Ceres, Kemback & Springfield Parish Church (SC017442) *linked with* **East Fife Rural**
Parish Church (Carnbee, Kilrenny, Kingsbarns, Largoward) (SC009474)

nevertheless, she persisted

Hebrews 13 vv 1 - 3 St Luke 18 vv 35 - 43

9.45a.m. Kilrenny + 11.15a.m. Largoward
Sacrament of Holy Communion

Rev Jane Barron
Sunday, 25th October 2026
Pentecost 23

Call To Worship

Hymn CH4 36 God is our refuge and our strength

Welcome and News from Across our Linkage

Services at Kilrenny and Kingsbarns at 9.45 am & Services at Carnbee and Largoward 11.15 am + Service at CKS at 10.30 a.m.

Church & Wider News

Administrator's Office Hours: Fiona will be as usual from 10a.m. - 4p.m. on Wednesday in Springfield Church. Any church business or queries please be in touch: churchofficeadmin@gmail.com

- **Springfield After School Club:** A reminder this is starting after the October holidays on Monday afternoons from 3 - 5p.m.
- **Springfield Community Garden:** A reminder to all gardeners/budding horticulturalists that the garden is open and the boxes are being tended and growing. Pls come along if you would like to get involved in this lovely outside way of being church
- **Springfield and Ceres Youth Clubs** are meeting respectively on Wednesday, 21st from 6.30p.m. (Community Church) and Friday, 23rd from 7p.m. (Ceres Session Hall)

- **Time to Chat**

Coffee & Co meet on Wednesdays at 10.30 in the Village Hall, Largoward.

Coffee & Conversation in the Kingsbarns Vestry Thursday mornings between 10 - 11.30a.m.

The Kilrenny Winter Wednesday Cafe will be starting on 4th November - Everyone welcome between 2 - 4p.m.

Coffee Club is on at Springfield Church every Wednesday morning btw 10.30 - 12p.m.

Walking 'The Way': This happened on Wednesday 21st October. 13 people gathered from across the linkage & walked from Springfield to Crawford Priory. This was a meditative walk, the first of a series across the CKS/EFR parishes offering fellowship and the chance of new friendships. There will be advance notice about the

next walk. Thanks to everyone who came. New friends were made and Biblical stories came to life - from Ethiopia!

Prayer Of Adoration And Confession

Loving God,
we thank you
that you do not abandon us
when the road is long.
We thank you
for courage that rises
in tired people,
for justice pursued
even when change is slow,
for mercy that meets us
when we need it.

We thank you
for those who teach us
not to lose heart:
campaigners and carers,
truth-tellers and peace-makers,
parents and children,
neighbours and friends,
all who keep loving,
serving,
praying,
and hoping
when giving up would be easier.

We pray for your world,
where so many cry out for justice
and are not heard.
We pray for those facing
poverty, war, displacement,
violence, exploitation,
and systems that seem impossible to move.

Strengthen all who keep knocking
at the doors of power.
Protect those who speak truth.
Encourage those who are weary.
Disturb those who benefit
from others giving up.
We pray for those
who feel they have nothing left:
those exhausted by grief,
those worn down by illness,
those waiting for answers,
those carrying debt or fear,
those whose prayers feel unanswered,
those who wonder
how much longer they can keep going.

Hold them close.
Send companions for the road.
Give them enough light
for the next step.
86 spill the beans, issue 60
We pray for your church.
Where we seek shortcuts,
teach us faithfulness.

Where we want renewal without change,
give us honesty.
Where we want justice without cost,
give us courage.
Where we cling to what we have,
teach us contentment, generosity,
and open hands.

Make us a people
who pray and act,
who receive mercy
and offer it,

who welcome the small
and challenge the powerful,
who follow Christ
even when the way is hard.
And we pray for ourselves.
When we are proud,
bring us back to mercy.
When we are anxious,
bring us back to trust.
When we are tempted to give up,
bring us back to hope.
When we ask for a shortcut,
show us the way of Jesus.
Amen.

