

Worship at Home—17 January 2021

Rev Easter Smart



Opening Call To Worship .

Prayer of approach to God

(Based on Psalm 139)

God of abiding love,
present in all our beginnings,
acquainted with all of our ways,
intricately woven into the depths of all things –
You understand our thoughts from far off,
and know our ways intimately.
As we gather to worship You,
nothing is hidden from You.
May we recognise Your voice in our midst.
As we gather to give You thanks and praise,
may we relish all of the days You have written for us.
Be with us now as we worship you in Spirit and in truth. Amen

SCRIPTURES

PSALM 13

How long, Lord? Will you forget me forever?
How long will you hide your face from me?
How long must I wrestle with my thoughts
and day after day have sorrow in my heart?
How long will my enemy triumph over me?

Look on me and answer, Lord my God.
Give light to my eyes, or I will sleep in death,
and my enemy will say, "I have overcome him,"
and my foes will rejoice when I fall.

But I trust in your unfailing love;
my heart rejoices in your salvation.
I will sing the Lord's praise, for he has been good to me.

EXODUS 3: 1-15 Moses and the Burning Bush

Now Moses was tending the flock of Jethro his father-in-law, the priest of Midian, and he led the flock to the far side of the wilderness and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. There the angel of the Lord appeared to him in flames of fire from within a bush. Moses saw that though the bush was on fire it did not burn up. So Moses thought, "I will go over and see this strange sight—why the bush does not burn up."

When the Lord saw that he had gone over to look, God called to him from within the bush, "Moses! Moses!"

And Moses said, "Here I am."

"Do not come any closer," God said. "Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy ground." Then he said, "I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob." At this, Moses hid his face, because he was afraid to look at God.

The Lord said, "I have indeed seen the misery of my people in Egypt. I have heard them crying out because of their slave drivers, and I am concerned about their suffering. So I have come down to rescue them from the hand of the Egyptians and to bring them up out of that land into a good and spacious land, a land flowing with milk and honey—the home of the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites. And now the cry of the Israelites has reached me, and I have seen the way the Egyptians are oppressing them. So now, go. I am sending you to Pharaoh to bring my people the Israelites out of Egypt."

But Moses said to God, "Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the Israelites out of Egypt?"

And God said, "I will be with you. And this will be the sign to you that it is I who have sent you: When you have brought the people out of Egypt, you will worship God on this mountain."

Moses said to God, "Suppose I go to the Israelites and say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you,' and they ask me, 'What is his name?' Then what shall I tell them?"

God said to Moses, "I am who I am. This is what you are to say to the Israelites: 'I am has sent me to you.'"

God also said to Moses, "Say to the Israelites, 'The Lord, the God of your fathers—the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob—has sent me to you.' This is my name forever, the name you shall call me from generation to generation."



Meditation: Moses and the Burning Bush

Today we heard the familiar story of Moses when he encounters God in a burning bush. This story is central to our faith—it shaped the emblem of the Church of Scotland. The Latin words of our Motto read, *Nec Tamen Consume Batur*. “The Bush was not consumed.”

When we meet Moses he isn't looking for a sign from God. Moses was not in a good place. He has run away because he has killed a man. He had seen how Pharaoh and his own brother and the powers that be were oppressing his people—and so he killed someone and now he was a wanted man in Egypt. He had run from his problems and was hiding, unsure of what to do next. He had really lost hope. The situation for his people back in Egypt was despicable, cruel, unjust. He was wrestling with what to do with his life and so his father in law Jethro gave him a job tending his sheep. A safe secluded job in a remote place where people wouldn't bother him. He wanted to be far away, to be alone. He is in a place called Horeb. Horeb literally means “Wasteland.” Horeb was one step even further removed from the wilderness.

And that is where God spoke to him—in the drab dreary wasteland. It is sometimes in the drab places when God comes and speaks. Maybe you feel a little like that these days . . . when people are stuck at home, waiting, wondering what to do, waiting for the world to open again, waiting to see one another or to resume a routine or a life. Maybe also there is stress of home schooling and working without colleagues, or jobs lost, and deep stress due to uncertainty and fear.

Sometimes like Moses, when we least expect it God can give us a nudge or a prompting or a sign. I don't know if you have ever had one of those experiences where you sensed clearly that God was giving you a sign or guiding you, calling you.

I came across a funny story about a lady who believed God had sent her a strong message. She was driving her car in the city and the traffic was bad. She was in a hurry and when she pulled up to a red traffic light it seemed ages before it turned green. Then when it turned green, the man in the car in front of her didn't seem to notice. His car didn't move. When she flew into a rage she started honking her horn and banging her dashboard—finally she opened her window and started shouting swear words. The chap came to and as the light turned back to yellow he passed through leaving her sitting again at the red light. Now she was really mad and she started shouting more and gesturing obscenities with her hands in frustration. A moment later there was a tap on her window and a police officer asked to see her driving licence and proof of her ownership of the car. He returned to his car to check the details.

After what seemed like an age, he returned and apologised for the inconvenience. You see, he said, when I pulled up behind your car at the lights, I saw the Jesus loves you sticker at the back of your car, and the lovely chrome Christian silver fish with the words love your neighbour beneath them. So, when I heard you yelling and turning the air blue, I naturally assumed you stole the car.

