

Paisley Abbey



Abbey Herald

October 2020

Pastoral Homily by the Locum, the Rev'd Jim Gibson.

Jesus went round visiting all the towns and villages. He taught in the synagogues, preached the Good News about the Kingdom and healed people with every kind of disease and sickness. As he saw the crowds, his heart was filled with pity for them, because they were worried and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. So, he said to his disciples, "The harvest is large, but there are few workers to gather it in. Pray to the owner of the harvest that he will send out workers to gather in his harvest.

(St Matthew 9: 35-End)

Perhaps the name is not instantly recognisable Nick Hanauer. He is an extremely wealthy man. Hanauer was the first non-family investor in Amazon. Among his many and varied business interests, he co-founded one that was sold to Microsoft for billions of dollars. Hanauer describes himself as an "*unapologetic capitalist*", but suggests there is something rotten in the state of modern capitalism.

Back in 2014, Hanauer controversially stated, "*If we don't do something to fix the glaring inequalities in the world economies, the pitchforks are going to come after us. No society can sustain rising inequality. In fact, there is no example in human history where wealth accumulated in the way it presently is and the pitchforks didn't eventually come out. You show me a highly unequal society, and I will show you a police state. or an uprising. There are no counterexamples. None. It's not if – it's when.* He also wrote, "*Revolutions, like bankruptcies, come gradually and, then, suddenly. One day, somebody sets himself on fire, then thousands of people are in the streets and, before you know it, the entire country is burning.*"

Given recent events, one might be forgiven in thinking parts of America are burning. The spark wasn't someone setting themselves alight, but the needless death in Minneapolis on May 25th of a 46-year-old African-American, George Floyd. Pictures of him being pinned to the ground, unable to breathe, as a white policeman kept his knee over Floyd's throat are sickening. Flames of anger unleashed against police brutality against black people quickly spread across the United States and, then, internationally. Mass protests have given birth to the *Black Lives Matter* movement calling for police reforms and legislation to address perceived racial inequalities.

In Britain, despite calls for social-distancing to be maintained by politicians, mass gatherings have been held across the country demonstrating support. Some, regrettably, have turned into ugly scenes of violence, disorder and vandalism. Though racism was the foremost cause, we have to question why such unrest can be fuelled so readily within our society. After all, if you have, or expect to have, a home to call your own and savings in the bank, surely you are less likely to want to burn it down. Perhaps as far as the British radical Left and/or populist Right is concerned, therein lies the answer.

As if stunned by the size of protest, senior politicians, civil-servants, police, celebrities and others have been quick to place on social media images of themselves *'taking a knee'*. A symbolic act supposedly aligning them against the action of the American policeman. As if such populist tokenism will increase their standing. One image, however, more than most exposed the uncomfortable reality lying behind much of the current social upheaval. It was a photograph of the notoriously well-paid CEO of the bank JP Morgan Chase apparently *'taking a knee'* in front of a bank vault. It's not that the ultra-rich won't make losses. Because of Covid-19 there will be many bankruptcies and countless businesses will sadly go under. However, for many, the crass tokenism of such an action is one thing: something more appropriate however might have been an explanation why he should profiteer when so many can't? When home-ownership is in decline. When rents for many are almost unaffordable. When so many, either individually or collectively, are so deep in debt. When so many individuals and families and communities feel left behind and ignored. These are some of the questions lying behind the unrest presently being experienced within society's minorities. They lead people to think that they simply don't count because of their colour and creed and social background. They are not being asked by black people alone, but articulate the anguish of all people who feel themselves vulnerable whatever their circumstance. They are profound questions about the essential nature of (British) society that refuse to *'go away'*. Somehow, answers must be found and given. Pity and condescension will not do.

Pity is a complex word. The natural state of human beings is one of *'pity'*: of having a mutual concern, a desire to enter into a caring and compassionate relationship of non-violence with each other. It is something that is written into our DNA: the natural capacity to *'see'* another human being, and encounter and engage with them, as the person that they are and not as a

potential enemy or someone, because of skin-colour or lack of education, as being less than oneself.

Presumably, on May 25th in Minneapolis, a white policeman saw an African-American man and his prejudice made assumptions which led to George Floyd's unnecessary death. As a direct result, it has seemed parts of America, Europe and our own country have been on fire. As we view this happening, how do we react? With token gestures? Day in, day out, when we meet folks known and unknown, what do we 'see' in them? Human warmth? Or, only what we want to see, what we choose to see, what our prejudices tell us to look for?

