

11TH APRIL 2021

FERINTOSH PARISH CHURCH

WORSHIP AT HOME



www.ferintoshparishchurch.org.uk

The Holy Spirit is no Sceptic, and the things He has written in our hearts are not doubts or opinions, but assertions - surer and more certain than sense and life itself. (Martin Luther)

HYMN

*Spirit of God, unseen as the wind,
gentle as is the dove:
teach us the truth and help us believe,
show us the Saviour's love!*

You spoke to us – long, long ago –
gave us the written word;
we read it still, needing its truth,
through it God's voice is heard. *(Refrain)*

Without your help we fail our Lord,
we cannot live his way;
we need your power, we need your strength,
following Christ each day. *(Refrain)*

PRAYER

Our gracious God and heavenly Father, we thank you that you are our Father, that you know us through-and-through and that your word is able, first to find us and then to speak to us and then to transform us. We pray that by the power of your Holy Spirit this book that we read will live for us today in the grace and through the teaching of our Saviour, our Lord Jesus Christ and so we come to you, our eyes are upon you, our hearts are full of affection for you, our wills bowed before you and we say to you, Speak, Lord, for your servants are listening. This we pray in Jesus our Saviour's name. Amen.

SCRIPTURE READING

JOHN 3: 1 - 8 (NKJV)

- 1 There was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews.
- 2 This man came to Jesus by night and said to Him, "Rabbi, we know that You are a teacher come from God; for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him."
- 3 Jesus answered and said to him, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."
- 4 Nicodemus said to Him, "How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born?"
- 5 Jesus answered, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.



6 That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.

7 Do not marvel that I said to you, 'You must be born again.'

8 The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear the sound of it, but cannot tell where it comes from and where it goes. So is everyone who is born of the Spirit."

LORD'S PRAYER

*Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy Name,
thy kingdom come,
thy will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our debts,
as we forgive our debtors
And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
and the power, and the glory,
for ever and ever. Amen.*

SERMON

To put our faith in Christ means that God must first renew our hearts and give to us the ability to believe. This is the work of regeneration, and it happens before faith and repentance. First the Spirit gives us a new heart and then we are able to exercise faith. Unless we are born again (the condition) we will not see the kingdom of heaven (the result). Regeneration precedes faith and repentance – not the other way around. The Lord's command to repent and follow Him is impossible unless God changes our hearts. Therefore, even repentance is a gift of God and not something for which we can ever take credit.

How do we know if we have been regenerated? We can know by the presence of repentance in our lives. All those who God has renewed by His Spirit come to faith in Jesus Christ and are saved. But while we choose to repent, we can only make this choice because the Lord has graciously granted us the ability. This means that we cannot be proud even of our repentance, for it is the gift of God.

Despite the fact that regeneration is required for spiritual life, it must be admitted that the experience of the new birth can be difficult to put into words. There is a great deal of mystery concerning the working of the Spirit in our lives. We know that He works, but we cannot always explain how He works. In fact, the actual process of regeneration takes place within and is not visible to our physical eyes. This is one of the realities Jesus points out in John 3.

In today's passage, Jesus continues His discussion with Nicodemus, a Pharisee who sits on the Sanhedrin, the religious governing body of Israel in the first century. While Nicodemus shows interest in Jesus, he is not yet a disciple of Christ as shown in his failure to grasp what Jesus is talking about — being born from above, not a second physical birth (v4). Our Lord goes on to clarify His point, talking about the need of the Spirit's work in regeneration (v5).

In His instruction Jesus points out the mysterious nature of the Holy Spirit by likening Him to the blowing of the wind (v8). Interestingly, the word for Spirit in the original Hebrew, *ruach*, is also the word we translate into English as "wind." The Greek term *pneuma* functions in the same way. Knowing that the Spirit's work is invisible, like the wind, it makes perfect sense that the biblical authors would use the same term for both "wind" and "spirit."

We all know that we can feel the wind and see its effects as it bends tree branches and so on. Nevertheless, we cannot actually see the wind itself. Similarly, we do not see the Holy Spirit Himself, but His work is evident in the fruit that He produces in the lives of all true believers. We can know that we are born again if we find the evidence of the Spirit's work in our hearts — a desire for the things of God and a life of repentance.

None of us will desire the things of God perfectly before we are glorified. None of us will love the Lord as much as we should this side of heaven. Still, the presence of such things at all in our hearts is proof of regeneration. No unregenerate person will have a desire for these things; at best he will be indifferent. What evidence can you find of the Spirit's work in your heart today?

HYMN

Thanks to God whose word was spoken
in the deed that made the earth.
His the voice that called a nation;
his the fires that tried her worth.
God has spoken:
praise to God for the open Word.

Thanks to God whose Word Incarnate
heights and depths of life did share.
Deeds and words and death and rising,
grace in human form declare.
God has spoken:
praise to God for the open Word.

