BABIES IN THE NURSERY?



ZOROWSKI

*"We have to pray with our eyes  
on God, not on the difficulties.*

*- Oswald Chambers*



*A New Year's Prayer*

*Another year is dawning  
With the chance to start anew.  
May I be kinder, wiser, Lord,  
In all I say and do.  
Not so caught up in selfish gain  
That I would fail to see  
The things in life that mean the most  
Cost not a fancy fee.  
The warm, kind word that I can give,  
The outstretched hand to help,  
The prayers I pray for those in need—  
More precious these than wealth.  
I know not what may lie ahead  
Of laughter or of tears;  
I only need to know each day  
That You are walking near.  
I'm thankful for this brand new year  
As now I humbly pray,  
My hand secure in Yours, dear Lord,  
Each step along the way.*

*— written by Kay Hoffman*

*The Lord's Prayer*

*Our Father which art in heaven,  
Hallowed be thy name.  
Thy kingdom come.  
Thy will be done  
in earth, as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread.  
And forgive us our debts,  
as we forgive our debtors.  
And lead us not into temptation,  
but deliver us from evil:  
For thine is the kingdom,  
and the power,  
and the glory, for ever.  
Amen.*

*Matthew 6:9-13 KJV*

## *Luke Chapter 2 Verses 41 - 52*



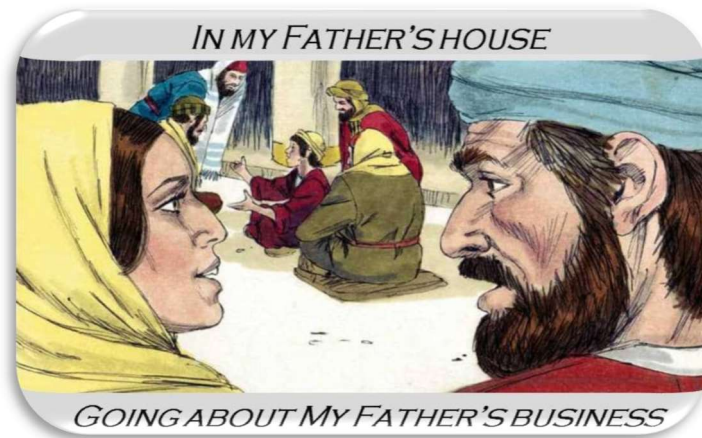
### **Luke 2:41-52**

#### ***The Boy Jesus at the Temple***

*<sup>41</sup> Every year Jesus' parents went to Jerusalem for the Festival of the Passover. <sup>42</sup> When he was twelve years old, they went up to the festival, according to the custom. <sup>43</sup> After the festival was over, while his parents were returning home, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem, but they were unaware of it. <sup>44</sup> Thinking he was in their company, they travelled on for a day. Then they began looking for him among their relatives and friends. <sup>45</sup> When they did not find him, they went back to Jerusalem to look for him. <sup>46</sup> After three days they found him in the temple courts, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. <sup>47</sup> Everyone who heard him was amazed at his understanding and his answers. <sup>48</sup> When his parents saw him, they were astonished. His mother said to him, "Son, why have you treated us like this? Your father and I have been anxiously searching for you."*

*<sup>49</sup> "Why were you searching for me?" he asked. "Didn't you know I had to be in my Father's house?"<sup>[a]</sup> <sup>50</sup> But they did not understand what he was saying to them.*

*<sup>51</sup> Then he went down to Nazareth with them and was obedient to them. But his mother treasured all these things in her heart. <sup>52</sup> And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man.*



As we move into the start of this New Year I thought we might review the story of Jesus' early life and see what we might find as an encouraging word, a challenging thought or confirmation of our Father's love for us. This story of Jesus when he was only 12yrs of age is the only story we have as point of reference to the childhood of Jesus and it therefore holds a special place for us as the bridge between the child in the manger and the time of Jesus' early 30's having grown up by then, following in his Step-Father's footsteps as a carpenter but who then begins his three year ministry travelling throughout Galilee, Samaria and Judea before coming to Jerusalem where within a week He is Hailed as a Redeemer on entry to the city but by the end of the week is arrested, tried and executed by Crucifixion only to rise that first glorious Easter Sunday morning.

There are a number of thoughts we could reflect on from this text. We could consider verse 52 held as a central theme by the Boys' Brigade where with proper nurture and example young boys could grow "***in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man.***" (perfect for 4 points in a sermon) We could consider the wisdom of Jesus and how he could confound his critics and enlighten his listeners. We could think of how Mary had these moments to treasure , the moments of joy at Jesus Birth, the moment of amazement as the boy Jesus sits and argues with the academic elite of his day holding his own easily, and those conflicting moments of deepest sadness as her Son, the precious gift of God himself to her, is crucified to the sound of his merciless critics jeering and sneering on what we call Good Friday only to be confounded three days later by the Joy of Glorious Resurrection on Easter Sunday.

Let me share a brief story somebody shared which I think helps set the scene. **"When I was about ten, I went on a school trip to the Science Museum in London. We all went down by train, took the underground to the museum and I spent several blissful hours goggling spellbound at**

everything. It was a Wonderful place! At the end of the day, the class trouped back across London and took the train back home..... Except me. I was still goggling at everything.

It was only when the museum staff came round at closing time that I realised that my group had gone without me. Looking back as a teacher and a parent I am appalled. What horrors would be running through my head if I had left a 10-year-old girl alone in London with no money, no food, no transport and no means of contact? This was, of course, in the Stone Age before mobile phones. As a teacher, the thought is terrifying; for a parent, even worse!

