

Worship at Home—23 August 2020

The Scripture Readings are taken from:

Isaiah 43:1-2, 5-7

Matthew 16: 13-18

Read by Fiona Pigott

Call to Worship

Your Grace is near O God, for you are our God, even in the storm. You wait in silence for us until we are open to you. Tune us to hear your voice. Speak and bring to us our Saviour, Jesus Christ, the giver of your peace. In the name of this one whom we know as the world's saviour, we praise and worship you.

Opening Prayer—Shirley Bowman

In the silence of the stars,
In the quiet of the hills,
In the heaving of the sea,
Speak, Lord.

In the stillness of this room,
In the calming of my mind,
In the longing of my heart,
Speak Lord.

In the voice of a friend,
In the chatter of a child,
In the words of a stranger,
Speak Lord.

In the opening of a book,
In the looking at a film,
In the listening to music.
Speak Lord,
For your servant listens.

Amen



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

Mrs Isobel Pringle
East Calder
and

Mrs Annabel Dickson
Stewart Road, Currie

Please pray for the families

Sermon in Lockdown

Matthew 16:13-20 – Tells the story of Jesus’ call to the disciples to “name” him, and, therefore, to have an understanding of Jesus’ place in the world and in their lives. As you heard, it was Simon who got the answer right. Jesus was delighted that God had revealed his true identity and purpose to Simon—so Jesus says to Simon son of John, “You are a like a rock—from now on I am going to call you Rock and so Simon became Petros, or Peter, the masculine for Petra which means rock.”

How we address someone, how we name them, what we call them is important just as our own names mean something to us.

Names matter! Tom Gordon, former chaplain at the Marie Curie Hospice often comes to speak to the Guild. He tells this story: “I’d always known that names matter to people, and that, when they’re in a healthcare setting, people need to be seen as individuals and not just as another patient. I’d gone to visit an elderly parishioner in a big hospital, and asked the nurse on the desk where I might find Miss Amelia Parker. She checked her list. ‘Oh yes,’ she replied – without looking at me—‘that’ll be the pancreas in the end bed on the right ...’ A lovely lady, reduced to one part of her anatomy—that just happened to be the part that was diseased. As a result, I was very careful in the hospice to make sure I got names right, and to ask a patient what name they wished to be called by.

So, when I came to the bed of a new patient one morning, and saw that the name above the bed in block capitals clearly proclaimed that William Anderson was the man I was meeting, after I’d introduced myself with, ‘Hello, I’m Tom, and I’m the chaplain here.’ I asked, politely, what name I should use for him. ‘I see you’re called William,’ I said. ‘What would you like me to call you? William? Bill? Or however your name’s used?’ The old man smiled up at me and said, ‘Thank you for asking. That means a lot to me, because most people make assumptions.’ He paused. His timing was impeccable. ‘My best friends call me Professor. But you can call me Dr Anderson.’ I smiled in response. But he wasn’t finished. ‘And, if you don’t mind, I’d prefer to address you as Mr Gordon.’ And he smiled too. And that’s the way it was all the time Dr Anderson was with us in the hospice.”

Why was that important to a patient, newly admitted to a hospice? Because when so many other things had been taken away—independence, dignity, privacy, and maybe even hope and purpose—holding on preciously to the individuality of a name really, really mattered. For here was familiarity; here was self-respect; here was integrity; here was normality; here was a definition of self.

I think I have mentioned that in a lot of African countries, people pray as a community for God to give the mother the right name for her child. Last week at a funeral I met someone called Keshena. It is an American Indian name that means “flies swiftly like a bird.”

Sometimes the names we are given are more like adjectives to describe us—Darren’s best friend from school is a short stalky rugby player who is known to us all as Stumpy. How often we label people by their attributes—big, funny clever-cloggs or whatever. Darren called Breanna ‘Specky’ because of her glasses—it has become a term of endearment.

I was thinking of the names of the seven dwarfs—dopey, sleepy, sneezy, happy. About the wife who said, “sometimes I wake up grumpy but sometimes I just let him sleep.” Our names, the adjectives and labels we use are deeply tied up with our identity, who we are. During lockdown, we watched a funny film with Melissa McCarthy who steals the wallet, credit cards and identity of Sandy Patterson—who as it turns out happens to be a man! The film follows the real Sandy trailing around to catch this identity thief to discover she is having a lot more fun living life with his money than he ever did.

In our scripture Jesus puts the disciples under the microscope when he asks them, firstly “who do people say that I am!” and more directly, and “Who do you say that I am!”

