

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

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During WW2 many pilots who survived being shot down, suffered horrendous burns, especially to their faces. Archie McIndoe and his plastic surgeons did their level best to try and help these brave young men. One pilot, Peter Foster had been in hospital for months having his face restored. He describes the mounting anxiety he felt as he neared the time when he would have to leave the hospital – he looked in the mirror and realised what people would see – the scar tissue, the odd wrinkling of skin, thicker lips and a different shaped nose.

As this group of men set to leave hospital there was one group whose wives or girlfriends could not accept the new faces and they either left their former lovers or quietly divorced them. Foster belonged to the other group where his girlfriend assured him that she still loved him and eventually married him.

The difference? By and large the men who were rejected lost their confidence, saw themselves as their former loved ones and their lives were marked with that stigma. Foster said that every time he became conscious of his “wounds” he would remember to see himself through the eyes of his wife and his life was, relatively, a success.

The point of this story? First of all, we as Christians, have to remember to see ourselves as God sees us – the beloved ones who are the image of the Son, Jesus Christ. It is this that defines us and makes us uniquely who we are and what we have become through grace.

Indeed, when we look at one another we see one that is beloved by Jesus and for whom Jesus lived, died and rose again. It is this that must always be the way in which we view every member of the Body of Christ. This is why division and denomination make so little sense. Too often we name call across the barricades that we have created where we consider ourselves more right than those on the other side! They too are beloved in the Son! They too bear the image of the One who came, lived, died and rose again!

We need too to carry this way of being and thinking into our world. What we are tutored to see as important are the outwardly beautiful and successful people – this is what we are called to aspire to – the kind of image that we want to have and protect.

As Christians we need to see way beyond that kind of superficiality. We follow One of whom it was said that there was nothing outwardly handsome about him, he did not possess much and had none of the trappings of worldly success. He called us to value life from the inside out. To cultivate inner beauty and grace – love of a different kind.

He also called us to look at other people in the same way. “Look at them,” He might say, “See beyond the outward appearance and success, and see the Image of God!”

“I see the face of Jesus in disguise,” said Mother Teresa, “sometimes a most distressing disguise. As I hold the face of the dying beggar in my hands I remind myself that I may be holding the very face of God.”

Iain

Intimations

Services will be at the normal times on Sunday – Facebook will go on at 9am, Zoom at 9.45 and the Main Service at 11am in the Church.

Zoom Service on Wednesday

On the week beginning the 30th November, the Newsletter will be delivered to everyone, along with a wee gift! We are also going to be inviting every member, if they are able and willing, to make a Christmas donation to the Church. This year we have not had any Christmas fundraiser and so our income will be down – it is an opportunity to close the financial gap which we and every other church in Scotland faces. If we can show a good financial position by the end of this year it will go a long way to clearly showing the viability of St. Margaret's for the future and in our negotiations next year when Presbytery looks at the viability of congregations and buildings!

Christmas Gifts! This year is going to be an especially hard year for many in our Parish [thank you to all who have given so generously to the food trolley – people have spoken to me about the difference this has made]. I am going to open the Church on Saturday 5th December from 10-4 for people to bring gifts for Adults and Children in order that we might distribute them throughout the Parish.

Christmas Concert. We are going to have this on Zoom – bringing in the best in Christmas music from around the world – this will be from 7pm on 15th December. If you would like to be linked in please contact me on email. Cost will be £6 and there will be a drop off during the day of home baking for us to enjoy “during the interval” – just a different way of accommodating our current circumstances.

Here is a man who was born in an obscure village, the child of a peasant woman. He grew up in another village. He worked in a carpenter shop until He was thirty. Then for three years He was an itinerant preacher.

He never owned a home. He never wrote a book. He never held an office. He never had a family. He never went to college. He never put His foot inside a big city. He never travelled two hundred miles from the place He was born. He never did one of the things that usually accompany greatness. He had no credentials but Himself...

While still a young man, the tide of popular opinion turned against him. His friends ran away. One of them denied Him. He was turned over to His enemies. He went through the mockery of a trial. He was nailed upon a cross between two thieves. While He was dying His executioners gambled for the only piece of property He had on earth - His coat. When He was dead, He was laid in a borrowed grave through the pity of a friend.

Nineteen long centuries have come and gone, and today He is a centrepiece of the human race and leader of the column of progress.

I am far within the mark when I say that all the armies that ever marched, all the navies that were ever built; all the parliaments that ever sat and all the kings that ever reigned, put together, have not affected the life of man upon this earth as powerfully as has that one solitary life.