

Is there some relief coming in our lockdown restrictions? It would seem that with Spring we may see some relaxation and maybe the opportunity to meet up with friends “face to face”, to visit family, to have fun together. It is good for our souls to have hope, but always we should keep in mind our responsibility to protect as well as share, to be careful as well as joyful. That is love for others, putting their safety above our own, and putting their needs in front of our own desires.

So let's welcome our freedoms and be aware of our responsibilities.

This Sunday is the 4th Sunday of Lent and the suggestion is that we read Matthew's Gospel Chapter 6 verse 9 through to Chapter 7 verse 12. A continuation of the Sermon on the Mount.

Taking the themes again from Brian McLaren's book “We make the road by walking” this reading exposes three problems which keep us from enjoying life to the full.

The first is anxiety. Anxiety causes us to grasp and hold on to “things”, for our security. Our good clothes, the quality of our meals, our appearance or standing in the community, what is going to happen tomorrow. As we get tied up in this kind of anxiety it just shows how little we trust God to take care of us, to meet our needs and to demonstrate His care.

Jesus tells us that the antidote to anxiety is to seek the Kingdom of God and His righteousness.

“When we focus anxiously on our own individual well-being without concern for our neighbour, we enter into rivalry and everyone is worse off. But when we learn from the songbirds and the wild flowers to live by faith in God's abundance, we collaborate and share. We watch out for each other rather than compete with each other. We bless rather than oppress each other...”

Jesus then talks about our next problem – our being judgemental. We look to find fault in others to avoid considering our own shortcomings. In judging others we consider them as less than we are, we feel superior, and so that relieves our anxiety. The antidote to being judgemental is honest self examination. Look at our own faults and deal with them, and that may help you understand the problems of others. Look to remove the big plank of wood in your own eye before you inspect the splinter in your friend's eye.

Finally in this section Jesus addresses the fundamental root of our anxiety and our judgmental outlook. Love. Do we appreciate the level of God's love for each of us. Just as no parent would give their child a stone or a snake when they ask for fish and bread, so how much more will God, our heavenly father give us all that we need. How much do we trust God, trust His love?

“If human parents with all their faults, know how to give good gifts to their children, can't we trust the living God to be generous and compassionate to all who call out for help.”

(quotations from Brian McLaren, “We make the road by walking” Hodder and Stroughton 2015)

Chris Todd.

Many of you will have known Chris Todd who died on Saturday after a long illness. Please remember his wife Jean and their family in your prayers. The family funeral will be on Thursday 11th at Carsaig.

Chris made a significant impact on Tayvallich serving on many local committees and supporting local events. In particular, he organised a Computer Club in the village hall in the days when we needed dial up connections, and so introduced many to the joys of computing. He was also a driving force behind the building of the Sports Court, steering the committee through grant applications and

building contractors. Recently he organised the provision of picnic benches around the Play Park which have been much used and admired.

He will be missed in the village and is an inspiration to others to serve and support the community.

Prayer for this Week:

This week the prayers are from the Church of Scotland Weekly Worship website for the 4th Week of lent. They have been prepared by Rev Liz Crumlish, Path of Renewal Coordinator for the Church of Scotland:

This fourth Sunday in Lent is known as Laetare Sunday – traditionally a day of celebration in the midst of Lent. It is also Mothering Sunday in the UK – which ties in with the celebratory theme of recognising all who have brought maternal influences into our lives, not least into our life of faith.

Thanksgiving

God of hope,

Your steadfast love endures forever.

We give You thanks that, time after time,

You break into the darkness of our world and of our lives with signs of Your everlasting love.

You bring light, sometimes the merest flicker that brings us a focus, other times a brightening glow that confronts us with the reality of Your presence.

Your love endures through all our doubt and confusion, persisting until we recognise the signs of hope that break through to remind us of Your grace, revealing the divine spark in each of us as we were created in love.

We thank You especially at this time for the skill of scientists and medics, continuing to find ways to live in harmony with creation, harnessing the gifts You have given to find protection from disease.

We thank You for all who put the needs of others before themselves, choosing to put another's welfare above their own comfort.

We thank You for all whose work continues to ensure that the hungry are fed, the sick are healed, the homeless are sheltered and the poor are cared for, those who, in their everyday lives show You at work in the world.

May our giving thanks, O God be manifest in our playing our part where we can for the healing of our world, for love's sake.

Approach, Confession

Living, loving, ever present God.

You journey with Your people

through every time and season.

You remain faithful, dependable and true.

When we look to You,

often we are enabled to see the way ahead.

You make the darkness light and turn sorrow into joy.

God of all the universe,

You draw alongside us,

weeping with us,
gently cradling our pain,
reaching out to heal and to hold.
Forgive us, O God
when we forget Your love,
for ourselves and for others.
Forgive us
when we hoard or discard resources
out of the rich bounty that You have given.
Forgive us
when we fail to see our connectedness to You
and to our neighbour.
Bring us back to You time after time
Stop us in our tracks and confound us with love
until, worn down,
we fix our eyes on You,
God of our salvation.

Intercession

In every sadness, O God,
You are there,
holding out comfort.
In every darkness, O God,
You are there,
holding out light.
In every fear, O God,
You are there,
holding out hope.
In everything, O God,
You are there,
holding out love.
When we don't know where to go...
When we fear what lies ahead...
When we long for what we knew...
May we see You,
sometimes ahead of us leading us
Sometimes behind us, nudging us
Often beside us accompanying us through it all
May we rest our weary souls
in the balm of Your grace and Your love
until we are renewed to carry on,
following where You lead
in steadfast love.

Blessing

The steadfast love of the Lord endures forever.

Live in that steadfast love wherever You go
knowing that God so loved the world.
And the blessing of God who created You,
Christ who redeems You
and the Spirit who sustains You
go with You always.
Amen.

You can find news on our church website: www.northknapdale.org

And our Face Book page – North Knapdale Church.

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