

COMFORT

in

North Carrick

Caring Observant Mindful Friendly Obliging Responsible Tactful

Providing comfort to the people of North Carrick at a time of crisis

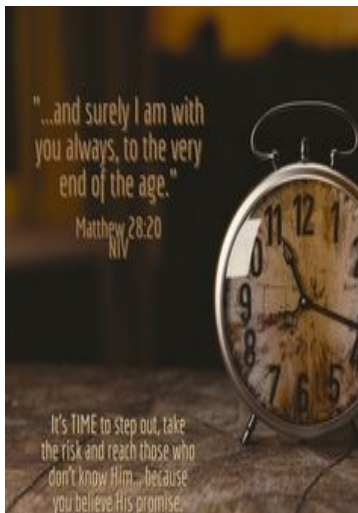
Sunday 17th May 2020

Hail the day that sees him rise

God has gone up with a shout, the Lord with the sound of a trumpet. – Psalm 47.5

Thursday 21st May is the 40th day of Easter and the day we celebrate the Feast of the Ascension of the Lord.

The Ascension marked the end of Jesus' 40 days of ministry following his resurrection and the event at which his disciples see him ascend to heaven to sit at the right hand of God.



Just as Jesus was resurrected in body, he ascends bodily, physically, to heaven. Before his ascension he tells his disciples to wait in Jerusalem where they will receive the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost. And when he gives his Great Commission instructing them to go and make disciples, he also tells them: "And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age." (Matthew 28.20).

So how is Jesus still with us if he physically ascends? Jesus is with us all as Christians and as the universal Church – the body of Christ.

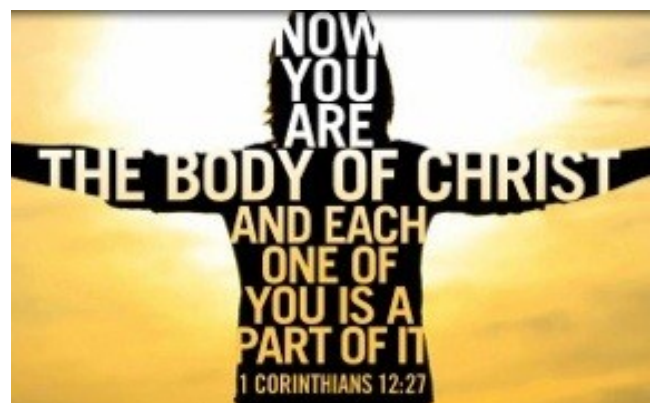
Paul says: 'And he has put all things under his feet and has made him the head over all things for the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.' (Ephesians 1.22-23).

As I consider the words of Jesus and of Paul, my prayer is that we can follow the commission given to us and that in our own way live to be more Christ-like each day.

I am reminded especially of these words, written by St Teresa of Avila:

*Christ has no body but yours,
No hands, no feet on earth but yours,
Yours are the eyes with which he looks
Compassion on this world,
Yours are the feet with which he walks to do good,
Yours are the hands, with which he blesses all the world.*

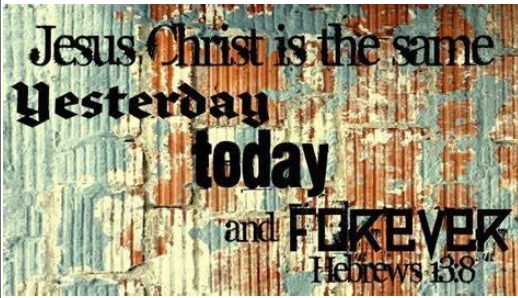
Matthew Wyllie



A message from Lynne Rankin, Session Clerk of Maybole Parish Church

A Prayer in Lockdown from the Church of Scotland website.

Lord, in a world turned upside down, where daily life is far from normal, we come to you, the One from whom our help comes.



The One who is the same, yesterday, today and for ever.

We come to you, giving thanks that you have promised to always be with us.

In your presence we find the security for which our hearts cry out at this time.

In this time of personal and national crisis help us to believe this is true.

Help us to trust in you.

Give us a faith that will be an anchor, firm and secure, in the storms we are going through.

Lord, we pray for all directly affected by the Coronavirus Covid-19.

For those who have been infected; those who have been hospitalised; those who have lost loved ones.

We pray also for all who are caring for and supporting those with the virus. Medical staff, health workers, carers. The emergency services. Families and friends.

Give them strength, compassion and love in these difficult days.

Lord, you knew abandonment and isolation. In the Garden of Gethsemane you were abandoned by your disciples. They slept while you prayed. In your anguish they could not keep watch with you.

