

Worship at Home—2 May 2021

Call to Worship

Dear friends,
we gather in the name
of the God of love,
we gather in the presence
of the God of love.

So let us worship the God of love.

Dear friends,
we gather as children of the God of love,
we gather as sisters and brothers.

So let us learn to love one another.

Prayer of Approach and Confession

As we focus our minds, it is easy for our minds to shoot off in so many directions.

We find it hard to slow down, to remove all the clutter and concentrate on You, Lord.
In the stillness of this place, this time, take from us the strain and stress as we feel ourselves rest in Your eternal love, in the everlasting arms.

Then quietly, the small beginnings of praise well up as we remember what we have in Jesus Christ.
That we have one who is with us, who guides and strengthens us.
Who holds us through every storm of life who leads us to everlasting life.

We confess that sometimes the storms we endure are of our own making.
A foolish word, a thoughtless comment, a misguided action, a quick judgement.
Then we have to live with the consequences, and the guilt.
Take all that stress from us too and replace it with Your forgiveness and peace.

Heavenly Father, in Your hands we are safe and secure – we rejoice in Your eternal love and all sufficient grace.



It is with great sadness that we have to intimate the death of Nairne Wight on 22 April in the Wallace View Care Home, Stirling.

An obituary written by Grant is on page 7.

Hear us as we share Our 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 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.

Amen

Scripture Reading

Jesus the True Vine

'I am the true vine, and my Father is the vine-grower. He removes every branch in me that bears no fruit. Every branch that bears fruit he prunes to make it bear more fruit. You have already been cleansed by the word that I have spoken to you. Abide in me as I abide in you. Just as the branch cannot bear fruit by itself unless it abides in the vine, neither can you unless you abide in me. I am the vine, you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing. Whoever does not abide in me is thrown away like a branch and withers; such branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned. If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask for whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit and become my disciples.



Sermon—God is a Gardener

Spring is officially here. The lambs are gambling about the fields. The blossoms are on the trees, buds are bursting forth and recently it has been warm enough to get excited about doing a bit of gardening.

On Saturday May 1st, Channel 4 launched a Programme called the great Garden Revolution. This is in addition to BBC shows like 'Your garden made perfect' and other shows with celebrity gardeners like Alan Titchmarsh.

Whether or not we are great gardeners or not, we all enjoy beautiful gardens. Some of us enjoyed the Guild outing to the Glendoick Gardens famous for their rhododendrons a year or two ago. In May 2019 the kids and I took mum for an outing to the Edinburgh Botanical Gardens—the weather was glorious. And even last summer when lockdown lifted for just a bit, we took the kids to Benmore, a sister of the Botanical Gardens. How lucky we are. I think everyone in Lockdown has appreciated the benefit of green spaces, of birds and beauty. A garden was almost a luxury



item when so many people, working at home discovered a life surrounded by a dreary desert of brick and concrete. Gardens speak of harmony, life and peace. Here is a lovely verse from a poem:

The kiss of the sun for pardon,
The song of the bird for mirth,
One is nearer God's heart in a garden
Than anywhere else on earth.

This week, the benefits of gardening were equated to exercise. On the news we were told about new research that suggests gardening is linked to improvements in wellbeing, anxiety, stress levels. People who garden just two to three times a week had wellbeing scores of 7 percent higher and stress levels 5 percent lower than people who don't garden!

The image of a garden is central to the bible. The whole human story begins in a garden. Some archaeologists enjoy speculating about the original location of the Garden of Eden through the references to the rivers Tigris and Euphrates. The results are always inconclusive and that is not what is important if we want to grasp the significance of the Genesis Story. The Garden of Eden is an ancient archetypal story which tries to answer the imperfect nature of our humanity.

The Hebrew word Eden means harmony, or delight! We are presented with a vision of God's Garden where everything is good and in harmony with God's will. There is a beauty, a peace and a sense of real wellbeing in the presence of God in the cool of the Garden.



Then God creates man and woman, the pinnacle of his Creation, and yet somehow, these human beings cause disharmony through deliberate selfishness, stupidity, ignorance, greed and pride. The man and the woman, give into temptation by assuming some power and authority over life. And the perfect harmony, the sense of wellbeing, and delight is lost and this loss is captured in a word, known in the bible as sin.

Recently we recalled how Jesus spent the last ours of His earthly life in a garden: the garden of Gethsemane. In some ways, like the Garden of Eden, the garden of Gethsemane is part of a prophecy. The Garden of Gethsemane was an ancient olive grove. Olive trees are known for their healing power and goodness. This is why an olive branch is given as a sign of peace and good intentions.

