



Newsletter 69

Week beginning 18th July 2021

CERES KEMBACK and SPRINGFIELD

Charity No: SC01471

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PRAYER

I trust in You, Holy One,
for I am created and known by You.
You have made me as I am, and know my deepest thoughts and needs.
Help me find in You this day, the peace that passes all understanding.
In the empty spaces, and in the searching places, let me trust in Your
love, and find my hope renewed.
Gentle Spirit, be my companion. Powerful Spirit, be my strength.
Transforming Spirit, be my inspiration.

Amen.

WORSHIP

Sunday Worship, led by Rev Jane Barron, is held each week at 11.15 in Springfield Community Church. Social distancing is carefully maintained. Places are available most Sundays, but in order to make sure of one of the twenty-four seats, 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

INTIMATIONS: VOLUNTEERING

There are many opportunities to take part in the life of the Church, as lockdown ends. We hope shortly to reveal plans to hold services in all three churches.

If you would like to work as a volunteer with Messy Church or the Youth Group, please contact Myra Todd or Anne Hughes Hallett. (A formal application, and PVG disclosure will be necessary for workers with children)

If you would like to join the teams cleaning Kemback or Ceres church for the re-opening, please contact Barbara Elder.

If you would like to take part in the Worship Group, or for any further information, please contact the Session Clerk, or any member of Session.

Season of Pentecost

Sunday, 18th July, 2021

Ceres, Kemback & Springfield Parish Church

Musical Welcoming *Kate Doig* 'Sarabande Holberg Suite' by Edvard Grieg
Call to Worship

Welcome and Notices

Hymn 598 Come, Holy Ghost, our hearts inspire

Prayers of Approach & The Lord's Prayer (Given by Anne Lumsden)

(Please see C of S website and go to ***Prayers for Easing of Covid Restrictions*** to see and hear a prayer by Lord Jim Wallace, Moderator of the General Assembly)

A Musical Reflection *Kate Doig* 'To A Wild Rose' by Edward MacDowell

Jeremiah 23 vv 1 - 6

St Mark 6 vv 30 - 34 & 53 - 56

Homily Called into Compassion

Hymn 112 God whose almighty word

Prayers of Thanksgiving and for Others

Hymn 519 Love divine, all loves excelling

Benediction

A Musical Sending Out *Kate Doig*
'Be thou my vision' by John Rutter

Called into Compassion

Have you seen pictures on the news over the last week or so, showing hundreds of people in Germany, Belgium and the Netherlands whose lives have been devastated and lost by record breaking floods across Europe? We've seen scenes like this before and closer to home. Remember the Welsh village almost swept away ten years ago when a combination of heavy rain and a blocked culvert brought Caernarfon's worst flood of the 20th Century? Onlookers said ...

"It was like a miniature Niagara Falls as it cascaded over pavement steps. I rushed to the shop and I could see the water had gone through the window. There were sandbags on the street door, but it didn't stop the water from entering the shop.

But the last few nights in Europe have seen flooding on a new scale ... one resident had tears on his eyes as he reported seeing families on rooftops crying for help before being lost as buildings collapsed ... he wanted to go and help, but it was impossible ...

This feeling, the feeling of wanting to join someone in their hurting, in their despair, in their fear and be with them goes some way to explaining the meaning of the world compassion ... the Latin origin of the word Compassion means co-suffering ... there are people called emotion researchers who explain compassion this way, as *The feeling that arises when we are confronted with another's suffering and feel motivated to relive that suffering ...*

So I suggest that a fulsome meaning of compassion goes beyond simply looking at our TV screens and feeling deepest sympathy ... it tips into feeling that intensity of sympathy and being motivated to do something to help ... We could have an interesting discussion right now on what is sympathy and what is compassion ... and do we get a gold star for being compassionate if we see suffering on our TV screens and send a financial contribution because we can't get there! After all, that means we've been motivated to do something ... and how does that compare, for example with actually arriving on site, giving up our lives for a week and pitching in with the rest of the rescue crews? But if we're less able physically ... if we have responsibilities at home does this mean we don't measure up to being compassionate if we can't just throw everything off and be a living hero complete with hard hat and sniffer dogs?

