



## Worship at Home

**7 March 2021**

### Opening Call To Worship

God has united us with Jesus Christ.

God made him to be wisdom itself,

and through him God has made us right with God.

The stone that the builders refused has become the head cornerstone.

He is our one foundation and

We are the temple of God and the Spirit of God lives in us.

We belong to Christ and Christ belongs to God

and God himself is love.

### Opening Prayer

Loving God

We take time away from other things

To come before you,

To praise you and give you thanks

We thank you for this new day

And for each and every new day

We thank you for the ability to gather

Even digitally to learn from your Word

Lord God you love us so much that you sent Your Son Jesus

To teach us how to live and to love

And Your love for us was demonstrated through  
his life, death and resurrection

We thank you that because of your Love for us  
We need not only seek you in the temple or the Kirk  
For you go before us  
Wherever we are, you are there,  
Whenever we fail, you are with us  
In every place or at any time  
We can have confidence  
To call out your name Lord,  
And know that you are with us  
Here and now, in this time and place  
We ask you to Come, Lord Jesus and be with us  
And we honour your name as we share the prayer you taught us.

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.

### Bible Readings—Hamish Leal

#### 1 Corinthians 3: 16-23

Don't you know that you yourselves are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in your midst? If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy that person; for God's temple is sacred, and you together are that temple.

Do not deceive yourselves. If any of you think you are wise by the standards of this age, you should become "fools" so that you may become wise. For the wisdom of this world is foolishness in God's sight. As it is written: "He catches the wise in their craftiness"; and again, "The Lord knows that the thoughts of the wise are futile." So then, no more boasting about human leaders! All things are yours, whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas or the world or life or death or the present or the future—all are yours, and you are of Christ, and Christ is of God.

and

## John 2:13-22—Jesus Clears the Temple Courts

When it was almost time for the Jewish Passover, Jesus went up to Jerusalem. In the temple courts he found people selling cattle, sheep and doves, and others sitting at tables exchanging money. So he made a whip out of cords, and drove all from the temple courts, both sheep and cattle; he scattered the coins of the money changers and overturned their tables. To those who sold doves he said, "Get these out of here! Stop turning my Father's house into a market!" His disciples remembered that it is written: "Zeal for your house will consume me."



The Jews then responded to him, "What sign can you show us to prove your authority to do all this?"

Jesus answered them, "Destroy this temple, and I will raise it again in three days."

They replied, "It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and you are going to raise it in three days?" But the temple he had spoken of was his body. After he was raised from the dead, his disciples recalled what he had said. Then they believed the scripture and the words that Jesus had spoken.

### Meditation

Sometimes I look at the lectionary passage and I think to myself, "Oh help—this is a hard story." We wonder why did Jesus have such a terrible temper tantrum in the Temple? We think of Jesus as our Prince of Peace, our strong, yet gentle Saviour. He is never violent or aggressive, even towards his adversaries who are out to get him. Even when Roman soldiers came for him in the Garden of Gethsemane, one of the disciples tried to cut off the Centurion's ear. Jesus had told him, "Put away your sword." But in our Gospel Story, Jesus throws down tables, and uses a rope whip to chase the animals and money lenders out of the Temple.

I remember as a youngster watching Wimbledon with Mum and the famous American John McEnroe would break the usual decorum of the tournament by picking fights with the Umpire, sometimes shouting, sometimes waving his tennis racket, sometimes throwing it. It felt very uncomfortable to watch. Maybe that is how we feel when we read this account of Jesus cleansing the Temple.

When we look at the New Testament we would rather speak about the uplifting passages that speak of hope, joy, love and peace. But we are not true to our faith if we ignore those parts of the bible that we find difficult. Why did Jesus get so frustrated and upset?

I wonder if you have ever had an experience where you cared about something deeply—an issue or a cause or maybe the welfare of someone who matters to you and you felt so strongly and so passionately that you could get really worked up thinking about it, maybe losing sleep and wanting to speak out or speak up. We have often heard about corruption or bullying or gender harassment in various organisations and it takes a brave person to be the whistle-blower. Whistle-blowers are never popular, just like the prophets of ancient Israel were often unpopular when they called people out for being unfaithful.