Prayer:

Jesus taught that love is the God of all. In love all the nations of the world were created as one human family. Jesus also taught that we are to love one another. Yet the peoples of the world seem torn apart with prejudice, arrogance and pride. God of love, help the different races of which we are all a part to accept, understand and love one another better. Increase our capacity for sympathy, tolerance and goodwill that we may better appreciate the gifts that others may bring to us so that in living together as members of one human family we each may be enriched by the other, individually and nationally. So may we rejoice in the diversity of our creation and the unity of your family on earth as in heaven. And so, for an end to racial injustice; and for all who feel disenfranchised, abused and forgotten, I pray. For all grieving lost opportunities, those whose lives have been changed by this pandemic and for all who have recently suffered the death of one they love. As I face this coming week, help me reflect your very being to those I may encounter and, as far as I am able, bring creativity, reconciliation and peace by what I think and do. In Jesus' name I pray this.

Our Father in heaven, hallowed by your name. Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sin as we forgive those who sin against us. Do not bring us to the time of trial, but deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours. Now and for ever. AMEN.

REVISED TIMES FOR SUNDAY SERVICES

Since the beginning of August, the Abbey has had two socially distanced Sunday services for a maximum of 50 worshippers at each. The Revd Jim Gibson, our locum during the vacancy has led our worship of sermon, prayers and readings, and, although there has been no congregational hymn singing, there has been music provided by one of our young cantors and the Director of Music. We have adjusted quickly to the new norm and, although very different from what we knew and loved in the past, we have been glad to offer worship to God in such an appropriate and uplifting way in our beautiful Abbey Church.

From Sunday 1 November, however, we are rescheduling the time for our second service so that for the foreseeable future from November, Sunday services will take place as follows:

10.30 am and at 12 noon

Each service lasts no more than 40-45 minutes.

Entry to the Abbey is only by way of the Cloisters in Abbey Close. Face coverings should be worn.

If you wish to attend any service, you should reserve a place by contacting the Abbey Office by 4pm on the Thursday before.

Contact details are as follows:

Email: linda.barrett@paisleyabbey.org.uk

Phone: 0141 889 7654

Marion Sommerville
Session Clerk

PAISLEY ABBEY MUSIC FOR OCTOBER 2020

4 October 2020

Kyrie
Society)
Psalm 80 7-15
Anthem

Trinity 17

Cantor: Flora Ritchie
McPhee (Scottish Church

Responsorial
Sing a song of joy Campion

11 October 2020

Kyrie

Psalm 145 8-17
Anthem

Trinity 18

(Harvest Thanksgiving)

Cantor: Flora Ritchie
McPhee (Scottish Church
Society)

Norris
Kommt, Seelen, dieser Tag
J S Bach

18 October 2020

Kyrie
Psalm 96 1-9
Anthem

Trinity 19

Cantor: Euan McDonald
MacMillan (St. Anne's Mass)
Responsorial
But thou didst not leave his
soul in hell (Messiah) Handel

25 October 2020

Kyrie
Psalm 1
Anthem

Trinity 20

Cantor: Mollie Kyle
MacMillan (St. Anne's Mass)
Hopkins
It is a thing most wonderful
Ireland

1 November 2020

Kyrie
Psalm 34 1-9
Anthem

All Saints' Day

Cantor: Flora Ritchie
Leighton
Plainsong
Pie Jesu Fauré

PARISH REGISTER – SEPTEMBER 2020

Funeral

10 September Margaret Lawrie

30 September Sheena Napier

Wedding

26 September Elizabeth Sangster & Paul Bonfant

SHOP SPECIAL OFFERS

Our latest special offer is on Beastie Assemblage jewellery and whimsies. Hand made in the Scottish Borders by designer Linda Lovatt from copper, brass, vintage crockery fragments and beads, these unique pieces are half price. If you are looking for a gift that is a bit more unusual, these are perfect solution. The shop opening hours are Wednesday and Friday 1pm – 3.30pm.



CHRISTMAS SHOEBOX APPEAL

It is that time of year again when we launch our annual appeal on behalf of the Samaritan's Purse 'Operation Christmas Child. We would like to support this appeal in spite of the restrictions due to Covid 19. Leaflets will be available in the orders of service on a Sunday with gift suggestions (and a list of items not to include) along with 'boy/girl/age' stickers.

Filled shoeboxes should be brought to the Abbey by Sunday 8 November.

If you are unable to be at one of the services to get a leaflet contact Sue Donn on 0141 884 2779 and she will arrange for you to get one. We would also be grateful for cash donations as there are always boxes for which we need to find the £5 that should accompany each box. If you are not able to fill boxes then please either donate some items or make a donation and we will fill a box for you.

The mission of Operation Christmas Child is to show God's love in a tangible way to needy children around the world. Since 1990, more than 157 million children in over 160 countries have experienced God's love through the power of simple shoebox gifts from Operation Christmas Child.

Do please support this appeal if you are able.

Sue Donn



LIFE AND WORK

Subscriptions for the 2021 issues of Life and Work magazine are due in Edinburgh by early November. I have not been given the exact date yet. Current subscribers should have received notification together with an envelope in which to put their subscription if they wish to continue receiving it or to inform me if they wish to discontinue their subscription.

