

St Peter's Scottish Episcopal Church, Kirkcaldy



Sunday 21st March 2021, Lent 5

Introit Hymn: O sacred head sore wounded

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.**

Summary of the Law: Our Lord Jesus Christ said:
The first commandment is this:
“Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is the only Lord.
You shall love the Lord your God
with all your heart,
with all your soul,
with all your mind
and with all your strength.”

The second is this:
“Love your neighbour as yourself.”
There is no other commandment greater than these.

Amen. Lord, have mercy.

Kyrie: Lord, have mercy.
Lord, have mercy.
Christ, have mercy.
Christ, have mercy.
Lord, have mercy.
Lord, have mercy.

Collect: Most merciful God, by the death and resurrection of your Son Jesus Christ you created humanity anew. May the power of his victorious cross transform those who turn in faith to him who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen**

Collect SPB: We beseech thee, almighty God, mercifully to look upon thy people; that by thy great goodness they may be governed and preserved evermore, both in body and soul; through Jesus Christ our Lord **Amen.**

First reading: Jeremiah 31. 31-34 (SPB Hebrews 9.11)

Second reading: Hebrews 5. 5-10

Introit Hymn: There is a green hill far away

Gospel Acclamation: **Alleluia, alleluia. If a man serves me, says the Lord, he must follow me; wherever I am my servant will be there too. Alleluia.**

Gospel: John 12. 20-33 (SPB St John 8.46)

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:

Lent, a season that calls us to repentance, in which we change our vestments to purple, a colour associated with mourning. It is a sombre season, and this may resonate with many of us today. It has been about a year since our worlds were completely changed. It has been a year of grieving, mourning routines – a year of adjusting to new ways of gathering. A year of limiting in-person gatherings to protect each other and the most vulnerable. A year of many changes, regardless of where we find ourselves on this life journey.

And maybe this Lent, you decided to do some self-care or take on a specific spiritual practice. If you did, great! And if you did not, that's great too! With a pandemic raging and all of the unprecedented events, it is important to be kind to ourselves. It is important to be present with all these changes and feelings.

Current news and the social unrest of this past year have probably left us with the same request as the Greeks in today's gospel: "Sir, we wish to see Jesus." Now, we do not know much about the Greeks in this story; Andrew and Philip did not know what to do, but Jesus made sure to respond.

Of course, right before this passage, many people had witnessed Jesus calling Lazarus from the tomb, so they wanted to meet and listen to this man. Lazarus was drawing crowds, and this understandably caused a lot of concern among many, including the religious authorities.

Similarly, this pandemic has highlighted our desire to "see" or experience Jesus. We have come face-to-face with the ways in which our world continues to oppress, but it has also lifted new movements to create opportunities to correct what has been wrong for so long. Our Old Testament lesson reminds us that the Lord will forgive Israel. A radically new future is presented. Maybe this is a time of God forgiving our communal sins and making way for a radically new future. Forgiving us for not listening to the voice of the Father. For not listening to the voices of those suffering. For perhaps trying to ignore the realities or experiences of those whom we label as outsiders. Allowing this sin to separate us from God and others.

This pandemic has allowed us to see what privilege looks like and whom it benefits. And this has left us wondering what it looks like to serve the Father. Jesus says that those who serve must also follow. Today, we are serving the Father by loving our neighbours, by listening to those voices telling us that they are not doing well. We are following Jesus by protecting our neighbors.

In our gospel reading, Jesus heard the voice. Some thought it was thunder and others an angel, but they all heard something. And like the crowd, we may sometimes confuse the voice, or even deny it. But Jesus reminds us that this voice is for our benefit. That we must pay close attention to what God is doing and saying.

This year has been one of much listening. We have heard the voices of so many. We have heard the voices of our neighbors who are Black and indigenous people of colour in ways that we have never heard before. We have heard the stories of families in need. We have heard the voices of anger, despair, and rage. We have heard the voices of the marginalized, the once forgotten.

What if we found God in these voices, too? Today, we can decide to be intentional about listening to these voices. We educate and inform ourselves in what matters to those who do not look or think like we do. We make space to welcome them into our lives, our communities, our churches, and our families. We welcome them in authentic ways that leave nothing to the imagination – because our actions make clear statements that we embrace all.

As we come to the end of this Lenten season, can we stop and wonder where we have heard that voice? From whom the voice came? Or even with whom have we shared this voice?

In answering and understanding these, we will also find love. We find God. We find forgiveness. We find that even in the midst of chaos, there is love. Even in our struggle, we will find love. We hear God saying that you are enough – that listening to God’s voice is transformative and healing.

Yes, it has felt like an extremely long season of Lent, but Easter is coming. We believe in a God who gives life. We believe that joy comes in the morning.

