

NEWSLETTER 57

CERES

KEMBACK and

SPRINGFIELD

Charity No: SCO1471



Website: www.ckschurch.org

Earth Day 22nd April 2021

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PRAYER

Ps 24 v 1 - 2

The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof,
the world and those who dwell therein,
for He has founded it upon the seas and established it upon the rivers.

Loving Heavenly Father, as our minds are drawn to Earth day and the problems our natural world faces,
may we be reminded that You created the world and all that is in it.

We are a small part of that beautiful creation.

Open our eyes to see as You see, our ears to hear as You hear and may we realise an interdependence with
all living things.

AMEN

WORSHIP

Sunday Worship, led by Rev Jane Barron, is held each week in
Springfield Community Church. Social distancing is carefully maintained.

To make sure that places are available, please phone 01334 652 056.

A zoom service is conducted every Sunday at 10.00 am by
the Rev. Bill Hunter with the congregation at Howe of Fife.

All are welcome. Joining details are:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/2794034482?pwd=MzRRcHpSd29TWUN1QkdMNXp6MnRsUT09#success>

Meeting ID 279 403 4482

Passcode: 5963

Psalm 137

This is probably one of the best known and loved psalms. Most people have heard it, or heard of it possibly through the talent of a certain Euro-caribbean vocal group called Boney M, which covered the chart hitting song in 1978.

We know that the Psalm poetically echoes and evokes the anguish and homesickness of captured Israelites who longed to be back in their homeland. They were taken against their will to Babylon where they lived as slaves to their new owners and masters.

Fast forward the best part of two centuries, and the world witnessed en-masse men, women and children - most from Africa but not all being similarly treated. Whole families captured, put on slave ships in appalling conditions where many died and ended up on foreign soil including Scotland where they lived as slaves to their new owners and masters. One such street in Glasgow, Jamaica Street speaks to this ... there are of course many others ...

Some of you may remember that I wrote about this Psalm some months ago, and in the narrative posted online I recalled the thoughts of Rev Canon Professor Sue Gillingham, presently based in Oxford. At the time Professor Gillingham had interpreted this Psalm through the lens of Covid 19, suggesting that in living with Covid 19, OUR land had become strange ... and that for many people it would be hard perhaps to sing the Lord's song in this strange land ... so much has changed in just over a year ... for many, mostly under 25's we're now hearing have been seriously affected, wither because of interrupted education or job losses ...

How can we sing the Lord's song, in a strange land? Covid turned our familiar home and parish into a strange land ... so few cars around, our shops, our local businesses closed and quiet some of our local traders stepping up big time and helping people with deliveries and orders just to keep people going - great work ... but it's been devastating in many ways ... How can we sing the Lord's song? Well we can't at the moment can we? Although on the plus side, I never thought I'd ever be playing Boney M in the middle of a church service! There are some benefits ...

But there's a shadow here too the adapted song originally came from a band called the Melodians ... Boney M covered it some years later ... According to Wikipedia, Brent Dowe, the lead singer of the Melodians, adapted Psalm 137 to the new reggae style because he wanted to increase the public's consciousness of the growing Rastafarian movement and its calls for black liberation and social justice. Like the Afro-Protestant Revival services, traditional Rastafarian worship often included psalm singing and hymn singing, and Rastas typically modified the words to fit their own spiritual conceptions; Psalm 137 was among their sacred chants. According to the Encyclopaedia Britannica, the Transatlantic slave trade was the segment of the global slave trade that transported between 10 million and 12 million enslaved Africans across the Atlantic Ocean to the Americas from the 16th to the 19th century.

On 25th May last year, a black man in Minniapolis called George Floyd was murdered by a white police officer called Derek Chauvin ... there have been innumerable killings of black men and women by white police officers in America ... not a single officer has been found guilty of murder until last week. Last week Derek Chauvin was found guilty on three counts of murder which means he could face a maximum 40 years in jail ...

This is unprecedented ... and most people agree that the reason why the conviction was possible was because a young girl who was passing at the time of George's arrest filmed the police officer kneeling on George's neck for 8 minutes and 46 seconds .. even after his pulse stopped he kept kneeling ...

Now it's not for me or any of us to guess or say what was in the heart of these officers ... we know most act out of a sense of duty, to Protect & Serve as the police slogan says over there ... and it would be wrong if I didn't call out the recent racism report which was published in this country at the end of March this

year, endorsed by our Prime Minister which found that there is no systemic racism in the UK ... the outcry by ethnic minorities has been deafening and people are demanding this is looked at again ...

Why am I talking about this? Because it's happening now, it's in our daily newspapers and featured on rolling news channels ... it's happening in our time, and it's happening throughout history ... and in this season of Easter it's well for us to consider how we can celebrate an Easter risen Lord when such horrors are still going on ...

Well let's have a closer look ... here's St John with some words we can look to and use in our lives, and in our prayers.

