

Stonehaven Carronside Church of Scotland

The Week's Reflections – Sunday 29th May 2021 – 10.30am

**A RECORDING OF THE SERVICE CAN BE WATCHED
FROM 10.30PM ONWARDS ON YOUTUBE
RIGHT CLICK ON THIS LINK AND CLICK "OPEN HYPERLINK" TO WATCH IT:**

<https://youtu.be/A2n2XMF09hQ>

OR FOLLOW THIS METHOD

"GOOGLE – YOUTUBE – CARRONSIDE CHURCH – SELECT DATE"

ORDER OF SERVICE

SERVICE LEADER – Ros Marshall

Entrance music: Dance of the Blessed Spirits

WELCOME

READING OF THE EDICT/NOTICE OF INDUCTION

CALL TO WORSHIP

Romans 8 v14

PRAISE: CH4 483: Father of Heaven whose love profound

PRAYER OF APPROACH and the LORD'S PRAYER

Hazel Paterson

BIBLE READING

John 3 ,1-17

read by Donald McRae

PRAISE: CH4 600: Spirit of God , unseen as the wind

REFLECTION: Ros Marshall

PRAYERS OF THANKSGIVING AND INTERCESSION

Elaine Craig

PRAISE: CH4 561: Blessed Assurance

BENEDICTION

PRAISE: CH4 786 May the God of peace go with us

Exit: Praeludium in D Minor (Improvisation)

Music by George Marshall, Ron Clark and Tito Daramola

Reflections by Ros Marshall

Good morning, and a very warm welcome to you as we join together for this service of worship. Today is TRINITY SUNDAY. Do come inside the sanctuary where we can draw close to God together.

CALL TO WORSHIP:

Let us draw close to God as we listen for his word.

From Romans 8. Verse 14

‘Those who are led by the Spirit of God are Sons of God’.

Amen

Our first hymn of praise this morning is:

PRAISE: CH4 483 ‘Father of heaven, whose love profound’

Father of heaven , whose love profound
A ransom for our souls has found,
before your throne we sinners bend:
to us your pardoning love extend.

Almighty Son, incarnate Word,
Our Prophet, Priest, Redeemer, Lord,
Before your throne we sinners bend:
To us your saving grace extend.

Eternal Spirit, by whose breath
Our souls are raised from sin and death,
Before your throne we sinners bend:
To us your quickening power extend.

Jehovah-Father, Spirit, Son-
Mysterious Godhead, Three in One,
Before your throne we sinners bend:
Grace, pardon, life to us extend.

Hazel Paterson will now lead us in our prayer of approach and the Lord’s Prayer.

PRAYER OF APPROACH and the LORD’S PRAYER

Let us Pray

Let us now join together in saying 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.
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 Forever,
Amen.

Donald McRae will now read for us.

BIBLE READING: John 3. 1-17

The word of God for the People of God,
Thanks be to God.

Our next praise is **CH4 600** 'Spirit of God unseen as the wind',

Spirit of God, unseen as the wind,
Gentle as is the dove,
Teach us the truth and help us believe,
Show us the Saviour's love.

You spoke to us, long, long ago,
Gave us the written word;
We read it still, needing its truth,
Through it God's voice is heard.

Without your help we fail our Lord,
We cannot live this way;
We need your power, we need your strength,
following Christ each day.

REFLECTION

May the words of my mouth and the meditation in my heart be acceptable to you, O lord, my strength and redeemer.

Have you ever looked at a rainbow and wondered how amazing it is?

The story woven to us as children, that you can find a pot of gold at the end of a rainbow, is a delightful myth.

Once when driving north from England we saw a rainbow in the field right beside our car, it seemed to travel alongside us. If ever there was to be an opportunity to touch a rainbow, this was the moment!

We can 'SEE' a rainbow, and we know scientifically why they appear because the water droplets refract light. However, we cannot touch or feel a rainbow.

One of the mysteries of nature indeed.

Today is Trinity Sunday and when we speak of the Trinity, we speak of The Three in One, God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit.

God is discovered hidden in plain sight in our individual and communal lives: awesomely 'other'; intimately close; sometimes both. We find God is untameable yet present to every leaf and flower. God is wonderfully comforting, yet uncomfortably challenging! His visible presence is everywhere, yet elusive, as if God has just gone around the corner.

