

Worship at Home—Sunday 29 August 2021

Call to Worship

I will praise you, O Lord among the people:
I will sing unto you among the nations.
For your mercy is great unto the heavens
and your truth unto the clouds. (Psalm 57:9-10)

Opening Prayer

Holy God, alpha and omega
Giver of life and forgiver of the living
You are our source and we know that we find
Our truest selves when we rest in you

As we enter this time of worship
May we lay upon you any cares or sadness, any stresses, distractions or worries
So that we may sense the peace you have for us
So that we can provide a welcome space for you in our hearts,
And sensing the love you have for us, we may love you more.

It is in your presence that we often see our own humanity and weakness most clearly.

Holy God we want to face the life you offer us with hope in our hearts, but many times we allow the events of our lives to consume us or weigh us down.
We confess we get busy or are not attuned to you.
We do not prepare ourselves adequately to hear your voice,
We say we don't have time to pray or we get impatient if we don't get immediate results from our prayers.

Sometimes we dwell on our own mistakes, refusing to
Let go of frustrations or worn out memories.
And often
We forget to forgive one another.

Yet we give you thanks for the hope that is ours in Jesus Christ. That you can forgive us and give us power to begin anew. Therefore touch those secret places in our lives that need to change. Tear down barriers which keep us from love



It is with great sadness
that we have to
intimate the deaths of

Eric Robertson
Bryce Crescent

Mrs Sheila Day
Elms Care Home

George Lackie
Easter Currie Terrace

Please pray for the
families

May Jesus be the companion of our thoughts
May his divine humanity may take root within our souls.

May he be in us, and we in him. So that we may be worthy followers of our saviour, our redeemer and the one who calls his followers friends. In his name let us share together 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 and ever. Amen

The Scriptures

First Reading

1 Kings 8:(1,6,10-11), 22-30, 41-42

Dedication of the Temple

Then Solomon assembled the elders of Israel and all the heads of the tribes, the leaders of the ancestral houses of the Israelites, before King Solomon in Jerusalem, to bring up the ark of the covenant of the LORD out of the city of David, which is Zion. Then the priests brought the ark of the covenant of the LORD to its place, in the inner sanctuary of the house, in the most holy place, underneath the wings of the cherubim. And when the priests came out of the holy place, a cloud filled the house of the LORD, so that the priests could not stand to minister because of the cloud; for the glory of the LORD filled the house of the LORD.

Solomon's Prayer of Dedication

Then Solomon stood before the altar of the LORD in the presence of all the assembly of Israel, and spread out his hands to heaven. He said, 'O LORD, God of Israel, there is no God like you in heaven above or on earth beneath, keeping covenant and steadfast love for your servants who walk before you with all their heart, the covenant that you kept for your servant my father David as you declared to him; you promised with your mouth and have this day fulfilled with your hand. Therefore, O LORD, God of Israel, keep for your servant my father David that which you promised him, saying, "There shall never fail you a successor before me to sit on the throne of Israel, if only your children look to their way, to walk before me as you have walked before me." Therefore, O God of Israel, let your word be confirmed, which you promised to your servant my father David.

'But will God indeed dwell on the earth? Even heaven and the highest heaven cannot contain you, much less this house that I have built! Have regard to your servant's prayer and his plea, O LORD my God, heeding the cry and the prayer that your servant prays to you today; that your eyes may be open night and day towards this house, the place of which you said, "My name shall be there", that you may heed the prayer that your servant prays towards this place. Hear the plea of your servant and of your people Israel when they pray towards this place; O hear in heaven your dwelling-place; heed and forgive.

'Likewise when a foreigner, who is not of your people Israel, comes from a distant land because of your name—for they shall hear of your great name, your mighty hand, and your outstretched arm—when a

foreigner comes and prays towards this house, then hear in heaven your dwelling-place, and do according to all that the foreigner calls to you to do.

The Second Reading

John 2: 18—20

The Jews then responded to Jesus, “What sign can you show us to prove your authority to do all this?”

Jesus answered them, “Destroy this temple, and I will raise it again in three days.”

They replied, “It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and you are going to raise it in three days?” But the temple he had spoken of was his body. After he was raised from the dead, his disciples recalled what he had said. Then they believed the scripture and the words that Jesus had spoken.

Sermon

In our scripture, we read of Solomon’s dedication prayer for the opening of the temple in Jerusalem.

For generations after their flight from Egypt, the Israelites carried with them a Tabernacle, a large tent which was movable and inside of which they kept the Ark of the Covenant. It was a Holy place and it was believed that inside was where the Shekinah, or the presence of God dwelled.