William Barclay writes that it is important not just to focus on the questions but the place. Jesus was trying to take the disciples away from the crowds to have time to teach the disciples about his calling and the suffering ahead—his time was short. They were in Caesarea Philippi, 25 miles north of Galilee where the population was non-Jewish. The historian Josephus has written about this ancient town. It was a beautiful town where rich people had holiday homes. There were temples to the Syrian gods like Baal scattered around. At the side of the town was a mountain

that was said to be the birthplace of the pagan god Pan. And at the heart was a giant white marble temple dedicated to Caesar by Herod's Son Phillip a way of keeping in with Rome. Hence why Herod's son renamed the town Caesarea Phillipi. So amidst this panoply of politics, idolatry and Roman wealth, Jesus wants to ask, "Who do the people say I am?"

I have been wondering how in these strange Corona-Virus days people have seen themselves or others differently. What is your name, what is defining you? Are you a policeman, a grandmother, a homemaker, or maybe now you have gone from someone working to someone unemployed. Do people see you differently because you are black or white. Perhaps you would call yourself right frustrated or anxious or sad or maybe thankful or perhaps these things change within the hour- certainly I think that was true for many the young folk caught up in exam chaos went through all sorts of changes in their identity. For One day some could say, "I am a failure I have no future ahead" and yet days later perhaps that changed to "I am smart, I have a future ahead," or I had a future but now I don't know. These times and have been tough on a lot of people of all ages. I know for some of you too.

Jesus asked the disciples, "*Who do people say I am. . what do people think about me?*"

The disciples were his eyes and ears among the throngs who had followed to hear Jesus teach and witnessed how he made announcements about the Kingdom of God. Who was this? . . well, Jesus, some people think that you are John the Baptist come back from the dead because he drew crowds and proclaimed the Kingdom was near . . . others say you are Elijah, some say Jeremiah or one of the prophets. These names, these terms from the public opinion were not simply compliments. These names were titles, titles for the one who would be the forerunner of the Messiah. When the crowds said that Jesus must be John or Elijah or one of the prophets, they believed he was sent by God. It is no wonder that Jesus was popular.

The people believed Jesus was sent from God, but they didn't get as far as calling him Messiah or Saviour. The trouble was with their expectations. They thought the Messiah was going to be a political leader, someone to rival Rome. In fact they were impatient people, impatient for a military leader, a mighty conqueror who would overthrow the powers that be. It was incomprehensible that this Divine Man was the Messiah. This gentle Jesus spent so much time helping women, stopping to talk to lame beggars and blessing children, hardly the marks of a great leader of the land.

Simon Peter was the one who sensed the truth about Jesus. He said, "You are the Messiah."

Fred Craddock puts it this way, "Has Simon Peter picked up something that everybody else has missed? If he did it was not obvious. In fact many of Jesus' followers grew a bit restless with his wasting so much time with the weak or crippled. Stop to pick up every cripple along the way and your army will never march. And the children—Jesus each time we stop to have a session along the road, in come the women and the children. The children fret and cry, why can't we say get the children out of here we are trying to get the Kingdom started! But Jesus said, "leave them alone. Bring the little children to me for of such is the kingdom of heaven!"

Simon Peter had been listening, he had been watching and observing his master and teacher and the way he cared for people, how he would stop in a large crowd because a woman had touched his cloak, or how he called people in need to him to forgive and healed them—as their need.

But it was not just by watching and listening that Peter concluded that Jesus is the Messiah, the revelation of God. It would take the Holy Spirit to reveal the true nature and name of Jesus to people's hearts. It is God who reveals Jesus to each one of us in a deeply personal way—Jesus knew this.

Peter had the courage to blurt it out there and then, "You are the Messiah, the Son of God." There is something profound when we name something, when we declare it to be true. Sometimes that can be scary like in a court when we promise to speak the truth, or when we make vows to be married or to profess our faith to become a member, or an elder. When we say things out loud it can be daunting. When we have a faith, this is what God requires of us, that we trust God, that we believe in Jesus our Saviour. This name Jesus, Messiah, Christ, all mean the same thing: Saviour.

Fred Craddock goes on to say, it is not enough to believe in God and then add Jesus. It isn't even enough for us to say "I believe in a God" because the name of God has been used to cause wars and divide people. That sort of God, just like the Syrian idols or Roman gods is not the God of Jesus Christ in whom we profess our faith.