As that 10-year-old however, I was not perturbed at all. I left the museum and followed the signs to the underground. I looked at the map to work out how to get across London to the train station (it had a funny name, so I had remembered it). Then I checked the timetable, somehow obtained a ticket and was on the platform, waiting for the next train home when a very flustered but very relieved teacher bounded up to me. My parents must have been out of their minds with worry but I had just been enjoying the museum.

Can we imagine what Mary and Joseph went through in this story? How do you think we would feel when as parents with our young child who we thought was by our side in the supermarket has actually wandered off to another aisle where he or she knows where the toys are. For every loving parent who has experienced that moment, it is their worst nightmare and fears come true. It's a horrible feeling when it happens. Fears for the safety of their little one and perhaps even fears that someone might call "the Social" and report them and that is usually over a period of minutes and not the four days in Mary and Joseph's Case. (One day on the road before noticing he was not with the anyone in the wider family on the road home, three days to travel back and search the city to find him.)

Mary's and Joseph may very well have been going out their minds just as the teacher and the parents in the other story, Jesus' answer, like the child who had been just enjoying the museum, his response had that child-like innocence too... *"Why were you searching for me?" he asked. "Didn't you know I had to be in my Father's house?"*

It is the comment "I had to be in my Father's house" that speaks to me most particularly. That is to be our theme today. For Jesus, It was important that he spend time in that place which was then the very heart of Old Testament faith and practice - the Temple of Jerusalem. The people he met with were the key experts in Old Testament law. They were the keenest

theological minds of the land and of God's people Israel and it made perfect sense for Him as God's Son to be there.

For us as Christians, I believe that this moment stands as a key opportunity of understanding why Christians should gather together in Church, a place we often will refer to as our God's House, A place where we can grow "in wisdom and stature and in favour with God and Man": A place where we can operate from in our desire to serve God and reach out to others in His name. I have heard all the arguments about how one can worship at home every bit as much as one can in church and how they therefore don't need to come to Church. And while they may be right about Church not being the only place we can give thanks to God in, the reality is that those who make the argument for worshipping at home or elsewhere probably don't and it presents merely an excuse needed to justify their lack of attendance. Now for those who are truly unable through frailty of one kind or another to come to God's House - that is fully understandable and we who are able to gather together in God's house should uphold them lovingly in Prayer seeking that God may Draw near to them and sustain them through these difficult days in whatever situation they find themselves. Those who say they don't need to come to church need to be challenged with the questions of how they are encouraged in their faith and how they encourage others through the example of their faith. Church is the natural habitat for the Christian, the ecosystem that sustains them.

Jesus speaks of the Importance of his Father's house in a number of other occasions. One is found later in Luke 15 where Jesus tells the story of the prodigal son, the younger son who takes his Father's inheritance and squanders it only to find himself in a place of complete ruination. The bible tells us that when he came to his senses, he said "I will go home to my Father..." (Luke 15: 17 - the Living Bible). The old Chorus sung in many a prayer meeting of old would often be heard.

***Back to my Father and home,  
Back to my Father and home,  
I will arise and go  
Back to my Father and home.***

The Evangelical cry of the gospel to all of us in this broken and fallen world is that we need to return to our Father's house and that we all must make that decision to go ourselves as no-one else can make that decision for us. That we need to trust in Jesus grabbing hold in faith with both hands and letting go of everything else not to do so is something that we do at our own peril.

In Luke 16 verse 19 and following, having already recorded the story of the prodigal son in the previous chapter another story is told by Jesus of a Rich man who lives the life of comfort and excess to the exclusion of all others seeing that even his dogs are fed better from the scraps of his table than the poor beggar called Lazarus down at the gate of his mansion. When they both die at the same time and Lazarus enjoys the Boon of Heaven while the rich man descends into what is referred to as Hades, he realises 2 things.

- 1) that there is only this life to get things right with God
- 2) that we need to have an urgency for all in our families and beyond to hear God's Call upon them as well.

Today here in Scotland there is a marked ambivalence to Faith in Jesus, the relevance of Christian Faith and the hope of eternity. We sometimes think it is irrelevant or outmoded, that is has no bearing on life today. The prodigal son was brought to his knees before realising that he needed to go back to his Father and home. In his Arrogance he needed to be brought low. For the Rich man in Luke 16 it was too late for that decision to be made and his concern shifted to that of his family. The urgency of the Gospel today is that we need to rediscover our evangelical fervour for saving the soul and bring hearts to repentance and faith. If we don't, our friends and families may be lost forever. The theologian AW Tozer once said, ***"God will take nine steps toward us, but He will not take the tenth. He will incline us to repent, but He cannot do our repenting for us"***

Which comes to the last reference of our Father's House found this time in the Gospel of John and the opening words of Chapter 14. ***'Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God<sup>[a]</sup>; believe also in me. <sup>2</sup> My Father's house has many rooms; if that were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you? <sup>3</sup> And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am.'***

The great promise of Jesus, is that He prepares a home for us. A theologian once concluded that if it took God only days to make the world and that it has taken God 2000 yrs to prepare a home for us with Him, then the world we live in today is like living in a dump in comparison with his "riches in glory" as the apostle Paul referred to it. This is not a promise to hide away but to proclaim from the highest rooftop. May we all understand more fully why we all need to be in our Father's house not just for a Sunday but for Eternity.

Every blessing for the weeks ahead  
Calum





*May the Blessing  
of the Father,  
the Son & the Spirit  
Keep you today and  
each day that follows*

*May you  
hear his voice,*

*Follow His footsteps  
Be comforted*

*by His care  
And live in his Grace*

*Now and always  
Amen*