

St Peter's Scottish Episcopal Church, Kirkcaldy



Alpine Flowers

Sunday 7th February 2021, Epiphany 5

- Introit Hymn:* Thou whose almighty word
- Welcome:* Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. **Amen.**
- Collect for Purity:* **Almighty God, to whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hidden: cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you, and worthily magnify your holy name; through Christ our Lord. Amen.**
- Gloria:* **Glory to God in the highest, and peace to his people on earth. Lord God, heavenly King, almighty God and Father, we worship you, we give you thanks, we praise you for your glory. Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father, Lord God, Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world; have mercy on us; you are seated at the right hand of the Father: receive our prayer. For you alone are the Holy One, you alone are the Lord, you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit, in the glory of God the Father. Amen.**
- Collect:* Merciful Lord, grant to your faithful people pardon and peace, that we may be cleansed from all our sins and serve you with a quiet mind; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen**
- Collect SPB:* O Lord, we beseech thee to keep thy Church and household continually in thy true religion; that they who do lean only upon the hope of thy heavenly grace may evermore be defended by thy mighty power, through Jesus Christ our Lord **Amen.**
- First reading:* Isaiah 40. 21-31 (SPB Colossians 3.2)
- Second reading:* 1 Corinthians 9. 16-23
- Gradual hymn:* Be thou my vision
- Gospel acclamation:* **Alleluia! Alleluia! I am the light of the World, says the Lord, anyone who follows me will have the light of life. Alleluia!**
- Gospel:* Mark 1. 29-39 (SPB St Matthew 13.24)
- When gospel is announced:*
Glory to Christ our Saviour.

At end: Give thanks to the Lord for his glorious Gospel.
Praise to Christ our Lord.

Homily:

Some Sundays, the lectionary readings seem to fit together better than other Sundays. Some Sundays, a coherent theme practically jumps from scriptures' pages into our laps. On others, searching for it seems to require a magnifying glass and a fine-toothed comb. Perhaps what more widely true Sunday in, Sunday is out is this: a theme that one person finds sitting in their lap, another hearer may not recognize at all.

The overarching theme of this season after the Epiphany is God's manifestation in Jesus Christ. After celebrating the birth of the baby in the manger, we now experience the Word made flesh all grown up and living out his ministry. Sunday mornings during this season are filled with stories of Jesus being revealed to the people around him, whether it be through his baptism, his miracles, his calling of the disciples, or his teaching in the synagogues.

While we Christians understand Jesus to be the ultimate revelation of God, we also know that God didn't wait until Jesus was born to be revealed to humankind. In fact, God revealed Godself all the way back in the first chapter of Genesis when the heavens and the earth, and all of humankind, were created in the divine image.

Each of today's readings—from the Old Testament and the New—reveal something about that divine image; that is, something of who God is—before, during, and after Jesus' earthly life.

Isaiah 40 reveals God's greatness in a time before Jesus. The prophet Isaiah delivers God's word to the people of Israel in exile. With vivid images, Isaiah reveals to the Israelites once again that their God is a God who is bigger and more powerful than even their enemies. "It is he who sits above the circle of the earth, and its inhabitants are like grasshoppers; who stretches out the heavens like a curtain, and spreads them like a tent to live in; who brings princes to naught, and makes the rulers of the earth as nothing."

But this Old Testament passages do not merely reveal something about who God is; they also show us that God's word embodies different points of view.

The prophet Isaiah's words are . . . well, prophecy. They are God's words, spoken through a mortal voice. Through the mouth of Isaiah, God is revealed to the Israelites in a steadfast promise to strengthen the weak. "Even youths will faint and be weary, and the young will fall exhausted; but those who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength, they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint."

This Old Testament passage is not unlike those in that famous New Testament exchange heard each year in the days leading up to Christmas. God's heavenly messenger Gabriel reveals God's plan when he comes and says, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favour with God. And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus."

Mary's most profound response to this revelation comes a little while later when she sings, "My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord, my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour." To this day, Mary's words reveal a God who casts down the mighty and lifts up the lowly; who fills the hungry with good things and sends the rich away empty; who helps the chosen ones and never breaks a promise. Both Gabriel and Mary reveal something about who God is. One heralds God's promise from heaven. The other responds to the experience of that promise on earth.

