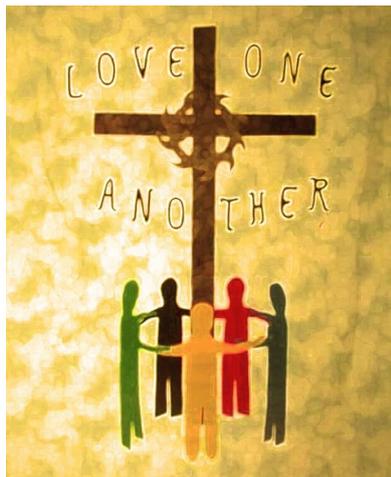




Christian Aid—Joint Worship—Order of Service Worship at Home—16 May 2021

Worship led by Rev Dr André Groenewald and
Rev Dr Easter Smart
Music from Harry Thomson



Nairne Wight

Nairn's ashes will
be interred in the
graveyard on
Wednesday
26 May at 2.00pm

Call to Worship—Psalm 98: 4-6

Shout for joy to the Lord, all the earth, burst into jubilant song with music;
make music to the Lord with the harp, with the harp and the sound of singing,
with trumpets and the blast of the ram's horn—shout for joy before the Lord, the King.

I greet you in the Name of God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

Amen

Hymn Love lifted me

I was sinking deep in sin, sinking to rise no more,
Overwhelmed by guilt within, mercy I did implore.
Then the Master of the sea heard my despairing cry,
Christ my Saviour lifted me, now safe am I.

*Love lifted me! Love lifted me!
When no-one but Christ could help,
Love lifted me! Love lifted me! Love lifted me!
When no-one but Christ could help,
Love lifted me!*

Souls in danger, look above. Jesus completely saves;
He will lift you by His love out of the angry waves.
He's the Master of the sea, billows His will obey;
He your Saviour wants to be, be saved today!
Love lifted me!...

When the waves of sorrow roll, when I am in distress,
Jesus takes my hand in His, ever He loves to bless,
He will every fear dispel, satisfy every need;
All who heed His loving call, find rest indeed.
Love lifted me!....

Opening Prayer and Lord's Prayer—Martin Petty

Lord you were discarded by your own people but rose to become the corner stone and the foundation of our faith. Through the storms of life, we hear your calming word and feel your reassurance, You care for us, You protect us and above all You love us, even when we do not deserve to be loved. Thank you Lord.

We are comforted and supported by the knowledge that if even if we forget you that you will never forget us. Heavenly Father you know us, You know that we can be loving and kind; and you know that sometimes we get things wrong. We are sorry for the times we hurt other people, forget to listen to you and don't to take care of your world as we should. Please forgive us and help us to do better.

In his letter to the early church, chapter 2 vs 16 and 17, James wrote:

'If you say to a person in need "God be with you! I hope you stay warm and get plenty to eat" but you do not give what that person needs, your words are worth nothing. In the same way, faith without action is dead.'

In 1945, when Britain was just emerging from the second world war and people could have said we need to help ourselves first, a group of Christians started what is now Christian Aid. Today Christian Aid is the official relief and development agency of 41 Christian churches in the UK and Ireland, and it operates with partners across the world in 37 countries helping to provide sustainable development in a wide variety of ways. This year's campaign is focused on action to stop climate change.

Father we thank you for those who in 1945 had the vision and faith to start Christian Aid, we thank you for the thousands of people who are now working through Christian Aid to help others.

We pray especially for this year's campaign which seeks to educate and stimulate action to stop climate change and so provide a sustainable environment for future generations.

We ask this in the name of Jesus 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

Reflecting on God's Word

Scripture Reading: John 15, v.9-17—Gordon Clephane

'As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love. If you keep my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commands and remain in his love. I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete. My command is this: love each other as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends. You are my friends if you do what I command. I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you. You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you so that you might go and bear fruit—fruit that will last—and so that whatever you ask in my name the Father will give you. This is my command: love each other.

Video from Christian Aid—for those who can access the service

Hymn 564 Jesus Loves me

Jesus loves me! This I know, for the Bible tells me so;
Little ones to him belong; they are weak, but he is strong.
Yes! Jesus loves me! Yes! Jesus loves me!
Yes! Jesus loves me! The Bible tells me so.

Jesus loves me! This I know, He loved children long ago;
He can always make me glad, even when I'm feeling sad.
Yes! Jesus loves me!