So, while the Garden of Eden is the tragic story of human beings breaking with God and going out on their own, the Garden of Gethsemane is the foreshadowing of a glorious hope for us all, for in Gethsemane, Jesus accepts the cup of suffering, and through his suffering and death, he is able to restore our dignity, our sense of wellbeing, our whole relationship with God our Father and creator.



It will not be a surprise to find that the final book of the Bible also offers up a profound vision of a garden. Revelation can be hard to interpret because its poetic imagery reads like a strange apocalyptic dream. In fact, the word Revelation, means apocalypse or—which in turn means unveiling or revealing. We hear about a garden with a river of life and on either side of the river is a tree of life bearing crops of fruit . . . and the leaves on the tree are for the healing of the nations. And a voice says, "Look God's

dwelling place is among his people and he will dwell with them. They will be his people and God himself is with them and is their God.” St John of Patmos, who wrote Revelation felt that the Holy Spirit had unveiled to him a vision of the end of time, when all the earth and all humanity would be restored and whole and reconciled to God, and all harmony and wellbeing restored.

And so we can find, throughout the bible from the prophets to the Psalms, in the Gospels, the Epistles, through to Revelation . . . the human relationship with God is often portrayed through the image of a Garden.

In our reading today, from John 15, And so, he tells them, “I am the Vine, and my Father is the gardener!” (John 15:1) Jesus is trying to give his followers an image that will help them understand how they can stay close to him after he has left them and gone to heaven.

The Vine is Jesus whose vibrant life is embodied by his followers, the branches. No branch has the power to live on its own, it draws life from the Vine, through the Spirit of God. God is the gardener, cultivating, caring, tending, as Christ’s followers work together to play our part in the bringing in, and bringing about of His Kingdom, by living for what is good and pleasing and acceptable and delightful before God.



In this week’s Sunday worship resource, Fraser Kennedy describes a summer holiday he enjoyed in the South of Spain, and a town which gave its name to Sherry. Over the two weeks, he learned a lot about the production of sherry. For example, all the vines used to grow grapes for sherry are grafted. The type of vine needed by the grower is grafted onto a parent stem, which makes the vine less susceptible to disease and therefore healthier—and it bears better grapes. He says it is a good image for Christ the true vine for the life of the vine can only grow from a strong root.

And so, Jesus explains to us that when we read the word of God, and pray and worship, then we remain in him and he remains in us and that we can be close to God and in the simplest ways, our lives will bear fruit, the fruit that shares God’s love. Furthermore, we know that if we want to bear fruit, we need to remain close to God, connected to God.

This week, the Church of Scotland worship resources, made mention of our western Culture of busyness. For some reason many of us grew up with the idea of a Protestant Work Ethic. Maybe it came from John Calvin, but over time so many of us learned to judge ourselves and other people by our work output even to measure ourselves by how busy we are. Fraser Kennedy joked, “Just gather a bunch of ministers in a room and time how long it is before they talk of how many funerals they have conducted this month and how long it is since they had a proper day off!” He notes that churches do this too, they like to market how busy we are and how much we do—as if it were a competition. We know that the Church would not survive without people giving their time and energy and often there are a few folk who do a lot. We often say, “If you want something done ask a busy person!”

But was Martin Luther King who pointed out a long time ago something good to remember. We are not justified by our works but by the grace of God at work in us. Sometimes it is easy to get so busy being the Church and doing the work of the Church that we lose sight of the fact that we need to stay connected to the source of our life, the source of our Spiritual life, the true Vine! Busyness on its own without the Holy Spirit is just busyness and will not bear the kind of fruit that is Spirit Led. The most fruitful thing a person can do is to remain close to the vine by carving out time for prayer and worship.

I remember a story of a church task group setting about a new project. Each person was asked to volunteer to do a task. One chap said, he would put up flyers, another lady said she would fund-raise, then someone else offered to phone people and get volunteers, and someone offered to type it all up on a spreadsheet. Finally there was a lady who had not rushed to put her hand up. She announced, "And I will pray for the project to bear fruit." Well people said she had taken the lazy way out, what a cop out, a way to dodge the work. But indeed she did pray faithfully and fervently every day and the project did go well. Later when she told the group how hard she had been praying, they realised that without her commitment, it might not have gone so well at all. Time spent in prayer and worship is not wasted but the most fruitful thing we can do. There is no point in being frantically busy if we don't pray to follow God's will.

Following through with Jesus' image, as Jesus would have known, when a grape vine is planted, the branches must be pruned back each year. Sometimes the branches take away from the ability to produce fruit so it isn't to hurt the tree but to enable it to grow that the branches are pruned back. Every vinedresser knows it is important to prune away the branches to ensure plentiful fruit.

