

REEMERGING TOGETHER 1

24th May 2020



WHILE THERE IS STILL A LONG JOURNEY AHEAD, IT IS GOOD TO SEE THE SITUATION STARTING TO IMPROVE. LET'S USE THESE DAYS TO BEGIN PREPARING TO RE-EMERGE TOGETHER AS THOSE WITH A DEEPER RELATIONSHIP WITH CHRIST

READINGS:

1 CORINTHIANS CH3

ON DIVISION

EXODUS CH31 V1-11

BEZALEL AND OHOLIAB



PRAYERS

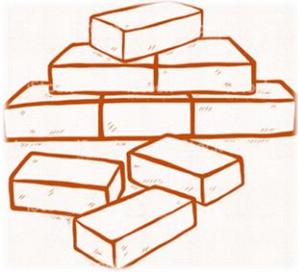
Almighty God, we pray that we will be taken into a deeper, more meaningful relationship with your Son, where we will grow in faith and hear your still small voice within our souls. Help us to be attentive to your call and cause us to walk in your righteousness. Open the eyes of our hearts. May we see the many blessings you bestow on us, especially the very small ones that we sometimes take for granted. Forgive us and bless us we ask, in Jesus' name... Take a moment to pray for NHS staff, key workers, those affected by coronavirus, vulnerable children, the elderly or lonely, our Prime Minister and government officials, our families and friends, the world and church near and far- lift to God the people and places that lie heavy upon your heart

"But dear friends, by building yourselves up in your most holy faith and praying in the Holy Spirit keep yourselves in God's love as you wait for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to bring you to eternal life." Jude v20&21

CHILDREN'S ACTIVITY

Get building! Use whatever you have about the place-Lego, blocks, plastic cups or something more creative and get to work! Help the children to build a house (or houses!) as large and tall as you can, if it falls down build it again, keep working until you have a good, big sturdy house to look at. **Read together:** Turn up the story of 'The Wise and Foolish Builders' in the Bible (Luke ch6 v46-49) and read it together. **Think about it:** Look at your house, why does it stand? It stands because it is sitting upon solid ground, like a rock, and also because it has been built with care, one piece at a time. If the ground was soft and mushy, like sand, or you just through the house

together in any old way it wouldn't stand- but fall down with a crash! Our lives are meant to be like the house that stands. The way that our lives can be that way is told to us by Jesus in the story he shared. **Frist, Jesus must be our foundation**, in other words he must be our base, by trusting in him and putting our faith in him he will be like a rock for us to stand upon. While the storms of life may knock us from here to there we can have confidence that Jesus will not weaken or change, he is always a strong rock for our feet. **Second, we must do as Jesus says**, Jesus points to living a life where we listen to what he teaches and then go out and put it into practice. Being a Christian is not just about believing things but also about doing the things that Jesus tells us about in the Gospels. Jesus said 'If you love me, keep my commandments (John ch14 v15).' Each time we do what Jesus asks us to do it is like we are placing a new brick into our lives and we hope that by continuing to live as Jesus has commanded us, with his help, our lives can look like a lovely strong house, built on a lovely strong foundation that brings glory to God. **Pray:** 'Father thank you that by trusting in Jesus we have a strong foundation, help us to listen and obey him, so that our lives can be like buildings that stand tall for you. Amen'



DEVOTIONAL

Prepare to Build!

Now in the wilderness, the Israelites begin the next stage of their spiritual journey. The road ahead would be difficult and uncertain but looking back the Israelites were to be encouraged by the memory of all that God had done, the grace and mercy he had shown, to bring them to point they were at. While I'm sure there was a sense of concern about what was ahead, I'm also sure there was a sense of anticipation of what God was going to do next, that things were now going to move in a different direction from what had been the case, that a path was before them, leading in a way that was new.

God called Bezalel and Oholiab to make arrangements for this new situation, giving them great skill he tasked them with the building of the Tabernacle and the making of all that was required for religious duties to be performed, including even the garments that were to be worn by Aaron and his sons. While much instruction had already been given and many preparations made, it was up to these two men to make those measures 'come to life' to see them manifest, to make the ideas become a reality. The Tabernacle was so much more than a means to instil a religious life among the people, it acted as the very heart and centre of the entire community, it was where God himself dwelt, his Presence resting in the Most Holy Place, upon the Mercy Seat of the Ark of the Covenant. It was in the Tabernacle that sin was atoned for, it was there that divine promises and theological ideas became real, so it was essential that Bezalel and Oholiab took great care in following the instructions by building and making that which would be fitting to fulfil such a holy purpose. Paul, when writing to the Christians in Corinth explains that in the days of the church, those in which we still find ourselves, we are called to see our very selves in a similar light to the Tabernacle. Just like the two craftsmen in the wilderness we are called to build our lives, honouring God's instruction, so that we would be fit for holy purpose. We find ourselves in a different time from that of the Tabernacle, or even of the Temple, we find ourselves in the post Pentecost age where the Holy Spirit, that divine Spirit, lives within all those who call upon the name of Jesus. Therefore our bodies and the lives that they lead are all little Tabernacles, with God at their centre. As Paul says '*Don't you know that you yourselves are God's temple and that God's Spirit lives in you?*' We, like the Corinthians and our friends from Exodus, are called to build with care and attention. To do this we must ensure that our foundation is not our own goodness, morality or wisdom but Jesus Christ and his blood shed at Calvary- our help and hope vested in his resurrection- and our power found through his Spirit. Then as we seek to live walking in his ways, we will build with gold, silver and the beautiful finery that adorned the Tabernacle and we too will be as a building fit for the Almighty.