Hymn CH4 782 Lord of life, we come to you

Bible Readings Hebrews 13 vv 1 - 3 & St Luke 18 vv 35 - 43

Homily *Pause, Take a Breath in Jesus*

I once heard a theologian comparing Worldly power and Kingdom of God power as being like two opposing tectonic plates shifting against each other … each vying for control …. grinding against each other wielding enormous power with very different intent … one causing upset, destruction and chaos … the other seeking firm foundations for everyone, safety, peace, hope …

The Irish Theologian John Crossan has dedicated much of his study and writing to understanding the former - the upset, destruction and chaos caused by the Roman brand of tectonic power which Jesus was born into … and Jesus lived in an incredibly violent time under Roman military occupation …
John Crossan's book entitled *God & Empire* scrutinises two very different types of power …. Godly power named as the Kingdom of God and Worldly Power named as Empire … and we don't need to be scholars to know that what he discovers and evidences shows the two are polar opposites … two powers grinding against each other like opposing tectonic plates - one causing chaos and suffering … the other pushing back to bring hope …

I offer the view that today's Worldly Empire is undoubtedly the United States of America - it is the most powerful nation in the world at present and what it says and does affects much of the rest of the planet … and it wasn't so long ago that the British Empire ruled the waves and certainly much of the world … Indeed this very week our present worldly monarch King Charles is on a tour of the Caribbean, visiting the Bahamas, Guayana, Antigua and Barbuda and now heading if not already at the Commonwealth Leaders' Summit … the BBC reported *The tour comes amidst renewed calls from Caribbean nations for Britain to apologise for its role in the slave trade and to offer reparations - compensation from those countries that profited from the trade in enslaved men and women.* Yesterday morning Prime Minister Andy Burnham said that he is *Open to calls for a formal State apology for Britain's role in the Transatlantic slave trade* ahead of the Commonwealth leaders' meeting …yes, if the world's powers get too much it seems we cannot help ourselves … we get greedy and cruel and the tectonic plate of suffering grinds on …

I haven't got the time to list and examine the list of worldly empires which have at one time or another held the most power and the ways in which they wielded such responsibility but none of them are pretty … and none of them come near to the constitutional demands laid out by Jesus Christ …

And I humbly suggest the world's powers are presently creating a more dangerous, greedy, frightened world - the divide between the haves and the have nots is ever widening … and as we gather in congregations across Scotland which often feel smaller and smaller we may well wonder where OUR power *is* - and ask what can we do against such might - and in many cases, wickedness …

But this is the arena into which Jesus was born and brought up … Our friend John Crossan writes this:

Jesus was born around 4BCE … in that year violent Jewish revolts against the Romans broke out all over Palestine … can you imagine the response? The Roman response to Jewish revolts against the Occupation in the year Jesus was born saw Rome sending four Legions to put the rebellions down … the Syrian governor Varus sent a detachment to the region known as Galilee under the command of a man called Gaius … he was ruthless - he captured and burned the city of Sepphoris where Jesus'

father almost certainly had his builders' business .. and reduced the inhabitants to slavery …

Jesus meanwhile was born in Nazareth about 4 miles away … what do you think happened to Nazareth when Varus' troops hit Sepphoris? Although we don't have first hand accounts of what happened in Sepphoris, John Crossan writes this: In a similar context at Gerasa on the other side of the Jordan from Sepphoris the Romans put to the sword a thousand of the youth who had not escaped … made prisoners of women and children … gave his soldiers to plunder the property, and then set fire to the houses and advanced against the surrounding villages … the able-bodied fled … the feeble perished and everything left was consigned to the flames …

Now this is very important ….it means in towns like Nazareth - Jesus' family's home - close to the year in which he was born - men, women and children who could not escape were violated, killed or enslaved … Jesus was born into this event … he must have grown up hearing the accounts of these horrors … *The Day the Romans Came* to Nazareth - and John Crossan asks the question - from such talk … from such stories what did the young Jesus absorb and understand about God, Empire, resistance and violence? And is it any wonder his life grew in the yearning for God and God's ways of peace, love, forgiveness and hope - which we need again in our lives and world today - and isn't it the case that in Jesus' life we see again he opposing kingdom powers against each other as Rome fought by sword and blood for supremacy and Christ fought with the loving tools of hope, love and forgiveness …

A few days ago I became a Great Aunt … I worry about the world young Kit will grow up in but perhaps we always do when a baby is born …and we don't have to be a new born to face enormous challenges at a personal, national or global level …

But I suppose what I want to say to you this morning is simply this … if we think things are bad in the world - remember what Jesus grow up in! And that terrorising experience which the Romans lavished on Sepphoris and Nazareth and countless little small towns across the Galilee in his vicinity called to the power of God within him to move against it - wielding God's Kingdom power of love, peace, forgiveness and hope against the Empire's determination to win at any cost … kill at any cost … steal at any cost … revenge at any cost … because Empires always do …

The power of God, the Kingdom power of peace, love, forgiveness and hope is within us through Christ … and is given and called upon whenever the world gets

rough - so little Flock - I call upon you and the power Christ vests within each of you and as a collective Church Family to persist … persist in learning and living what Christ offers - and be brave enough to believe his brand of Kingdom power outlasts anything the Empires throw at us …

All power and glory is God's and we choose to follow Kingdom power in the name of Jesus Christ …

Offering and Dedication of the Offering

Gracious God,
take what we offer today
and use it for your good
and the good of all your people.
Make these gifts,
and the lives they represent,
part of your work
of mercy, justice, and hope.
Amen.

