

# Worship 21st February 2021

Aberlour Parish Church

Rev Andrew Kimmitt

## Intimations:

### 1. Wednesday Zoom Coffee Break 1030-1130am

Each Wednesday from 3<sup>rd</sup> February onwards you are invited to join with a morning coffee break over Zoom meeting – come and say hi to friends and familiar faces and meet new folk. Whether you're stuck with too much time on your hands, or homeworking and taking a quick break, feel free to drop in and out at any time over the hour. The meeting will have lots of small 'breakout rooms' that you can join so you can catch up with a small group of folk rather than a huge Zoom call.

To join the Zoom meeting you just need either:

The link: [www.aberlour.video/coffee](http://www.aberlour.video/coffee)

Or

To manually enter on Zoom:

Meeting ID: 917 8188 1669

Passcode: coffee

It'd be great to see you any Wednesday!

### 2. Bible Study group Tuesday 4pm

By popular demand! Each week we'll meet for a short discussion time about a bible passage, followed by a time of prayer. One way to delve a little deeper into the world of the bible and spend time nurturing a relationship with God. If you're at all interested – or if you would be interested in another time – please drop a line to Andrew at [akimmitt@churchofscotland.org.uk](mailto:akimmitt@churchofscotland.org.uk) or call/text/WhatsApp on 07752306462

### 3. Lent Book Group – Thursdays 7.30pm from 18<sup>th</sup> February

A few weeks ago I included a thought in a sermon about the Insider/Outsider dynamics of church life. Who feels like they belong? How do we become a place where people are welcomed and embraced into our community?

This Lent Season we'll take a journey of reflection with the poet Pádraig Ó Tuama and public theologian Glenn Jordan (both of the [Corrymeela Community](#)) looking some of these themes the biblical book of Ruth with their book: 'Borders and Belonging' – this short book comes very highly recommended and will be a touching, searching, and life-giving journey through Lent. Each week will involve around 10 pages of reading, and then a group discussion on Thursdays at 7.30pm (initially via Zoom, in person if ever possible).

The book is £12.99 RRP available from The BookShop.org (which supports local bookshops) at <https://uk.bookshop.org/books/borders-and-belonging-the-book-of-ruth/9781786222565>; Direct from the publisher at <https://chbookshop.hymnsam.co.uk/books/9781786222565/borders-and-belonging> as well as on Amazon and other bookshops.

**Please(!)** don't let the cost of the book put you off if you would like to join along - we can get copies for anyone who needs it.

Again, if you're interested please drop a line to Andrew at [akimmitt@churchofscotland.org.uk](mailto:akimmitt@churchofscotland.org.uk) or call/text/WhatsApp on 07752306462

### 4. Online Sunday Services and Facebook + Church coffee Sunday 1000-1100

Finally a reminder that we are sharing our Sunday morning worship digitally on our [website](#); on [YouTube](#); and on [Facebook](#) where we also post daily 'Prayer points' and publicise other news.

From Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> February we'll also be meeting for Zoom coffee (in the same way as Wednesday coffee above) between 10am-11am. Feel free to drop by and say hi:

To join the Zoom meeting you just need either:

The link: [www.aberlour.video/coffee](http://www.aberlour.video/coffee)

Or

To manually enter on Zoom:

Meeting ID: 917 8188 1669

Passcode: coffee

## Call to Worship

The injured,  
Priest,  
Levite,  
Samaritan,  
Mary,  
Martha.  
So many characters.  
Recognise yourself?  
So which are you?  
Feeling battered?  
Or perhaps have turned a blind eye?  
Maybe you didn't want to get your hands dirty?  
Or perhaps you let your heart do the talking  
and did the right thing?  
Or were you too busy keeping busy  
to listen to what God has to say to you?  
We all want to be a Samaritan,  
and we would all like the time to be like Mary.  
What is stopping us?

## Hymn

1. Inspired by love and anger  
Disturbed by need and pain  
Informed of God's own bias  
We ask Him once again  
How long must some folk suffer  
How long can few folk mind  
How long dare vain self-interest  
Turn prayer and pity blind
2. From those forever victims  
Of heartless human greed  
Their cruel plight composes  
A litany of need  
Where are the fruits of justice  
Where are the signs of peace  
When is the day when prisoners  
And dreams find their release
3. From those forever shackled  
To what their wealth can buy  
The fear of lost advantage  
Provokes the bitter cry  
Don't query our position  
Don't criticise our wealth  
Don't mention those exploited  
By politics and stealth

4. To God who through the prophets  
Proclaimed a different age  
We offer earth's indifference  
Its agony and rage  
When will the wronged be righted  
When will the kingdom come  
When will the world be generous  
To all instead of some
5. God asks Who will go for me  
Who will extend my reach  
And who when few will listen  
Will prophesy and preach  
And who when few bid welcome  
Will offer all they know  
And who when few dare follow  
Will walk the road I show
6. Amused in someone's kitchen  
Asleep in someone's boat  
Attuned to what the ancients  
Exposed proclaimed and wrote  
A Saviour without safety  
A tradesman without tools  
Has come to tip the balance  
With fishermen and fools

CCLI Song # 3163221

Graham Maule | John L. Bell

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## Reading – Luke 10:25-42

<sup>25</sup> Just then a lawyer stood up to test Jesus. “Teacher,” he said, “what must I do to inherit eternal life?” <sup>26</sup> He said to him, “What is written in the law? What do you read there?” <sup>27</sup> He answered, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbour as yourself.” <sup>28</sup> And he said to him, “You have given the right answer; do this, and you will live.”