What kind of God do we profess to trust? The answer for us is the God who is like Jesus. When we recall the time the crowd gathered to hear Him and they were hungry and he fed them. That is what God is like. OR the time when Jesus took the little children and blessed them. That is what God is like. Or when the Canaanite woman shouted Son of David have mercy on me and he healed her. This is what God is like. Or, when they were all frightened in the storm and he told them that peace would come. That is what God is like. And when the disciples were all arguing about who was the greatest and he took a towel and some water and knelt down to wash their feet. This is what God is like. And when Jesus put a wooden cross on his shoulders and began the painful walk to Golgotha.

This is our God the Saviour, the Messiah—who would take all our sin and all the mess of our world away and promise a new way, a new Kingdom.

The Gospels make clear that we don't come to trust in God merely based on our intellect—it's something that stirs in our hearts when the Spirit who reveals him to us and we experience the presence of God in our own lives.

Soon we will hear the lovely words of the hymn by John Newton:

How sweet the name of Jesus sounds
In a believer's ear!
It soothes our sorrows, heals our wounds,
And drives away our fear.
It makes the wounded spirit whole
And calms the troubled breast;
'Tis manna to the hungry soul,
And to the weary, rest.

Tom Gordon reminds us that names matter. But it is not just the names we use to describe God who is beyond our full knowing that matter.

The book of Isaiah Chapter 43 which Fiona read tells us

Listen to the Lord who created you. The one who formed you says
Do not be afraid for I have redeemed you
I have called you by your name, you are mine
You are precious in my sight .

The scripture goes on to explain that whatever we pass through or go through, even through raging waters or furious fires, even death itself we are assured that God is with us because he Loves us and he made us

And no one can un-make what God has made.

And God knows each of us by our name. Nothing can take that away. God knows our true person, more than anyone else can ever know.

God knows our needs which are spoken and unspoken

God is the one who knows our real identity and who holds us in life and in death and beyond. Therefore no matter the labels people give us or the nicknames our friends use, no matter how many hats we wear or titles we have—one thing we know is that we are blessed and redeemed because we are children of God and in Jesus we gain new names like neighbour, disciple, beloved. Jesus says to those who see his Divine purpose, "I know longer call you servants, I call you friends."



Prayer for Others based on the Hymn:

“Immortal, invisible, God only wise.”

“Immortal, invisible, God only wise”

You are the Alpha and Omega of our creation, the eternal living presence.
And now in our prayers, the immortal touches the human;
You bid us come. You will us to enter Your presence
You smile upon us in welcome when we come.

Unchanging God, *“Unresting, unhasting”*

We thank You for Your boundless love in Jesus Christ,
You show us that You believe in us,
You call us to serve. Take us now; call us by name;
He taught us to come to You with our prayers
And we do so in a spirit of gratitude
for all the ways Your grace and mercy fills our lives ...

We pray for the Church.

Keep us one in faith and service, so that Your Good News might be proclaimed,
and so that Your love and light might be beacons of hope and purpose
in the darkest places.

We cannot love You fully unless we love our neighbours as ourselves.

We pray for all those in need, in body, mind and spirit;
we pray for all who suffer from pain and sorrow;
especially any known to us whom we name before You now ...

God of compassion,

“To all life Thou givest, to both great and small;

In all life Thou livest, the true life of all;”

bless us and those we love, that, drawing close to You,
we may be drawn closer to each other.

As we long for the togetherness we used to take for granted.

Help us to find new and creative ways to continue to serve your love

To care for the needs in our homes, communities and schools

And hold us always in communion with the Saints of all the ages,

especially those dear to us, in the one Kingdom of Your love

These prayers we bring You,

“Great Father of glory, pure Father of light”,

in and through the name of Jesus Christ our Saviour.

Who taught us to pray. .

Our Father, who art in heaven; hallowed be thy name.
Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread.

And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.

Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, for ever.

AMEN

Scripture Reading: Isaiah 43:1-2, 5-7

Israel's only Saviour

But now, this is what the LORD says—

he who created you, Jacob,
he who formed you, Israel:

“Do not fear, for I have redeemed you;
I have summoned you by name; you are mine.

When you pass through the waters,

I will be with you;

and when you pass through the rivers,
they will not sweep over you.

When you walk through the fire,

you will not be burned;

the flames will not set you ablaze.

Do not be afraid, for I am with you;

I will bring your children from the east
and gather you from the west.

I will say to the north, ‘Give them up!’

and to the south, ‘Do not hold them back.’

Bring my sons from afar

and my daughters from the ends of the earth—

everyone who is called by my name,

whom I created for my glory,

whom I formed and made.”



