

St Nicholas Church, Sighthill

26th September 2021

With COP26 (the 26th UN 'Conference of Parties' on Climate Change) due to take place in Glasgow in November, there is a particular focus this year to our worship during Creation Time/Season of Creation through September, as we look to the gathering of government and civic organisations from around the world to debate and determine how to act in the ongoing Climate Emergency. With the world focussing on the meeting in Scotland, the churches here continue to encourage our congregations and members to confront the threats posed by climate change to the ecology of our planet, to our environment on which we depend and to human well-being and flourishing.

Call to Worship

We come to you O God, because you are the Creator. We come to you O Lord, seeking answers to our questions. We have trusted your steadfast love; Our heart shall rejoice in your salvation. We will sing to you because you have dealt bountifully with us. We come looking for a song to sing; We wait for your voice to call us from beyond our fears. We come ready to learn, to worship and to

Opening Hymn: Psalm 23 (The Lord's my Shepherd) New Scottish Hymns

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mWDGgwHmNYM>

Opening Prayer

Leader: The heavens proclaim Your glory, O God;

All: And their voice goes through all the earth.

Leader: Your Law is perfect, Lord

All: More precious than gold, and sweeter than honey

Leader: O Lord, You are our rock and our redeemer

All: May the words of our mouths and the meditations of our hearts be acceptable to You.

Leader: Holy God, Maker of All, we come to You in worship, offering our praise and prayer in wonder at all You have made. With all creation our voices rise to You and proclaim Your enduring faithfulness.

Come to us in the power of Your life-giving Spirit and enliven our hearts and minds to respond in faith and trust to the knowledge of Your love and grace. For the sake of Your Son, Jesus Christ Amen

The Lord's Prayer

Bible Reading: Mark 9:38-50

Another Exorcist

John said to him, 'Teacher, we saw someone casting out demons in your name, and we tried to stop him, because he was not following us.' But Jesus said, 'Do not stop him; for no one who does a deed of power in my name will be able soon afterwards to speak evil of me. Whoever is not against us is for us. For truly I tell you, whoever gives you a cup of water to drink because you bear the name of Christ will by no means lose the reward.'

Temptations to Sin

'If any of you put a stumbling-block before one of these little ones who believe in me, it would be better for you if a great millstone were hung around your neck and you were thrown into the sea. If your hand causes you to stumble, cut it off; it is better for you to enter life maimed than to have two hands and to go to hell, to the unquenchable fire. And if your foot causes you to stumble, cut it off; it is better for you to enter life lame than to have two feet and to be thrown into hell. And if your eye causes you to stumble, tear it out; it is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye than to have two eyes and to be thrown into hell, where their worm never dies, and the fire is never quenched. For everyone will be salted with fire. Salt is good; but if salt has lost its saltiness, how can you season it? Have salt in yourselves, and be at peace with one another.'

Brief Reflection

Whoever is not against us is for us. Making common cause with people who do not share our faith, or our culture, or our political views, can be challenging. Accepting that people who are not part of 'our' group can lead us to think in terms of 'them' and 'us', and a desire to maintain some form of ideological or theological purity.

What Jesus says is that even those who are not part of our group, or movement, or church, can nevertheless be with us in our endeavour to make the world a better place and to improve the lives of all the world's peoples.

Faced with the urgency of the climate situation we are in now, we could all learn to set aside our differences, and seek instead the common ground and shared purpose of all who wish to see change in the attitude and behaviour of governments, industries, and communities throughout the world. Equally, the voice of the Church can be a powerful witness and encouragement to those of all faiths and none who feel that they are in an uphill struggle and in a race against time.

Equally, children (here 'little ones', and it is clear from the context that Jesus is referring to those like the child who He has held in His arms, telling His disciples that when they welcome a child like this, they welcome Jesus Himself) feature regularly in the gospels as an example of the values of the kingdom of God. The first are last, and the last first; the great of the world become the least and the least become the great. Elsewhere, Jesus will tell the same disciples that they must be as accepting and trusting as a little child, if they are to see that kingdom.

The example set for us is for every area of life: what the world so often holds dear is counted of little significance with God, and vice versa. The way in which people and nations are driven to compete for a greater share of creation's wealth is destructive of the very creation on which we all depend. The ambitions of businesses to profit from their exploitation of finite natural resources too often leads to environmental degradation and disregard for the value of human life. Only the surrender of self, and of the struggle for personal or national advantage at the expense of others, will lead to a right stewardship of creation, such that it will continue to bless and enrich the lives of generations yet to come.

Rev Alan F. Miller, Vice-Convenor of
the Faith Impact Forum, Church of Scotland

O Lord, You are our Rock and our Redeemer - a prayer for Sunday 26 September

(by Lord Wallace, the Moderator of the General
Assembly of the Church of Scotland)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vqFrPiYszeY&t=41s>

O Lord, You are our Rock and our Redeemer,
Hear us as we call to you with open lips and open
hearts. Hear us and accept us we are. Lord, in your
mercy, **Hear our prayer.**

O Lord, You are our Rock and our Redeemer,
Hear us as we call to you in the times in which we
live. Hear us in hard times and answer us in your
time. Lord, in your mercy, **Hear our prayer.**

O Lord, You are our Rock and our Redeemer,
Hear us as we call to you with the words that you
have given to us. Hear us with words hewn from the
experience of life. Lord, in your mercy, **Hear our
prayer.**

O Lord, You are our Rock and our Redeemer,
Hear us as we call to you though our words are often
frail and our hearts sometimes faint. Hear our words
and accept the offering of our hearts.
Lord, in your mercy, **Hear our prayer.**

O Lord, You are our Rock and our Redeemer,
Hear us as we call to you and may the words we offer
and the meditation of our hearts be acceptable in
your sight. Lord, in your mercy, **Hear our prayer.**

Song (Closing song for 1st/ Zoom service): Beautiful Brokenness.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sl7IYM1IZIs>

Final hymn (Live service): For the Beauty of the earth

1. For the beauty of the earth
For the beauty of the skies
For the love which from our birth
Over and around us lies
Father unto You we raise
This our sacrifice of praise
2. For the beauty of each hour
Of the day and of the night
Hill and vale and tree and flower
Sun and moon and stars of light
Father unto You we raise
This our sacrifice of praise
3. For the joy of love from God
That we share on earth below
For our friends and family
And the love that they can show
Father unto You we raise
This our sacrifice of praise
4. For each perfect gift divine
To our race so freely given
Thank you Lord that they are mine
Here on earth as gifts from heaven
Father unto You we raise
This our sacrifice of praise

CCLI Song # 1097183, Foliott Sandford Pierpoint

Final blessing

As the journey continues, remember this:
Our God reigns! He is robed with majesty and
armed with strength. His kingdom is from
everlasting to everlasting. He holds our world and
our lives securely. So, do not be afraid, but go from
here with confidence, knowing that the God who
goes with you is greater and more powerful than
anything else you will face this week.