

**St. Margaret's Community Church of
Scotland**

Dunfermline

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11thSeptember 2020 Newsletter

William Booth, founder of the Salvation Army was in the habit of giving the Army a different motto or challenge every year. For one of those years his motto was simply, "Others."

If I have learned anything through the last few months, it is surely that this is one of the great mottos of the Christian faith. We have had to look out for others and even by our self-isolation, that was an act of concern and love for others in order to stop the virus spreading – it seems to me that we are again facing the question of whether we are going to put our own wants and pleasures before the greater good of society, or not. This is in particular a challenge to younger people under the age of 35 who might catch the virus but it will not have the same impact on them but in the process of careless and one might say, selfish living, spread it into the older more vulnerable community.

Others! Will that be our motto going forward? The other day I was speaking with a young man outside the church. I invited him to come along on Sunday. "What if there is not enough room for me if your numbers are limited." The man standing beside me who is an elder in our church said this to him – "In that case, you can have my place!" That is what it means to put other people first.

Over the whole of this pandemic we have had our food trolley out and filled twice a day. I was speaking to someone outside the church the other day and he

said to me "this has been a life saver for some of us." This too is what it means to have as our motto, "Others."

If you think of the heart of our faith, Jesus struggled in the Garden of Gethsemane, only hours before his trial and crucifixion. He had two choices. He could have escaped from Jerusalem and saved his life. That was not only a very real option, it was also deeply what he felt like doing. It was not, though, the option he took. He knew that to go into the Hell of the Cross and all it implied, would mean salvation for many. He put "Others" before himself. He literally put us first and submitted to the will of God.

This is perhaps summed up in one of the greatest and best known verses in the Bible – "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only son so that whoever believed in him would not perish but receive eternal life." Wow! Is that not the essence of putting "Others" before himself – yes even the Creator God. He could have chosen differently but in love his choice was made.

To put "Others" first is always a choice – sometimes a very difficult choice but surely as we come back into church and look towards the future, this is going to be our battle cry.

To put it in the wonderful words of the apostle Paul, "Your attitude should be the same that Christ Jesus had. Though he was God, he did not demand and cling to his rights as God. He made himself nothing; he took the humble position of a servant and appeared in human form; and in human form he obediently humbled himself even further by dying a criminal's death on a cross. "Others" first, Himself second and our salvation guaranteed!

Iain

Intimations

Two Sundays ago we got back into Church and the move has been successful even with the limitations we have had to accept. The age range of those present has been from 90 to 13! If you want to come along to the service – lasting about 45 mins please contact Irene Cunningham – the number is 01383 731947.

The Church Service will be at 11am.

The Zoom service will continue for those who wish – a good number attended Zoom this week. The minister will hold the Zoom Service from 10.00am [beginning at 10.15].

Facebook will continue everyday of the week and we are working our way through Genesis and looking at the life of Abraham. There will be a Facebook Service pre-recorded every Sunday.

Due to circumstances in the parish and an unforeseen number of bereavements in the parish, the minister was unable to take a week of annual leave – this will instead be taken next week.

Harvest Thanksgiving

I think it is important that we have a times of Harvest Thanksgiving, especially under current circumstances. Normally we would do this on a Sunday but instead, this year, we are going to hold it on a Saturday. On Saturday 19th September, the church will be open from 10am till 4.30pm – you can bring your gift either of money or non perishable goods all which will help to support our local food trolley.

Because of the range of time allocated this should allow people to come, give, sit and reflect and on the hour, every hour, listen to a short reflection by the minister, and be safe in God's House.

What is love?

It is silence--when your words would hurt.

It is patience--when your neighbor's curt.

It is deafness--when a scandal flows.

It is thoughtfulness--for other's woes.

It is promptness--when stern duty calls.

It is courage--when misfortune falls.

Sacrificial love has transforming power. Genuine love is volitional rather than emotional. The person who truly loves does so because of a decision to love. This person has made a commitment to be loving whether or not the loving feeling is present. It is, so much the better; but if it isn't, the commitment to love, the will to love, still stands and is still exercised. Conversely, it is not only possible but necessary for a loving person to avoid acting on feelings of love. I may meet a woman who strongly attracts me, whom I feel like loving, but because it would be destructive to my marriage to have an affair, I will say vocally or in the silence of my heart, "I feel like loving you, but I am not going to." My feelings of love may be unbounded, but my capacity to be loving is limited. I therefore must choose the person on whom to focus my capacity to love, toward whom to direct my will to love. True love is not a feeling by which we are overwhelmed. It is a committed, thoughtful decision - Dr. M. Scott Peck

Love is an action, not a feeling. Love is a choice. In fact, love is a commandment - Mack Timberlake