Perhaps we have been feeling like this unrest will never end. Although we are slowly coming to a new normal, we know that nothing will entirely go back to what it used to be – nor should it. Be reminded that the same Jesus who cried out with a loud voice, “Lazarus, come out!” will do the same with us even when we don’t see it. Even now, God is calling us with a loud voice, saying, “Come out!”

The journey is always a struggle. But the movement is always forward. If there is no struggle there is no progress. We cannot learn from blocking changes or denying our struggles – and this is difficult to understand. There will be days when we will not get all of the work done, days when we will not know which voices to listen to – but God will remain with us. We must take our time when listening to the voices around us and decide where we can find God in them. We must decide to love because we know that hate is too much to carry. We must continue to say, “We wish to see Jesus.” Let us continue to boldly claim this for our lives and for our world.

Be reminded that we are not alone. Remember that God delights in our particularities and that God sees our struggles. God recognizes all of who we are and all of what we experience. We have the example in Jesus, who also offered up prayers and supplications, with loud cries and tears, to the One who was able to save. Jesus is the example for us to follow. So, offer up your prayers, your loud cries and tears, knowing that God hears them, knowing that we belong to a God whose compassion blots out our offenses. We serve and follow a God who sees our transgressions and loves us the same.

May the God who saw our tears yesterday and heard our silent prayers today provide and care for us in ways that cannot yet be described. May the voice sustain us, may love guide every part of our life, and may the loving and liberating Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ give us peace. Amen.

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: Composed by a member of the Intercessions Group

Everlasting God, your son chose twelve disciples to work together to spread the good news of the gospel, help us as we work together in our congregation and diocese for the common good. May we delight in sharing in each other's spiritual gifts and enabling everyone to make their own contribution however small. May we always be ready to toil and not to seek for rest, to labour and not to ask for any reward, save that of knowing that we do your will. We pray for Mark our Primus, Ian our Bishop and all involved in ministry in St Peters.

Lord in your mercy, **Hear our Prayer**

Creator God, we pray for peace in our world; may all lands that suffer violence and injustice find peace and reconciliation. We pray for the peoples of the world and all who offer their services in the leadership of the affairs of the world that they may uphold what is right and good. We pray particularly at this time for peace in all places where there is violence, war and terrorism.

Lord in your mercy, **Hear our Prayer**

Father God, we thank you for all those who help our community to run smoothly because of their jobs, voluntary work or neighbourliness. Help us to be supportive and encouraging and to step in to situations where we can serve. Bless our neighbours and strengthen those who are working in your name in order to bring healing and comfort to those in need.

Lord in your mercy, **Hear our Prayer**

Merciful God your Son Jesus Christ healed the lame with a touch and raised the dead with a word – hear our prayers today for those who are laid low by sorrow and illness, or by fear and weakness; breathe new life into them as we name them before you now. For Sheila Brown and Hilary Barratt

Lord in your mercy, **Hear our Prayer**

Merciful God, we thank you that our movement towards death and decay is not the final sentence in our life story. We thank you that by your faithfulness we are born to a new and living hope in a future where love will never be terminated and life will never end. May we always trust in you as we pray for those who have departed this earthly life. In our years mind we remember Ella Gorska and Mary Shields.

Lord in your mercy, **Hear our Prayer**

Loving God as we go forth from this time of worship, help us to remember that you do infinitely more for us than we can ask or imagine. Hear our prayers for all your creation and gather us in the embrace of your abundant and life-giving Spirit.

**Merciful father: accept these prayers for the sake of your 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: Blest are the pure in heart

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: Drop drop slow tears

Concluding Prayer: **Merciful God, you have called us to your table and fed us with the bread of life. Draw us and all people to your Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.**

Blessing: Christ crucified draw you to himself, to find in him a sure ground for faith, a firm support for hope, and the assurance of sins forgiven; 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: Just as I am

7pm Candle Prayer

**God whose love endures and is revealed in Jesus Christ,
May we hear the words of the Psalmist who calls us to remember:
The steadfast love of the Lord endures for ever.
Lord, in your mercy, Hear our prayer.**

**God whose love endures and is revealed in Jesus Christ,
Be with us in all we endure at this time.
Grant that we may know your love in days of light and in days of shadow.
Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.**

God whose love endures and is revealed in Jesus Christ,

**Be with all who find themselves at the limit of their endurance
And embrace them in the depths of your enduring love.
Lord, in your mercy, Hear our prayer.**

**God whose love endures and is revealed in Jesus Christ,
As a mother comforts her child may you comfort all who call upon you.
Hear us, as we give thanks for all who have nurtured us in this life.
Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.**

**God whose love endures and is revealed in Jesus Christ,
Grant to us a vision of a community and society that will endure in times to come
And hear us as we pray: Thy Kingdom Come.
Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.**

**God whose love endures and is revealed in Jesus Christ,
May we live our lives in response to the gift of the life of your Son
In whose life is love embodied.
Lord, in your mercy, Hear our prayer.**

Registered Charity SCO10443 St Peter's Episcopal Church