

Ceres, Kemback & Springfield Community Parish Church

Sunday, 31st March 2024

Springfield Community Church

Easter Day Celebration

Call to Worship

M. This is the Good News -
the grave its empty, Christ is risen./

P. HALLELUJAH!

M. This is the Good News -
The light shines in the darkness,
and the darkness can never put it out.

P. HALLELUJAH!

This is the Good News -
Once we were no people, now we are God's people,

P. HALLELUJAH!

Christ is our peace,
the indestructible peace
we now share with each other.

P. HALLELUJAH!

(We share the peace, and shake hands)

Flowering the Cross

Hymn 410 Jesus Christ is risen today, *Alleluia!*



Welcome & News from Church & Community

A Wee Reflection The Pasque Flower **by June Smeaton**
The Anemone of the Passion

Prayers of Approach (Anne Lumsden)
(When you hear me say, *Alleluia, Christ is risen,*
please respond,
He is risen indeed!

Risen in the quiet and mysterious darkness
before the chorus of the dawn.

Alleluia, Christ is risen;
He is risen Indeed!

Risen with glory and grace in reserve,
and authority beyond measure.
Alleluia, Christ is risen;
He is risen indeed!

Risen to prove that violence is not the answer;
to offer us peace and life in all its fullness.

Alleluia, Christ is risen;

He is risen indeed!

For Christ has taken into his own flesh
the sin of the world.

The last laugh is God's laugh:

For freedom comes beyond the cross,
for peace comes beyond the violence,
for friendship lives beyond the betrayal - and
life comes beyond the crushing of life.

The first laugh, and the last laugh are God's.

God has made laughter for us.

Alleluia, Christ is risen;

He is risen indeed!

Amen

Bible Reading

Psalm 36 vv 5 - 11 (June Smeaton)

This Psalm is a poem describing the infinite places where God's power reaches and dwells ... the poet describes God's power in the high places, the heavens and the mountains ... and in the lowest places named as the great deep ... all these places from the highest to the lowest are made by God and where God's power is - which I believe makes the argument for the whole of creation being a sacred place ... but of course some places are more sacred to us than others ... our churches, for example are special places, where the prayers, tears, songs and celebrations of the faithful have literally permeated the very stones ... which is why the loss of Kemback as a worshipping place was deeply felt ... but today we are celebrating something of the life and traditions so dearly held there to here, to this place - bringing something of Kemback's sanctity to adorn this sacred place ... So as we remember one dear and sacred place, Kemback Church, we move with the promise and light of Easter to a new dawn in Springfield Community Church ...

Kemback Banners (Jeanette Armes)

There are 4 pieces, but two stories. The first is the Millennium Guild Banner, designed by Ruth Walker and crafted by the Kemback Guild at the turn of the third millennium. It shows geographically all the Guilds which were active and celebrating in the then St Andrews presbytery, and its noticeable how few are left today.

Then there are three pieces which make up a triptych of the Easter story, the first showing darkness covering the land, the second the empty cross and lastly the brightness and hope of resurrection. Again the creative mind behind these was Ruth Walker and the crafting completed by the hands of the members of Kemback's Guild.

Dedicating the Kemback Banners in Springfield Community Church to the glory of God

Ruth asks the Minister:

As Minister of this parish, will you receive these banners in memory of the life and congregation of Kemback Church, and dedicate them to the glory of God?

Minister replies:

On behalf of this congregation I gratefully accept these gifts. And in the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, I dedicate these banners and declare them to be set apart to the glory of God. In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, Amen .

Let us pray ... May these glorious decorations, fashioned with skill and in love of you Risen Christ adorn these walls, reflecting the stories of faith and those so inspired by them ... we offer thanks for their artistry and illumination - so long cherished in Kemback Church, and which now this Easter blaze the life and light we celebrate on resurrection day ... Your risen life, storied in these creations gift us community ... light from darkness ... hope from hopelessness ... courage from fear ... By the power of your soon-coming Spirit, make us true children of grace and faithful witnesses to the glory of the gospel. Through the risen Christ we pray,
Amen .

Hymn 417 **Now the green blade rises from the buried grain**

A Sense of Sacred Place

Perhaps most or all of us have a special place ... it might be in a garden somewhere ... it might be in church ... it may be somewhere abroad ... then again it might be more general than that ... a place where we feel a sense of awe ... perhaps safety ... perhaps a closeness with God ... it will be a place where we feel happy, I suggest ...
it's a place which refreshes, nourishes ...

Can I ask you to take a few moments and chat with your neighbours about your sense of special place and why it's special to you - it might be a church ... it might be a beach ... it might be when the wind is blowing wildly ... it might be a place where the family gathers together ... where is sacred to you, and why?

Bible Reading **St John 20 vv 1 - 18**

(June Smeaton)

Easter Homily

We've heard again the story of the first resurrection appearance to Mary who thought she was seeing a gardener! My NT professor Howard Marshall would say isn't it interesting that the gospel writer decides to include this in the text? Why is that? Is it important to the story - whether Mary thought Jesus was a gardener or not?

