



## Worship at Home—Sunday 8 August 2021

### Celebration of Holy Communion

*Dear friends, it has been a long time since we were able to share in Communion together. The readings this week lend themselves so perfectly to the Sacrament of sharing in bread and wine together and so, please if you are able—before you begin the service, find for yourself some bread and some libation so that we can share communion in a virtual way.*

*I pray and hope that VERY soon we will be sharing communion in person, God bless, Easter.*

#### Call to Worship

Loving God  
We gather in worship today  
Because You sought us and found us.

We come as we are  
knowing a place is prepared for us.

We bring what we have  
to receive what You give to us.

Bread of life for the world  
Grow Your kingdom within us. Amen

#### Opening Prayer

Lord God you are the beginning of our journeys  
Our guide, and our destination  
There is no joy like the joy of your presence in the  
Midst of your people  
You do not deny your love to any who seek you.  
You lead us to springs of new life and new beginnings

Help us to know you and love you more  
Keep us from being so busy that we forget you  
From rebelliousness which takes us from you  
Or irreverence which mars you

It helps us to remember that you know all about us  
You know us better than we know our own selves  
So we ask you to help us keep our thoughts and our actions good  
So that they may be fit for you to see.

God our father you have given us people who love us  
Help us not to hurt them by things we say and do  
But rather to show them your love and compassion  
Through a smile, a kind word, through companionship and community  
Helping one another along the road.

There are also those in our lives on whom we have an influence  
Help us never to do anything that would make it  
Easier for them to go wrong.  
But rather to be positive in our influence in their lives.  
Help us to live so that life may be stronger and purer  
And kinder every day, so that at the end of the days  
There would be nothing of which to be ashamed  
And nothing to regret.

We thank you for the sunshine, for all the good things  
And the bright things of life.  
Help us to see them and to count them and to remember them  
That our lives may flow with ceaseless praise.  
We ask you to hear our hearts as we share the sacred prayer of Jesus our Lord

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 and ever. Amen

## The Scriptures

### 1 Kings 19:4-8—Elijah Flees to Horeb

While he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness. He came to a broom bush, sat down under it and prayed that he might die. "I have had enough, LORD," he said. "Take my life; I am no better than my ancestors." Then he lay down under the bush and fell asleep.

All at once an angel touched him and said, "Get up and eat." He looked around, and there by his head was some bread baked over hot coals, and a jar of water. He ate and drank and then lay down again.



The angel of the LORD came back a second time and touched him and said, “Get up and eat, for the journey is too much for you.” So he got up and ate and drank. Strengthened by that food, he travelled forty days and forty nights until he reached Horeb, the mountain of God.

## John 6: 35-48—Jesus the Bread of Life

Then Jesus declared, “I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never go hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty.

At this the Jews there began to grumble about him because he said, “I am the bread that came down from heaven.” They said, “Is this not Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How can he now say, ‘I came down from heaven?’”

“Stop grumbling among yourselves,” Jesus answered. “No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws them, and I will raise them up at the last day. It is written in the Prophets: ‘They will all be taught by God.’ Everyone who has heard the Father and learned from him comes to me. No one has seen the Father except the one who is from God; only he has seen the Father. Very truly I tell you, the one who believes has eternal life. I am the bread of life.

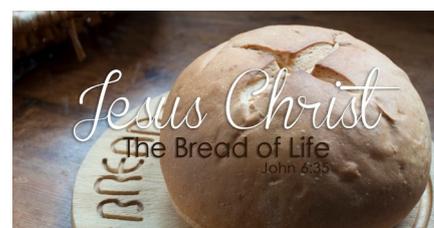
### Sermon

Jesus said, “I am the Bread of Life”.

The lectionary for the last couple of weeks guides us through John Chapter 6. In John 6 we read about that epic miracle of Jesus somehow feeding a massive crowd of 5,000 people. The story is told in all four Gospels, but in John who is by far the more philosophical and poetic author, wants us to understand, not just the historical or physical facts of feeding the large throng of folk, but the deep spiritual significance and symbolism of the message that Jesus was giving to those people; something far more meaningful than simply physical food—He was offering them sustenance for their lives, their hearts, their souls. This teaching culminates when he explains, in one of his many I AM statements—I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me shall never hunger; and whoever believes in me shall never thirst.” With those words, Jesus was teaching about bread to feed the deep spiritual hunger which so often nags away in our human hearts, manifesting in despair or lostness or lack of purpose and hope.

