

Worship at Home—26 April 2020

Dear Friends of Currie Kirk. Please get in touch with the Kirk Office (451 5141) if you need anything. We have friends willing to listen, shop, walk a dog, fix a garden. Website: <https://www.curriekirk.org/> or <https://www.facebook.com/CurrieKirk/>

Opening Prayer

O God, you constantly try to get our attention. You stir and call in the most unlikely places of our lives. People and places that we may dismiss as not being able to contain your presence. Yet as we walk through life, you beckon us to those corners of our inner being where we have yet to discover you.

Open our hearts, so that we will not miss your presence in these times. Help us to learn how to walk with you, and how to simply 'be' that we may find ourselves in you and let go of our need to be swallowed up by activity.

Thank you that your grace and love abound and are sufficient.

Amen



The Scripture Reading is taken from Luke 24: v.13-35

On the Road to Emmaus

*Please check the Kirk website for Easter's Sermon
<http://www.curriekirk.org/>*

It is with great sadness that we have to intimate the deaths of :

Margaret Donaldson, 40 Lanark Road West, Currie

Elizabeth (Betty) Lumsden, 18 Forthview Avenue, Currie

Terrence (Terry) Robertson, Dolphin Road, Currie

Please pray for the families



Meditation: Walking with God:

As life in Lockdown slows us down, we all see so many more people out walking. We've been lucky with the weather and I have enjoyed walking with our family, even with social distancing in place.

Walking slows us down. We can only go as fast as our legs take us. I love walking in the outdoors . . . but I confess I am the worst *American* culprit. I will drive to Zumba to take exercise even though it is only a ten minute walk away. So many of us are attuned to see going somewhere as a means to an end, so for efficacy we take the quick way. But walking encourages us to appreciate the journey on the way. When we walk we notice things we wouldn't see if we drove or took a tube. Amidst the devastations of this cruel virus and economic distress caused, there are *some* good things—for one, rediscovering the pleasure of walking.

Many of you walk a lot. The friendships and deep conversations that have grown out of the walking groups in Currie are testament to the fact that walking is a lovely form of ministering to the soul and to one another. It is biblical; the prophet Amos walked with God.

Jesus walked a lot during his ministry. He walked throughout Judea to towns like Galilee, Samaria, Nazareth and Jerusalem. He walked in the hills, by the sea and he even walked on water. If Jesus had driven about in a car, or cart, or chariot, or if he had had a steed to take him from place to place, he would not have had the same impact. Walking allowed him to stop to speak to people—the beggar by the side of the road, the leper by the pool, the widows paying homage at the temple, the haemorrhaging woman . . . walking brought them into focus just as he became the focus for so many people who encountered him on their journey or who journeyed just to hear him.

I mentioned that my favourite Lock Down read so far is—Barbara Taylor's—*An Altar in the World*. She has a chapter called "*The practice of walking the Earth,*" in which she mentions the ancient practice of walking a labyrinth.

A labyrinth follows a path to the centre. We begin out in the world, but as we walk the winding trail, we leave the world behind because the centre represents the heart of God where we can be refreshed and renewed before following the rhythmic path back out to the world. I've told you that in Aberdeen the curator of the Botanic Gardens grew a labyrinth out of crocus bulbs for the students. It was popular before exams—as a means to calm anxiety and enjoy beauty.



When Barbara Taylor describes walking one for the first time, however, she was frustrated. She was in such a hurry to get to the centre that she wanted to jump over the stones just to get there. She didn't feel she had the patience to follow the swirly path. So she rushed to the inside, grumpy that the walk required switch backs and turns because these are dilly dallying tactics. Having got the goal, she realised that, as she wound her way back out again, she no longer had a need to rush to get to the end. She understood that walking with God is not about the route or the destination but what you make of the experience.

Some of you presently cannot go out to walk if you have been advised to *Shield* or self-isolate to minimise risks. But even if you cannot walk out of your home, there are other ways to walk spiritually . . . enjoying the feeling of grass under your bare feet and there are paper labyrinths to walk with our fingers on-line.

Meanwhile, today's scripture involves a walk. A walk between two followers of Jesus and a stranger on the road to Emmaus. A walk where the conversations grew deeper. A walk not just from Jerusalem to Emmaus but from hopelessness to hope. A journey from grief to resurrection joy.

We can imagine the hopelessness felt as they set out for Emmaus. From the day Jesus was hailed with Palm branches to the day these two followers decided to give up and go home, a lifetime seemed to have passed them by. Eugene Drewerman describes their leaving Jerusalem as a "funeral pyre of all their hopes."

They had seen Jesus die a gruesome public death, and with His death came defeat, despair. Jesus had not just been their teacher, but the One upon whom he had pinned all their hopes for the future.

“We had hoped,” Cleopas explains, that “he would be the one to redeem Israel!”