When Jesus arrives, these heavenly and earthly perspectives are joined in the flesh. In Mark's first chapter, Jesus heals Simon's mother-in-law at home, and with news of his miracles spreading quickly, the whole city gathers at the door to catch a glimpse as Jesus cures the sick and demon-possessed. These folks are among the first to witness God revealed where heaven and earth meet—in the person of Jesus Christ.

The next morning, after retreating for a time of prayer, Jesus sets off for the neighboring towns to continue preaching and healing. "For that is what I came out to do," he says. And so, the marvelous ministry begins. More and more will soon come to know God manifest in human form. They will hear his teachings and witness his acts of compassion. Some of them will even walk with him all the way to the cross. Three days later, the first few will begin to understand that what seemed like the end was really just another beginning. God would continue to be revealed.

Several years following Jesus' resurrection, St. Paul writes to the Corinthians about what his experiences of God's revelation in Jesus have taught him. He reveals to the faithful a God who calls each of us to be a servant to everyone—even to those of cultures different from our own. Like Paul, we who live the post-resurrection life preach the Good News not simply for our own benefit, but for the benefit of those who will hear it anew.

We may not have first-hand experience of the person of Jesus, but our lives are changed because the Word became flesh. That means that today's Good News is no different than it is on any other Sunday (or any other day of the week for that matter!): God is revealed to us. God has always been revealed to us.

As one of our Eucharistic prayers puts it, we thank God "for the goodness and love which you have made known to us in creation; in the calling of Israel to be your people; in your Word spoken through the prophets; and above all in the Word made flesh, Jesus, your Son."

The "above all" part of that can be tricky for some folks. It is certainly not meant to suggest that the God revealed to us in Jesus is different or more authentic than the God of the prophets and psalmists. God is God, living and true. The words "above all" simply acknowledge that as Christians we experience Jesus as the perfect embodiment of God's solidarity with humanity. He who by his death conquered death has raised us to everlasting life. Because we live in this reality, we do our best to follow the example God has revealed to us since before time began.

So, week in, week out, we may experience God in different ways, from different perspectives. And from season to season the themes of our common worship may change. But the sure thing is, we will experience God. And when we do, we are called to respond in much the same way: by sharing God's Word with the world.

Nicene Creed:

**We believe in one God, the Father, the almighty,
maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.
We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God,
eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God, begotten, not made,
of one substance with the Father. Through him all things were made.
For us men and for our salvation he came down from heaven;
by the power of the Holy Spirit he became incarnate of the Virgin Mary,
and was made man.
For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;
he suffered death and was buried. On the third day he rose again
in accordance with the Scriptures; he ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead,
and his kingdom will have no end.
We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father.
With the Father and the Son, he is worshipped and glorified.
He has spoken through the prophets.
We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church.
We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.
We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come.
Amen.**

Intercessions:
Group

Composed and prayed on behalf of the congregation by a member of the Intercessors

Heavenly Father, at a time of great uncertainty, we offer up to you our prayers, our hopes and our fears. As always, we offer these prayers in the name of your Son, our Saviour, Jesus. Lord, in your mercy; **hear our prayer**

We have been reminded in today's readings of the healing that can come from belief in you. As this terrible pandemic extends across the world, we are in great need of an unwavering belief in your powers of healing; Father, we believe, but we ask that you will help our unbelief.

We pray that the spread of the virus can be brought to an end, thinking not only of ourselves but of those in parts of the world where poverty and inadequate health services mean they can be offered little medical help. We are placing great hope in the vaccines that are being developed to counter the virus, and we ask that those in charge of their distribution will ensure that they are made freely available to all in need of them, and not only to those in nations that can afford to pay for them.

Lord, in your mercy; **hear our prayer**

Within the province and diocese of our part of your universal Church, we pray for the leader of our college of bishops, Mark, and for our diocesan bishop, Ian, as they both work on our behalf at this especially testing time. And we place before you those who worship and minister in the Highland Perthshire group of churches, at Pitlochry, Strathtay, Kilmaveonaig and Kinloch Rannoch.