Once the people were settled in Israel, King David felt that God was calling him to build a temple in Jerusalem. He had a desire to build something more permanent than a mere tent for the ark of the Covenant—a Holy Place where people could meet together in the presence of God, and so under King David, plans were laid out for the great temple.

David spent a great deal of time at war and the temple didn’t get built during his reign, but he passed the vision onto his son King Solomon who wanted to fulfil his father’s promise to God.

If you read through the Books of Kings you will find the exact specifications for the Temple in detail.

Solomon himself laid out the floor in cubic measurements. He oversaw the whole thing. The temple was to be a magnificent building, with all the finest architectural designs, the most exquisite fabrics, the most ornate and valuable stone and cedar wood—all the best architects and artists and materials of the day. We read of the carved flowers, panels with carved out lions and bronze pillars, and gold alters.

For the Israelites, building the temple was a sign of great hope and positivity. Solomon’s passion to build a temple which would glorify God and uplift the Jewish nation, had finally come about in peace time. Solomon had managed to unify north and south Israel and now, after seven long years of building, here we read of this magnificent prayer of dedication.

There is a sense that everything is as it should be. God had promised King David that through his son, the kingdom of Israel would be established forever if the people were faithful. And so Solomon celebrates the centrality of this Temple for the people to the glory of God.

He prays confidently that God will be favourable to him and that the people will be faithful and God will bless them in turn. He prays that the people of God will, “pray towards this place.”

People believed literally and figuratively that the presence of God dwelled in the temple and so it is no wonder, that pilgrims travelled from all over the nations, and still do, to the temple in Jerusalem, to be with God.

However, this halcyon scene of glory would not last. The Israelites did not remain faithful. Prophets came to warn the people who were drawn to idols and other gods. Solomon became King in 970 BC and the temple was completed in 959BC, but soon Israel became divided and under attack from pagan regimes. Israel was invaded by Persians from Assyria several times. First, the North fell to Assyria and then the south fell to the cruel persecution of Babylon.

As a way of totally destroying the hearts and will of the people, Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon destroyed the Temple in 586 BC.

Nebuchadnezzar forced the Israelites into slavery and many were captured and taken into exile in Babylon. For seventy long years the people had no temple to visit, no sacred place to call their spiritual home. During that brutal, hard time, the Prophet Jeremiah sometimes known as 'the weeping prophet', wrote the Book of Lamentations. If you want to read it, he pours out his heartbreak at the capture of Jerusalem, the destruction of the temple and the fact that without a land, a King or temple, the people of Israel and their hope seemed lost in exile.

We can understand his sorrow. Jeremiah felt this was punishment and so he called on people to draw their hearts to God even in exile and to be faithful, no matter their sufferings or torment. The people longed for home and for their temple.

In these past 18 months, we have all been able to appreciate what it means to have a deep longing for our sacred space—a place where we know we have met God, a place we can call a spiritual home.

We know theoretically that we can pray to God anywhere, but an ancient sacred space like Currie Kirk has, for most of us, been a place where we have experienced God's presence, grace, and love in a deeper way—because we have been here together.

It is our sacred space, filled with a sense of beauty and history, and filled with important memories of worship, meetings, conversations, perhaps life rituals like baptisms or weddings. We trust that when we are in here, we are surrounded by the prayers of all the saints who have worshiped before us—for their prayers have echoed inside these walls and this is where we know we can encounter something holy. This is hallowed ground.

Many of us have encountered something similar when we have visited the Abbey and the island of Iona. I have not yet had the experience of making a personal pilgrimage to Israel but I hope to one day.

Whether you feel up to coming in person on Sunday or you feel it is safer to wait a little longer—and that is sensible with the Delta Covid Variant spreading. Yet this is still a week of celebration because the Presbytery gave us permission to open for public worship. We get to be together, even a few of us, it is a start—we still have a journey to go before we can sing and shake hands and share coffees. We can at least enter and praise God—and for those not yet able to come, at least now you know that one day soon, you can and you will.

This year has been very wearying. No one foresaw how much Covid would disrupt our lives. It has affected us on many different levels—economic, social, physical—and without doubt, it has cost us our spiritual wellbeing. We have had a deep longing to come together to share the good news, to share real life experiences and ideas and mission and purpose. (Instead, you've just had me on a tv screen, and I know I am just a small part really in the mission of Currie Kirk. So here we are, beginning, just beginning to get back.)

Our own exile is finally nearly over. It has not been an exile caused by Babylonians or Persians or persecutors, and we are certainly not suffering like the people of Afghanistan. And there must be lamentation for them.

But our own little exile was caused by an insidious invisible virus—yet it did come at a cost to us all psychologically, emotionally and spiritually.