I wonder, how your building is going just now? Has it moved from the idea stage to the reality or is it still as scribbled plans on a piece of paper? Maybe for a while you were going well, making headway and feeling as if you were sliding in a number of well-placed bricks, but just lately work has slowed, your tired, frustrated, worried or burdened by doubt. As lockdown slowly begins to lift and together we enter something of a new reality, in these strange days we each have an opportunity to build our lives of faith and make preparation for further building as and when more measures are eased. The road ahead is still uncertain, but the truth of God is not, he has promised to help and equip us, to lift us up when we make mistakes, to forgive us when we repent and to shape and fashion us into those who are more and more like his Son, our Lord and Saviour Jesus. Don't waste this time, don't get caught on the hop when the situation changes, be a modern day Bezalel or Oholiab and get building! So each of us will be the better for it, when, eventually we all reemerge together.

***Dear Name, the rock on which I build,
my shield, and hiding-place;
my never-failing treasury, filled with
boundless stores of grace.***

***Jesus, my Shepherd, Saviour, Friend,
my Prophet, Priest, and King;
my Lord, my Life, my Way, my End,
accept the praise I bring,***

ANNOUNCEMENTS

CREGAGH REEMERGING TOGETHER

Each Friday morning I will email out an update like this one, which will include a devotional, children's activity, prayer points and readings. These can be hand delivered or posted if necessary, if you hear of anyone who is not receiving a copy, or if you know of someone outside of our congregation who might benefit from receiving one please let us know.

MRS LAURA CURRIE

It is with sincere regret that I record the death of Mrs. Laura Currie, formally of 6 Merok Park. Please remember her son Peter and the wider family circle in your prayers

OPEN CHURCH

The church building will be open on Monday and Fridays mornings from 10am-12noon for private prayer. A one-way system, social distancing and hygiene procedures will be in effect. The facility to drop off church envelopes is also now available during these times. Please also take note of new arrangements for pastoral care outlined in the attached letter.

PRAYER

The fortnightly Prayer Link will be sent out next week, if you have any prayer requests please pass them on, if you do not receive the Prayer Link but would like to via email or printed copy please let me know.

BIBLE STUDY

If you would be interested in joining our Zoom Bible study group please email me. We meet on Mon evenings at 7pm, however another time can be arranged, or another group formed if required. It would be great if more folk were interested in joining in. I would encourage you to take part or contact me about setting up another group at an alternative time.

CHRISTIAN AID

Thank you for your donations to the work of Christian Aid, however our collection this year has been much less than in previous years, if you would still like to contribute please leave a contribution marked Christian Aid in the offering box, send a cheque to the church with addition note marking in as for Christian Aid, or contact Gordon (028 90 453 829) about making an electronic payment.

PCI MATERIAL

PCI are gathering useful material to help during these challenging days, for a number of blogs, podcasts and links to other materials visit- www.presbyterianireland.org/thesehreeremain
You may also wish to take this opportunity to follow PCI on social media (Facebook, Twitter and Instagram) to keep up to date with resources and news.

GET IN TOUCH

Please do not hesitate to get in touch if I can be of any help whatsoever, if you need messages or even if you would just like a chat.



CREGAGH PRESBYTERIAN

Love God and Love Your Neighbour

19th May 2020

Friends,

While this has been, and continues to be, a challenging time for us as individuals and as a church family, and while we continue to grieve with those who grieve, it is good to see a little change in the wind. Ever so slowly the situation is improving, with that comes an opportunity to begin, in line with governmental and denominational guidelines, to tentatively and gradually reopen our church building. Initially the Kirk Session announced that services would cease for *'up to twelve weeks'*, unfortunately the situation has not developed to the point of placing any date for the return of services or meetings in the manner that we are accustomed to. However if this trend of improvement continues we can be confident that we are moving towards seeing our church life restored to us. In the meantime, two small initiatives will begin this week as we take our first steps towards re-emergence together:

Open Church: The Church building will now be open on a Monday and Friday morning from 10am-12noon, to be used as a space for private prayer. In order to accommodate this there will be a one-way system in operation alongside social distancing and hygiene practices. This will also allow us to reintroduce the facility of dropping off church envelopes should anyone desire to do so.

Pastoral Care: 'Garden Chat'- I hope to begin from next week to offer the opportunity of a *social distanced chat* in the side garden of the church building. These will take place on Tuesday and Thursday afternoons, for individuals or groups of up to five people. Everyone is welcome, should you wish to avail of this, **contact me to book in for a slot**. Please don't arrive without booking as I wouldn't want to turn anyone away or place anyone at unnecessary risk

'Garden Visit'- Over the coming days I will be asking Elders and Committee Reps to send me names of those in their district who would value, and where it would be practically possible, a garden visit. I would prearrange to call on a Wednesday afternoon to conduct a *socially distanced visit* in the front garden. If you would like to contact me directly to arrange such a visit please do so.

With both of these measures there will be a limited number of slots and the weather might not always play ball, but hopefully they will serve as a beginning to slowly moving towards seeing more of each other once again.

I hope these two initiatives are the beginning of many that will see us once again worshipping together as a church family. I pray that you continue to know the Lord's help during these days, remembering that through our faith in Christ we are not forsaken and that his love for us is new every morning, *'Sun of our life, Your living ray*

*sheds on our path the glow of day;
star of our hope, Your gentle light
shall ever cheer the longest night.*

Your Minister and Friend,

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