In the reading today from John, 3 1-17 we learn about Nicodemus. He was a Pharisee, and a member of the ruling council called the Sanhedrin.

The Pharisees were a group of religious leaders whom Jesus and John the Baptist often criticised for being hypocrites.

Most Pharisees were intensely jealous of Jesus because he undermined their authority and challenged their views.

However, Nicodemus was searching, and he believed that Jesus had some answers. A learned teacher himself, he came to Jesus to be taught.

Nicodemus may have been afraid of what his peers, the Pharisees would say about his visit to Jesus, so he went after dark.

What did Nicodemus already know about the Kingdom? From the Bible, he knew it would be ruled by God, it would be restored on earth, and it would incorporate God's people.

Jesus revealed to Nicodemus that the Kingdom would come to the whole world and not just the Jews.

Even more astonishing to Nicodemus was the fact that unless he was personally 'born again' he would not be part of it.

From verse 4: 'How can a man be born again when he is old?' Nicodemus asked. 'Surely he cannot enter a second time into his mother's womb to be born!'

Jesus answered, 'I tell you the truth, no-one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit.

Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit. You should not be surprised at my saying you must be born again. The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So, it is with everyone born of the Spirit.'

This must have come as a shock to the devout Pharisee.

When reading Reverend William Barclay's commentary on this passage in John, He speaks of three great related concepts.

They are:

'Entry into the Kingdom of heaven'

'Becoming Children of God'.

And 'Eternal Life.'

Eternal Life is the kind of life that God lives.

To enter into eternal life is to enter into the possession of that kind of life which is the life of God. It lifts us up above merely human thoughts and transient things into that joy and peace which belong only to God. Only when we give to God that love, reverence, devotion, and obedience can we be in true fellowship with him.

These three concepts are all dependent on our obedience to the will of God. This is where the idea of 'being reborn' is.

We cannot do this in our own strength but only when God's Grace takes possession of us and leads us to follow Jesus.

Water and the Spirit represent the cleansing and strengthening power of Jesus, and this gives us rebirth.

Jesus was explaining the importance of a rebirth to Nicodemus, saying that people do not enter the kingdom by living a better life, but by being spiritually reborn.

Who is the Holy Spirit?

God is three persons in one – the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. God became man in Jesus so that Jesus could die for our sins. Jesus rose from the dead to offer salvation to all people through spiritual renewal and rebirth. When Jesus ascended into heaven, his physical presence left the earth, but he promised to send the Holy Spirit so that his spiritual presence would still be among mankind. As we know from reading the Bible, the Holy Spirit first became available to all believers at Pentecost.

The Kingdom is personal, not national, or ethnic, and its entrance requirements are repentance and spiritual rebirth.

Nicodemus, an expert in the Jewish law, went to ask Jesus a question. His expert knowledge of the law did not answer some of the questions in his heart. Book knowledge was not enough. God is close within, but also mysteriously beyond us. God hidden in plain sight in our relationships and in all creation never lets us stop adventuring.

Like Nicodemus, we must also come to Jesus with an open mind when we are searching for answers.

Then, God's untameable dancing spirit urges us on in our search.
Amen

PRAYERS OF THANKSGIVING AND INTERCESSION – Elaine Craig

Prayer for our world on Trinity Sunday

Father, Son and Holy Spirit,

On this Trinity Sunday, we bring to you first our prayers of thanks.

Heavenly Father, we give thanks for the gift of scripture and the truths it invites us to embrace.

Through them we gain insight into the elusive mystery of Your life. Help us to worship you, one God in three persons, and reveal yourself as we proclaim and live our faith through you.

Our own religious road may not contain thunderous voices or winged messengers. God, You speak to us more in the everyday, offering us quiet reassurance in silence and meditation.

Led by the spirit to be children of God, we look towards a life where we can live more openly as restrictions ease from the pandemic. Through so much sadness, pain of loss and loneliness, we offer our gratitude for the strength You have given your children to persevere through all the challenges of the past year, and praise You for the prospect of new beginnings. That You have guided Sarah's steps to Stonehaven as we prepare to welcome her as the first minister of Carronside Church of Scotland we give You thanks.

You are with us now in our lives as we look ahead once more with hope and joy.

In worship, You speak to us,
In our journey through life, You travel with us,
When we look for a way, we can see it through Your son Jesus,

We give thanks, God, for the times when You will come to us in the future,
When our lives are troubled, You will be there for us,

Your promises will remain, You will hold us fast,
Your son Jesus will give us the strength, peace and comfort to go on,

For Your love which holds us forever, we praise You.