<sup>29</sup> But wanting to justify himself, he asked Jesus, “And who is my neighbour?” <sup>30</sup> Jesus replied, “A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell into the hands of robbers, who stripped him, beat him, and went away, leaving him half dead. <sup>31</sup> Now by chance a priest was going down that road; and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. <sup>32</sup> So likewise a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. <sup>33</sup> But a Samaritan while traveling came near him; and when he saw him, he was moved with pity. <sup>34</sup> He went to him and bandaged his wounds, having poured oil and wine on them. Then he put him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him. <sup>35</sup> The next day he took out two denarii, gave them to the innkeeper, and said, ‘Take care of him; and when I come back, I will repay you whatever more you spend.’ <sup>36</sup> Which of these three, do you think, was a neighbour to the man who fell into the hands of

the robbers?”<sup>37</sup> He said, “The one who showed him mercy.” Jesus said to him, “Go and do likewise.”

<sup>38</sup> Now as they went on their way, he entered a certain village, where a woman named Martha welcomed him into her home. <sup>39</sup> She had a sister named Mary, who sat at the Lord’s feet and listened to what he was saying. <sup>40</sup> But Martha was distracted by her many tasks; so she came to him and asked, “Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me to do all the work by myself? Tell her then to help me.” <sup>41</sup> But the Lord answered her, “Martha, Martha, you are worried and distracted by many things; <sup>42</sup> there is need of only one thing. Mary has chosen the better part, which will not be taken away from her.”

## Reflection

In this reading from Luke we are given three very well known passages: the greatest commandment; the Good Samaritan; and the story of Mary and Martha.

It’s not often we get all three together; but I’m glad this week that we do.

When the teacher of the law asks Jesus the most important commandment: the answer is marvellous and memorable. Jesus is being asked this in the context of being a Jew who has studied the books of the Law – dip into Leviticus and Deuteronomy: and you’ll see what sort of volume of individual laws and commandments we’re dealing with. And that’s without countering in the vast array of *interpretations* of those laws in Jesus’ day: something the pharisees were very keen on. And Jesus takes it all, and has it summed up in just the way the teacher answered him by quoting from Deuteronomy: Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, strength and mind; and love you neighbour as yourself. The greatest commandment: love God; love neighbour.

And we might want to pause and wonder about several aspects of this commandment.

We might explore the tensions between being commanded to *love*, which feels like an order and a duty, when we think of love as something done freely, and we live in a culture which often gives the message that we can’t help who we love.

And we might pause to dwell on the strength and intensity and all-consuming demand laid on the love for God: with *all* our heart, *all* our soul, *all* our strength, *all* our mind. A hefty summons, and perhaps ultimately no more achievable than fulfilling all the laws of the Torah.

Or we might pause to linger on the clause ‘love you neighbour *as yourself*’ and remember that love of self is something we, perhaps particular as Brits and Scots, deeply struggle with. No wonder that drag artist Ru Paul is adored for the catchphrase ‘Remember - If you can’t love yourself, how the hell you gonna love someone else?’ – it’s a message that comes straight from Jesus’ command here.

Or we might pause to wonder about the relationship of the two sides of the command: love God, love neighbour; and ask about priorities there: is one more important than the other, does one take precedent? And how we know when it is time for one or t’other? Or are they more connected than we tend to imagine?

And that seems to be something Luke would have us explore in exactly the next two passages. The parable of the Good Samaritan at its core is about shining a light on the difference between those who, on the surface of it, prioritised love of God – the priest and Levite – and the Samaritan who – even the teachers of the law around Jesus could see - loved his neighbour, and made a neighbour of

a stranger and a foreigner. And in this case it's the Samaritan who is held up as the example – the one who actually *does* something.

But then, very quickly, it's made clear that *doing* things isn't always the correct approach either. In the story of Mary and Martha, it's Martha who is *doing all the time*. It's Martha who is doing all her tasks. And mind carefully here: it's often assumed Martha's tasks were domestic housework and hospitality – but nowhere in the text does it actually say that. What we know of Jesus' followers is that there were women who were often the ones organising things, helping people in need and bankrolling Jesus' ministry – an arrangement that continued into the early church – in which women were key leaders.