Jesus loves me! He will stay close beside me all the way;
He will always be my friend, and his love will never end.
Yes! Jesus loves me! ...

Anna Bartlett Warner, 1820-1915

Meditations

Rev Dr André Groenewald & Rev Dr Easter Smart

Reflection by André

In this text Jesus tells his disciples what real LOVE is. I wonder what their experiences have been of LOVE. Did they understand LOVE like Jesus explained it? I guess we will never know.

What we do know, is how we understand LOVE and how our world often portrays LOVE.

Sometimes we are made to believe that TRUE LOVE is only possible in films. Others, especially those who have experienced broken relationships or have been witnesses to friends and relatives splitting up—will have a different perspective on LOVE. The Beatles once sang: *All we need is LOVE!* But then soon after they produced this hit song, they broke up, which does make you wonder?

In our text Jesus is portraying a different LOVE—a LOVE that is unbreakable, true, trusting, joyous, faithful and constant. Jesus is making the point that this LOVE is only possible because He loved His creation first.

And because of HIS love, His people are capable of the same LOVE, as long as they remain obedient to HIM through faith. If they remain in His commandments, they will experience LOVE that surpasses all human understanding. But His LOVE is sacrificial. He gave HIS life so that people of faith can live.

God already gave us HIS LOVE. To keep it, we need to have faith in the TRIUNE God—believing that God the Father made us all wonderfully well and gave HIS only Son Jesus Christ to redeem all our sins on the cross, who died for us but was resurrected and ascended to heaven, that we can live in the HOPE of inheriting the coming Kingdom. We need to believe that God’s Holy Spirit was outpoured for us so that we can go out and proclaim God’s Salvation to the world, always believing that God is present among us through His Holy Spirit—convincing, motivating and nourishing our faith on a daily basis.

We also should share this love, everywhere we go and not keep to and for ourselves, something that Christian Aid stands for.

Maybe the Beatles should have said: “All the world need is GOD’s LOVE”.

Amen

Reflection by Easter

Last week we celebrated the theme of **Love** in our local community, and this week it is a privilege and joy to team up with Balerno to celebrate the theme of Love with our neighbouring church nearby and also across the world as we highlight the fantastic work of Christian Aid.



I mentioned last week that Jesus doesn’t simply invite us or encourage us to love. In John’s Gospel, he commands us to love. Throughout John, Jesus says, “This is my commandment that you love one another as I love you.” To love is the foremost commandment of the Christian Faith.

C S Lewis wrote a book explaining there are actually four words for love in the biblical Greek. There is Eros, romantic love; Agape, an affectionate love for one’s family/pets; and Phileo which is an intimate form of friendship, sometimes translated as “Brotherly Love.” Whilst all these are gifts from God, the last form of love to which Jesus and Paul most refer is translated sometimes as Charity or Divine Kindness. This love is not a mere touchy romantic sentiment. The bible uses all sorts of language to describe this love. It is patient, kind, caring, selfless, puts another first, always desires good. This is the love that can weather life’s storms and scrapes, that abides the test of time because it is eternal, rooted in the nature of God himself. Jesus says, “If you love me, keep my commandments, if you love me feed my sheep.” Love is purposeful and practical. We show Christ love when we do simple things to show we care for other people, such as when we feed the hungry, offer water to the thirsty and tend the poor and sick.

When asked by a lawyer, which of the commandments matter most, Jesus offered the Golden Rule, “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and soul and mind and strength AND love your neighbour as you love yourself.”

When I was a student, one of my favourite and most formative classes was taught by Gustavo Gutierrez, a liberation theologian from Peru. He taught us that the idea of our neighbour should never be abstract. In the first world it is as if the well off and well to do, often might think of their neighbour as someone, over

there, someone needing our help, a charity case. This mode of thinking underscores a sort of us/them dynamic. Gutierrez argued, to think of our neighbour as the 'other' is to miss out on the real meaning of Christ's call to love. We are all equally neighbours as God's children. The creation of God's kingdom on earth means we are called to work together in the pursuit of justice and health for all. Human liberation from poverty, oppression, corruption—the creation of a more heavenly earth requires that we understand that despite differences in circumstances and cultures, we are all neighbours.

One thing that Covid has brought to light is that this crisis cannot be solved individually despite what isolationist or colonialist think. Some might say, "well as long as we are vaccinated in our country, we are safe . . . who cares about people elsewhere." There is no room for such isolationist thinking at such a time. We recognise that unless we distribute vaccines, oxygen and PPE fairly to all, we are all still in danger.