We are a world that is desperate for Your presence and support, God.
When earthly powers struggle for dominance,
and war, oppression and abuse result;

When groups of people oppose one another
because of ideology, religion or culture;

We need a God who is greater than ourselves,
and our personal interests.

We bring you our prayers that by Your grace, the ceasefire in the Middle East develops into a lasting peace. That wherever there is dissension, You will be done.

When people are disregarded and devalued
because of poverty, geography or disease;
When compassion and justice are withheld

We need a Saviour who is more compassionate than we are
who includes even those we would exclude.

May your example and divine grace shine for us as we seek to eliminate unfair
discrimination.

Lord make your presence felt among the victims of the volcano in east Congo
and particularly in the town of Goma. As a town which has been a great centre
of humanitarian resources, offering help to others, take care of the town and its
people who now sorely need help.

When earthly resources are mismanaged and abused
and the world and its creatures are destroyed;
When motivation is scarce and creativity is in short supply
to address the challenges that we face;
We need a Spirit who is more powerful and more creative
than we could ever be.

Lord God, Loving Saviour, Empowering Spirit,
we offer You these prayers because we need You so desperately.

May we never forget that those challenges which face us are never greater than
the Power which has our back. Amen

PRAISE: CH4 561 MP 59 'Blessed Assurance'

Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine!
Oh, what a foretaste of glory divine!
Heir of salvation, purchase of God;
Born of his Spirit, washed in his blood.
*This is my story, this is my song,
Praising my Saviour all the day long.
This is my story, this is my song,
Praising my Saviour all the day long.*

Perfect submission, perfect delight,
Visions of rapture burst on my sight;
Angels descending bring from above
Echoes of mercy, whispers of love.

This is my story, this is my song...

Perfect submission, all is at rest,
I and my Saviour am happy and blest;
Watching and waiting, looking above,
filled with his goodness, lost in his love.

This is my story, this is my song...

I would like to thank everyone who has helped to make this video service possible, including the work, in many cases, which goes on behind the scenes.

Thank you all.

BENEDICTION

As we leave this place,
May the roads rise to meet us,
May the wind be always at our back,
May the sun shine warm upon our faces,
The rains fall soft upon our fields
And until we meet again
May God hold us in the hollow of His hand.
Amen

Let us join together in the singing of **Hymn 786** 'May the God of peace go with us'.

Reflections by Ian Wilson

Dear Friends,

When I was member of Midsocket Parish Church I would often provide pulpit supply during our minister's leave of absence. Aberdeen College of Education was within walking distance of our Church and two of the Senior Tutors at the college were members of our congregation. In the delivery of my sermon they may well have been able to overlooking my shortcomings but it would have been a completely different matter if the Children's Address did not come up to their standard. One of the

principles they would tend to stress was the importance of providing the children with visual aids to help them understand the message I had for them.

Of course, using something physical and concrete to express a metaphysical and spiritual reality was indeed something Jesus Himself would do - particularly when He speaks of the Kingdom of God; saints and missionaries throughout the centuries have followed His example when preaching the message to the people. In 387 A.D. St Patrick was born in Britain at a time when most of the island was under the Roman Empire - however, he felt called by God to leave his home and travel to Ireland to preach the Christian gospel there which he did for 40 years. As he preached he realized how important it was to find concrete ways to explain the mysteries of the faith.

Today we celebrate 'Trinity Sunday' also known as 'The Feast of the Holy and Undivided Trinity' and the mystery of the Holy Trinity was something that Patrick needed to find something concrete to teach this holy truth to the Irish converts. We are told how Patrick took the shamrock or clover and asked the Irish to look at the leaf. This leaf represents the Holy Trinity - it is one leaf and yet we can see three segments - the mystery of the One in Three - One God in Three Persons - Father, Son and Holy Spirit. So today as we reflect on the Holy Trinity, which we believe not through logical analysis but rather through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit in our hearts, may the shamrock, as a visual aid provide some understanding for our minds.

And now as we enter into that Spirit of worship on this Trinity Sunday may we find some direction through the words of Cooper's famous hymn. We know the hymn as Hymn 483 so if you feel inclined why not sing it now.

