

St Peter's Church Peebles and St Andrew's Church Innerleithen

Mothers' Sunday

"Walking together with God"

22nd March 2020



Because of the current circumstances of COVID 19 and the closure of churches for public services, we would encourage you to use the prayers, bible readings and reflection below to join together 'in spirit' as a church community.

We hope this is helpful for you to use individually or with other members of your household.

Opening Prayer:

This is the day that the Lord has made for worship

This is the day that the Lord has made for encouragement

This is the day that the Lord has made for us to hear about Jesus.

Be with us, Lord, today, and although we cannot come together physically, we pray that you would inspire our worship, help us to be sincere in our encouragement of each other and open our hearts to encounter you. **Amen**

Confession:

God is love and we are God's children. There is no room for fear in love. We love because God loved us first. As we open our hearts to God, we are reminded of times when we have not shown God's love to others as we should:

When we have been selfish and not helped others: **Lord, have mercy**

When we have been frightened and not stood up for justice: **Christ, have mercy**

When we have been hurting and deliberately caused pain to others: **Lord, have mercy**

Merciful Lord, you know our struggle to serve you,
when sin spoils our lives and overshadows our hearts,
come to our aid and turn us back to you again;
forgive us and give us peace through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

Prayer activity:

The theme today is 'walking with God.'

Sometimes it feels hard to try and follow Jesus, sometimes it feels like the best thing in the world. Sometimes it feels like a boring routine and sometimes it feels like something brand new. And in each of our walks with God, we walk with others - sometimes it's our family - our

mums and dads, our children, our husbands or wives, often it's our friends - old friends, new friends. Sometimes its people we haven't ever met, but who inspire us - missionaries, those standing up for social justice, facebook posts.

Take some time to prayerfully to think about your own walk with God and remind yourself that **God is always with you**. Pray for yourself and others as you do this, especially those who are vulnerable and worried about COVID 19.

You might like to listen to some music as you pray.

Ending with:

God our Father,

Wonderful creator of all the amazing things in our world.

Thank you that you love me with a never ending love.

I pray that you would walk beside me all the days of my life. **Amen**

New Testament Reading: 2 Corinthians 1: 3-7

Gospel Reading: Luke 2: 41 - 52

Reflection

In the prayer activity I hope you've been reminded and encouraged that **God is always with us**. But in our day to day lives, do we always try our hardest to be close to God and follow Jesus?

In the gospel reading, we read about Jesus when he was 12. His parents, like any devout Jews, were making the trip to from Nazareth to Jerusalem for the Passover with friends and relatives. At the end of the Passover, Mary and Joseph left Jerusalem without Jesus, presuming he was somewhere in the group that they were travelling with. When they missed him, I can only imagine the worrying three days they had travelling back and looking for him everywhere, until eventually they found him in the Temple, in their place of worship and teaching. Any parent at this point will tell you that no doubt Mary and Joseph felt a mixture of exasperation and relief, felt like shouting at Jesus and hugging him all at the same time. But's it's what Jesus was doing that I want to focus on. As we think about our walk with God, this story of Jesus, aged 12, gives us a great model of how to draw near to God, how to try our hardest to be close to him.

- (1) Jesus had been in the temple courts - he'd deliberately gone somewhere where as a Jew he would feel close to God, placed himself somewhere where he could draw near to God. He said to Mary, his mother 'Didn't you know I had to be in my Father's house?'
- (2) Jesus was sitting amongst the teachers, listening to them and asking questions - he was taking time to learn from others who were wiser than him, who would have known the scriptures and the Law, who might have had stories of prayers being answered, of encounters with God.

And I think those two things are vital for us too. We know that God is always with us, but how much effort do we make to draw near to God - setting aside time for prayer and reading the bible, finding quiet spaces, sacred spaces - outdoors in a special place, indoors at a quiet moment of the day - like Jesus going to the temple. And taking time to learn from those around us - from our mothers and our families, yes, but also from our Christian friends as well. We should be putting ourselves in places where we have the best chance of God leading and guiding us, of God supporting and encouraging us. **Trying to draw near to God.**

Others are with us on our journey with God too, despite the restrictions imposed by COVID 19 and the current social distancing restrictions. In the letter to the Corinthians, Paul writes of his thanks that God comforts him and Timothy in their troubles, and then they in turn can comfort others. The Message paraphrases it like this: "God comes alongside us when we go through hard times, and before you know it, he brings us alongside someone else who is going through hard times so that we can be there for that person just as God was there for us."

Others are with us in our walk with God. Sometimes that will have been our mums, loving us, teaching us, and helping us as a child to grow into an adult. And on this Mothering Sunday, we do particularly think about our mothers and any others who have cared for us in this way. It may be other family members or friends who encourage us, give us a shoulder to cry on and a hug when we need it, and give us a delighted whoop down the phone when we share good news.

On a usual Mothering Sunday, we would often give out flowers to mums and others who encourage and support us. Sadly that's not possible at the moment, but it *is* possible to speak to your mum or others, or drop them a message and say 'thank you for loving and encouraging me in my walk with God.' That phone call or text will become really important as the reality of social distancing sinks in.

So three things to remember today:

- God is always with us;
- It takes conscious time and effort to draw near to God; and
- Others are with us in our walk with God.

Prayers:

Prayer of Thanks:

Loving God, we thank you for the care shown to us by our mothers. We thank you for the love we have known in our homes, among our friends and with God's people.

In a world where many are lonely and have lost their way, help us to walk together and support, encourage and show God's love to those around us. **Amen**

The Lord's Prayer:

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins 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.**

A blessing on the week:

Lord, in all our travelling: **May your footsteps guide us**
Within our homes and families: **May your footsteps guide us**
In difficult situations and conflict: **May your footsteps guide us**
In times of loneliness and anxiety: **May your footsteps guide us.**
As we place our trust in you: **May your footsteps guide us**
In all our journeys of faith, Lord, may it be your footsteps in which we place our feet.
Amen.

A similar set of information will be sent out next week, for Sunday 29th March 2020, based on the story of Jesus' raising of Lazarus, John chapter 11: 1 - 44.