Listen for instance to the prophet Jeremiah preaching to the Temple in his day . . . some 600 years before Jesus. In Jeremiah 7 we read,

*The Lord gave a message to Jeremiah.*

*He said, "Go to the Lord's Temple, and give this message to the people: 'O Judah, listen to this message from the Lord! Listen to it, all of you! This is what the Lord the God of Israel, says:*

*"Even now, if you cease your evil ways, I will let you stay in your land. But don't be fooled by those who promise you safety simply because the Lord's Temple is here. They chant, "The Lord's Temple is here! But I will be merciful only if you stop your evil thoughts and deeds and start treating each other with justice; only if you stop exploiting foreigners, orphans, and widows; only if you stop your murdering or harming yourselves by worshiping idols.*

*Do you really think you can steal, murder, lie, and burn incense to other gods and then come here and stand before me in my Temple and chant, "We are safe!"—only to go right back to all those evils again? This Temple, which bears my name, has become a den of thieves. I, the Lord, have spoken!"*

There were always two sides to Jesus ministry. Yes he healed the lame and he forgave sins. He blessed children and welcomed women and Samaritans and foreigners. He fed the hungry and preached about a loving father who welcomes home prodigal children.

But the other side of his ministry, from the outset, was spent challenging and provoking the religious institutions and the religious leaders in the Temple. He detested their hypocrisy and most importantly the insincerity of their worship before God.

Jesus' cleansing of the Temple took place during the Festival of The Passover in Jerusalem. This is one of the most significant celebrations of The Jewish Faith when people gather to recall the night when God sent angels to enable Moses to lead the Israelites out of Egypt and a life of slavery. This Exodus story is the story that defined their faith as a people who worship One-true, Holy and Almighty God.

But just as in Jeremiah's day, when Jesus entered the Temple he saw that the whole religious festival had become a farce, a money laundering scam, a load of hocus pocus which not only lacked authenticity but impeded people from worshipping the One True God.

William Barclay writes in detail about the setup. In those days Jewish people from all over the Roman Empire would flock to Jerusalem for the Festival of the Passover. Every young man over 19 had to pay a temple tax to enter the temple. However the only currency used in the Temple was called a Shekel. When the people came with coins from Rome, Greece, Egypt, Sidon and Palestine, the money lenders would exchange their gold and silver for Temple Shekels so they could pay the entry tax which was equivalent to more than a day's wage, (just for entry!) As well as the temple authorities raking it in, the money lenders also made commission on all the exchanges. Once inside, pilgrims were obliged to use shekels to buy a dove or a lamb to offer a thanksgiving sacrifice. Each animal had to be unblemished and so a further shekel was paid to an animal inspector to make sure the animal was respectable. Barclay estimates the Passover could bring in, in today's money around two hundred thousand pounds. The people who could enter were barely able to afford it but so many others, the widow, the orphan, the poor or the leper would all be excluded. The place was a noisy rabble, there was no peace to pray. Jesus was furious. He felt the temple was desecrated.

In Matthew's Gospel we find Jesus also angry at the Scribes and the Pharisees, saying, *"You pretenders. You devour the inheritance of widows, stringing out long prayers, but you deny people real access to the heavens."*

Now we understand it was no wonder Jesus was furious that the priests were merely paying lip service to God whilst chasing wealth and ostracising the poor. Jesus was enraged by the haggling and profiteering but also by the arrogance, and ostentatious hypocrisy of the spiritual leaders. Jesus was so upset because he knew that what they were doing was not only morally wrong but obscene because it was contrary to the will and the teachings of God.

For Jesus, to corrupt or distort true worship is to forget God and to lose the whole purpose of life. Jesus preached that God is Spirit and we must worship God in Spirit and in Truth. Authentic worship as the prophets often said is not about sacrifices bought with money. Authentic worship draws us into God's love where we need be sincere and faithful before our Maker.

There was a further aspect to what Jesus said and this was also an early clue to his ministry in John's Gospel. John's Gospel was written fifty years after the other Gospels and the author from the outset wants the reader to know who Jesus is. And so in John's telling of the temple cleansing Jesus also says, "I will destroy the temple and rebuild it in Three Days."

Jesus wanted them to know that during the three days from his death to his resurrection, the need for the temple would become obsolete. No longer would Jews, Gentiles, Men, women or children need access to a Temple to have access to God. NO longer would they need to shed the blood of an animal because Jesus' own blood would be shed so that all people anywhere and everywhere might be able to worship God in Spirit and in truth and the meeting place would no longer be a building. The meeting place is in his body—and we are his body. We are his temple. The first line of the Westminster Catechism reads, 'The chief end of humanity is to glorify God and enjoy Him forever.'