HYMN 483 (CH4)

Father of heaven, whose love profound,
a ransom for our souls has found,
before Your throne we sinners bend:
to us Your pardoning love extend.

Almighty God, incarnate Word,
our Prophet, Priest, Redeemer, Lord
before Your throne we sinners bend:
to us Your saving grace extend.

Eternal Spirit, by those breath
our souls are raised from sin and death,
before Your throne we sinners bend:
to us Your quickening power extend.

Jehovah - Father - Spirit Son,
mysterious Godhead, Three -in - One,
before Your throne we sinners bend,
grace, pardon, life to us extend.

COLLECT FOR TODAY

Almighty and eternal God,
through Your Word and Spirit
You created all things.
In Jesus Christ, the Word made flesh,
You reveal Your salvation
in all the world.
Through Your Holy Spirit
You give us a share
in Your life and love.
Keep us firm in this faith
and fill us with the vision of your glory,
that we may serve and praise You all our days
through Jesus Christ our Lord
who is alive and reigns
with You and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.
Amen.

OLD TESTAMENT READING - ISAIAH 6.1-8

REFLECTION

"God forgave my sin in Jesus' name;
I've been born again in Jesus' name
and in Jesus' name I come to you
to share His love as he told me to.
He said:
'Freely, freely you have receive,
freely, freely give;regent
go in My name and because you believe,
others will know that I live.'"
(HYMN 181 CMP)

As the Prophet Isaiah reflects on God's call he remembers the exact time of this event in his life - it was the year 758 B.C. King Uzziah came to the throne of Judah at the age of 16, (initially as co-regent with his father King Amaziah) and reigned over the

Kingdom for 52 years. thus the death of Uzziah in 758 B.C. marked the end of an era - and for Isaiah it also appeared to mark his spiritual reawakening - his vision of Almighty God. He describes his experience in very elaborate terms:

"I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, high and lofty and the hem of His robe filled the Temple."

"The Temple" was the place where the community of God's people would gather and thus in his vision Isaiah represents the transcendent Lord touching the earth and touching the centre of the lives of His people. Isaiah sees God as being surrounded by seraphs (literally burning ones - fire being the symbol for the holiness of God). He describes the seraphs as having six wings, two which cover their faces preventing them looking directly at the divine; two which cover their lower parts and two through which they could fly. The seraphs joined in a heavenly chorus:

"Holy, holy, holy."

When expressing the superlative Hebrew repeats the word - thus holy, holy means most holy. However, the above sentence in Isaiah is the only point where 'holy' is written three times - thus signifying how God's unapproachable and unique moral majesty before which sinful humanity quakes in terror. Moreover, Isaiah's vision of the holiness of God leads him to confess:

"Woe is me - I am lost, for I am a man of unclean lips and I live among a people of unclean lips."

Following Isaiah's confession he experienced the joy of sins forgiven demonstrated by the vision of the coals touching his lips and cleansing him from all guilt. Moreover, that knowledge of sins forgiven - the knowledge that "unclean lips" have been touched by the coal give him the reassurance that all sinful humanity can be touched and forgiven by God. This reality allows him to hear that Call of God:

"Whom shall I send?"

and allows him to make that response

"Here I am - send me"

Freely, we have received the forgiveness of God through the sacrifice of Christ the Saviour - let us freely proclaim God's love and forgiveness to all his creation.

Amen. Thanks be to God.

As the seraphs proclaimed "Holy, holy, holy" let us on this Trinity Sunday worship God the Holy and Undivided Trinity in those words "Holy, holy, holy.". We do this through the Hymn 111 and if you feel inclined why not sing it now.

HYMN 111 (CH4)

Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty!
early in the morning our song shall rise to Thee,
holy, holy, holy merciful and mighty!
God in three Persons, blessed Trinity!

Holy, holy, holy all the saints adore Thee,
casting down their golden crowns around the glassy sea;
cherubim and seraphim falling down before Thee,
God ever living through eternity.

Holy, holy, holy though the darkness hide Thee,
through the sinful human eye Thy glory may not see,
only Thou art holy: there is none beside Thee,
perfect in power, in love and purity.

Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty!
all Thy works shall praise Thy name in earth and sky and sea;
holy, holy, holy merciful and mighty!
God in three persons, blessed Trinity.