And so in many ways we can relate to the people of Israel in exile. Theirs was 70 years, ours just 17 months so perhaps we can call Covid a 'mini-exile.'

One thing that struck me when reading the Old Testament is that even while the Israelites were far from home and life was far from right, they never lost sight of two things;

1. They never lost their sense of identity; and
2. they never lost their desire to get back to Jerusalem, to their heavenly city.

So, as, our little exile can finally come to an end. It has been a tough challenge but we CAN return to worship in Currie Kirk, albeit we have to allow for restrictions. WE can return to this place we love. We remember that the church is not a social club—we are a family called together by Jesus and we need each other. Even though we are out of our routines and we may have to reinvent life a little, we are still Christ's people in Currie and we can dream and work ahead and finally be allowed to rebuild the Kirk community that we know and trust has been called into being by God Himself.

Prayer of Intercession

Loving God

It is from You

that we derive our creative instincts.

We are makers and crafters,

designers and builders

of relationships and social systems,

of ideas and projects,

of agreements and policies,

of tools and artworks.

Thank You that our lives are the better

for what has been made by hands and minds

in our own generation and those older and younger.

Thank You for those whose skill and faith, time and money

have brought into being houses of prayer; sanctuaries of worship.

Thank You for all the ways that cathedrals, temples, monasteries

This very Kirk have served Your purposes,

making visible a glimpse of Your glory and grandeur;

moving people into an encounter with You;

speaking of the longer story we are part of.

We also thank you that whether we are

Here in this sacred space, or still in a lockdown

You invite us to wait before You

and meditate on You –

this is what restores us.

To know again

that You are the Living God –

Today we pray for our brothers and sisters across the world
who long for the freedoms we take for granted –
To worship together in a dedicated building, or anywhere

We pray for your people who live in the danger of war zones who may feel desolate, and afflicted, or
afraid. Where your people are refugees or hungry or helpless we ask that human help and assistance
would be provided.

Bring Your comfort and protection to those who have lost loved ones
and are themselves at risk of injury, torture or death
Uplift your people and grant them your protection.

We cry out to You for a world free from injustice and oppression
Where children may grow and learn and thrive
May Jesus be the companion of our thoughts
May his divine humanity may take root within our souls.
May he be in us, and we in him. So that we may be worthy followers of our saviour, our redeemer and the
one who calls his followers friends. In his name let us share together our Lord's Prayer

And live full lives as you would have them do.

Christ's RULE of love shows us truly
How leaders ought to lead, how power ought to be exercised, how politicians out to act, how the Church
ought to minister
We pray for the leaders to seek wise solutions to violence, to climate change
We pray for greater international cooperation and courage

Compassionate God, we carry in our hearts the names of many people who need prayer. Friends or
family, people we know in this Parish who are in a place of difficulty or doubt. Open our hearts that we
might care for them.
May your vision of healing and wholeness find them and bring them peace
Lift the anxiety of those who are stressed
Sustain those who have had a diagnosis, who are unwell, who may be caring for a loved one who is ill or
who bear the sadness of loss
We ask that your grace would abound in each and every situation.

We pray for ourselves.
Grant us the spiritual strength you alone have to offer us
The peace you can give such as the world cannot give
The wisdom and assurance and confidence
we only find in being our truest selves before you our maker, redeemer, and Lord, Amen

Closing and Benediction

And now, go in peace
and may the blessing of God Almighty, Father, Son and Holy Spirit be with you,
and remain with you, now and forever more.

Amen

If you plan to attend the Kirk please let Nina know by phoning her between 10 am and 12.30 pm on Thursday—this is for “track and trace”.

Current regulations require:

- ◆ face masks must still be worn.
- ◆ worship still requires that we stick to the one-metre social distance rule.
- ◆ There will be sanitizing stations.



Wishing Christine Lindsay of Weavers Knowe Crescent a happy special birthday on 30th August.

Kirk Contacts

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



Celebrate Life and Work Sunday on 29 August and support the magazine of our church

Join us as we celebrate the past, present and future of the Church's magazine

Life and Work has been informing, uplifting, moving, connecting and occasionally enraging the Church of Scotland for over 140 years. This summer, we are offering churches the chance to celebrate that.

Life and Work Sunday will be marked on 29 August with a celebration and the team are delighted to offer a collection of resources, including a specially-written prayer and short reflection, and suggested readings and hymns for inclusion in worship if you wish. Alongside that, there will be a slideshow and printable exhibition of past covers. See our feature on page 24 of the August issue.

You will find worship resources including the slideshow and exhibition at
www.lifeandwork.org/resources/life-and-work-sunday

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