On the cross you felt abandoned by your Father.

We pray for all who feel abandoned or isolated because of the emergency we are going through.

Help us, in these difficult days, to be good neighbours. To reach out in love to our neighbours in our communities and beyond.

Lord you said, 'By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.'

We give thanks for all who by their acts of love and selfless service are standing by their neighbours especially in these challenging days.

Amen.

From Marguerite Hunter Blair, Chair of Our Lady and St Cuthbert's Parish Pastoral Council

"The Holy Spirit whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and remind you of all that I have told you"
John 14:26

The 6th Sunday of Easter reminds us that we have the power of the Holy Spirit within us and that we must use this Spirit to follow in the path and deeds of Jesus. Jesus said to his disciples: "If you love me you will keep my commandments. I shall ask the Father, and He will give you another Advocate to be with you forever, that Spirit of truth is with you, He is in you. I will not leave you orphans; I will come back to you."

A crisis brings out the best in us all. We only need to look around us every day to see this in our community. It is easy to find things to clap about and even easier to be moved to tears at the goodness around us. But at times we can feel very disappointed in ourselves or in others. With the current restrictions in place we can be quick to judge others harshly for apparently not following the rules. In these challenging times we need to draw on the strength of the Holy Spirit to give us the wisdom and ability to be compassionate and forgiving and follow in the path of Jesus.

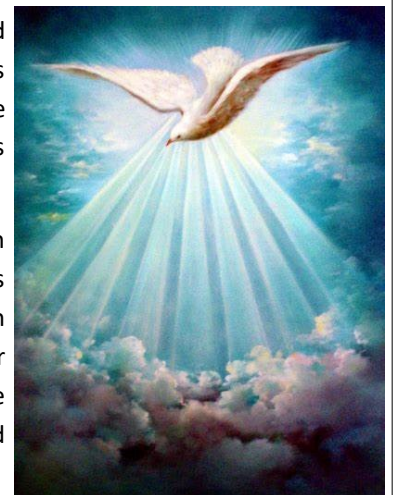
In your quiet place of prayer reflect on the beautiful hymn

Be still, and know I am with you,

Be still, I am the Lord.

I will not leave you orphans.

I leave you with my world. Be one.



From Rev Dr John Lochrie, Locum Minister at Crosshill and Maybole Parish Churches

When St Paul crossed into Europe one of his objectives was to visit Athens. That was a city that seemed to offer great potential for the faith. It appeared to be particularly religious, being full of temples and shrines dedicated to almost every known god. Just in case, there was even an altar to the Unknown God. Clearly for the Athenians nothing was to be left to chance.

Athens was also a place where many were eager to hear and debate new ideas, and it had seemed to be the ideal forum for such discussions. Luke puts it clearly in Acts 17:21 –“all the Athenians and strangers which were there spent their time in nothing else, but to tell or hear some new thing”.



When Paul arrived, having been forced out of Thessalonica, he began as he usually did, in the synagogue, but soon began to preach openly in the market. What he said there attracted attention because his preaching of the resurrection was strange and new. Some of the philosophers of Athens brought Paul to the Areopagus seeking enlightenment.

The Areopagus was a rocky hill just below the Acropolis, the home of the Parthenon and other temples. The significance of taking Paul to the Areopagus is not always clear to us.

That was where the City Council met. It was composed of elected citizens and was the origin of democracy (literally in Greek, rule of the people by the people for the people).

Here then was a golden opportunity for Paul. On the Areopagus he had the ear of the people who really mattered in Athens. It is clear from Acts that they listened, that they showed interest in what Paul had to say. Unfortunately that was all. Athens listened, but Athens did nothing and Paul moved on to Corinth leaving Athens as the city of what might have been.

Listening to a message is never enough. It has to be heard and then there has to be action. That is something we need to remember just now. Turning on the radio or the television for the daily Covid briefings is all very well.

There we get the message – Stay at home. As a message it is valuable, but only if we all follow it.

It is becoming clear that for some this is becoming more and more difficult as the lockdown lengthens and the weather improves.

The temptation to be out and about seems to be becoming harder to resist. Perhaps the time has come, as has happened in England; to change the message, but Stay Alert does not really seem to mean anything.

Perhaps a more appropriate message for the coming weeks as small changes are likely to be made to the lockdown advice, was suggested in a letter to the Herald recently – Stay Apart. When and if we are allowed out more staying apart to maintain social distancing will be vitally important.

As Paul’s experience showed in Athens listening is all very well, but if that is the end of the matter it is of no use at all.