NEW TESTAMENT READING - ST JOHN 3.1-17

REFLECTION

'The best of the old ways falls short of the perfection of the new'

We are all familiar with the story of The Sermon on the Mount which St Matthew relates in his gospel chapter 5 to 7. Perhaps the most familiar verses are what we call the Beatitudes:

"Blessed are for...."

these being great words of encouragement and comfort as we seek to follow Jesus as His disciples here today.

Another of the frequent phrases spoken by our Lord and recorded in the Sermon on the Mount include the words:

"You have heard that it was said to those of ancient times...

.....but I say to you....."

These words are spoken by Jesus asking those who hear Him firstly to consider the words of the ancient Mosaic Law ..

and to be able to reflect on the fact that things will become better still for those who hear and obey His voice - the voice of the Holy Spirit in their hearts.

Our gospel reading today provides the same message as the Sermon but St John does not give us lists of Jewish ritual followed by Christian insight . There is nowhere within the reading that we see the words:

"You have heard it said by those in ancient timesbut I say unto you"

However, John brings us the message of the Sermon through the encounter of a man representing the best of the old - Nicodemus, the best representative of Judaism - with the perfection of the new - our Lord Jesus Christ son of the Living God. Through the interaction of Jesus and Nicodemus we see had that new spiritual reality - Jesus the Messiah supersedes the Law of Moses. Jesus is the Messiah who has come down from heaven has superseded the Law of Moses represented by Nicodemus, the Pharisee, the Leader of the Jews, the Member of the Jewish Council the Sanhedrin.

Nicodemus (a Greek name meaning 'conqueror' or 'ruler') had come to visit Jesus by night. Of course, it is understandable that in order to be unseen he would come to Jesus during the hours of darkness but perhaps John adds this detail in his story to signify how the darkness of the old ways come to find that new reality - the Light of Christ.

Nicodemus moreover addresses Jesus as Rabbi: although many people addressed Jesus in this way, it has a greater significance that Nicodemus himself a Teacher of the Law uses this title when addressing Jesus. Nicodemus expressed his admiration for Jesus with the words:

"You are a teacher who has come from God; for no one can do these signs that you do apart from the presence of God".

When Nicodemus speaks of the signs of Jesus he can not see beyond Jesus as a mere man inspired by God. What Nicodemus saw in the acts of Jesus is what he had seen with his eyes. Jesus, however, answers with the words:

"No one can SEE the kingdom of God without being born from above"

Jesus is not merely referring to the physical ability of seeing; He speaks of a spiritual reality - a reality through which God's Holy Spirit can convince the heart that there in his midst is the Only begotten Son of God - the Saviour of the World. May the Holy Spirit of God bring the Light of the Risen Christ to our souls so that we may see His Kingdom and live in the joy of the things which are eternal.

Amen. Thanks be to God.

As the Holy Spirit is at work in the World may we know more of our Saviour's love for us.

"teach us the truth and help us believe
show us the Saviour's love."

so let us rejoice in Jesus' love through the words of Hymn 600 and if you feel inclined why not sing it now.

HYMN 600 (CH4)

Spirit of God, unseen as the wind,
gentle as is the dove,
teach us the truth and help us believe,
show us the Saviour's love.

You spoke to us, long, long ago
gave us the written word;
we read it still, needing its truth,
through it God's voice is heard.

Without Your help we fail our Lord,
we can not live His way;
we need Your power, we need Your strength,
following Christ each day.

May God richly bless us in the days ahead as we remember to give thanks that He has brought His servant Sarah among us to minister to us. Pray too that God will bless her ministry here among us, that she will be kept from harm and bring forth spiritual fruit to the greater glory of God.

With all kind thoughts,
Ian

OFFERING.

If you would like to make your offering as a donation to Stonehaven Carronside Church of Scotland, you can do so easily on-line in the Church of Scotland web site

<https://cos.churchofscotland.org.uk/donate/>

Select "donate to a congregation"

Enter "Stonehaven Carronside"

Select Gift Aid if you pay tax and

Then go to payment details.

You may also make a donation by cheque in an envelope addressed our office at

Stonehaven Carronside Church of Scotland

St Bridget's Hall Church, Bridgefield Terrace, Stonehaven, AB39 2JF

Stonehaven Carronside Contacts

Interim Moderator	David Galbraith	david@galbraith.scot	01561 320 779
Session Clerk	Brian Sim	bsim84@gmail.com	01569 762 038