



Week beginning 10th October 2021

Newsletter 81

CERES KEMBACK and SPRINGFIELD

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PRAYER

Heavenly Father,
we come to offer the thanks for the blessings that we enjoy.
We give thanks for the many seen and unseen people who contribute to our daily life.
We thank You for those who grow and prepare our daily bread,
we thank You for those who develop and maintain
the energy supply and transport systems that we have access to.
We give thanks for those who work to keep us safe,
those in the forces and the police.

Lord we are grateful for the array of carers who help to support us,
those who work to heal us,
those who help us in our frailty,
those who help develop medicines to fight disease.

Almighty God,
we thank You for the gift of Your word –
'a lamp for our feet and a light for our path'
and the example set by Your son, Jesus Christ.
These are gifts beyond all measure.

For all this and much more we offer our humble thanks.

Amen

WORSHIP

All services start at 11.15.

On 17th October the service will be in Ceres, with a Harvest theme.

On 24th October the service will be in Kemback.

On 30th October our National Giving Day service will be in Springfield.

Sunday 10th October

Sermon

Some weeks ago, late on a Saturday evening, all was snoozy in the Gilchrist household as we followed the latest episode of some Nordic crime drama which had a body count almost as large as a Dunfermline home game.

Then our evening was interrupted. How inconvenient! The phone rang. It was Maudeen, our local minister, wandering if I had a dog collar she could borrow because the next day's service (barely 12 hours away!) involved the BB doing a dramatic retelling of the Parable of the Good Samaritan. And as one of the protagonists in the oft-told tale is a priest, albeit Jewish, she wondered if this junior thespian could borrow a dog collar to "look the part".

I found a spare one gathering dust somewhere, got it to the manse early the next morning, and last I heard that particular service had gone down rather well!

I said that my evening was interrupted but that's not really true. I have time to spare these days. It was actually Maudeen's evening which had been interrupted, as minister's lives often are. It's simply the way of things.

The word interruption gets a bad press. It has a whingey factor about it, a wasp-in-the-mouth irritation. There I was, doing this, going there, being busy, being relaxed and enjoying it..... when I got interrupted.

There I was, happily tinkering in my garden, making the meal, watching the film when THIS happened, whatever "this" is, and it's already clear that it's an interruption and it wasn't welcome.

All of which is understandable. But if we're serious about being disciples, if we're serious about following in Christ's footsteps, we need to look afresh at interruptions.

After all, since most of us were knee-high to a low-flying midgie, we have been told Jesus' Parable of the Good Samaritan, which is really a story about how several people didn't want their carefully laid plans to be interrupted and inconvenienced, so they walked on by.

And how one person was willing to allow his day, his plans, his timetable to be interrupted – in the name of human compassion – and he stopped to care for a beleaguered and beaten-up fellow traveller.

Maybe next time that piece of Scripture is read in the kirk it should be introduced as The Parable of the Interruption! Even better, why not call it The Parable of the Very Poor Time Manager? Because this is all about what we do with our time. How we manage it.

Years ago my kirk session eagerly sent me to a conference – which was all about time management. Perhaps they were hoping their minister would make more house calls if his diary was less chaotic.

Anyway, I arrived late at the conference and had to leave early. Honest! Ironic for a course on time management, but a parish funeral had cropped up and I didn't think the bereaved and distressed family would find much comfort in me saying "I'll be with you in four days.....don't worry, grandad's not going anywhere."

So I got to this conference on time management - late. And had to leave early. But the bit in the middle was really very interesting and one out-standing moment I'm sharing with you now....because this little sermon isn't about how ministers work; it's about how Jesus works.

The speaker simply said, "Next time you're beating yourself up because you've got to the end of the day and you haven't achieved half the things you set out to achieve...just remember that Jesus' ministry was a ministry of interruptions.

He then went on to quote several incidents in the Gospels, exactly like what we heard earlier in our service.

Jesus was walking to Jericho, when...INTERRUPTION! Or, Jesus was on his way to, when...INTERRUPTION!
Or, Jesus was sharing a meal with friends when...INTERRUPTION!
It was suddenly so clear, so crystal clear to me, that so often in the life of Jesus, the Kingdom is revealed in the course of an interruption.

He's going from A to B when he's confronted by:

1. a desperate father seeking help for his ill son;
2. or a centurion (one of "the Enemy") asks help for his servant;
3. or a humiliated woman is thrown before him by a crowd of knuckle-dragging, stone throwers who like nothing better than old-fashioned justice for adulterers. The female variety, preferably.

And it is how Jesus reacts to these interruptions that reveals that the Kingdom of God, as we sang earlier, is all about justice and joy; all about mercy and grace; all about challenge and choice.

I don't know about you but, even in retirement, I like to have a game plan for the new day. I wake up, I think "No' deid yet" and that means there's a whole new shiny day lying ahead of me. And I have a plan for that new day, a mixture of duties and pleasures, grand plans and routine chores, obligations and inclinations.....but it is a plan.

Just as I had a plan for every day when I was working in the parish. The fact that those plans very rarely got accomplished isn't really important. I think it makes sense to at least have some sort of plan at the beginning of the day.

And depending on who you are, what stage of life you're at, what job you do.....that plan can cover all manner of scenarios.

- For some it means walking the dog, ironing the school shirts, making up lunch boxes and doing the school run – and it isn't even 9am yet!
- For others it can mean clocking in at the office, making the mid-morning conference, looking in on the afternoon team meeting, filtering a tsunami of emails and finding a way to meet impossible timetables.

- For others it means tinkering with the vegetable patch, dead-heading the Livingstone Daisies, stacking the freezer with pizza and ice cream because the marauding grand-children are coming.

What matters for every one of us – and no-one who calls himself a Christian is exempt from this – is that whatever plans we lay down for the day, we need to remember that – sometimes – there will be interruptions and – sometimes – those interruptions, inconvenient and pressurising as they probably are – how we respond to them may become the critical moment in our about-to-be-messed-up day – because it can become the moment when the Kingdom comes, the moment when we let something of the grace of God be seen through us, for the blessing of others.

And what might those interruptions be? Where do we start?

- A phone call from the school saying that Daughter Number Two has a temperature and needs to be collected.
- Or, your car is puttering patiently at the traffic lights, you're checking your watch, know you're still on time for that meeting, when you see an elderly person pause on the pavement, then collapse.
- Or, you are so looking forward to watching the Wimbledon final (64-year Roger Federer is playing a Iron-Bru sponsored and mechanically rebuilt Andy Murray) when a friend phones and it becomes clear that she wants to talk, needs to talk. Now.
- You've just got home from a very bad day at the office. You just want to make it to the kitchen, find a cold beer and unwind...but you see the removal van next door and know it means that the new neighbours have arrived. You're smart enough to know that a word of welcome NOW could mean a lot, and a lot less in a week's time. But it's been a hell of a day...

Every person here could add another half dozen scenarios to that list. All I'm saying is that it's good to have a plan when God gives us a new day, but it's even better to know when that plan has to be ditched (and perhaps salvaged later) because something has happened that wasn't on anyone's agenda.

And how we respond to that moment, that interruption, that inconvenience...that may be the moment when the prayer we say so often – "Thy Kingdom come, Lord, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven" – that may be the moment when heaven's grace flows through your life and mine....and others will be blessed.

Of course, there's often a mess to be tidied up afterwards. Undone tasks still need done. And pleasures surrendered which may (or may not) be retrieved later.

But that's not the point.....the point is that Jesus' ministry was a Ministry of Interruptions. It changed the world. It's how heaven was revealed on earth. We could do worse than imitate some of this thinking...and his actions.

And if some days, at the end of that day, when you sigh and see only the things that you didn't get done...pause a while longer. Maybe there have been interruptions. You've almost forgotten about them. But maybe you didn't walk on by. And maybe the grace of the Kingdom was glimpsed.

GLORY BE TO GOD THE FATHER, GOD THE SON AND GOD THE HOILY SPIRIT; AS IT WAS IN THE BEGINNING, IS NOW AND EVER SHALL BE. AMEN

Rev Ewan Gilchrist

PRESBYTERY

The latest Presbytery Mission Bulletin is available at <https://mailchi.mp/2ce542e68f69/mission-bulletin-4862042?e=14c2c093c3>



On Sunday 17th October we're going to celebrate God's wonderful world and have a Autumn Scavenger Hunt followed by juice, coffee, tea and biscuits in Springfield Church afterwards. The Hunt will start from 2pm onward at Springfield Church and follow the Moor road to the woods. You'll be collecting things and taking photos so please ensure that you have a mobile or camera with you. We'll give you a bag to put your trophies in.

We hope you can join us on the 17th. Please let me know if you are coming so we have plenty of biscuits etc. Thank you. You can invite your friends, provided they come with an adult. Everyone is welcome.

If you've any questions please just ask. It will be great to see you and also to have a catch up.

Our first Family Film Night of the year will be on Friday 22nd October in Springfield Church. You can find out about the film on the church website ckschurch.org It will be 5.30 for a 6 o'clock start. Covid precautions will be in place.

We also are having a Special Event in November. Joyce Anderson will be leading a dance / exercise session on Sunday 14th November as part of Messy Church. It will be lots of fun.

If you know of anyone who would like to help at Messy Church please let me know. Perhaps you know of someone who enjoys crafts and working with children, or maybe who would like to help with catering. It would be great to have new faces on our team.

Looking forward to seeing you .

Myra Todd

A poster for a movie night event. At the top, the words "MOVIE NIGHT" are written in large, white, block letters with a yellow outline, set against a dark background with red curtains. Below the text is a pile of yellow popcorn. At the bottom of the poster, it says "YOU'RE INVITED" in small white letters. The entire poster is framed by a green and black checkered border.

Springfield Community Church
On the **BIG SCREEN**
Friday 22nd October
5.30 for 6.00 start

Come and see a popular children's film
(Children must be accompanied by an adult.)

Please check ckschurch.org for details