

KEEPING CONNECTED AGAIN! 5

14th February 2021



**THIS WEEK IS THE FIRST
OF OUR TWO GUEST
CONTRIBUTORS- PADDY
SMYTH IS A MEMBER OF
WEST KIRK AND SERVED
AS AN ELDER IN
KILLINCHY. HE IS
CURRENTLY TRAINING TO
BECOME AN ACCREDITED
PREACHER**

READINGS:

LUKE CH1 V46-56

MARY'S SONG

GENESIS CH11 V1-9

THE TOWER OF BABEL



PRAYERS

Almighty God, we come to you in thanksgiving, knowing that all we are and all we have is a gift from you.

Give us Christ-love, love for when we need it most, give us in abundance overflowing joy and humility. Keep our eyes focused on you, the One who we are to love with all our heart, soul, mind and strength.

To the One who offers us a new start, free us to fully delight in you more. Not to get the desires of my heart, but that you may be the primary delight and satisfaction of our hearts.

We are sinful beings. Yet we thank you for your Son who has justified us and given us a merit which is not our own. Draw us near, purify and humble our hearts. Remind us of your grace and love. Amen

● Take a moment to pray for all those affected by coronavirus in whatever way, the NHS and frontline workers, the world and church near and far- lift to God the people and places that lie heavy upon your heart

“But he said to me, ‘My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.’ Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ’s power may rest on me.”

2 Corinthians ch12 v9

CHILDREN'S ACTIVITY

It's God's Work!

Find a painting or a piece of artwork that was gifted to you and talk about how beautiful it is. Imagine if I started to act as if I had made this and told all my family and friends I made it. I would be taking credit for something that I didn't do. That's called stealing someone's reputation. As well, imagine if the artist found out I was

attempting to steal their work? How would the artist feel?

There was a time in the Bible where humans started to take credit for the gifts God had given them. They wanted to grow the city they were in by building a tower that would be really high and make their name known. The Bible tells us that God was watching this. God had told the people just before this to move to other parts of the earth but they were so focused on their own reputation that they lost sight of their Creator God. God came down to earth, changed the languages of the builders which meant that they couldn't understand each other. He also gives them a second chance, and scatters them around the world. They deserved to be judged by God, but He showed them grace. Just as God came down to the builders, Jesus came to earth and defeated sin and death and offers salvation and new life for those who trust in him. Let us give God the glory for everything he has made and for giving us his Son Jesus ***Pray: ‘Jesus, thank you for the gift of salvation. Help us to focus on eyes on you, and give you the glory for everything we do. Amen’***



DEVOTIONAL

Towers of Pride

It's been over 50 years since Neil Armstrong landed on the moon and his famous words are still very well known today. "One small step for man, one giant leap for mankind". It was an incredible accomplishment. However, some people have criticised his words and accused them of giving glory to man, rather than to God. What we read in Genesis 11:1-9 isn't that different. The people living in

Shinar wanted to build a city and a tower. But what was really going on? Of course, it's not wrong to build a tower and tell other people about it. But the builders wanted to "make a name" for themselves. They wanted to strengthen their identity and become famous. They were full of pride. They wanted all the glory. They thought this tower would guarantee their security and give them a powerful reputation. Even though God had commanded them to **"be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth"** (Gen 9:7). They didn't think they needed the God who created them. So how did God respond? God came down to see what they were doing (v5). Do you see the irony there? They wanted a tower that reached the heavens but God had to come down to see it. And it definitely didn't take God by surprise - the Almighty, all-knowing God knew exactly what was going on. As a result of their prideful behaviour and ignorance, God judges them, and rightly so. He confuses their words and they start speaking different languages and what sounded like total gibberish. The huge building program came to a halt. They were full of pride and disobeyed what God had told them to do. But in how God responds, we see a glimpse of his grace. He scatters them (v8). He's giving them another chance at what they were originally commanded to do.

Our problem is not all that different from the people thousands of years ago in Genesis 11. In the depths of our hearts, we all secretly want to make a name for ourselves. We build towers that crumble before our eyes and we wonder what went wrong. We're too busy building our kingdoms instead of seeking first the Kingdom of God. No wonder we're frazzled, tired, nervous, uptight, jumpy, irritable, easily distracted, and easily seduced by money, desire, power and fall into disunity so easily. The Spirit of Babel is not just out there, it's inside all of us all the time. Think about when we introduce ourselves to people. We automatically tell people what we work as or where we work. Even when we're retired, we have to tell people what we did during our working years. Our identity is so entangled in what we do with our lives and what people think of us. If ever there was anyone who had the right to boast and be prideful, it was the One through whom all life came into being. If Jesus came into this world and demanded that all serve him, and do it immediately, it would not have been arrogant and would have been very appropriate. But as the apostle Paul tells us, he came not as a ruler but as a servant. Yet, God's response to us, is even more gracious. Just as God came down to the builders to see this mighty tower, the Son of God, Jesus Christ, emptied himself, came down to earth, took the form of a servant and humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. And he would rise three days later, teaching the apostles how to teach the church, and promising he would come again. And he will come again. Through his work and promises Jesus pronounces us guiltless. He promises that his grace will be sufficient for us in all our weaknesses (2 Cor 12:9-10) - as we trust Jesus as our righteousness, and our provider of everything we need. We know how easy it is to focus on ourselves and take our focus off God. ***The people said, "Come, let's build." But Jesus said, "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest"***. It's all about our risen Saviour Jesus Christ. It's all about him and what he has done. By his death on the cross our sins are forgiven. By his resurrection we gain new life. Stop clinging to your tower of pride, reputation and self-righteousness. Cling to the cross and what Christ has done for you, and how under his grace he will keep you.

***Come behold the wondrous mystery
In the dawning of the King
He the theme of heaven's praises
Robed in frail humanity***

***In our longing, in our darkness
Now the light of life has come
Look to Christ who condescended
Took on flesh to ransom us***

ANNOUNCEMENTS

KEEPING CONNECTED AGAIN!

An update, like this one, will be emailed out each Friday and delivered to folk who don't have internet connection or an easy way of accessing it. Please feel free to share around!

MINISTER'S LEAVE

Rev. Edward will be on leave from 8th-21st February, if you have any pastoral concerns during that time please speak to Michael of your elder.

'Preaching to the choir'

Each Thursday evening at 6:30pm, while we are closed for services, we will upload a recording of a little midweek- *'Preaching to the Choir'*. This will include a few musical items, prayer, reading and devotion. This is not a replacement of our Sunday service, yet is accessed the same way via the website or YouTube, but an additional opportunity to share in for the next while.

OPEN CHURCH

The church building is open for private prayer on Fridays 10am-12noon. There is also the facility to drop off offering envelopes.

PRAYER LINK

While Morning Watch cannot meet at the moment the Prayer Link will still be circulated, sent out later in February, if you have any prayer requests please pass them along and if you would like a copy of the Prayer Link emailed or delivered please ask

ZOOM BIBLE STUDY

The Zoom Bible study will not meet again until Monday evening 22nd February at 7pm, this season we are exploring the Gospel of Luke together, everyone is very welcome!

BIBLE CLASS

Bible Class will continue on Zoom on Sunday mornings at 11:30am, all p7s and up are welcome- if there is anyone who hasn't joined in yet it would be great to have you, please get in touch.

CHURCH FLOWERS

We would thank those members of the congregation who provide church flowers each Sunday. Unfortunately, since Sunday 10th January and until church services can resume church flowers are not required.

We are aware that some of the flowers are in memory of a loved one or to mark an occasion and this is regretted but hopefully these dates can be honoured next year.

As soon as we have a date when services can again be held a member of our Flower Arranging team will be in touch.

Church flowers on Sunday 14th Februray would have been:

Mrs D Platt, Cregagh Road and Ms M Mulligan, Haddington Gardens 'In memory of our our Mum, Rosalie Scott' (Pedestal)

And

Mrs C Ferguson, Cairnshill Park and Mrs K Glover, Ballygowan 'In memory of Dorothy and David' (Sanctuary)