I have noticed that the generations coming up. Generation Z they call it, I think? (I am Generation X and millennials are known as Generation Y . . . but the upcoming Gen Z, my kids, your kids are so aware that if we want to tackle the greatest threats and problems in our world, we will need joined up, cohesive thinking. Gen Z is well aware that problems such as the threat of Covid, Climate Change, Cyber-attacks need great local and international cooperation. There can be no us/them divide or duality between ourselves and our neighbours. We need practical as well as political solution to face poverty, pollution, plastic waste, or pandemics.

This is why Christian Aid is such a fantastic cause. It brings us, in practical ways, closer to real people in their real-life settings and struggles. Christian Aid helps us engage personally and practically with our neighbours near and far. We hear our neighbours across the globe recount real stories of individual people and projects so we can connect with the situation. We watched the video of Florence. This week Christian Aid also highlights the story of Rose in Kenya. The changes in climate year on year with hotter weather and less rain has caused long droughts in Rose's village. With such uncertainty about water, crops are at risk and this will create food shortages.



Christian Aid is doing so much to help build water wells, to provide animals and educational possibilities not only in Kenya but in 27 of the poorest countries world-wide by creating sustainable projects to help people help themselves. Christian Aid is committed to ending world poverty and this year in particular to fighting climate change. This is why their slogan is "We believe in life before death."

So just to recap, here are simple ways you can donate. If you go to the Christian Aid website, it is easy to click on a link to donate and find out what your donation could be used for. Currie has ordered hundreds of little envelopes for cash or cheques. These can be left at the Gibson Craig Hall and, importantly there is a gift aid declaration to tear off and put into the envelope with your donation. Lastly, for fun, we are hosting a Christian Aid Quiz at 7pm on Saturday 29th May. This will be a virtual quiz of course, on Zoom. If you'd like to join, just let Nina know in the Currie Kirk Office and she will register you.

In the meantime, it has been a pleasure to work together with Balerno on this worship and hopefully we can share worship like this again.

God bless,

Easter

Prayer for Others—David Booth

Let us pray

We, your unworthy servants, thank you Lord for all the blessings and benefits we have received at your hand. Grant that we may be ever grateful and that we may use these wisely and purposefully to the furtherance of your kingdom, both here and in the wider world. In your Holy name we pray.

We ask your forgiveness Lord for anything you have seem amiss in our worship of you. Help us to face the truth about ourselves, to hear our words as others hear them. Make us as ready to listen as we are to talk, ready to listen to your voice in the quietness of our own hearts and to give others in need a sympathetic ear. Give us sufficient humility to accept our own weaknesses that through your grace we may learn to live our lives anew each coming day. We ask this in the name of your Son, Jesus Christ.

Help us to forgive others Lord, as you have forgiven us. Give us compassion towards those who do not know you as we do, that we may ever look to you for grace to be true evangelists for the promotion of our faith in You.

Lord, we pray for all those who follow a political calling, especially those recently elected to serve in our parliament. Strengthen them in the burden that we the voters have placed upon them; Guide them that they may plan our future for the good of all society without undue favour and that they can honestly discharge their duties to the betterment of us all. In your name we pray.

Thursday this week was Ascension Day. Eternal God, the king of glory, you have exalted your only Son with great triumph to be Lord of all; leave us not comfortless but send your Holy Spirit to strengthen us that we may work for the coming of your kingdom, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

As today marks the end of Christian Aid week, we pray for their staff, throughout the world working to alleviate the effects of poverty, disease and climate injustice suffered by many of the world's most vulnerable people who already face a lack of water, food and healthcare; and who are now offering practical support to keep people safe from Coronavirus. Be with them in all their efforts Lord and grant your blessing to all those in their care.

Heavenly Father, we pray for those who are sick in body, mind or spirit and for their family and friends and as we do so we bring to mind those known to us personally. Bring them your peace in their pain, your strength in their weakness and your comfort in their sadness. We pray too for those known to us who have recently died—give them your eternal peace; and for those who have been bereaved or are grieving—comfort them in their sorrow and help them to feel your presence beside them.

We pray for all those who lead the ministry in our churches. Be with them Lord, as they guide us in all aspects of our worship and may we your servants find joy and peace as we share the many gifts you offer. Help us to promote our faith from a better understanding of your word so that we can proudly profess that faith with confidence and humility.