There are stories about hunger and food throughout the bible and many are not just to be taken literally—because each unfolds to us the nature of humanity and the nature of God. As early as the first book of Genesis, Adam and Eve eat the apple, and for this transgression against God, they must go out and tend the earth themselves to have food. Throughout the Old Testament there are stories of miraculous hospitality, like the angels who visited Abraham and he and Sarah made them a meal, unaware they were entertaining angels . . . and of course the story of how God provided the Israelites with water, manna bread and quail during their long years of wilderness. We can move right to the end of the bible and there is the image of the Great Banquet of God in Revelation.

Today’s Old Testament story is also powerful in its own way. We find Elijah when he is absolutely at the point of giving up. Elijah has done his best to be a faithful prophet for God, (in fact, his name Elijah means, “My God is Yahweh!”) . . . but try as he must and faithful as he is, he can’t see it paying off and he feels like all his stress and all his efforts have amounted to nothing and he is exhausted, with nothing left to give. In fact he is so burnt out that he goes to the wilderness and sits under a tree and begs God just to let him die.



Elijah lived through a time in Israel had a corrupt King Ahab who's disregard for the people's welfare was only worsened by the conniving selfishness of his horrible wife Jezebel. There had been a terrible drought for over three years in Israel. This had hurt the whole country and, as with all climate disasters, or pandemics, this had intensified the inequalities and it was the poor who suffered. King Ahab and his wife could not care less about the suffering and decided to follow fashion and worship the false God Baal. And so people followed the king and Baal had become the popular superstitious belief, incurring sacrifices and superficial ceremonies.

Elijah knew that if the people wanted God to send rain, they needed to be faithful to the one true real God but the King didn't care. At Carmel, Elijah challenged 450 of the Baal priests to a contest of sacrifices. In today's passage, Elijah has gone off to be by himself in the wilderness after the great drama at Carmel. He had had enough. Like many prophets he was unpopular and morose, he felt hopeless—he had gained the annoying nickname, "The great trouble of Israel."

We find him under a tree simply asking God to let him die. He is at the end of his tether, spiritually and physically. And then, suddenly, an Angel wakes him saying, "Come on, get up, eat, drink, otherwise the journey to Horeb will be too much for you." Gene Rice comments that this story gives fresh insight into God's presence and care. In a time of great crisis, when Elijah was so worn out and exhausted to the point of giving up, God was with him in his lowest of lows and ministering to him—not only with food but the encouraging companionship of an angel.

Carolyn Kelly, (Chaplain at Glasgow University) has mentioned how many of us might relate to Elijah—the impact of Covid has been so wearing. We are hopeful now because lockdown restrictions seem to have eased and I know you have been refreshed by some good weather in Scotland . . . but even if things are looking better, we have all felt the impact of Covid with its loss of schooling and money and holidays and cancellations and disappointments—not least it has been 17 months since we have been able to worship in any normal sense in Currie Kirk and even if we had gone ahead and opened sooner we would have been so few in numbers and there would be no shaking hands or singing. This has been an experience of long-term weariness and so it is uplifting to read of Elijah and to know that God did not leave him alone in his time of exhaustion, but ministered to his body and spirit with free gifts of grace in food and water. Elijah was physically hungry, but moreso spiritually running on empty and no one could supply his real need other than God.

There are many scenes in scripture where God's people are hungry—I like the new word my children use: HANGRY. Teenagers get so hungry they will pick fights with anyone and they will be grumpy until you feed them and then, suddenly they are fine!

In the bible, stories of hunger, psalms about hunger are sometimes for food and at other times they reflect our deepest human need for the guiding presence of God's Spirit . . . our deep longing for meaning and purpose and encouragement and fulfilment.

When Jesus looked at the crowd of 5,000 he had compassion on them because he knew they were hungry. The disciples told Jesus to send them home—it would take a year's wages to feed them all. Only Andrew simply knew that Jesus was going to do something and somehow this great miracle of sharing and caring enabled everyone to be filled with good things. Jesus was always sensitive to the human need and necessity of for food but he also recognised that all of us from a young age have a hunger for love, for a sense of belonging and we not only desire to receive love but instinctively to give love too. And so people were drawn to Jesus, symbolically also this was the time of the Passover and

Jesus was offering them a message that was so profound because it comes from God. He knew to feed them not only with food but with his soul, his compassion, his wisdom . . . and his message culminates with him saying, “ I am the Bread of Life.”

God desires to feed us and God cares about our bodies, our minds and our souls. The sad fact is that there are still so many people suffering from real physical hunger. In places like Yemen and Ethiopia, Sudan wars and droughts bring conflict after conflict and it is the poor who suffer. Oxfam, the Red Cross, and Unicef tell us that there is no justifiable reason in the world for anyone to die of starvation. I was also horrified to read an article outlining how much food is thrown away every day in the United States. Tonnes! Wouldn't it be great if we could, in some way, demonstrate an example of Jesus miracle by finding our own creative ways of caring and sharing the world's resources and putting a stop to world hunger and needless waste and abysmal suffering. Just as in Elijah's day, Covid has only highlighted the inequalities of our world and those at home too. I am so glad that our church is supporting the Community Food project here in Currie as well as our ongoing support of the Food Bank at Trinity Wester Hailes . . . it is sad even that food shortages can be local.

That day when the crowds had gathered, Jesus told his disciples, give them something to eat. And soon enough everyone had more than enough. Jesus also says Blessed are the hungry for they shall be filled. Jesus longs to offer us gifts to feed our souls—he knows that only God can ultimately fulfil our deepest needs for meaning, purpose and life and God is as near as the air we breathe—and God's spiritual gifts, God's grace and love are freely given when we come in spirit. Like Elijah we need physical food to have energy and strength. But it is Jesus who offers us himself, God's greatest gift to the world, the bread of life broken for you and me and given freely and generously and lovingly. So let us come to the table and be fed. I know that we are not together . . . and while communion is meaningful when we are together as the Body of Christ, we can still receive. This sacrament calls for each of us individually to be a participant, welcomed by Christ himself. God can energise us and renew us and give us the strength, wisdom and grace to press on, to see ourselves through the eyes of Jesus and the world through the eyes of Jesus and to feel our lives sustained by a strength not of our own.

## **Pastoral Prayer**

Most wonderful and loving God  
We thank you for all you have given us  
We rejoice in the gift of life itself  
We are grateful for everything that makes life worth living  
For the things we like to eat,  
For the things we like to do,  
For the people who love us and care for us

We thank you that you have always loved the world that you have made  
That in Jesus this love of yours was fully expressed  
We thank you that he befriended those whom others rejected  
We thank you that he shared his plans, his work and God's work with ordinary people like ourselves  
And that he called us to the ministry of prayer in relationship with you.

And so during this time we pray for ourselves and our world.  
We pray for those many places where war and violence  
Threaten the stability of society

The safety of families, and take a daily toll on life.  
We pray for those displaced in refugee camps  
Who have no safe place to go.  
We offer to you our prayers and our hopes that peace will come  
And justice will prevail.

We pray for all your children Lord who find life difficult  
Who face challenges and trials they know they cannot meet alone  
Who are ill or facing treatment or waiting for surgery or a doctor's letter  
Who are tired because someone they love is ill  
Who are sad because someone they love has died  
Who are struggling to have enough money or food or a place to stay

We ask you to bless our community of Currie and  
All the families and folk who live in the area  
Bless those preparing to reopen the schools  
Bless all the many sports teams and  
bless too our Kirk and all its members and friends  
as we begin to emerge from the trauma of the Covid Crisis.  
Grant us faith and strength

We thank you that you hear all spoken and unspoken needs  
Of your people throughout the world  
We pray your love will hear their cries  
Your providence will support and sustain their needs

We ask you to bless our lives with joy and compassion  
Help us to remember you in own relationships  
And to persevere in faith.

WE pray for your Church in the whole world  
So that in faith your people may provide a beacon of light  
Joyful in Loving  
Tireless in serving  
Delighted in sharing the love and the message of our Lord Jesus Christ  
our saviour in whose name we pray.

Amen

## **Invitation to Holy Communion**

He was always the guest.  
In the homes of his friends, he was always the guest.  
At the meal tables of the wealthy  
where he pled the case of the poor, he was always the guest.  
Upsetting polite company, befriending isolated people,  
welcoming the stranger, he was always the guest.

But here, at this table, he is the host.  
Those who wish to serve him must first be served by him,  
those who want to follow him must first be fed by him,  
those who would wash his feet must first let him make them clean.  
For this is the table where God intends us to be nourished;  
this is the time when Christ can make us new.  
So come, you who hunger and thirst for a deeper faith,  
for a better life, for a fairer World.

Jesus Christ, who has sat at our tables, now invites us to be guests at his.

### **The Story**

What we do here, we do in imitation of what Christ first did,  
To his followers in every age, Jesus gave an example and command rooted in  
the experience he shared with his disciples in an upstairs room in Jerusalem.  
On the night on which he was betrayed, and as they were sitting at a meal, Jesus took a piece of bread  
and broke it. He gave it to the disciples saying,

*“This is my body. It is broken for you, Do this to remember me” .*

Later, after they had eaten, he took a cup of wine and said,

*“this cup is the new relationship with God made possible because of my death. Drink this all of you, to remember me.”*

So now we do as Jesus did:

We take this bread and this wine,  
the produce of the earth and fruit of human labour,  
In these, Jesus has promised to be present;  
through these, Christ can make us whole.  
As Jesus drew near to God to thank him for his gifts, let us so do. . .

Let us pray

### **PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING**

Loving God, is indeed right, to praise you and give you thanks  
for you made us, and before us,  
you made the world we inhabit, and before the world,  
you made the eternal home in which, through Christ, we have a place.  
All that is spectacular, all that is plain have their origin in you;  
all that is lovely, all who are loving point to you as their fulfilment.

And grateful as we are for the world we know  
and the universe beyond our ken, we particularly praise you,  
whom eternity cannot contain, for coming to earth and entering time in Jesus.

For his life which informs our living,  
for his compassion which changes our hearts,  
for his clear speaking which contradicts our harmless generalities,  
for his innocent suffering, his fearless dying,  
his rising to life breathing forgiveness, we praise you and thank you.

Our gratitude rises for the promise of the Holy Spirit, who even yet,  
even now, confronts us with your claims and attracts us to your goodness.  
And offers us gifts of grace and peace beyond our understanding.

Therefore we gladly join our voices  
to the song of the Church on earth and in heaven:

HOLY, HOLY, HOLY LORD,  
GOD OF POWER AND MIGHT.  
HEAVEN AND EARTH ARE FULL OF YOUR GLORY.  
HOSANNA IN THE HIGHEST.  
BLESSED IS HE WHO COMES IN THE NAME OF THE LORD.  
HOSANNA IN THE HIGHEST.

And now, lest we believe that our praise alone fulfils your purpose, we fall silent  
and remember him who came because words weren't enough.

(Silence)

Setting our wisdom, our will, our words aside, emptying our hearts,  
and bringing nothing in our hands, we yearn for the healing,  
the holding, the accepting, the forgiving which Christ alone can offer.

Merciful God, send now in kindness,  
your Holy Spirit to settle on this bread and wine  
and fill them with the fullness of Jesus.  
And let that same Spirit rest on us, converting us,  
from the patterns of this passing world,  
until we conform to the shape of him whose food we now share. Amen

## **COMMUNION**

*(breaking bread)*

Among friends, gathered round a table,  
Jesus took bread, and broke it, and said,  
*"This is my body. It is broken for you. Do this to remember me."*

*(Holding up a cup of wine)*

Later he took a cup of wine and said,  
*"This cup is the new relationship with God made possible because of my death.  
Drink this all of you, to remember me."*

Jesus, firstborn of Mary.  
HAVE MERCY ON US.

Jesus, Saviour of the world.  
HAVE MERCY ON US.

Jesus, monarch of heaven.  
HAVE MERCY ON US.

He whom the universe could not contain,  
is present to us in this bread,

He who redeemed us and called us by name  
now meets us in this cup.

So take this bread and drink this wine.  
In them God comes to us so that we may come to God. ( sharing of bread and wine)

### ***The Peace***

Christ who has nourished us, is our peace,  
old and young, he has broken down the barriers  
to bind us to him and to each other.  
Having tasted his goodness  
The peace of the Lord be with you.

### **Let us pray.**

In gratitude, in deep gratitude  
for this moment, this meal,  
we give ourselves to you.  
Lord, having tasted the living bread, may we live to your glory,  
both as inhabitants of earth and citizens of the commonwealth of heaven.

Amen.

## **The Blessing**

May God himself, the God of Peace  
Make us holy through and through  
And keep us sound in spirit, soul and body For the sake of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ

Amen

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

## Jungle Adventure 2021

Wow, what a week! Holiday club this year took place outdoors from 26—30 July in the grounds of Heriot Watt University. We had a wonderful space next to the Chaplaincy building that gave us open space, access into the woodland area and, quite importantly, access to toilets in the building!



We are very grateful to Heriot Watt and the Chaplaincy team for allowing us to use their space. This was our first larger event since COVID hit, and it was full of joy. Falling under Youthwork guidelines meant that by the time the club began we didn't have to social distance from each other which made things a lot easier. We still had increased precautions and added safety measures, but it was wonderful to be part of something that felt "normal".