Thanks to God whose Word was written
in the Bible's sacred page,
record of the revelation
showing God to every age.
God has spoken:
praise to God for the open Word.

Thanks to God whose Word is published
in the tongues of every race.
See its glory undiminished
by the change of time or place.
God has spoken:
praise to God for the open Word.

Thanks to God whose Word is answered
by the Spirit's voice within.
Here we drink of joy unmeasured,
life redeemed from death and sin.
God is speaking:
praise to God for the open Word.

PRAYER

Our heavenly Father, truly all blessings come from you. We thank you that in Jesus Christ you have filled us with blessings: the knowledge of the Lord, peace, the forgiveness of our sins, the transformation of our lives, a taste and indeed desire for the words that come to us from your mouth in the pages of Scripture. We thank you for the Spirit of our Lord Jesus Christ who has opened our eyes to see our need of Him and His all-sufficiency to be our Saviour here and hereafter. Lord, as you speak to us, make us conscious of how great your love for us is and so we look to you to lead us and to teach us from your word. We pray this in Jesus our Saviour's name. Amen.

BENEDICTION

And now may the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with us all this day and forevermore, Amen.

DUKE OF EDINBURGH

A message from the Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, Rt Rev Dr Martin Fair on the death of His Royal Highness Prince Philip, the Duke of Edinburgh

The death of the Duke of Edinburgh marks the end of an era in the life of our nation. Prince Philip's naval service to our country in time of war, and his enormous service to the nation afterwards, and his support of many organisations and charities in industry, education, conservation and sport have been an example to many. Throughout his long life, Prince Philip has shown how privilege ought to be marked by service. In his dedicated and distinctive way, he has shown our nation what this looks like, and what kind of difference it can make.

The inception of the Duke of Edinburgh Award to recognise significant leadership and community service in the lives of young people has inspired generations to look to ways to make a difference in communities and the wider world. The award has transformed the lives of many young people, giving a sense of confidence and self-worth through achievement and hard work.

The Duke's constant support for Her Majesty the Queen as her consort throughout their marriage has been unswerving. He was, in the Queen's own words, "her constant strength and guide".

The Church of Scotland shares in the nation's sense of loss at this time and give thanks for the Duke's life. We offer our prayers and sincere condolences to Her Majesty the Queen and the members of the Royal Family.



Prayer following the death of HRH Prince Philip, the Duke of Edinburgh

Almighty and everlasting God, 'the life of mortals is like grass, they flourish like a flower of the field; the wind blows over it and it is gone, and its place remembers it no more.'

But You are forever, from everlasting to everlasting, and we put our trust in You for You have promised never to leave us nor forsake us.

Loving Lord, in this last year, through the worst of a global pandemic, we've been face to face with our fragility and vulnerability, perhaps for some of us as never before.

Against that backdrop of hurt and loss, we give you thanks for the life and service of Prince Philip, the Duke of Edinburgh. Some are called to the front of the stage, others to supporting roles and we rejoice in the way he supported Her Majesty the Queen through all of the years of her reign.

We remember, too, his work supporting charities and, perhaps most memorably for young people for over sixty years, his patronage of The Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme.

In this hour of loss, we offer our heartfelt prayers for Her Majesty and her family. Comfort them in their loss, bind up their wounds and grant them the consolation of a store of treasured memories. Grant Her Majesty the peace that comes from knowing you and which passes all understanding.

These and all our prayers we ask in the name of Jesus, who through his life, death and resurrection offers us hope instead of despair, life instead of death.

Amen.

WORSHIP

Sunday Church services are at 11am and 12.15pm (if required). Seating in the Church is limited to comply with current guidelines. To attend you must contact the Session Clerk, Martin McLauchlan, by Friday at 5pm prior to the service to book a place.

To book, either visit the church website, and complete and submit the online booking form at: ferintoshparishchurch.org.uk/booking or email the Session Clerk at SessionClerk@ferintoshparishchurch.org.uk and he will send you a link to the Booking Form for you to complete and submit. If you do not have access to the Internet, phone him on 01349 830303 and leave your name and phone number and he will get back to you as soon as he can to take your details.

The Sunday Zoom service is at 6.30pm. If you would like to join the Zoom-service, please contact the Session Clerk at SessionClerk@ferintoshparishchurch.org.uk

Please continue to take care and stay safe.



HIGHLAND FOODBANK

Contributions can be brought to church and placed in the container in the vestibule and then it will be taken to the depot. Thank you for your support.

FELLOWSHIP OF THE LEAST COIN



Any monies for this charity should be given to Janette Steele by Sunday 17th April.

There has been a great response so far but all contributions will be welcomed to help women and girls climb out of poverty.

LADIES BIBLE STUDY

The group continue to meet each Wednesday at 9.45am on Zoom. We are studying the Letters of John and will be looking at 1 John 4 on the 14th April. Please come along. Just contact jintys@btinternet.com so that an invitation link can be sent to you.