

New Kilpatrick

Podcast

28th June 2020

Matthew 10:40-42



Welcome

Hello and thank you for the invitation to share worship with you today. From wherever you are, this has become a special and unique place for us to meet and worship and pray together. So thank you for the invite.

I'm Roddy Hamilton, the minister in New Kilpatrick Parish Church and we create a space together today to reflect and pause and take a deeper breath, finding ourselves in a more profound way, among all that is happening in the world.

It is good to find these moments where we can tap into something greater than the news cycles, and seek some solace, understanding, comfort and strength. This morning we offer something slightly different from usual, a spiritual essay of sorts around the theme of welcome. Let us be together.



Gathering

Holy God
Holy and generous
Holy and loving
Holy and beyond our words.
We pause
and take breath
breathing in your spirit of life

Holy God
Holy and present
Holy and constant
Holy and companion on the way
we pause
and seek silence
beyond which you still are

Holy God
Holy and true
Holy and gracious
Holy and comforting for our
world
we pause
and turn towards that
which is deep within us

And find you
waiting



Worship Space

I'm lighting a candle now, a sign of presence, as old as light itself. God's first act, was creating the light; God, being present. In that light we still gather, an ancient light from the dawn of creation, and still calls us together wherever we are. Let us welcome each other imagining the dispirit community we are, on phones, on podcasts, in cars, on mountains, in living rooms and kitchens. We are God's People, still, gathering in this first and brightest light of God.

Psalm 4

Sing, O my voice,
a song for tomorrow.
Find words
reimagined with promise and life.

Sing, O congregation,
the poems not yet written,
born in expectation
of what this journey can become.

Sing, O you people,
of the God who is at hand,
reborn in the questions
we honour and voice together.

Sing, O our souls,
of possibility in the present
honed by a faith
heading for tomorrow.

Sing, all you people,
both lament and celebration
and in such heady combination
let our hopes arise.



Emotions

Since lockdown began, myself and Kirstin Freeman, the Rector of All Saints Episcopal Church in Bearsden have collaborated in writing a new psalm each week. You have just heard Psalm 4. Psalms have always been one of the go-to books of the bible to find expression of our emotions in whatever circumstances we find ourselves in.

So together we write each psalm, and they have, in a lesser or greater way, expressed the feelings each week of lockdown has brought. In the first weeks, they began with lament and loss and have grown to be reshaped round anxiety and worry as we have settled into the length of this experience. But what has also grown is the possibility of renewal and transformation, as we have begun to recognise what has been exposed in these months about our relationships, our institutions, the priorities we had three months ago and what they are now, and in recognising those, recognise too places of new hope, having become clearer about that which we need to transform and renew.

Psalm 9 perhaps expresses that.

Psalm 9

In the chill of a summer dawn
as bird call saturates the air
heralding new life
we pause

as bees sip from the dew heavy grass
before fleetingly visiting each flower
seeking for richer sweetness.
we pause

In kaleidoscopic changing sky
decorated with wispy clouds reminiscent
of the conta trails that once painted the sky.
we pause

In this day, just another in so many ways
you O God, already abide
waiting to surprise and delight us.

As we pause in the moment
you pause with us
inviting us to breathe and enter the day.



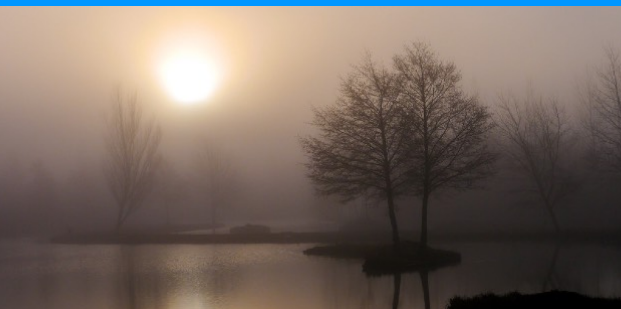
Pausing

Perhaps it is the pausing we need most. Lockdown has reduced the activity levels for many folk but there is a difference between doing less, and pausing.

Pausing brings an awareness of things. It is a choice to listen differently. A choice to be aware of different senses, to engage with the world a little more deeply with them, feel, be prepared to feel differently about something, that isn't all about the surface.

And we don't pause easily. I often feel guilty doing that because pausing feels like doing nothing, and I should be doing something, there is plenty to do.

Yet it isn't doing nothing. It is doing something very human and spiritual. It is an expensive thing to do because by pausing, you stop doing something else and shift your awareness and find yourself in a different place, or lane, or moment. Or maybe it is just to find yourself and these emotions we carry, and these stories we shape, these memories that we hide or hold onto.



Shaping Tomorrow

Shaping the tomorrow beyond tomorrow.

And there is the hope, the ability to look beyond the moment, the issue, the time and live towards what is yet to come.