I know that we truly miss meeting in our own sacred building, Currie Kirk, but it is encouraging to remember we are still the Church, still the body of Christ even when we cannot meet in the building. We can still be his arms, his feet. We can still share his words of love and hope and peace and we can worship the Lord in Spirit and in Truth wherever we may be.

## Mothering Sunday—14 March

**Next week Heather will lead us in family worship for Mother's Day**

## Sunday—21 March

**Bring your favourite cup (with juice/wine) and bread and we will celebrate the Sacrament of Communion at home**

Sunday Club is taking place on Zoom this term. Fortnightly beginning on Sunday 24th January at 4.30pm. We'll have a Bible story, games and activities together for around 45 minutes. If your child would like to join in then contact Heather at [familyworker\\_jvp@outlook.com](mailto:familyworker_jvp@outlook.com) for details.

## Pastoral Prayer—Geoff Rae

In Paul's letter to the Philippians, chapter 1, verses 9 and 10 he says:

*'And this is my prayer; that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, so that you may be able to discern what is best ....'*

Let's pray

Lord—we are in a time of great need and yet we have much to be thankful for.

You are with us in the good times and the bad, in freedom and in lockdown, when we are alone and when we are together.

Thank you Lord that we can still hear your word even when we can't meet together in church

We give thanks for all those in the health service who continue to tend to those who are affected by the virus right now.

For those who are affected, I pray that you would calm their fears and give them strength.

For those who maybe need non-COVID care, I pray they won't feel forgotten and that their need would be reached.

I pray for those situations where people are in care or in hospital but can't receive visitors. Lord—may there be someone alongside them who can break the loneliness with an encouraging word and the physical presence that is needed. For the families who are desperate to visit but can't, give them assurance of the love and care that their loved ones are receiving and sustain them when they can't share time with each other.

For all us who are missing family and friends Lord, come close to us and let us feel the assurance of your constant presence.

I think too about mums and dads who are juggling with working from home and home schooling. Lord I don't know what to pray for, but I know that's a big challenge for so many. I just ask that you can come in to these situations of greatest need to give them the energy to cope and provide moments of encouragement.

I thank you for those who have to manage our responses to the pandemic—for all those in government and our medical officers. I pray for wisdom that they make the right decisions. I pray too that they will consider other countries who may not have the money to obtain the vaccinations, so that we would truly see the world as our neighbours.

Father I pray too for other areas of the world who are torn by conflict. Syria, Myanmar, Yemen. I give thanks for all those who are prepared to take risks and report those conflicts to the world and for those agencies who reach out to help. Lord keep them safe and let them reach those in greatest need.

For those nearer home who remain homeless ... Lord I give thanks for the service of all those who reach out to them and I pray that those without homes may have hope

And lastly Lord I pray for our own church. I give thanks for Easter and her ministry and pray that you would encourage her, particularly during a time when she can meet so few of us face to face.

I give thanks for our Kirk Session and our Guild and give thanks for them still being able to meet virtually.

I think of those of our number who are in need ... those who feel lonely, those who are in care, those who are in need of treatment. Lord bring joy to their hearts and the reassurance of your presence.

In all we say and do Lord as a church and as individuals may we put you at the centre of the temple. Let our hearts and minds may be filled by you and led by you. Let us put our trust in you and honour you.

In Jesus' name we pray.

And all God's people said...Amen.

## **Currie Kirk Lenten Appeal—St Luke's Leprosarium, Tamil Nadu, South India**

Last Sunday in the Worship Sheet, Hamish Leal launched a Lenten Appeal for additional funding for St Luke's Leprosarium in Tamil Nadu near the southern tip of India. As he mentioned, Genevieve and I visited it in 2003. Our son, Alastair, had been working there whilst spending a gap year in a nearby home for boys with polio.

Despite the Indian Government declaring in 2005 that they had eradicated leprosy, WHO confirms that India still hosts 56% of all leprosy patients in the world. In 2019 there were estimated to be 114,451 cases in India. Sadly, claims of elimination of the disease have dried up the funds that can be raised by international leprosy relief agencies.

The funds that the Kirk, and others of us, have donated in the past are invested and the interest is used to feed the 100 or so lepers at St Luke's and their children. Poor interest rates and inflation make it difficult to generate sufficient funds to supplement the basic rice rations with chicken.

We were privileged on our visit to serve chicken curry and rice to the patients and children. It is served on a banana leaf instead of a plate so there is minimal washing up! Most eat with their hands but many, who have sadly lost most of their digits, strap a spoon to their stump with Velcro!



Banana leaves as a plate substitute!

In Leviticus 13 v 45 we read: "*and the leper in whom the plague is, his clothes shall be rent, and his head bare, and he shall put a covering upon his upper lip, and shall cry, 'Unclean, unclean'*". Perhaps, as we wear masks and step aside as others pass us even on country paths during the current pandemic, we can empathise with the situation of the leper.

I encourage you to dig deep and continue to help support our brothers and sisters in the Leprosarium.

Gordon MacKinlay



Gen serving chicken curry and rice to the female lepers



Whilst I served the male lepers



Gen holding a leper's hand to which he has applied a Velcro strap to hold a spoon

If you would like to make a donation, please put it in an envelope, address it to Eddie Pigott, mark it 'St Luke's' and put it through the letterbox of the Church Office. If you would like it to be gift aided add a dated note saying this. Cheques should be made payable to 'Currie Kirk'.

Alternatively, people can make a direct payment into the Currie Kirk bank account by sending it to Sort Code: 80-06-20; Account No: 00336407 and marking it for 'St Luke's'.

It would help if you could then email Eddie at: [pigottsef@icloud.com](mailto:pigottsef@icloud.com) letting him know that you have sent a donation and saying if you wish it gift aided.

**Hamish Leal**

## Lenten Studies

Easter will be holding a series of Lenten Studies every **Wednesday at 1pm**. Each session should last about an hour and will be conducted via Zoom. If you are interested in taking part, please email Louise:

elf.lamont@blueyonder.co.uk

by Tuesday morning and she will send you the link.



## Currie Kirk Guild

We had a really successful meeting on Tuesday morning when Iain MacIntyre regaled us with "A Tale of Two Skeletons". After much musing amongst ourselves as to what this could be, it turned out to be with regards to his wife's family tree. They discovered that there was a connection to royalty via Alice Keppell and also to expeditions to the Arctic led by John Franklin looking for the Northwest Passage. Fascinating stuff.



Birthday greetings to Margaret (Meg) Watson who will celebrate her 80th on 8 March. Although grand celebrations are not possible at the moment, I am sure there will be some once we are permitted to meet others.

With the arrival of the first two Easter eggs on my doorstep brought by Margaret, I will put out yet another plea for eggs for the Foodbank. Easter is on **4 April** so I really need to **deliver them on Tuesday 30 March**. If you can help, please do so – 13 Dolphin Gardens West—just up from the High School. If you would like to help, but don't want to visit the shops, a financial contribution would be equally acceptable and I can then buy eggs myself.

Finally we will be having another coffee/chat this Tuesday 9 March at 11am. Please join us if you can.

Take care and look after each other.

Louise Lamont      Guild President



## Kirk Contacts

Minister: Rev Dr Easter Smart—Tel: 449 4719 email: esmart@churchofscotland.org.uk

Session Clerk: Hamish Leal—Tel: 449 3288 email: hamish@hamishleal.co.uk

Family worker: Heather Merriman email: Familyworker\_JVP@outlook.com

Please get in touch with Nina at the Kirk Office—451 5141

email [currie\\_kirk@btconnect.com](mailto:currie_kirk@btconnect.com)> if you need anything.

We have friends willing to listen, shop, walk a dog, fix a garden.

Website: //www.curriekirk.org/ or //www.facebook.com/CurrieKirk/

All sermons from Currie Kirk can be found on the Kirk's website and on YouTube—search Currie Kirk

## Community for Food

Tiggy (Caroline) Brown set up Community for Food in March in response to a number of families locally in crisis from a food poverty perspective.

Community for Food is a local community initiative set up to empower local schools to support families in need whose kids attend: Balerno High School, Currie Community High School, Currie Primary, Nether Currie Primary and Juniper Green Primary schools.



Currently supporting 46 families a week with fresh food gifts and stocking up larders at schools it is running at costs of £1,380 per week.

Fundraising has meant that it is able to provide food gifts weekly since 11 January and it has enough funds for another week only.

It now needs to push its fundraising and work with local businesses and organisations to support these families.

So far it has had enormous support for fresh food parcels provided from McGills Butchers and Bakers, The Corner Cafe Currie, Mollys Juniper Green and Let them eat cake Currie.