Jesus describes God as the Gardener and he himself as the vine. If we want to bear fruit, we must remain in his love, seek him. Then in his fellowship the Spirit can enable us to bear the kind of fruit grows into community, that enables goodness.

God is the Gardener, ever at work in the garden, pruning us, feeding us, watering our souls, cultivating our life together, creating harmony and wellbeing, so that we might find peace and wellbeing in the cool of the garden.

Prayer of Intercession

Jesus Christ, the true vine, in our need we come to You,
in weakness, needing Your strength—for we too easily become dry and lifeless
without Your life-giving spirit.

Jesus Christ, the true vine, teach us to remain in You
and so to find Your life flowing in us giving strength and vigour to our discipleship.
As we come closer to You our lives are drawn closer to others.
Our minds turn to images of violence we have seen on the news in places of fear and terror,
to where people are at loggerheads, over race, religion, land, political manoeuvring and power.

Our thoughts turn to all people of faith or conviction Who are suffering for their beliefs
Christians, Muslims and human rights protestors
living with persecution who face danger, who are imprisoned unfairly and yet are willing to lay themselves
down and suffer because of their desire to free people from oppression and cruelty.

Father, prune back all that stands in the way of peace.

Our thoughts turn to people in leadership and power—who have decisions to make over the economy and people whose jobs and livelihood will be affected.

We pray for our nation, and its leaders.

As our country approaches an election—we pray for leaders to be elected who will have wisdom and vision for inclusion, not exclusion, for unity rather than division

We pray for leaders with integrity that we can look for in all elected representatives.

We pray that they would care, not just for constituents with influence but for all those who need support and care

As we look across a world—Suffering so greatly from this Pandemic Crisis
We pray for all people of all nations to get the help, the oxygen and vaccines needed.

Loving Lord, in our hearts are people in need in our church and community.

Wherever hearts are breaking
bodies are failing
minds are confused
families are ruptured

Lord, come with Your help and healing.

Here, too, as Your church gathered today,
we give thanks for the saints of the past and the fruit they have borne in our community and beyond.

Like them, help us to remain in You that we may be fruitful and bring glory to Your name.

Through Jesus Christ, the true vine.

Amen

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email currie_kirk@btconnect.com> if you need anything.

We have friends willing to listen, shop, walk a dog, fix a garden.

Website: [//www.curriekirk.org/](http://www.curriekirk.org/) or [//www.facebook.com/CurrieKirk/](https://www.facebook.com/CurrieKirk/)

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

Nairne Wight

Nairne is gone; she is gone. To the many people in Currie, and there were many, who knew her she was a legend in her own lifetime. It may be a much over used phrase but it is true for during the 56 years in which she lived here she gave of her time endlessly, not just for Currie Kirk but also for the Community at large. It is fair to say that Nairne epitomised the second verse of the Hymn 'Brother, sister, let me serve you' which puts it so well in the words:

'We are pilgrims on a journey, and companions on the road; we are here to help each other walk the mile and bear the load'.

Nairne died on 22nd April 2021 aged 94, surrounded by her family, in the Wallace View Care Home, Stirling having been resident there since before Christmas 2020. Nairne and David, her late husband who died in 1991, moved to Currie in 1954 from Morrison Street, Edinburgh and she brought her association with Currie to an end in 2010 when she moved to Fallin to be nearer her family.

Nairne's service to Currie Kirk was long and varied. She was ordained as an Elder on 16th January 1972 and provided pastoral care to members and non-members within a district. She served on the Congregational Board for many years and was a diligent keeper and booking-officer of the Gibson Craig Memorial Halls. She played an organising role in the annual Charities Christmas Sale, the annual Christmas Fair and was heavily involved in the Snack Lunches served in the Gibson Craig Halls. In any event where hospitality was needed the Kirk could count on Nairne. She also worked tirelessly for Kirk House.

In the wider Community Nairne was at one time an Assistant Cub Scout Leader and had an organising role in the early days of the Riding of the Marches. She had also been a member of the Currie Community Council.

Nairne loved her dogs and caravanning spending many happy weeks with family at either Yellowcraigs or laterally Thornhill. She cherished every one of her family, especially her grandchildren and great grandchildren.

Many people will have fond and affectionate memories of Nairne. Possessed of a warm personality; a smiling face; a word of encouragement; a sympathetic ear; that was Nairne Wight. She has left her indelible imprint on this community of Currie and Currie Kirk in particular.