That phrase, “We had hoped,” speaks a lot to these days. I hear people saying, “we had hoped to go on holiday.” “We had hoped to have a wedding this summer.” “We had hoped to visit Mum in hospital.” “We had hoped his friends could attend the funeral.” “We had hoped for Personal Protection Equipment!”

These are times when there is real bad news . . . knocking people off balance, undercutting good plans and even keeping families apart . . . the disciples’ words, “we had hoped” resonates with us.

As the two walked they met another sojourner who joined them. They walked and talked and talked and walked— as they walked, the stranger unfolded the power of scripture, enlightening upon their minds such things as how the prophets foretold that the Messiah had to suffer. Even though his words made sense, it must have been hard amidst their trauma to take it all in.

Then, exhausted from the walking and the talking, when they broke bread together at dusk, their hearts were suddenly warmed. Their eyes were opened by God’s Spirit to know who this was. No sooner had they understood who he was and why there was meaning in all that had happened, than he was gone.

As with all the resurrection stories of Jesus, we don’t ever know HOW things happened. We only know that the encounter with the risen Jesus changed their hearts.

Maybe you have had an experience when, after a time of hopelessness, you looked back and thought that God had actually been there all along in the small detail or the people around you.

Marcus Borg explains that Jesus still teaches and helps us understand Scripture, even when life around seems traumatic or confusing. He can warm our hearts with understanding, enlightenment and hope. We can trust that He is with us when we break bread together and also that Jesus walks with us on our own journeys, whether we are fully aware of Him or not. The hope is that as we slow down to walk more, we might have more moments to stop, to recognise that He is with us, in the sights and sounds, in the silence and solace and in the people we encounter as we walk. This is an enlivening story because the disciples kept walking. They turned around and walked back to Jerusalem to share their joy and newfound hope and, with that, the good news spread.

So if you can enjoy a bit of a walk or if you just stay home and imagine going on a walk, you can still slow down and open your heart and mind to the things God might show you along the way. Remember it is not the destination or the route that matters, but what you experience on the way.

A poem entitled ‘In the time of quiet’ written by Philippa Atkin.

No one’s told the daffodils about the pause to spring;
And no one’s told the birds to roost and asked them not
to sing;
No one’s asked the lazy bee to cease his bumbling round;
And no one’s stopped the bright green shoots emerging
from the ground
No one’s told the sap to rest deep within the wood;
And stop the sleepy trees from waking wreathed about in
bud;
No one’s told the sky to douse it’s brightest shade of
blue;
And stop the scudding clouds from puffing headlong into
view;
No one’s asked the lambs to calm the spring beneath
their feet;

To stop their rapid rush and quiet each joyful bleat;
No one’s told the streamer halt it’s gurgle or it’s flow;
And warned the playful breezes not to gust and blow;
No one’s asked the raindrops not to fall upon the
earth;
And fail to quench the soil in the season of rebirth;
Remember what you value remember who is dear;
Close the doors to danger and keep your family near;
In the quiet all around us take the time to sit and stare;
And wonder at the glory unfurling everywhere;
Look towards the future, after the ordeal;
And keep faith in Mother Nature’s power and will to
heal

Pastoral Prayer

Lord Jesus

When things happen that we find hard to deal with
When our head goes down and our eyes see no further than our feet,
Help us to be honest with you
Even if through tears or rage or fear
Help us to trust that you are there through each walk in the sun
And even in the times of storm.

Help us to trust that you are there, even when we cannot see or feel you close
Then gently tilt our faces to look into Yours
To find there
Limitless compassion,
Endless understanding
And the courage we need to continue walking

We bring to you those whom we carry in our hearts
Those loved ones with whom we live in seclusion and isolation
Those loved ones with whom we cannot see or meet with other than
On screens or phones

We bring to you those on the front-lines of this and who are making sacrifices
For loved ones and for people they don't know. Those who are working in supermarkets, delivering mail and milk
and groceries and those sewing face masks and laundry bags.
Those working in hospitals and care homes and facing the worst, which we cannot imagine.

We bring to you those in other nations, where there is no social care or national health
Where the realities are stark and needs are great
Please help us not to fail them. We pray we might be the ones to offer hope

We pray for our church locally and nationally in a time of uncertainty and crisis
Help us to continue to be the church and to be brave
And able to offer hope, and the understanding that only you can give.

Bless each one, wherever they are, and wherever they walk, let your beloved know your abiding presence.

Amen

BLESSING—God make us brave (author unknown)

God make us brave for life
Let us straighten after pain,
As the tree straightens after rain,
Shining and lovely again

God make us brave for life
As the blown grass lifts, let us rise
From any sorrow, with quiet eyes,
Knowing thy way is wise.

God make us brave for life-
Life brings such blinding things
Help us to keep our sight
Help us to know
That out of dark comes light.