A lot of people of faith say they feel close to the divine in a garden ... pushing fingers into soil ... preparing the good ground for flower, shrub, vegetable, tree is one of the most raw experiences we can surely have? My husband had a Native American student who told him about the sacredness of nature, particularly trees ... Native Americans fashion pieces of ribbon or cloth in a ritual manner and tie them to bushes or trees ... the living energy in the tree combined with the blowing air through the branches carries the wishes and prayers, they believe beyond the confines of the earth to be blessed by spirits ...

How many of us or people we know say we feel closer to God outside or in a garden ... and Jesus did liken himself to a vine with far reaching branches ... And isn't it interesting that in so many of the world's religions, trees feature large in their canon of what is sacred?

In our Christian tradition, people have for millennia written prayers and attached them to prayer trees - reminiscent perhaps of the Tree of Life ... remember in the Book of Revelation John describes the *River and Tree of Life* - the Tree bearing

twelve types of fruit for the healing of the nations ... and it says *There will be no longer be any curse ... no longer any night* ... it is with this mysterious vision in mind Christians tie their prayers to prayer trees, harbouring the hope of healing envisioned in Revelation ... and with Christ's death bed promise that his Holy Spirit would be released and blow generously, gloriously and universally - disturbing not only ourselves but also the prayers of our hearts ...

We have a prayer tree here in Springfield, and in Ceres Church we have a tree made by the late Simon Weller ... the Prayer Group and the Worship Group invite us, initially through the season of Easter, if we wish to write a word or a sentence, our prayer on a given leaf - which you can either take home or place in the offering plate as it comes round later ... and the prayers offered in the plate will be hung on the trees as we sing the last hymn of the morning ... We will start this today, and on the further two first Sundays in April and May ... If you wish to write on a leaf, please do so at any time in the service ...

Gardens feature large too don't they in the Holy Week and Easter story - Jesus' arrest happens in the Garden of Gethsemane ... Gethsemane means *oil press* ... scholars ask us to imagine a walled off area perhaps the property of someone known to Jesus within which are olive trees and a press ... it's likely they slept here on many nights ... its down the slope of the Mount of Olives and they'd come into the city that way from there Jordan valley after stopping over with their good friends in Bethany ... Luke even writes that *As usual Jesus went out to the Mount of Olives because Jesus had often met there with his disciples*. This was not the first time they've been there. This Garden too, while becoming the violent place of capture and arrest was across the course of Jesus' life a haven and a quiet place to rest with friends ... and remember the Biblical significance of the Olive tree is 'flowering abundance' - another image of wonder and mystery from the natural world ...

And then, framing the entire Easter story from capture to resurrection, Jesus appears and Mary believes he's the gardener ... and he tells her *Do not touch me* ... why? Because he's now embodying the free blowing Spirit he promised is coming ... free from the constraints of flesh and bone he's beyond the mere physical and about to loose his extraordinary power over creation ... renewing it again, making it good again, blowing its fire and breath through city, hill, mountain, valley and tree ... fitting it and preparing us for the inaugurated Kingdom of God ...

Amen

Hymn 416 **Christ is alive! Let Christians sing**

Offering and Dedication of the Offering
Musical Interlude 'Cavatina' played by Kate Doig
The Prayer Tree

Giving God,
creator of all that we have,
and all that we are,
on this Easter Day,
the day we have been waiting for,
the day when you gave us everything, we bring to you our offering,
our tokens of dedication to you,
to your church,
and to your mission and ministry
here and everywhere.
Accept them we pray,
and use them for your good
and the good of all your people.
Amen.

Prayers of Thanksgiving & Remembering the World (Anne Lumsden)

We remember the cry of Mary,
"I have seen the Lord!"
and grant us faith to believe!

In joy and hope let us pray to the Father.
That our risen Saviour may fill us with the joy of his
glorious and life-giving resurrection ...
we pray to our loving Father and mother of all ..
Hear our prayer

That isolated and persecuted churches
may find fresh strength in the good news of Easter ...
we pray to the Father and mother of all ..
Hear our prayer

That God may grant us humility
to be subject to one another in Christian love ...
we pray to the Father, and mother of all ..
Hear our prayer

That he may provide for those who lack food, work or shelter ...
we pray to the Father, and mother of all ...
Hear our prayer

That by his power war and famine may cease through all the world ...
we pray to the Father, and mother of all ..
Hear our prayer

That he may reveal the light of his presence to the sick,
the weak and the dying,
to comfort and strengthen them ...
we pray to the Father, and mother of all ..
Hear our prayer

That freed from physical constraint, he will send the fire of the Holy Spirit upon his
people, so that many bear faithful witness to his resurrection,
we pray to the Father and Mother of all ...
Hear our prayer

Heavenly Father,
you have delivered us from the power of darkness
and brought us into the kingdom of your Son:
grant that, as his death has recalled us to life,
so his continual presence in us may raise us to eternal joy;
through Christ our Lord.

We remember the cry of Mary,
"I have seen the Lord!"
and grant us faith to believe!

The Lord's Prayer

Amen

Hymn 419 Thine be the glory

**Jane & Anne decorate tree with the help of Charlotte, Margot and Gilbert
visiting from North Carolina**

Sending

Christ has risen!
Christ has spoken!
Christ has called us
to bring Good News
of healing and forgiveness.
Go in peace and feel the presence of the Risen Christ with you.

Benediction