We ask Gods guidance in all the challenges we face in our daily lives. You are our refuge and strength Lord—an ever-present help in times of trouble. Where our self-confidence fails or our faith waivers teach us how your power and love can help us to overcome all challenges that life presents, that they shrink in comparison with the immensity of your love for us.

For this and all our prayers, we ask your blessing Lord, Amen

Hymn 519 Love Divine

Love Divine, all loves excelling, joy of heaven, to earth come down,
Fix in us thy humble dwelling, all thy faithful mercies crown.
Jesus, thou art all compassion, pure, unbounded love thou art;
Visit us with thy salvation, enter every trembling heart.

Come, almighty to deliver; let us all thy life receive;
Suddenly return, and never, never more thy temples leave.
Thee we would be always blessing, serve thee as thy hosts above,
Pray, and praise thee, without ceasing, glory in thy perfect love.

Finish then thy new creation: pure and spotless let us be;
Let us see thy great salvation, perfectly restored in thee,
Changed from glory into glory, till in heaven we take our place,
Till we cast our crowns before thee, lost in wonder, love, and praise.

© 2011 by the author. All rights reserved.

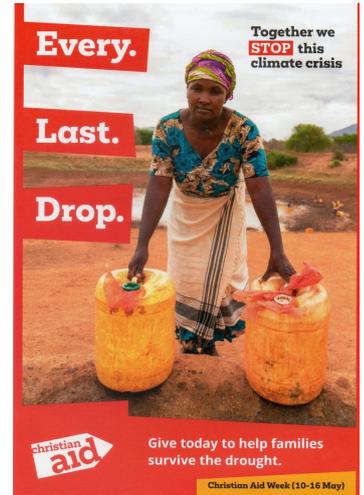
Prayer

A prayer of praise and thanksgiving
Lord Jesus, as your disciples in the world today,
we thank you that your word of truth,
your prayer of power and your heart of love,
continue to protect, inspire and unite us
as we live out our faith,
build up our relationships,
and hold the world before you in prayer.
Amen.

Blessing

Lord Jesus, we rejoice
that you have chosen us to be your disciples.
Help us to be faithful to you by obeying your commands.
As we go out into your world,
help us to live a life that reflects your love,
by being loving and kind to others.
And the blessing of God Almighty, Father Son and Holy Spirit will be with all of you.
Amen

This year the focus is on the climate crisis and our global neighbours in Kenya who continue to battle the effects of extreme weather. Like last year Kenya is caught in a cycle of climate chaos—severe droughts and flooding rob villagers like Rose of a reliable source of water. There is an earth dam not far from Rose’s home which should be a lifeline but it runs out of water too quickly, forcing villagers to walk long and exhausting journeys to fetch water. The pandemic has made the lack of water even worse as handwashing with soap and water is vital to stay safe against the virus. Christian Aid can help communities like Rose’s withstand climate chaos: from building better earth dams to harvest more water, to sowing drought-tolerant crops, to demanding climate justice at the highest level.



As we are unable to deliver and collect Christian Aid envelopes we propose to have a supply of envelopes in the plastic box outside the Gibson Craig Hall for anyone who would like to make a donation. Once you have completed the envelope details please post it through the Kirk office door. If you want to find out more about the work of Christian Aid please log on to their website – www.caweek.org.



We are having a Quiz on Zoom on Saturday 29 May at 7pm, John Macaulay being the Quizmaster. If you’d like to take part please contact Nina at the Kirk Office to be registered (currie_kirk@btconnect.com). Entry is free but any donations to Christian Aid’s work will be very welcome.



Fiona Pigott, Mission, Outreach and Fellowship Committee.

Milk Bottle Tops



After more than a year of being unable to travel, I am delighted to say i was able to take thousands (yes really!) of milk bottle tops down to the borders this week. The car was full, and yet I know that some people have yet to get their tops to the Kirk Office due to it being closed.

I would like to say a big ‘thank you’ to everyone who has saved theirs up during the pandemic. Until the office is open again, feel free to post little bags of them through the office door. May I please, however, stress that we can **only collect milk bottle tops**—not fruit juice, fizzy drinks or tomato sauce and the like. I cannot pretend to know the technicalities of the different plastics, but they have to be from the regular plastic milk cartons.

Please continue to save your bottle tops—it costs you nothing to rinse them, rather than throw them out, but results in a welcome donation to a cancer charity. Please do keep collecting—and why not spread the word to your pals as well?

Ishbel Massie