Moses wasn't looking for a sign from God, He didn't go looking for God in the temple, nor the church. But he was certainly feeling low and lost. Sometimes like Moses, it is when we really need a sense of reassurance—when we are hoping for a tiny reminder that God is still with us, that God has a purpose for our lives, that we are most open to God's presence. In psalm 13, the Psalmist felt very much like that when he said,

How long, Lord? Will you forget me forever?

How long must I wrestle with my thoughts
and day after day have sorrow in my heart?
Look on me and answer, Lord my God.

Give light to my eyes, or I will sleep in death,
and my enemy will say, “I have overcome him,”

But I trust in your unfailing love; my heart rejoices in your salvation.
I will sing the Lord's praise, for he has been good to me.

These days when we read a prayer like that I am reminded of the plight of the NHS doctors, nurses and ambulance drivers who are indeed suffering in a wasteland of sorts, wondering when there will be a break from all the loss, pain and exhaustion due to this pandemic. I am also reminded of many people who are simply finding the isolation of lockdown interminable.

God came to Moses and Moses soon found himself drawn out of his own negative thinking, and drawn instead towards this dynamic mystery before him . . . a burning bush that was not consumed. When we are sunk into ourselves we can find ourselves less likely to look out beyond our immediate problems to sense God who can lift us to a new perspective and give us new blessings and sense of purpose and joy.

And so, instinctively Moses felt drawn closer to this beautiful fire . . . and God called to him, "Take of your sandals for the place where you are standing is Holy Ground." Moses did as he was told and he heard these powerful words, "I have seen the misery of my people in Egypt. I have heard them crying out because of their slave drivers and I care about their suffering. So I have come down to rescue them . . . I am sending you to save my people out of Egypt."

There in the middle of nowhere Moses witnessed an exchange between Heaven and Earth, between God and humanity. God was coming to save his people - calling an ordinary human being like Moses into Divine Service. When we feel stuck or in a wasteland or a hopeless place, God is able to do that, to fill us with a sense of purpose, an experience of joy or a instinctive idea of ways to share love with others who need it.

A little boy about 10 years old was standing before a shoe store on the roadway, barefooted, peering through the window, and shivering with cold. A lady approached the boy and said, "My little fellow, why are you looking so earnestly in that window?" "I was asking God to give me a pair of shoes," was the boys reply. The lady took him by the hand and went into the store and asked the clerk to get a pair of socks for the boy. She then asked if he could give her a basin of water and a towel. He quickly brought them to her. She took the little guy to the back part of the shop and removing her gloves, knelt down, washed his little feet, and dried them with a towel. By this time the clerk returned with the socks. Placing a pair upon the boy's feet, she purchased him a pair of shoes. She patted him on the head and said, "No doubt, my little fellow, you feel more comfortable now?" As she turned to go, the astonished lad caught her by the hand, and looking up in her face, said, "Are you God's wife?"

Currie is known as the community that cares and caring is something we do in our Kirk. It is what we do when we raise funds for Christian Aid or Bethany Trust, when we collect food or knit jumpers for refugees or take gifts to the homeless. Many of you do these things together or through the Guild or Snack lunches, the Kirk Singers . . . some of you are anonymous angels who take care of computers and printers, halls and heaters behind the scenes- and many of you also give money to the Church and to the Benevolent Fund where you can. In these strange times when we cannot meet, we can still feel called to care. In fact our caring is perhaps more important now than ever. We see families struggling to feed their children depending on food deliveries and school lunch packages. These are still the ways God needs us to help. God can call us out to renew us, to make use of our gifts even in lockdown.

The Holy Ground where we meet God might not be the Kirk right now. It might not be in the fellowship we so miss when we are together . . . but in this quieter time, in this lockdown Horeb, we can meet God on Holy Ground . . . it might be in the living room, in the kitchen, on the phone to a friend or neighbour, . . . in the promptings of prayer out walking in the snow . . . amidst all of these strange times, God can be sure to help us still live as if our faith makes a difference.

Let's pray

Loving God we know you still call us to know you and serve you
Here in lockdown, help us to listen, help us to seek you
Help us to notice the burning bush moments and not to miss them
Guide our feet where you would have us go
Guide our hands to the things you would have us do
Guide our hearts to the people you would have us care for
And above all grant to each of us the blessed assurance of your love.

Amen

PRAYER

Reconciling God,
We pray for Your World.
May all that is divided
by doctrine or politics,
class or nationality,
be united in Your praise.

We pray for a peaceful world,
where children grow up without fear,
where security rests on trust rather than threats,
and where nations fight against poverty
rather than against each other.

We pray for all in authority,
that those who lead us,
may establish right priorities,
and that by Your wisdom and their vision
the world may reflect Your kingdom.

Healing God,
We pray for those who are ill and suffering,
for all who are worried
for those who are grieving
or experiencing trauma
and for a world gripped by the repercussions of pandemic.

