

Ardoch Parish Church

Sunday 18th October 2020

Rev Mairi Perkins welcomes everyone to our Service of Worship. Today, Mairi considers how as a church community we need to get outside into nature, to appreciate it, care for it, and find the great Creator through it.



Opening Thoughts

In winter the world goes into retreat. The trees stand bare, grasses and wildflowers die back. Nature seems dormant, and in some cases that's literally the case, as hibernating creatures sleep the coldest months away. Of course, one of the reasons that nature seems dormant in winter is that we spend more time indoors, and are more likely to miss the wildlife around us. There's still plenty going on, and in some ways this is a time to pay

closer attention, as we may be able to offer a helping hand. We need to inspire young and old alike in our church community to get outside into nature, to appreciate it, care for it, and find the great creator through it.

Our first hymn is “Morning has Broken”

Morning has broken,
Like the first morning,
Blackbird has spoken
Like the first bird;
Praise for the singing,
Praise for the morning,
Praise for them springing
Fresh from the Word.

Sweet the rain's new fall,
Sunlit from heaven,
Like the first dewfall
On the first grass;
Praise for the sweetness,
Of the wet garden,
Sprung in completeness
Where his feet pass.

Mine is the sunlight,
Mine is the morning,
Born of the one light
Eden saw play;
Praise with elation,
Praise every morning,
God's re-creation
Of the new day.

Let us say together the 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, the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen

Peter Scott reads from

Genesis Chapter 1 v 1 –25

Peter introduces the next hymn which is

Way Maker signed in Makaton by Becky George

Mairi's address is about An Invitation to the Feast

Just think for a moment of the last time you were invited out to a grand meal or had that celebration meal at home . It would have been a time of great enjoyment, a time of sharing, a time of fellowship with friends old and new ,a time of contentment, a time you felt you belonged. , One of the recurring images of the Kingdom of God is a banquet – a lavish feast thrown by a generous host. The finest food and wine is laid on, and everyone is welcome. Unlikely guests are brought

in from the backstreets and the country lanes. Rich and poor, powerful and powerless, the hungry and the full, all sit together at the same table.

It's a powerful image, all the more so in a world where so many don't have enough to eat. It emphasises God's welcome, and shows that generous provision is one of God's defining characteristics. This is not a feast of selfish indulgence, but a celebration in the joy of God's presence, to which all creation is invited. In God's economy, nobody goes without. "Give thanks to the Lord for his love", says Psalm 107:8-9. "He satisfies the thirsty and fills up the hungry." In Jesus' parables about feasts and wedding banquets, the guests are always human.

Other parts of the Bible celebrate how God provides for wildlife too, giving the birds the food they need, or sending the rain for the trees and the wildflowers. God "provides food for the cattle," says Psalm 147, "and for the young ravens when they call."

As communities of worship, we can reflect the character of God to the world around us by extending generosity and hospitality to those that need it. That includes wildlife – especially in winter. How can we make our gardens and church grounds a places of plenty? Do animals, birds and insects experience the church as places of abundance or scarcity? Whether we have a churchyard, a back garden, a window box or a pot plant, how could we lay on a feast for local wildlife? One of the best ways to provide a feast for wildlife is to plant fruit trees or shrubs with berries but we can use these

trees and bushes.

Remember last week we spoke of refuge and safe places for animals in our church garden and my challenge to you last week was to build bird boxes, hedgehog homes and bug hotels and bring them along to be put up in the church grounds.

Well this week we have been talking about being invited to a grand feast for all. So my challenge to you this week is to make bird feeders, fat ball or perhaps we could start our own wild life foodbank so that every living creature can share in the feast that our saviour provides.

The contents of today's sermon is from work by Faith Action for Nature

Prayer
Loving God

Creator of the ends of the earth, source of all and giver of life.

We praise you for the wonder of the world and for the vastness of the universe

For all that you have made

And for the place you have given us within your creation

We marvel at the beauty and the variety of this earth

Its wonderful mixture of plants, animals, birds, trees, mountains, valleys, streams, oceans and so much else besides

We thank you for everything that lifts our spirit

That moves us in wonder,

That holds our attention,
That captures our interest
We rejoice that out of chaos you brought order
An order we can see throughout the universe
Which we can depend on, explore and understand
An order that reflects your sovereign purpose
And reveals your guiding hand
Loving God
Creator of life in all its fullness
We bring you praise
We offer you worship
We make our response in joyful celebration
We join together to worship you
In the name of Christ

Amen

**Our closing hymn is “Let us build a house
where love can dwell”**

Let us build a house where love can dwell
and all can safely live,
a place where saints and children tell
how hearts learn to forgive.
Built of hopes and dreams and visions,
rock of faith and vault of grace;
here the love of Christ shall end divisions.
All are welcome, all are welcome,
all are welcome in this place.

Let us build a house where prophets speak,
and words are strong and true,
where all God’s children dare to seek
to dream God’s reign anew.
Here the cross shall stand as witness
and as symbol of God’s grace;

here as one we claim the faith of Jesus.
All are welcome, all are welcome,
all are welcome in this place.

Let us build a house where love is found
in water, wine and wheat:
a banquet hall on holy ground
where peace and justice meet.
Here the love of God, through Jesus,
is revealed in time and space;
as we share in Christ the feast that frees us.
All are welcome, all are welcome,
all are welcome in this place.

Let us build a house where hands will reach
beyond the wood and stone
to heal and strengthen, serve and teach,
and live the Word they've known.
Here the outcast and the stranger
bear the image of God's face;
let us bring an end to fear and danger.
All are welcome, all are welcome,
all are welcome in this place.

Let us build a house where all are named,
their songs and visions heard
and loved and treasured, taught and claimed
as words within the Word.
Built of tears and cries and laughter,
prayers of faith and songs of grace,
let this house proclaim from floor to rafter.
All are welcome, all are welcome,
all are welcome in this place.

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Benediction

Now go, with the joy of creation in your hearts. In the name of the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Intimations

There will be a virtual Kirk Session Meeting via Zoom on Wednesday 28th October at 7pm.

A personal appeal from Ann Spiers

The Blythswood Shoebox Appeal is no longer being run out of Crieff. This gave me pause for thought.

Blythswood boxes went abroad to many countries, But what about our country? In view of Covid 19, people are losing jobs and their homes....why don't we give locally, as well.

So I contacted the Salvation Army in Stirling. I am a huge fan of the SA and have donated for many years. They will be delighted to cooperate by receiving gifts which they will distribute to needy families, the homeless, elderly in need, etc.

My plan is, in view of the Church being mainly closed, to collect at my house and when I have a fair amount I will deliver to Stirling. Gifts should be of warm socks, gloves, scarves etc. just like we put in the boxes...for all ages. Toiletries, toys for

children, household items, etc. Please mark on your parcel the age group.

This not a scheme for getting rid of your junk .. it is Christmas and a time for Christian giving.

Please join me as you did with the Shoeboxes.

Thank you

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