Scripture Reading: Matthew 16: 13-18

Peter Declares That Jesus Is the Messiah

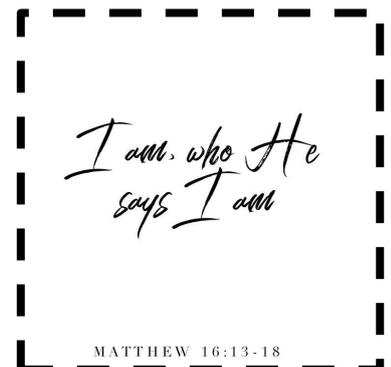
When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, “Who do people say the Son of Man is?”

They replied, “Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, Jeremiah or one of the prophets.”

“But what about you?” he asked. “Who do you say I am?”

Simon Peter answered, “You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.”

Jesus replied, “Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by flesh and blood, but by my Father in heaven. And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it.





Mission, Outreach and Fellowship Committee updates:

The Mission, Outreach and Fellowship Committee has continued to support the various outlets throughout the lockdown and restrictions—here a few updates:

The Night shelter has now closed for the summer and will reopen in early October at this time we have no idea what form this will take—Diadem is the perfect purpose built venue but if we are still living with socially distancing restrictions then perhaps it'll be down to the hotels again to provide beds. We were under the impression that everyone in the Old Waverley Hotel had been offered permanent accommodation in the city but we discovered on Tuesday that there are still 50 homeless people in Edinburgh and some are indeed still living in the Old Waverley Hotel.

The care van continues throughout the year to serve the homeless in Edinburgh with soup, tea, coffee and rolls. This service is run every evening and there are also five lunchtime services during the week. During lockdown Social Bite was providing food parcels for everyone, each bag containing a sandwich, crisps small carton of juice and a piece of fruit. Since the Social Bite cafes are now opening up again the volunteers of the nightly care van have been back supplying food. Due to social distancing restrictions inside the van Eddie and I agreed to take on the monthly duty on behalf of Currie Kirk. There is only space for two people inside the van to work side by side. We have been out monthly on the 3rd Tuesday offering filled rolls, soup, crisps and fruit along with tea and coffee. Each month we have been totally humbled by the cheerfulness and the acceptance of the lockdown situation. Life has been tough for everyone throughout the past five months and yet they seem to bounce back from every down turn.

We have heard the good news that Fresh Start has started to receive small electrical items, kitchenware, dining crockery, toiletries and cleaning materials but no soft furnishings, towels or bedding. They have also asked that the donations are made by making an appointment first so if you're not sure then please contact Christine Wilson (538 2567) or the church office.

I don't like to mention the big C word but Christmas is coming albeit a good few months away. The group of crafters have used lockdown to create lots of new items which we will look at creating a brochure along with some Christmas cards nearer the time. If anyone is interested or has some good ideas or even keen to be involved please contact Shona or myself.

Do you may remember the Sunday before lockdown when we gave out Smartie tubes to kick off the toilet twinning project? We were delighted to have been able to twin 2 toilets in the church and 3 in the Gibson Craig Hall but due to restrictions we haven't managed to put them up yet. However today I am delighted to hand over this certificate for the manse toilet to Easter.





On Tuesday 19 August our Guild Committee had its last meeting in its present form—social distancing, of course—in my garden. It was a beautiful morning—raining first but it cleared and the sun came out for our meeting at 10.30. My last meeting as President before I have the pleasure of handing over to Louise.

As you are aware we were not able to have our AGM in April but this will now take place on **TUESDAY 1 SEPTEMBER AT 7.30 PM BY ZOOM.**

If you are not a member of the Guild, at present, but would like to join please send your email address to Louise at elf.lamont@blueyonder.co.uk who will send you the invitation.

Thank you to all who voted for our project for 2020/2021—The Boys' Brigade Scotland—had your vote and though we are not sure at this present time how we will raise the money—I am sure the new Committee will have some great ideas.

Our project 2019/2020 was “CrossReach” and though our funding was curtailed—no Daffodil Tea—Mary, our Project Treasurer, was able to send off a cheque for £1,370. Many thanks to all who supported the Guild's project—we could not have achieved this without the support of the congregation and the community.

At this time I would like to thank the Currie Guild for inviting me to be its President. It has been an amazing few years, making lots of new friends and enjoying the fellowship. I would also like to thank those on the Committee for the support I have received—they are an amazing group of people.

The Guild is hoping to return in October but until then its meetings will be by Zoom. If you are now able to have visitors please get in touch as we would be delighted to pop in and meet up with you. You know my number 451 5112.

In the words of Vera Lynn—We'll meet again, don't know where, don't know when but I know we'll meet again some sunny day!!

Take care and God Bless.

Isobel

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/>

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