It is a faith position. Not only Christianity, or Judaism or even any religious faith. Faith is not limited to religion. Indeed it is a human condition at times to have faith that enables us to see and therefore live towards a time that is different from now, better, more life-giving.

Living towards something yet to come.

Here's the sixth psalm we wrote:

Psalm 6

When we've thought too much,
and run out of words...

When we've tried to understand
and found a more profound silence...

When we've engaged with the future
but found no blue-print or plan...

Send out your spirit, O God,
and twist together the strands of this story,
that we might weave together
new songs to sing
from these Babylonian riverbanks,
hope-filled for this time
where 'Tomorrow' has already begun,
shaping the Tomorrow beyond tomorrow
and the Tomorrow beyond the tomorrow after that...





Reflection

When you listen to Jesus words about welcome and providing for your guest, there is very much a 'now' element in them, responding to a need, a moment. But that is what relationship is, and what the Gospel continually talks about. Welcoming someone establishes that relationship: by investing in the 'now' of that relationship we are reshaping the future. You can't get to the future without starting in the present.

So while we hear Jesus words about how we look towards our neighbour, or how we make space for the widow and the orphan, or how we welcome the stranger, these do two things: they change what happens in the present as we respond to needs through hospitality, and clearly, by changing that present, by providing for needs, the future shifts as well.

So when Jesus speaks about welcoming folk, this is what is happening, whatever you do now towards someone, moves the future in a particular direction. We make the space for the future to grow depending on how we treat others now.

In the west we often forget this future element in things. We are instant consumers. We can expect a book bought on the internet to arrive that same day, we send text messages and expect the reply to be almost instant.

Scripture

The scripture passage we use today helps us here. We take our bible passages from the revised common lectionary, a global pattern of readings for the world church. Today many round the global church are reading this passage from Matthew 10:40-42

“Whoever welcomes you welcomes me, and whoever welcomes me welcomes the one who sent me. Whoever welcomes a prophet in the name of a prophet will receive a prophet’s reward; and whoever welcomes a righteous person in the name of a righteous person will receive the reward of the righteous; and whoever gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones in the name of a disciple—truly I tell you, none of these will lose their reward.”



Yet the culture of welcome that Jesus explains, is not only about that instant welcome, and drawing a person in and being hospitable to them. The culture was quite clear that you never welcomed individuals but you welcomed all they were associated with, their whole household, their beliefs, their family.

Here's Jesus words that explain that culture: Whoever welcomes you welcomes me, and whoever welcomes me welcomes the one who sent me.

In making space for a person, we make space for all that is bound to them. We may not necessarily agree with or support those things. But we aren't asked to be hospitable only to those we agree with but to all our neighbours.

In making that space, the future becomes more fluid as we don't know how this relationship, this

Reflection continued

connection with our guest will evolve. We are opening ourselves to the possibility of change, through different points of view, or seeing the world from a different perspective.

Shaping the tomorrow beyond tomorrow in what we do towards our neighbour now. Welcoming people does that. In the culture of the kingdom, making space for guests, creating hospitality, shapes the tomorrow beyond tomorrow.

And we honour that person, by pausing and reflecting, taking a breath, considering them and how they shape us and how we have maybe shaped them, especially as our guest, in Jesus own words, has been not just Jesus himself, but the whole company of heaven.



Prayer

Loving God
who welcome us
and all we are

may we make space to welcome
you
and the whole company of heaven
of followers and travellers
of doubters and questioners
of denominations and none
of children and adults
of women and men
of saints and sinners

and in such a band of believers
and doubters
may we find the space
reserved
and honed
and inviting
each of us

Holy God
may we travel deeper into your
love
reshaped by its blessing
as it encourages us
leads us
towards others
love broad enough
to make table space

hospitable space
gracious space
for enemy and friend alike

and in that radical
dangerous space
may there be time to pause
with our neighbour
knowing such moments
shape the tomorrow beyond
tomorrow

Loving God
may we shift the world
in living kingdom-wise

and in these days
so different to us all
recognise the space they make
to be different tomorrow
because of what we invite today

Holy God
Loving God
God of the pauses and the
welcome
God of the present and future too
hear us
as we share the Lord Prayer

Amen

Benediction

Go in peace, my friends
Go in generous love
and hospitable welcome

And the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ
The love of God
and the commonwealth of the Holy Spirit
be with us all
Evermore
Amen



Thank you

Thank you for sharing the journey today, a different approach to our reflection. It is always good to receive feedback so we may always offer something closer to what people are searching for. You can do that by a phone call or an email or on the website nkchurch.org.uk. On the website you will find all the psalms, some of which you have heard today along with videos for each. There too you'll find daily prayers, meditation and all our social activities and worship material from each week.

Thank you to Gillian and Jimmy Dinsmore for sharing in the service today. It is greatly appreciated and I hope you all keep well, safe safe and catch up next time. Take care.