Grant Gordon



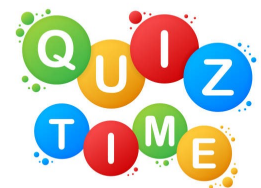
**Christian Aid week—10—16 May 2021
(Christian Aid Sunday—16 May
Currie Kirk’s service will be available on YouTube).**

This year the focus is on the climate crisis and our global neighbours in Kenya who continue to battle the effects of extreme weather. Like last year Kenya is caught in a cycle of climate chaos—severe droughts and flooding rob villagers like Rose of a reliable source of water. There is an earth dam not far from Rose’s home which should be a lifeline but it runs out of water too quickly, forcing villagers to walk long and exhausting journeys to fetch water. The pandemic has made the lack of water even worse as handwashing with soap and water is vital to stay safe against the virus. Christian Aid can help communities like Rose’s withstand climate chaos: from building better earth dams to harvest more water, to sowing drought-tolerant crops, to demanding climate justice at the highest level.



As we are unable to deliver and collect Christian Aid envelopes we propose to have a supply of envelopes in the plastic box outside the Gibson Craig Hall for anyone who would like to make a donation. Once you have completed the envelope details please post it through the Kirk office door. If you want to find out more about the work of Christian Aid please log on to their website – www.caweek.org.

We are having a Quiz on Zoom on Saturday 29 May at 7pm, John Macaulay being the Quizmaster. If you’d like to take part please contact Nina at the Kirk Office to be registered (currie_kirk@btconnect.com). Entry is free but any donations to Christian Aid’s work will be very welcome.



Fiona Pigott, Mission, Outreach and Fellowship committee.

Name the Heron—suggested names



- Herman (rhymes with sermon)
- Horton
- Harry
- Nimrod
- Jaeger
- Solo
- Napoleon } As in The Man from U.N.C.L.E
- Sally
- Huey
- Henry

Stay Connected

These resources are designed to help you explore the Bible as a family together at home while we can't go to church. Be as creative as you want to be and enjoy spending time with each other and with God.

Prepare yourself...

Come apart from your busyness.
Leave your stresses at the door.
Come and reconnect with God.
Remain in him and grow.
Grow closer, grow deeper.
Grow and be fruitful.
Come and glorify God!

Amen.



Question...



In what ways have you stayed connected to people throughout the pandemic?

Challenge...

Pick a fruit that is most like how you feel, for example a polished apple – bright, a lemon – sour/excited, a pineapple – prickly/grumpy.
What emotion might grapes represent?



Read the Bible...

Today's verses are found in **John 15:1-8**. You can read them in a Bible or find them [here](#). Here's another version you could read: <https://www.rootsontheweb.com/media/22614/easter-5-present-the-reading.pdf>
Here's a short video you could watch too: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iEiEfThEjk>

Talk together...



- ◇ Have you ever planted or grown anything?
 - ◇ What does it feel like waiting for it to grow?
- ◇ What do you think it means to “remain in” Jesus?
- ◇ How have you stayed/how do you stay connected to God?
 - ◇ In what situations or surroundings do you feel most connected to God?
- ◇ What do you think the “fruit” is that Jesus talks about?
 - ◇ Look up Galatians 5:22-23 for ideas!
 - ◇ Can you see any of this ‘fruit’ in people you know?
- ◇ Spend some time connecting with God. Sit outside, hug a tree, listen to some worship music, read the Bible, write a prayer, watch the clouds, splash in water – whatever you want to do, just spend time with God, unhurriedly and quietly spend time in God’s presence and allowing him into yours.

Play together...

I heard it through the grapevine

Sit in a line or circle with plenty of space between each person. The first person whispers a phrase to the next person who then passes it on until it reaches the last person. The last person writes down or says what they heard – was it the same as the original whisper?

Obstacle course

Set up an obstacle course around your house or garden. Can you complete it while staying connected to each other?

Pray together...

You’ll need some grapes.
Each take a grape, say thank you to God for someone you are connected to, then eat the grape.

Finish by saying these words:

Thank you, God,
for all our relationships
and the ways we are connected,
and for our connection to you.
Amen.

Do something...



Praise together...

You will need: a glass of water, bright food colouring, a stick of celery or a white flower with a long stem.

Add a few drops of food colouring to the water and stir until the colour is all mixed in.

Place the celery/flower into the water.

Watch what happens during the day as the plant sucks up the water.

How might this be a symbol of us remaining in Jesus?



[Never once](#) by Matt Redman

[The more I seek you](#) by Kari Jobe

[The fruit of the Spirit song](#)
A fun children’s song that reminds us of the true fruits of the Spirit!!