Kind donations received from The 42nd Pentland Scouts, the CBDRT, St Mungos Church Balerno and Currie Wines. The local community has been so generous donating nearly via our justgiving page.

<https://www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/communityforfoodcurriebalernojunigreen>

Morrisons at the Gyle have kindly donated a trolley load of non perishable foods for the past few weeks.

Our plans are to continue to supply fresh food gifts as long as funds allow and we will be working with the schools to assess demand and ensure they have the food provision needed to support families in need.

We now have non perishable stocked larders at 4 out of our 5 schools with the plan to complete the 5th next week.

We are looking at other ways to make our money stretch further by working with charities like Fareshare and the Big Hearts charity.

We would like to thank The Corner Cafe in Currie for the amazing support it has given us by using their premises and the time of their staff to stock the larders at all our schools.

We have a team of amazing volunteers across the villages who shop for these families weekly, who collect and sort food items and who liaise with the schools to assess needs.

We could not do this without the time and donations from our community. It has been a very heart-warming and worthwhile project.

If you would like to donate you can do so by the following methods:

- <https://www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/communityforfoodcurriebalernojunigreen>
- Paypal to [brown\\_caroline\\_a@gmail.com](mailto:brown_caroline_a@gmail.com) - reference Community For Food
- Cheques can be made payable to Douglas Brown and dropped into the Currie Kirk postbox - please mark Community for Food on the back.
- Volunteers or requests for more information can email [communityforfood@gmail.com](mailto:communityforfood@gmail.com)
- Facebook: Search for Community For Food - <https://www.facebook.com/groups/37661517988601> - we will be advertising an online auction in the coming weeks on our Facebook page in advance of Mother's Day so look out for this as a way to donate and the chance to bid on so many wonderful prizes donated from local businesses.

**Non perishable food donations can be dropped off from Saturday 13 March at the Village Hall in Juniper Green between 11.00-13:00 every Saturday.**

Thanks so much, Tiggy and all the volunteers at Community For Food.

## Jesus goes to the Temple

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, thank you for being in our lives, for walking with us, for helping us.

Thank you for guiding us as we try to figure out the best way to live and the choices we should make.

Thank you for loving us and showing us that love every day in different ways. We gather now to remember who you are.

Amen.



### Question...



When was the last time you were angry about something, or felt something was unfair?

What did you do?



### Challenge...

What do you think the ideal church looks like? What's important and what's not? Is it just a building?

### Read the Bible...

What do you think the ideal church looks like? What's important and what's not? Is it just a building?

## Talk together...



- \* Does anything surprise you in the story?
- \* Why do you think Jesus was so angry?
- \* The Temple was the place where people came to worship God. It's where they would make animal sacrifices to receive God's forgiveness. During this visit, Jesus saw God's home being treated like a marketplace. Animals were being sold at unfair prices, money was being exchanged and people were being overcharged. Does this sound right to you?
- \* What places are special to you and why?
- \* How would you feel if someone spoke about those places being destroyed?
- \* What are some of the things that you see in the world which are wrong and make you feel angry?
- \* Is there anything you could do to help those situations?
- \* We don't have a Temple nowadays. We do have a church building but really we are the church, we are the place where God lives, through his Holy Spirit. (See 1 Corinthians 3:16!)
- \* What things in our lives do we need to "clear out" to help us be closer to God?

## Play together...

Play a game of Jenga. If you don't have this, try to build the tallest tower you can out of things you have around you.

## Pray together...

Dear God, Thank you for the story of Jesus clearing the temple.  
Thank you, God, that you care about justice. Help us to stand up for what is right and speak out when we see things that are not fair. Show us the areas where we need to stand up for fairness and justice in our world today. Help us to make our churches places of justice and righteousness. God, show us what things in our lives need to change so we can be closer to you and more like you. Amen.

## Make something...

Sometimes we get caught up in how we should or shouldn't act or whether we're doing the right things; but God loves us for who we are and there's nothing we can do that will make him love us any more or less than he already does. Find a stone and decorate it with a heart shape and the words "God loves you". Put it somewhere you'll see it a lot and every time you look at it remember the truth of those words. If you can't find a stone, make a poster or card to display somewhere.



## Do something...

Are there things in your home you don't need, want or use anymore? Toys, clothes, food, books...? Why not have a bit of a spring clean this week and get rid of some of those things. You could donate them, sell them, gift them. You could make a difference to someone else by tidying!



## Praise together...

This little light of mine  
Be still for the presence of the  
Lord