If any member of the congregation would like to become a subscriber the discounted cost is £36 for 12 issues of the magazine, which is delivered with the Abbey Herald, could they please let me know by the end of October.

I can be contacted on 01505 323532 or leave your details at the Abbey office. Thank you.

Cathy Craig

SCOUT GROUP NOTES

The group have been busy over the last month carrying out risk assessments, so that the young people are able to return to face to face scouting and continue learning skills for life.

The group said a very fond farewell to Alan and Carol after over 30 years with the group. They will be missed dearly, however the group wish them both a long and happy retirement.

The group continued to meet over zoom for the entire summer and awarded over 160 badges across the three sections. The young people have worked incredibly hard over the whole summer and it's been great to be able to continue to develop the teach the young people skills for life during a global pandemic.

We are so excited to get back to face to face scouting and continuing the adventure.

Richard Murray
Scout Leader

PRESBYTERY REPORT

I attended the final meeting, by Zoom, of the Greenock and Paisley Presbytery on 27th August 2020.

I joined the initial meeting on 1st September 2020, by online livestream from Renfrew North Church, of the new Clyde Presbytery, which gave approval for the union of the Presbyteries of Dumbarton with Greenock and Paisley.

At this meeting Rev Ian Johnson, minister of Dumbarton Riverside, was installed as Moderator of Clyde Presbytery.

A recruitment panel was appointed to recruit and appoint a Presbytery clerk for Clyde Presbytery. In the meantime, Rev Dr Alistair Shaw will continue his duties as Presbytery Clerk.

There is a new website www.clydepresbytery.org

A new minister, Mr Tim Minard, is being ordained and inducted to Barrhead St Andrew's Church on 24th September, 2020

John Kitson
Presbytery Elder

FOODBANK

The next Foodbank collection will be on Sunday 25 October. Shortages this month are jam, tinned potatoes, toiletries and household cleaning products. Thank you.

Margaret Sharp

LETTING GO

The Very Rev Dr John Chalmers emphasises the importance of letting go of the past and living in the present.

IN 1974 Marijohn Wilkin and Kris Kristofferson gave us the words of the song *One Day at a Time*. It was first recorded by the American Gospel singer Marilyn Sellars but from over 200 cover versions those by Lena Martell and Christy Lane are perhaps the best known – taking it to No 1 in the charts. For those who love Country and Western it is a classic but for those who have trouble with that particular musical genre it will, no doubt, be a toe curler!

The lyrics are in the form of a prayer:

Yesterday's gone sweet Jesus

And tomorrow may never be mine

Help me today

Show me the way

One day at a time.

In the first verse the words admit to the sometime feebleness of human nature and it has the singer asking for the strength to face the challenges of life just *One day at a time*. Whatever we may say about the lyrics of this song it actually declares a deep wisdom. It derives its fundamental insight from Jesus who, in what is known as the Sermon on the Mount, advised his listeners: “not to worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.” (Matt 6: 34) In the same passage Jesus reminds his listeners to set aside worrying about the things we cannot change and instead focus on the things of greatest import and

value. It is the passage where Jesus reminds us that worrying doesn't add years to our life, but that looking out for the Kingdom of God might add life to our years.

It is from this sage advice and wisdom that Alcoholics Anonymous and many other addiction groups get their fundamental working principle. This is built around the knowledge that no addict can say that they will remain sober or clean or free from their obsessive habit for the rest of their life but they can say that they will remain sober or clean or habit-free for today. It's about living life in the present – yesterday is gone, tomorrow may not be what we plan, but *the now* is of the utmost importance.

The ancient Chinese philosopher, Lao Tzu, (Laozi) writing six hundred years before Christ is credited with many wise utterances, but perhaps one of his most insightful is a message about the positive nature of living in the present. He said: *“If you are depressed you are living in the past. If you are anxious you are living in the future. If you are at peace you are living in the present.”* I don't offer Laozi's words as a diagnostic tool for our mental health, but I do offer them as a tool for grounding ourselves in the present.

Trying to see each new day as a gift and, whatever our circumstances, trying to make the most of each day is one of those self-evident truths and yet it is so hard to put into practice. Harboring resentments about stuff that happened in the past drains the appetite for today and living for some far-off dream that may never come to pass is a sure-fire recipe for missing the best of the present. Let go of what you cannot alter and choose to be present in the moment.

In the world of golf, I am a huge admirer of Ben Hogan, who, by all accounts, was one of the greatest players ever to hold a golf club. His philosophy for living: *“As you walk down the fairway of life you must smell the roses, for you only get to play one round.”* It was his way of saying; life is too short to dwell on what happened yesterday or to worry about what tomorrow may bring – if you want to smell the roses you have to be alert to what is around you in the here and now.

This article first appeared in the Life and Work issue of October 2020