St John 10 vv 11 - 18

In the Middle East, most flocks are mixed, both sheep and goats which is why Jesus talks so easily about sheep and goats ... they literally go together over there ...

and in the Middle East shepherds go ahead of their flock... in this part of the world in Scotland and the west shepherds drive from the rear ... we see sheep dogs herding from behind don't we ... remember One Man & His Dog on television on Sunday afternoons?

In Jesus' time herding the flock was a dangerous way of life ... dangerous wild beasts lurked in the countryside seeking prey, which often was a sheep or a goat - or a shepherd if he was unlucky enough to be in the wrong place at the wrong time ... shepherds would go ahead of the flock with their staff, and the staff was literally to fight off a wild animal or perhaps a human sheep stealer, but in the main it was there as a defensive weapon to literally save life from danger ...

You'll know that in a hot dry country, and especially if you're living outdoors which these shepherds did, caves were a source of protection from the heat of the sun by day, and at night they were a source of protection from the cold, and provided a niche to a deep nook in which to hide the flock away from marauding predators ... and the shepherd - often a young boy would literally lie down across the mouth of the cave opening to protect the vulnerable animals ... literally putting his body mass across the opening so that if a killer came in the night his body would protect and if necessary be a sacrifice giving the animals time to flee ...

Friends, Minneapolis seems a long way from Springfield this morning but what isn't a long way from Springfield this morning is people suffering ... we can't heal everyone ... we can't help everyone ... but what we can do is to keep watch and see where the risen Easter Christ in our communities ... where are people vulnerable ... It's clear from conversations in our various groups online in recent months that the parish church really is IN the community, and that brothers and sisters are aware of how people are suffering out there ... police brutality isn't a burning issue but the fall out from the pandemic on some is ... the worry about people being isolated is ... the concern about how families recover from the economic hits from the last year ... has local businesses have or have not recovered ... all these and more beside mean some people may be looking for some form of recognition, companionship even which allows them time to recover ... they need someone to recognise their vulnerability, as shepherds of old recognised their flock's and laid down their lives across the mouths of caves to protect them ... and from what I hear the opening of our community facilities such as the cafe for coffee mornings here in Springfield Church ... the Ceres Community Cafe re-opening - these may provide hope and companionship we can't imagine ... and young people in our communities ... this Friday, Eugene, Anne Hughes-Hallett and the Youth Group will be meeting outside in Craighall Den for the first time in a long time... we can't know right now how much these openings are life-lines for some folks' mental health and well being ... but thank God we're doing it ...

In these Easter days the risen Christ asks us to remember the work of shepherds and do likewise ... to be alert to danger and suffering, to discern together carefully and respectfully about how we may become involved to serve with & help recover their lives ... this is how we can change the world, with the risen Christ leading us all the way ... let's keep our eyes fixed on him ... He goes ahead of us ... he is the Good Shepherd ... Amen, and thanks be to God for the gift, for the encouragement of the Gospel ...

CONGREGATIONAL NEWS

The Youth Group is planning a walk in Craighall den on the 30th April. For details, please contact Anne Hughes-Hallett.

It is hoped that the Springfield café will open again on the 19th of May, and that other activities will resume in the same week. Full details of advice are available on the Church of Scotland website at https://churchofscotland.org.uk/resources/covid-19-coronavirus-advice/reopening-and-looking-after-your-church-buildings/_nocache

The Lighthouse has reopened. The hours are still reduced at the moment, from 10am to 2pm, but it means that we will be able to hold a Fairtrade stall there on Thursday 29th April from 2pm to 3:30pm. The café will be closed at that time as social distancing measures mean that there is not enough space for both. The bookshop will be open for sales of books and cards. Orders for Fairtrade goods can be placed at fairtradecupar@gmail.com to be picked up on the day.



PRESBYTERY MISSION BULLETIN

The latest Bulletin includes an introduction to the publication 'Knowledge is Power' – hints that might make life easier after a diagnosis of dementia.

Also, from the *Talking Mission Series: Five Marks of Mission*, with Rev Dr Donald MacEwan, Convenor of the Theological Forum. The bulletin can be found at <https://mailchi.mp/3f648798fbdf/mission-bulletin-4786482?e=a3be434696>

CHRISTIAN AID WEEK 10th -16th May

A fundraising poster for Christian Aid. It features a woman in a vibrant, patterned sari (green, purple, yellow, and orange) with a red bindi on her forehead. She is looking directly at the camera. The background is dark and slightly blurred, suggesting an outdoor setting. In the top left corner, there is a red banner with the text 'Fundraising for Christian Aid'. On the right side, large white text reads 'You are helping to end poverty'. At the bottom, there is a red banner with white text providing details about the partner Shushilan in Bangladesh and the support provided to a woman named Menoka.

Fundraising for Christian Aid

You are helping to end poverty

Christian Aid is empowering some of the world's most vulnerable people. In Bangladesh, our partner Shushilan is supporting local groups of farmers, young people and women by training and funding them to set up small businesses. Menoka (pictured) received Shushilan's support in setting up this stall which she has run since 2014.

Together we are helping some of the world's poorest communities lift themselves out of poverty.



caid.org.uk/yourway
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