

PERTH METHODIST CHURCH MESSAGES AND INFO

Friday 7th August

Our usual news-sheet sheet is renamed Messages and Info and we hope it will be one of the ways we can keep in touch with each other during this strange and difficult time.

Please encourage others to read it and please print a copy for anyone you know who is not on email. Please also send in any items such as personal messages or info that you wish to share with members of the congregation.

Nik Wooller gives us her Manse Musings.

A big week ahead for the children in our communities and families! School starts again and that is going to be strange. They haven't been in school for a little over 5 months. So there are going to be some mixed feelings. For some, there will be a degree of excitement at a new adventure. They might also feel a bit apprehensive. It's been a while and learning has been somewhat different. They might not have seen their friends for a while. They will all be wondering what is it going to be like? So, a real mixture of feelings!

Our Scripture this week (**Matthew Ch 14 vs 22-33**) tells us of a time when that idea of a real mixture of feelings could describe, quite accurately, the emotional state of Jesus' disciples. They were in a boat in the middle of Lake Galilee. Jesus had sent them on ahead of him because he wanted to be alone to have his own prayer time. He had just spent time healing many and miraculously feeding a very large crowd with just five loaves and two fish. He needed to 'recharge his batteries' in conversation with his Father.

So the disciples were out on the lake, not enjoying a smooth sail because "the wind was against them" Suddenly, out of nowhere, a figure appeared to be walking towards them across the water! Naturally they were afraid and immediately assumed it was a ghost - what else could walk on water? Jesus spoke to them to calm their fears.

Peter, the ever bold Peter, wanted a bit more proof. "If it is you, command me to come to you on the water." So Jesus issued the invitation - Come. How often do we hear that simple invitation offered to people? Peter, full of belief, leaves the boat and starts walking towards Jesus. As long as he keeps his eyes fixed on Jesus he is fine but he starts to take notice of the conditions round about him and he loses that belief. He calls out to Jesus for salvation and, of course, he receives it.

Jesus ponders why Peter started to doubt but gets him back safely into the boat. The disciples are full of wonder and make the claim: "truly, you are the Son of God." They have travelled with this man, watched him and learned from him and now they have a moment of true revelation - they know exactly who he is!

So there they are, having experienced fear, wonder and now a sense of certainty about this man who is their leader. All in the space of few minutes or so. Add to that the amazement they must have felt at the feeding of the 5,000+ crowd and you can see that they would have a real mixture of feelings to deal with.

However, these feelings aren't particularly unusual. I think that we all experience them - and sometimes all in a short space of time. This may very well have been heightened for us during this time of Covid-19. I think of those who have been shielding and have now been freed from the restriction of having to stay at home and not socialise. I am sure that they are very happy but perhaps that happiness is tinged with a little apprehension. It is not easy venturing out after you have lived in near isolation for a while.

I know that when I have been shopping in Perth, it has been both exciting and a bit fearful. Would people keep a social distance? Would they wear masks? Life does bring its challenges to us, and particularly at the moment.

Here in this story of Jesus walking on the water, we are provided with the tools to help manage life in all its complexities. Know that Jesus is with you at all times but especially when "the wind seems to be against you." He is not an apparition but a real presence beside you. The secret to achieving what you want is to keep your eyes fixed on Jesus!

I think that is very important in this present time. Our thinking about church has been challenged. We have had to find different ways of 'being church' There has been lots of creativity expressed as churches try to reach out to their members. The main point is that church still continues without a building, and by fixing our attention on Jesus and his mission we are enabled to continue to do his work

It is when we start to let other factors affect us that we start to lose faith and drive and then we begin to 'sink below the waves'. We must never doubt that we have the ability to carry out the task we have been given. We do need to look to Jesus for help and for the power he gives us through the Holy Spirit.

We need to remind ourselves of that revelation which was voiced by the disciples "truly, you are the Son of God" This is what we are trying to share with others. This is the man who brings salvation to you. This is the man who will stop you sinking below the waves. Keep your eyes fixed on Jesus

Prayer

Living God, who cares for us in all aspects of our lives

Teach us to find time for you each day, so that we hear your voice and discern your will.

Teach us to step back and take stock, allowing your greatness to overwhelm us anew so that we might step forward in faith, strengthened in spirit, and equipped to do whatever it is that you might ask of us.

Remind us, Lord, of your saving power that goes with us to protect us whenever we are keeping our eyes fixed on your purpose, and remind us of your care for each one of your children.

God our Saviour, we pray that you will come to the aid of your people who place their hope and trust in you as we recall your saving power in your mighty acts;

May those for whom we pray know your presence to be with them and experience your help for them in their time of need.

We pray for all who feel as if they are sinking under a tide of trouble at present, reach out and bring them to safety.

We remember before you all who are struggling with health issues at this time; all who are mourning the loss of a loved one; those who have lost jobs because of our present economic circumstances and those who are anxious about the future, bring them peace of mind and a sense of your calming presence.

We pray, Lord, for all children who will be returning to school and for their teachers. We pray that the return will be exciting and that any nerves will soon be calmed. Keep them safe, we pray, and let life assume some normality for them.

Lord, we bring before you the awful tragedy in Beirut and pray for all who have been affected, those who have lost loved ones; those who have been injured; those who have lost their homes and possessions; all front-line workers who are doing their best in very difficult circumstances. We pray that the world will respond with compassion to their plight

Lord God, we recall your love for us in all that you have done from the beginning of creation until now. May we ever look to you for inspiration as we go out into this world to share the good news of salvation. Help us always to keep our eyes fixed on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of our faith.

Amen

God Bless, Nik

Here is a list of Methodist worship across Scotland for those looking for something to replace Mark's services on a Sunday during August.

- **Shetland District** offers worship services on the [Shetland Methodist](#) YouTube Channel. The [Shetland District](#) Facebook page has lots of other news and resources too.
- **Inverness Circuit** is broadcasting on their YouTube Channel [Inverness Methodist Church](#) and you can follow all that's happening at [The Bike Shed](#)

[Coffee House](#) with Dave Saunders the [Bearded Woodworker](#) who is hosting a series of online conversations connected to issues of faith and everyday life raised by the current pandemic. These are posted on the [Kyrios](#) Facebook page.

- **The North of Scotland Circuit** offers acts of worship and a variety of ways to connect:
- [Moray Coast](#) offers worship services led by folks from the coastal churches.
- [Peterhead Methodist Church](#) Facebook Page has lots of videos and devotional material for all ages.
- [Aberdeen Methodist Church](#) YouTube Channel offers reflections and more. Further resources on the [Aberdeen Methodist Church](#) Facebook page.
- **Angus, Dundee and Perthshire Circuit** offers reflections, prayers, artwork and more on the [Circuit Facebook](#) page, and [Scottish Methodists Online](#) is a gathering place for prayer, bible reflection, worship and more, for all who are, or want to be, part of the Methodist family in Scotland.
- **Ayrshire and Renfrewshire Circuit** has links to a variety of [streamed events](#). To connect with others gathering regularly in the online small group, contact [Rev Rob Morton](#)
- **Strathclyde Circuit** is offering acts of [worship](#) and a variety of online gatherings to all seekers through the [Trinity Methodist Shettleston](#) YouTube Channel as well as Webinars on many different topics. Subscribe to the [Shettleston Trinity Facebook](#) page to find out more about resources and events in Strathclyde. [Rev Andrew Baker](#) leads 5live@5 every Saturday at 5pm for 5 minutes on his YouTube channel.
- **Forth Valley Circuit** offers [worship](#) downloads and links to online worship at: [Livingston United Parish Church](#) every Sunday at 10.30am via Zoom. LUPC has a range of other activities online. For more information please visit [Livingston United Parish Church Facebook](#) page.
- [Stirling Methodist Church](#) also offer worship every Sunday at 10.30am via Zoom. If you would like to join them please email [Jon](#) for instruction on how to link to the service.

Nick Baker has a sick note until the end of August and the situation will be reviewed after that. He is far from back to full strength and still has frequent spells of extreme fatigue. Please continue to remember him and Petra and their family in your prayers. He is grateful for all our support.

Sunday worship

The news from the Circuit Leadership Team is that from 6th September, and at least throughout the month, we will have a weekly Circuit Service which will be pre-recorded and put on YouTube where it will be available from 11.00 each Sunday. A full transcript of the service and also an audio CD will be made available to those who need them. If you are willing to take part in such a service, eg by offering to video record a reading or a prayer please let Nik know.

Methodist Prayer Handbook 2020-2021

Entitled The Earth is the Lord's this year's edition is now available at £4.15 per copy. Please let me know if you would like a copy. Pam

Brief Encounter

No, not the 1940s film but how about going to the South Inch and finding other PMC folk there?

The stewards would like to suggest that we do this on either Thursday 13th August, 10.30am - 12 noon, or Tuesday 18th, 2.00 - 3.30pm? The choice is yours. Enthusiastic people might wish to 'do both'.

There are picnic tables with benches on the South Inch where it borders Marshall Place and the cafe is usually open. Socially distanced and behaving ourselves, as we always do, we should be able to catch up with each other in that area, moving on from table to table. This is NOT a Meeting but hopefully will give some of us an opportunity to see each other. As for the weather, just keep hoping for the best. Any other queries, please ask me. Pam

Sundays at 7.00pm. We are reminded that Scottish Church leaders encourage us to continue to light a candle in a window and offer a prayer on Sunday evening.

The prayer for this coming Sunday is as follows:

Lord, you are our Creator and our Maker.

We are fashioned in your image

And all that we are is known to you.

Hear us as we cry out and respond to us in our time of need.

Lord, in your mercy, *Hear our prayer.*

Lord, your Word has become flesh and lived among us

Full of grace and truth.

As the living Word comes, we respond with open hearts

And ask that you will meet us in the place where we are today.

Lord, in your mercy, *Hear our prayer.*

Lord, you see all that takes place around us

And nothing is hidden from your sight.

You see waves that batter us and the storm that seems unceasing. Come to us in response to the depth of our need.

Lord, in your mercy *Hear our prayer.*

Lord, your presence is revealed in the life of your Son.

He knows us as we are and even now he prays for us.

May he hear us when we are anxious And respond when we are afraid.

Lord, in your mercy, *Hear our prayer.*

Lord, you inspire in us faith

And yet we confess that our faith is weak.

Hear us when we cry: "Lord, save me!"

And in response reach out your hand to all who cry to you today.

Lord, in your mercy, *Hear our prayer.*

This **Messages and Info sheet** is currently being produced by Gerald, please send items for inclusion to him by 12 midday on Thursday each week.

His details are in the church directory.