Whatever the tasks Martha was involved with, it's clear that she was prioritising the *doing* involved with loving neighbour. And she's frustrated with her sister who doesn't seem to be *doing* anything. And yet when Martha complains to Jesus, she finds he sides with Mary's approach: she has chosen the better part, the loving and listening to Jesus.

If we take these two episodes of expressing different emphases of the command to love God and love neighbour then we might find ourselves left in a bit of a quandary: which is it that is more important; the spiritual bit that's about God; or the *doing* bit that's about our neighbour?

But I think there's an answer here. And one that doesn't involve the passages conflicting. And it's an answer that brings us full circle back to this idea of the commandment to *love*. While the priest and Levite might not technically have been wrong – in their understanding of the law – to pass by on the other side; and while Martha wasn't *wrong* as such to be occupied with important tasks: when we look at them both through the lens of *love* it becomes very clear why the Samaritan and Mary were in the right. The Samaritan was moved by *love* for the stranger he made his neighbour; Mary was moved by *love* for Jesus to sit at his feet and listen to him. .

It seems clear that the guiding principle, in our attempts to live out the commandment of Loving God and Loving neighbour, is *love*.

And we can, of course, only love because love is a gift of God shown to us by God first: in the words of the first letter of John: We love because God first loved us.

As we enter into this season of Lent, this journey towards Easter, I hope that our Lent journey is one of love. And that if we take time to reorient ourselves at all, it is to orient towards love: love of God, Love of neighbour, and love of self.

Amen.

## Hymn

1. When I needed a neighbour  
Were you there? were you there?  
When I needed a neighbour were you there?  
*And the creed and the colour*  
*And the name won't matter*  
*Were you there?*

2. I was hungry and thirsty  
Were you there? were you there?

I was hungry and thirsty were you there?  
*And the creed and the colour*  
*And the name won't matter*  
*Were you there?*

3. I was cold I was naked  
Were you there? were you there?  
I was cold I was naked were you there?  
*And the creed and the colour*  
*And the name won't matter*  
*Were you there?*

4. When I needed a shelter  
Were you there? were you there?  
When I needed a shelter were you there?  
*And the creed and the colour*  
*And the name won't matter*  
*Were you there?*

5. When I needed a healer  
Were you there? were you there?  
When I needed a healer were you there?  
*And the creed and the colour*  
*And the name won't matter*  
*Were you there?*

6. Wherever you travel  
I'll be there, I'll be there.  
Wherever you travel. I'll be there  
*And the creed and the colour*  
*And the name won't matter*  
*I'll be there*

CCLI Song # 227923

Sydney Bertram Carter

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## **Prayer**

Lord God,

These are familiar stories for many...  
stories that many have heard time and time again  
and prayed to be better neighbours  
and Good Samaritans  
on more occasions that we can perhaps remember.  
May today be the day on which we act.

God of grace and guidance,

may you be with all  
who have the power to bring about change.  
Inspire them to pave the road of peace,  
rather than cross over to the other side.

May we play our part  
in binding wounds  
afflicted by words or violence.  
God of care and compassion,  
may you be with those  
in our midst or in our community  
who need your help at this time.  
May we be your agent of love this day.  
May we love you and each other  
with all our heart, soul and mind.  
May we love those beside us,  
the stranger,  
the immigrant.

May we recognise those times when we are helpless,  
when we do not have the capability  
to meet our own needs,  
whether physically, mentally or spiritually,  
and accept the help and support that others can provide us.

May we not feel threatened by revealing our weakness,  
but rather may this be a chance  
to build bonds of grace and generosity.  
May we bring to you now  
our own prayers in this time of silence.

*Silence*

Lord hear us. Lord graciously hear us.  
Amen

## **Hymn**

- 1 Brother, sister, let me serve you,  
let me be as Christ to you ;  
pray that I may have the grace to  
let you be my servant too.
- 2 We are pilgrims on a journey,  
and companions on the road ;  
we are here to help each other  
walk the mile and bear the load.
- 3 I will hold the Christ-light for you  
in the night-time of your fear ;  
I will hold my hand out to you,  
speak the peace you long to hear.
- 4 I will weep when you are weeping ;  
when you laugh I'll laugh with you ;

I will share your joy and sorrow  
till we've seen this journey through.

5 When we sing to God in heaven  
we shall find such harmony,  
born of all we've known together  
of Christ's love and agony.

6 Brother, sister, let me serve you,  
let me be as Christ to you ;  
pray that I may have the grace to  
let you be my servant too.

Richard A. M. Gillard (*b.* 1953)

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## **Blessing**

As we go out this day,  
may we seek to be better neighbours  
to those we know well  
and those who we do not know at all.

May we cross the road to help  
rather than to avoid.  
With softened hearts,  
may we love others,  
particularly those who need it most.  
And as we do, may it be with your blessing,  
now and forever,  
Amen.