

Barthol Chapel and Tarves Parish Churches - Worship Materials

Sunday 26 July 2020 9.45 for 10.00am



5 This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light and in him there is no darkness at all. (1 John 1:5-2:2)

INTRODUCTION

Several weeks ago I suggested setting apart a special space where you might spend time with God, both on Sunday mornings either on zoom or with the written worship materials from the web-site, and during the week.

God is light. This week you might like to take a small tealight or candle with you to your space. Hold it for a moment unlit. Contained within this small package is energy, waiting to be untapped. There is potential sitting in the palm of your hand.

Praise 180 Give thanks with a grateful heart

Give thanks with a grateful heart
Give thanks to the Holy One
Give thanks because He's given Jesus Christ, His Son.
Give thanks with a grateful heart
Give thanks to the Holy One
Give thanks because He's given Jesus Christ, His Son.

And now let the weak say, "I am strong"
Let the poor say, "I am rich"
Because of what the Lord has done for us."
And now let the weak say, "I am strong"
Let the poor say, "I am rich"
Because of what the Lord has done for us."

Give thanks with a grateful heart
Give thanks to the Holy One
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Because of what the Lord has done for us."

Give thanks

The Word of God: 1 John 1:5-2:2

5 This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light and in him there is no darkness at all. ⁶If we say that we have fellowship with him while we are walking in darkness, we lie and do not do what is true; ⁷but if we walk in the light as he himself is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin. ⁸If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. ⁹If we confess our sins, he who is faithful and just will forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. ¹⁰If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.

2 My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; ²and he is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world.

Reflection

When Tim Peake, the British astronaut returned from his time on the international space station he was asked for his impressions on outer space. I have never forgotten his reply. He mentioned how beautiful the earth looked from the space station. But this had not really come as a surprise to him because so many of his predecessors had commented upon it before. However what did surprise him was how black space was and how small the earth appeared in the midst of all that darkness.

How much we depend on light! Perhaps it is not surprising then that light is one of the great themes of the bible. From Genesis to Revelation light plays a key role in the language of faith. Today we heard these words from the first letter of John. “*God is light and in him there is no darkness at all.*” And the writer of that letter encourages us to walk in the light. We are to live in the light as Jesus himself did.

When I was reflecting on these words this week I found myself being drawn back to that picture of Tim Peake and his fellow astronauts in the international space station – looking on the one hand at the beauty of the world, but also being very aware of the blackness of space. And perhaps the challenge for us is to keep looking to the light – even if that light sometimes seems as small as a pin-prick in the darkness that hems us in.

For that light is there. And for people of faith, that light begins to shine ever more brightly when we recognise who Jesus is and who we are. One commentator writes of the light that it helps us to see ourselves as children of God, to know ourselves as God’s beloved children. This is the connection that I was talking about last week when we were thinking about how our stories are all held within God’s greater story. To see this and know this means that we can never be defined by the darkness.

Darkness affects all our lives, whether that be in the form of illness or bereavement or a broken relationship or a career that did not work out as we hoped, or perhaps something that we have done wrong in the past that has had implications for ourselves or others. But while these things might describe what is happening in our lives, if we take seriously the Gospel message, they can never define us. Because we are defined not by the darkness but by the light that God sheds upon us. God’s story is one of life, death and resurrection. In that story Jesus shines a light revealing that we are all God’s children. We are known, loved and forgiven by God. And because of this we can follow Jesus example and walk in the light. We can be and should be bearers of the light of God to others.

A few years ago in the middle of winter I took a service for a friend in a church in an area of multiple deprivation. They were a congregation who were struggling. The Church buildings needed hundreds of thousands spent on them. Yet you could probably count the number of salary or wage earners on your fingers. They could not afford to meet the costs of one minister let alone the three that were identified some time ago as necessary to serve the parish of 15000 people. Yet they, and many parishes like them, are in the front line of the struggle against darkness in some of our poorest communities.

On the Sunday I visited, the service was held in the hall. There was a problem with the church heating and a question-mark over whether it could be fixed. We had to wait for tea and coffee afterwards because the other hall, where it was usually served, was occupied by foodbank parcels which would be distributed by church members to families in need of support. Over the Christmas period the local authority referred 15 families including 37 children to them for help. What a privilege it was that Sunday to be with that congregation and discover how they were fulfilling their role as light-bearer in their own community.

But they could not do this on their own. And that is one of the strengths of being a national Church. The front-line struggle against the darkness of poverty and injustice and suffering, does not only involve practical assistance. It also involves giving and prayer and advocacy and imagination. In fact there are as many ways of being light-bearers as there are followers of Jesus. We are all called to bear the light of God's love to others.

How and to whom, might God be calling you to be a bearer of his light today?

Pointers for Prayer

- Those affected by the corona virus
- The NHS, its staff in hospitals and GP practices as well as the other emergency services and volunteers
- The Government and Scottish Parliament and their advisers as they seek to guide us out of lockdown
- Those engaged in scientific research and development
- Those whose businesses are struggling and all who are facing redundancy and financial hardship
- Those countries which do not have the resources to respond to the pandemic
- Family, friends and neighbours, those most affected by the lock-down and those finding it difficult to move forward
- Other people and situations who are in your hearts today.
- The Church that we might offer a faithful witness to Christ through this time

CH4 543 Christ be our Light

Longing for light, we wait in darkness.
 Longing for truth, we turn to you.
 Make us your own, your holy people,
 Light for the world to see.
Christ be our light!

*Shine in our hearts.
 Shine through the darkness.
 Christ, be our light!
 Shine in your Church gathered
 today.*

Longing for peace, our world is troubled.
 Longing for hope, many despair.
 Your word alone has power to save us.
 Make us your living voice.

Chorus

Longing for shelter, many are homeless.
 Longing for warmth, many are cold.
 Make us your building, sheltering others,
 Walls made of living stone.

Chorus

Longing for food, many are hungry.
 Longing for water many still thirst.
 Make us your bread, broken for others,
 Shared until all are fed.

Chorus

Many the gifts, many the people,
 Many the hearts that yearn to belong.
 Let us be servants to one another,
 Making your kingdom come.

Chorus

Notices

Next Sunday 2 August 2020 United Summer Worship gathering. Meeting opens 9.45am. Service begins 10.00am. Opportunity to chat afterwards!

Tarves Care for the Community if you are aware of anyone who needs help of any kind please contact Ruth 851887

Barthol Chapel informal meeting of Session and Board Monday 27 July 5.00pm

Tarves Session Coffee Morning Tuesday 28 July 11.00am

Zoom Coffee Morning for the Totally Terrified! An hour of simple tech learning and conversation. Fun and laughter guaranteed! Tuesday 4 August 10.00am on Zoom. To register please e-mail aswindells@churchofscotland.org.uk and we will send you the link. All Welcome! Bring your own coffee! Please pass on the invitation to anyone you think might be interested.