Our team was made up of ten adult leaders, one trainee and two young leaders. Gathered from several churches, united through Christ and in our longing to serve Him and tell children about His greatness. A massive thank you has to go to them, without them we wouldn't have had holiday club this year and they worked so hard during the week to make the experience the best it could be. We had 24 children join us for the week and they were amazing. Full of life, energy and enthusiasm. They threw themselves wholeheartedly into everything we did and came running in each morning with big smiles on their faces. When Friday came, they were all asking for more days together!

In the run up to and throughout the event we saw God at work; through provision of the space, to lessening restrictions, to the exact number of team we needed, spaces to be filled and for all our resources, God was there. We prayed for good or at least dry weather and God heard our plea. On the Tuesday and Wednesday there was forecast to be thunderstorms and heavy rain, but they never came. Whilst we were out on Tuesday afternoon buying more tarpaulins and considering how to make best use of the space while staying as dry as possible, we prayed that God would change the weather to not be as bad as the forecast and God did far beyond what we had hoped for. Perhaps ironically, our story for Wednesday was Jesus calming the storm! It was a special moment to tell that story then explain that the same God who calmed that storm 2000 years ago, was the same today and had calmed a storm for us too.

The children were full of questions about God and the Bible and it was lovely to provide an opportunity for them to ask those questions and try to think through together what the answers might be. Being outdoors meant we could explore and respond to the stories in different ways, using nature to help us. On Friday we were able to act out the story of Peter's denial around a real fire, just as it would have happened at the time.

At the end of each morning we gave away a craft bag for them to take home and do with their families in the afternoon. This was our way of reaching out to the wider family, hoping and praying that as they did the crafts there would be talk of the Bible stories and of God as they created together. We don't know how many of these were used or will be used in the coming weeks, but our prayer is still that they will serve as a reminder of who God is and what they heard about Him. Thank you to those who helped put those packs together.

One of the highlights for me has to be singing with the children. On the first day they joined in but it was tentative, quieter. Well, by the end of the week no-one was shy about singing! I had planned to do one song each day, maybe two at the most, after all we weren't used to singing together and we had no musical accompaniment to drown out any wrong notes! But once we got singing they didn't want to stop!

Three or four songs were sung each day, with actions! One morning the children didn't want the adults to join in, they wanted to perform for us. What ensued was chaotic and loud, but such a heart-warming moment as all these children stood in front of us with huge smiles on their faces, shouting at the top of their voices and doing actions that God is king over everything, including them. An incredible moment that I will remember for a long time.

Thank you to all of you who prayed. It was reassuring to know that as we met with the children there were people praying for us behind the scenes. I likely will never know the number of people who were praying for us but thank you if you were one of them. Thanks too to all those who helped us out with resources, they were very much appreciated and we are grateful to you.

I wish you could all have been there to see what holiday club was like and to rejoice with us in all that happened, but I hope the video of photos that we've put together gives you a little insight into what fun we had together. I'm so thankful for having had the opportunity to lead holiday club again this year. Despite the challenges it was a delight to be there, to see the children's happy faces, see the incredible team shining their lights, and most of all to see God at work. All the glory and highest praise must go to Him, who is faithful and loving and good.

If you can here is the link to Heather's video

<https://photos.app.goo.gl/tSbp9WpjaFZpuAu36>



## **Celebrate Life and Work Sunday on 29 August and support the magazine of our church**

### **Join us as we celebrate the past, present and future of the Church's magazine**

Life and Work has been informing, uplifting, moving, connecting and occasionally enraging the Church of Scotland for over 140 years. This summer, we are offering churches the chance to celebrate that.

Life and Work Sunday will be marked on 29 August with a celebration and the team are delighted to offer a collection of resources, including a specially-written prayer and short reflection, and suggested readings and hymns for inclusion in worship if you wish. Alongside that, there will be a slideshow and printable exhibition of past covers. See our feature on page 24 of the August issue.

**You will find worship resources including the slideshow and exhibition at**  
[www.lifeandwork.org/resources/life-and-work-sunday](http://www.lifeandwork.org/resources/life-and-work-sunday)

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Apologies and thanks to those who have pointed out that the words to the Lord's Prayer in last week's order was incorrectly typed. In the words of Eric Morecambe—they were all there—just in the wrong order!!

This weekly service has been going out since 3 May 2020 and last week's error is proof that the file is read!! .