Since the advent of 24 hour rolling news we've been assailed for decades now by awful images of suffering and a lot of viewers have got better at only watching at certain times and for a set time ... we'd truly go off our heads if we sat and watched news for hours ...

This is where belonging to a church family comes in useful, I think because over the years it would be impossible to calculate the numbers of Christian brothers and sisters who've been collectively moved by awful stories and appalling images and done something about it, together as a congregation ... I think this is another very reasonable explanation of what compassion is ... when individuals in a congregation become aware of suffering whether within their parish, their nation or somewhere around the globe, talk together, do the research, take it to Session and agree on a course of action ... this is where the rubber hits the road ... this is where feeling meets action ...

The Pastoral Care group is engaged with that sort of initiative at present ... and arising from several group discussions from Talk the Week and Lent Studies the plight of people who have Dementia and the worrisome growth of people in our communities who are isolated and possibly suffering serious mental health problems has prompted us to hear two speakers, one talking about Dementia and the possible setting up of a Memory Cafe to which we might invite carers and people with Dementia ... and another where we invited the session clerk from Largo Parish Church who was instrumental in setting up a Befriending Service with people in the community when the Pandemic struck ... And over the centuries, how many hurting people and places have received compassion from our congregation whether by collective and individual prayer, social events and mission drives? This is where our power lies, together, and gifted by the energy and loving force of the Holy Spirit.

It may be that we eventually pursue neither of these things ... but importantly our Lord Jesus Christ draws us to where he calls us, and asks us to be wide-eyed and vigilant to who and where we're being called to bring the compassion of Christ ... so let's have a look at what's going on today in our faith stories ... where is compassion happening in scripture?

Jeremiah never minces his words and certainly not today ... but the reason why he's so angry is because the leaders of Israel have been weak and reckless and the people they're charged to care for and lead are suffering ... in the ancient world great leaders were called shepherds ... we don't know whether King David ever actually was a shepherd boy, he might have been ... but as with all cases in scripture it's the meaning that's important ... and as we know King David even to this day is regarded by many Jews as the greatest leader Israel has ever had ... shepherds, meaning literally the young boys who looked after flocks of sheep and goats were revered in ancient Israel as being brave, kindly, compassionate leaders who literally laid down their lives for their flocks ... cared for them, made sure they were fed and could sleep safely at night ... and so throughout scripture we see Israel's leaders being weighed against the leadership of the shepherds of Ancient Israel ... and as Babylon lays siege to Jerusalem causing appalling suffering by the city's inhabitants, Jeremiah cries FOUL on the standard of their leadership ... and in the Old Testament reading we heard the disgust and derision Jeremiah has for leaders who allow the suffering to go on ... Jeremiah has compassion for the people and yes, he does act to help them ...

Fast forward half a millennium and we find Jesus and in these short paragraphs we see Jesus feeling compassion and acting on his feelings no less than four times ...

Firstly the apostles come back and report their work to Jesus and they must have looked exhausted because he says, *Come to a quiet place by yourselves and rest ...* and he acted by taking them away in a boat on the lake ...

Secondly as they began to disembark after a quiet sail on the lake, Jesus saw a great crowd of people and we're told he had compassion for them, because they were like a *sheep without a shepherd ...* and so he acted .. he began to teach them many things ...

Thirdly after they'd crossed the lake again people recognised him and began bringing their sick and dying loved ones to him laid out on mats for him to help and heal ...

Fourthly we're told that wherever he went whether in the cities or in the byways people were brought who were suffering so that they could at the least touch his cloak ... and it says all who touched it were healed ...

The Ceres, Kemback & Springfield church family can't help everyone ... that's not what Jesus calls us to do ... we can't heal the world and that's not what we're asked to do ... he draws us to the people and places he longs for and we'll only realise the work he calls us to if we're open-eyed and prayerful at the same time ...

Amen and thanks be to the God and the Gospel for the call to be compassionate, and to do it as well!