North Carrick Community Resilience - Isolation Support

The wonderful volunteer teams of North Carrick Community Resilience - Isolation Support are now able to offer the following services for our elderly and vulnerable:

Prescription pick up and delivery

Groceries delivery, with phone payment system for certain shops now available

Telephone chats/support/befriending/therapy

Dog sitting and dog walking

Advice on games and activities to keep you busy at home

Signposting to other support agencies

Help with getting pets to the Vet

To register for help/support please call 07707056170 (Mon-Sat 9.30am-12.30pm)

or email northcarrickresilience@outlook.com

FALSE GODS

Athens is the capital city of modern Greece, and one of the oldest cities in the world. In classical times Athens was a vibrant centre of culture and learning, widely referred to as the cradle of Western civilisation and the birthplace of democracy.



In St. Paul's day, elaborate altars had been erected all over Athens to unknown gods. Built for various reasons, many of these altars had fallen into disrepair. One of them, however, had been restored to its former glory. This did not escape the apostle's notice, and in a sermon (with a hint of sarcasm) he told the Athenians that, while walking round the city, he had noticed an altar dedicated 'To an Unknown God'. This provided the thrust of a sermon - namely, that God, the Creator, the Lord of heaven and earth, is the only God worthy of worship. This was a blunt rebuke to those who would worship any god of their own manufacture.

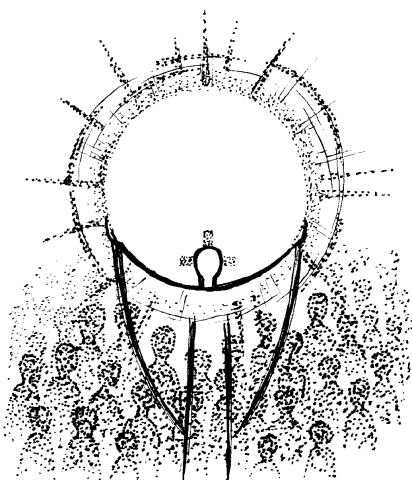
Human beings have been described as 'worshipping animals.' We must find something or someone to be the focus of our ultimate allegiance. To achieve this, we will even manufacture our own gods and pay homage to them. Today, many put their faith in gods of their own making - scientific, cultural, political, technological and so on. We have the powerful cult of celebrity, where iconic figures are accorded almost semi-divine status, while we also bow at the altar of wealth, power, ambition and a host of other contrived 'deities.' Such gods of human ingenuity or human devilry fail to satisfy or save, and those who put faith in them later regret it.

In 1902 Henry Adams (American writer) visited an exhibition (The Great Exposition) in Paris. He spent the whole summer there, fascinated by the newly-invented giant dynamo on display. He said that for him it was like 'a symbol of divinity.' He even began to sense it had a moral force, and felt drawn towards it, in the way that Christians are drawn to the Cross. He noted how easy it is for human beings to venerate man-made objects to the point of worship, and how the dynamo was so impressive that he could almost 'pray' to it.

The gods of our own making are ultimately of no use. They will never give that love which will not let us go, or bestow that peace which passes human understanding. In the face of adversity, they are redundant, just like those derelict monuments to unknown gods scattered around Athens.

As Eastertide comes to a close, let us forsake idolatry, and abandon the the gods of our own making. Let us fix our worship on the one true God, the Creator, the Lord of heaven and earth. For this God is not 'an unknown deity,' but One who made himself known in Jesus Christ, raised from the dead and alive for evermore!

Rev Gerald Jones



Perhaps as these anxious weeks of isolation and restricted movements continue, prayer may have become a more important feature of many people's lives. Sometimes we forget how important prayer was to Jesus, how very powerful it is in releasing God's mercy and graces.

When we recall that the night before his crucifixion Jesus prayed earnestly to his Father for protection for his followers, we can take comfort from his prayer for it includes ourselves in our day and age. His intercession and care goes on for all time. As we pray we pray together with Jesus, commending ourselves and our world to the Master Builder, to the one who created us in the first place.

I remember a wise old Anglican priest telling me that God is glorified (or not) in each generation of his people. In the present crisis prayer is a powerful and very real resource. It not only changes us as individuals for the better but can effect change in our entire world. Prayer from the heart moves the heart of God. As we look forward to the coming feast of Pentecost, we pray for a fresh outpouring of the Spirit on our troubled and needy world.

Ellen Hawkes

In a time of crisis, everyone pulls together. With all churches closed until further notice, local church members have come together to produce this newsletter. None will be distributed by hand but will be passed on electronically. If you know someone who may be interested in reading it, please send it on. Through Palm Sunday, Holy Week and Easter Sunday, the hope is that some COMFORT is available. God bless.