May we all know
the power of Christ to sustain us
and the love of friends near and distanced to support us.
You know our greatest fears, our longings and our hopes,
sometimes these are expressed in so many different ways,
so Lord, in Your mercy,
hear those prayers.

Eternal God,
Present among us.
You are with us in our gathering,
You are with us in our distancing.
Hear our prayers, and blend our voices together,
unite us by Your Spirit as we join together in the prayer that Jesus 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.

The voice from a bush

These resources are designed to help you explore the Bible as a family together at home while we can't go to church. Be as creative as you want to be and enjoy spending time with each other and with God.

Prepare yourself...

Loving God,
speak to us
through the words of the Bible;
speak to us
through the words of our friends,
help us call others
to come and listen too.
Amen.



Question...

Who are you? Write down all the different forms of who you are e.g. son, sister, friend, cousin. Think about nicknames you might have.
Which person do you like being the most?

Challenge...

Play two truths and a lie. Each person says 3 sentences or facts about themselves – 2 of which are true and 1 which is a lie. Can the others guess which is the lie?



Read the Bible...

Today's verses are found in Exodus 3. You can read them in a Bible or find them [here](#). You could try reading the verses in different versions to see if it adds to your understanding of the passage.
You could also watch this [video](#) which is a clip from the Dreamworks film *The Prince of Egypt*.

Talk together...



How do you think Moses felt when he saw the burning bush?
What about when he heard God's voice?
Why do you think God chose a burning bush as a way to speak to Moses?
How can we hear God's voice today?
What name does God give himself in the story? What do you think that means?
Did Moses feel able to do the task God was giving him?
What promises does God give to Moses?
I wonder how you would feel if God gave you a big task like Moses'?
What promises does God give to us?

Praise together...



[Open the eyes of my heart](#) by
Michael W Smith.

Play together...

Who is it?

Take turns to be blindfolded. Then point to another person who says one word out loud. The person who is blindfolded has to try and guess who is speaking just by listening to the voice.

Make together...

Bonfire

Build a fire, either a real one if you have a safe way to do so, or a model one. You could use Lego, or sticks/ cardboard tubes and crumpled up tissue paper, or playdoh. If you still have fairy lights from Christmas you could make your fire light up too!



Pray together...

Thank you, God, for the story of Moses. Help us to be like Moses when we draw close to you, showing respect but able to speak to you like a friend.

Thank you that just like Moses you can choose us to serve you and others. Help us to listen to you and live in obedience.

We pray for those in the world who like the Israelites in the story are living in slavery or are suffering and scared. May they know your comfort, peace and hope. Amen.



A Happy New Year to one and all. The Guild will be holding its first meeting of 2021 – via zoom – this Tuesday 19th January at 2pm. Our speaker is Heather McAffie who will be talking about “Changes at the Botanics”.

If you would like to join us, please contact me at elf.lamont@blueyonder.co.uk and I will send you the link. Alternatively phone 0131-466-3472.

Well done to our Guild member Lucy who has been a star of the TV—I do hope you are getting the repeat fees!!

Hoping to see as many of you as possible.

Meanwhile stay safe and look after yourselves.

Louise Lamont Guild President

Session Meeting, 21 December, Update

The last Session Meeting of 2020 was held on Monday 21 December and the following might be of interest to you.

Our Session Clerk, Gordon Clephane, having completed slightly more than his agreed 3 year term in office, stepped down at the 31 December 2020 and was succeeded by Hamish Leal from the 1 January 2021. Hamish has also agreed to serve for 3 years and his term in office will come to an end on 31 December 2023.

Easter thanked Gordon for his loyalty and commitment over the years and warmly invited Hamish into his new role.

Hamish can be contacted on 0131 449 3288 or e-mail: hamish@hamishleal.co.uk

Sandy Harper, a well kent face around Currie has decided to retire from two positions within the Kirk. Sandy has been one of our Safeguarding conveners in the Kirk and I'm sure many of you will have dealt with him over the years if you had booked a child's party, anniversary or function at the Gibson Craig Hall, as he kept everyone up to speed with the required regulations. Sandy has completed an amazing 26 years in this position.

Sandy is also retiring from the Eldership and has requested transfer to Emeritus Status which will allow him to take things a bit more easily. Sandy became an Elder in October 1989. Session congratulated Sandy on his 57 years combined service and wished him well for the future.

Session were presented with a letter from the Minibus Trustees that the Kirk Minibus had been sold and the proceeds deposited in the Minibus bank account. A feasibility study on the disposal of the bus had been undertaken and it soon became apparent that the Minibus would have to be sold due to the imposition of Covid restrictions which would limit passengers to one only because of 'social distancing' guidelines. Tax, MOT and Insurance costs, along with projected passenger usage, were taken into consideration prior to making the decision.

The situation will be closely monitored and, should there be sufficient interest at a later date, the committee will consider sourcing another minibus.

I will present an updated COVID report next week, relevant to the Kirk's potential reopening but, for the moment, may I take this opportunity to thank everyone for their support and help during my time in office as Session Clerk. It has been at times challenging but rewarding and I have enjoyed working with Ishbel, Nina and Easter in the office, where not only has it been productive but fun too.

Thanks to all.

Gordon

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