We pray for the work of the Scottish Episcopal Institute, asking that those who are worthy of your calling can be brought forward and nurtured as future pastors in your Church.

Here in our own parish of St Peter's, we thank you for your continuing support of Christine's ministry and we also give thanks for the contributions of those who offer their gifts to our life as a community in whatever way they are most able.

Lord, in your mercy; **hear our prayer**

Across the wider world, we ask for your support for Archbishop Stephen, as he provides spiritual leadership to the Karen people in Myanmar, in the Mae Ra Mo refugee camp and elsewhere.

Lord, in your mercy; **hear our prayer**

Father, we ask that we can become more conscious of the harm that mankind continues to cause to the wonderful world you have given us.

We ask that you will give us the wisdom and reverence to use the resources of nature in such a way that no one can suffer from our abuse of them, and that future generations will still be able to praise you for the spiritual and physical healing that we can draw from the natural world.

Lord, in your mercy; **hear our prayer**

We place before you the needs of any known to us who are suffering illness or frailty, whether of the body or the mind, praying that, if it is your will for them, they can be brought back to a state of good health.

We pray particularly for those who are suffering from depression or heightened anxiety at this stressful time, and we ask that you will show us how we can best offer help to those in need of it.

Lord, in your mercy; **hear our prayer**

We remember those who have passed into your presence in previous years, calling to mind: Joan Coles, Bessie Potts and William Ernest Raine.

We thank you for the promise of eternal life in your presence for those who have died in the faith.

Lord, in your mercy; **hear our prayer**

Father, we offer up these prayers in the name of your risen Son, our saviour, Jesus Christ.

Amen

Confession

and Absolution:

God is love and we are his children. There is no room for fear in love.
We love because he loved us first. Let us confess our sins in penitence and faith.

Silence

**God our Father, we confess to you
and to our fellow members in the Body of Christ
that we have sinned in thought, word and deed,
and in what we have failed to do.
We are truly sorry.
Forgive us our sins,**

**and deliver us from the power of evil.
For the sake of your Son who died for us,
Jesus Christ, our Lord.**

(May) God, who is both power and love, forgive us and free us from our sins,
heal and strengthen us by his Spirit and raise us to new life in Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Peace: We meet in Christ's Name let us share his peace.

Offertory hymn: How shall I sing that majesty

Communion Prayer: **God of infinite mercy. We thank you for Jesus our Saviour who feeds his people and gives them eternal life. Though we cannot consume the gifts of bread and wine we thank you that we do receive Christ's saving presence, the forgiveness of sins and all other benefits of his passion. Grant that we may continue for ever in the risen and ascended life of our Saviour. Amen. (This prayer is said during the online Provincial service).**

The Lord's Prayer: **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 trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And 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.**

Communion hymn: Breathe on me breath of God

Concluding Prayer: **Eternal God, in you we find peace beyond all telling. May we who share in heavenly things be instruments of your peace on earth, in the name of Jesus Christ the Lord. Amen.**

Blessing: Christ the Son of God gladden your hearts with the good news of his kingdom; and the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, be among you and remain with you always. **Amen.**

Dismissal: Go in peace to love and serve the Lord
In the name of Christ. Amen.

Recessional hymn: I danced in the morning

7pm Candle Prayer

**God who remembers, be with us in our remembering this day.
Be with us on the journey that takes us from the past
And into the future that lies before us.
Lord, in your mercy, Hear our prayer.**

**God who remembers, be with us in our remembering this day.
Be with us as we recall those who have shaped us
And the events that have made us. grant to us grace and healing in all we recall.
Lord, in your mercy, Hear our prayer.**

**God who remembers, be with us in our remembering this day.
Be with us in sorrow and in loss and come beside all who mourn this day.
Come beside us and do not leave us.
Lord, in your mercy, Hear our prayer.**

**God who remembers, be with us in our remembering this day.
Be with those who serve in hospitals and in homes
And who, by their medical and nursing skills, provide comfort and hope to those who suffer.
Lord, in your mercy, Hear our prayer.**

**God who remembers, be with us in our remembering this day.
Be with us as community and nation and strengthen us in all we endure.
Even in the darkness, may we find your light renewed through Jesus Christ.
Lord, in your mercy, Hear our prayer.**

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