Invitation to Communion

We come, not because we are strong, but because we are weak.
We come, not because any goodness of our own gives us a right to come, but because we need mercy and help.
We come, because we love the Lord a little and would like to love him more.
We come, because he loved us and gave himself for us.
Come and meet the risen Christ, for we are his Body.

Largoward/ Communion Hymn CH4 510 Jesus calls us here to meet him *(omit v 2)*

Kilrenny/ **Communion Hymn GWA 69** Come to the table of grace
Come to the table of grace
Come to the table of grace
This is God's table, it's not yours or mine
Come to the table of grace.

Come to the table of joy
Come to the table of joy
This is God's table, it's not yours or mine -

Come to the table of joy.

Come to the table of peace
Come to the table of peace
This is God's table, it's not yours or mine -
Comer to the table of peace.

Come to the table of love
Come to the table of love
This is God's table, it's not yours or mine -
Come to the table of love.

+ **Introduction** +

<u>The Great Prayer / Preface</u>
M. The Lord be with you.
People. ***And also with you.***
M. Lift up your hearts
People. ***We lift them up to the Lord.***
M. Let us give thanks to the Lord our God
People. ***It is right to give him thanks and praise.***

+ The Great Prayer & The Angels' Hymn +

Affirmation of Faith, from The Iona Community
We believe in Emanuel God with us,
Maker and sustainer of all life, of sun and moon, of water and earth -
of all living creatures.

We believe in God beside us,
Jesus Christ, the Word made flesh,
born of a woman, servant of the poor,
tortured and nailed to a tree.
A man of compassion, he died forsaken;
he descended into the earth
to the place of death.

On the third day he rose from the tomb;
he ascended into heaven
to be everywhere present;
and his Kingdom will come on earth.

We believe in God within us,
the Holy Spirit of Pentecostal fire,
life-giving breath of the Church,
Spirit of healing and forgiveness,
source of resurrection and life.

Let us pray … response … God in your mercy … *hear our prayer …*

Maker and Lover of all,
in the mystery of your love
you have bound us to each other,
and called us to serve the earth and its peoples.

So hear us, as in this sacred place of worship
we pray for the church to which we belong
that she may ever be a centre of faith, hospitality and kind imagination,
modelling the future, not lamenting the past. We pray for
brothers and sisters in the faith everywhere - and especially
our kin across the parishes of East Fife Rural & Ceres, Kemback & Springfield …

M. God in your mercy,
P. Hear our prayer

Grateful for the life in our bodies,
we pray for those whose lives are diminished by
ill health, depression, grief or rejection,
asking for the healing, the affirming, the listening
which will encourage and restore them.

M. God, in your mercy,
P. Hear our prayer.

Conscious of the peace in this place,
we pray for those who have no peace
because of war or the threat of war,

the threat of violence,
or the grip of hunger,
or the loss of hope.
May the voices of the victims be heard
and the work of peacemakers, blessed.

M. God, in your mercy,
M. Hear our prayer.

Surrounded by rugged and tender beauty,
we pray for the earth,
especially where it is damaged by human carelessness
and threatened by human greed;
and ask that we may learn to care for the earth as you do.

M. God, in your mercy,
P. Hear our prayer.

And because we are here to meet with Jesus,
we celebrate this precious time with him,
saying together the words of the *Angels' Hymn* …

Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might
Heaven and earth are full of your glory, Hosanna in the highest.
Blessed is he Who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.

Epiklesis
(calling down the Holy Spirit)
The Fraction
(distribution of the gifts)
Agnus Dei
(Lamb of God)
M. O Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world,
ALL. **Have mercy upon us.**
M. O Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world,
ALL. **Have mercy upon us.**
M. O Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world,

ALL. **Grant us your peace.**
The gifts of God for the people of God.

+ In Communion +

The Peace of Christ shared by all

Hymn CH4 193 God is love, his the care

Sending out & Benediction

Truth can hurt.
No matter what pain comes into our life,
it can be hard to find the right words,
but remember Jesus has been there before us,
embracing vulnerability,
seeking grace to accept reality,
speaking up for the voiceless,
fighting for justice for the poor and oppressed,
finding strength and peace.
Go now, in that same grace of the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen