

PERTH METHODIST CHURCH

MESSAGES AND INFO

FRIDAY 20TH NOVEMBER

Our usual news-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.

This time of year, in the church's calendar, is very much a 'waiting' time. We are approaching, very quickly, the end of the church's year and awaiting the beginning of a new one as Advent begins. We are beginning to let our thoughts wander towards Christmas and all the preparations that are involved in that. Perhaps, we are wondering what that means for us this year. It all adds to the sense 'not knowing'.

In terms of the Covid pandemic we are also in a 'waiting' time. This week we heard the good news of a possible vaccine. Good news indeed! However, we can't celebrate too much yet because there are still quite a number of uncertainties in terms of validation, knowing the long-term effects and delivery to the people. So we watch and wait with hope but still not with certainty. Again, we are in the 'not knowing' category.

So, perhaps our Scripture for this week (**Matthew Ch25 vs 14-30**) is apposite. Matthew was writing to people who were also in a 'waiting' time. This was after Jesus had been crucified and risen again and the expectation is that he would come again. His followers were all waiting for this because they thought it would happen very quickly after his Ascension. They were definitely in a period of 'not knowing' what was going to happen. So, Matthew was writing to them to encourage them to stay firm in their faith and keep following in the ways of Jesus.

He was encouraging them to keep the faith and to show it by emulating the ministry of Jesus. Jesus' ministry, of course, was to feed the hungry; visit the sick and the prisoners; to clothe the naked; to welcome the stranger; to serve the least. This parable that Jesus told was being used by Matthew to encourage people to do likewise and not to hold back just because Jesus was not with them in person.

To the parable itself. It is quite easy to misunderstand this parable. It is not about talents or skills as we know them in terms of gifts and abilities. A talent in Jesus' time was a weight of money, measured on scales. These weights of money talked about in the parable are worth an enormous amount. It is difficult to quantify in this day and age but it represents a lot of money. This parable is talking more about the generosity of God than about anything else.

The point is about what we do with God's generosity. Do we accept it with gratitude and go and spread it so that it multiplies? Or do we go and bury it so that it never gets the chance to increase?

The two servants who used the talents well and increased their worth were praised. The servant who buried the talent was severely rebuked. God gives us gifts and abilities so that we might use them to serve others and thus, increase their worth. If we decide to bury our gifts and not use them to serve people then we are not doing what Jesus modelled for us.

That is a very important point for us. God has poured his love out generously upon us. Particularly in the person of Jesus Christ our Lord. It was in God's power to give this gift to us in order to help us and bring us new life. In order to fulfil that Jesus had to die upon the Cross and be buried. God could have left the story there. However, He did not. He did not bury him and leave him there - he resurrected him so that we could all be blessed with the gift of eternal life. If God is so generous towards us, does it not follow that we should share his generosity with others?

It is particularly important in this waiting time - the run up to Christmas; in the continuing pandemic that we use all that God has gifted us with, in order to be a gift to others. God was generous with Jesus Christ our Saviour, so how can we share that generosity with others? This

'waiting time' is crucial for us. Let us be a church that goes out to others to share God's love. Let us try to help, wherever we can, to help others through this waiting time. What have you got to offer?

We all have something to offer, time, money, ideas, willingness to help - I could go on. Be generous to others just as God is generous to you! Don't squander what God has gifted to you - use it to help others and you will be amazed how it grows!

Meditation

Do I give you joy, Lord?

You have entrusted me with small things, talents and skills:

Some I know and practise, some I hardly understand,

Some I keep hidden away.

I know these things give me joy.

I like it when people praise me for doing things well,

I like it when someone appreciates my help,

I enjoy it when I say the right thing -

Then I bask in glory because I am liked, loved.

But do I give you joy?

Do I use all my gifts which your generous nature has bestowed?

If I have five measures, do I give five more in return?

Or do I keep a bit back, hold some in reserve, no letting on

What I can do, afraid of being open and giving freely.

I thank you for what I have received.

Give me wisdom to use these talents,

In work, through the church, in your service,

So that I give you glory, and my life reflects your love.

You promised: to those who have shall more be given.

Give me more, and I will give you even greater joy.

Worship, this Sunday, 22nd November

This week's service, will be on the Angus Dundee and Perthshire YouTube channel from 9am Sunday. To access the service or any of the earlier services go to [youtube.com](https://www.youtube.com) and where it says 'Search' enter 'Angus, Dundee and Perthshire Methodist Circuit'.

If you know of anyone who doesn't have access to YouTube and would like the service on DVD or a full script, please let Nick Wooller or Sue Marshall-Jennings smj4409@hotmail.co.uk know, so it can be posted to them each week.

Solas Festival Winter Event is coming to you on **Sunday 29th November**.

Join us at the virtual fireside for a day of conversation, music, poetry, and song.

Go to solasfestival.co.uk

Two messages from **Action for Children:-**

Secret Santa is back This festive season, Action for Children is looking for a sleighful of Secret Santas to support their Christmas campaign.

To become a Secret Santa please visit iamsanta.org.uk/methodist

Starry Night - virtual Christmas Carol Event. On Tuesday 8th December, join us and families across the UK for an evening of Christmas carols, fun and festive cheer hosted by Channel 4 News' Jon Snow. Tickets are £10 per household and will give you access to exclusive entertainment, readings and performances from celebrities. All this from the comfort of your own home

Buy tickets here www.starry-night.co.uk

Sundays at 7.00pm. Scottish Church leaders encourage us to keep on lighting a candle in a window and offer a prayer on Sunday evening. They make the following comment: Scottish Christians have been continuing to answer the call to pray at the same time each week, and the Methodist Church in Scotland has been taking part alongside them. "There are some things which make sense for a certain period of time but which come to a natural conclusion - such as clapping for carers during the spring lockdown. Prayer isn't one of them," Rt Rev Dr Martin Fair, (Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland) says. "The Apostle Paul encourages us to 'pray without ceasing' and Jesus himself offers parables where persistence in prayer is lauded. It can be hard to keep going when there's no end in sight; much easier when the finishing line comes into view. In the case of the pandemic, it still feels as if there's no light at the end of the tunnel. All the more reason for God's people to continue faithfully in prayer, even better when we pray across the whole of the Church, unrestricted by denominational divides".

The prayer for this coming Sunday 22nd November is as follows:

Good Shepherd, Speak to us at this time
And hear us when we call to you.
Answer our call And come to journey with us.
Lord, hear us. *Lord, graciously hear us.*

Good Shepherd, Search for us when we are lost
And gather us safely into your presence.
Speak to the depths of our fears And still our anxious hearts.
Lord, hear us. *Lord, graciously hear us.*

Good Shepherd, Stand with us in the midst of these times
And do not forsake us.
Search for the lonely and the anxious And embrace them in your love.
Lord, hear us. *Lord, graciously hear us.*

Good Shepherd, Strengthen us when we stumble
And renew us when we are weak.
Stand with all who are made in your image And who reflect your goodness.
Lord, hear us. *Lord, graciously hear us.*

Good Shepherd, Support us when we suffer
And bring healing when we are wounded.
Strengthen us that we might strengthen others
And be with them in all we face together.
Lord, hear us. *Lord, graciously hear us.*

Good Shepherd, Speak once more to our hearts
And offer us vision and hope for days to come.
Go before us Shepherd King And lead us into the future that you hold in your hands.
Lord, hear us. *Lord, graciously hear us.*

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