



Nothing Can Stop Us From Worshipping

Since my last column there's been something of a controversy over the closure of church buildings - again. A group of ministers (predominately from independent churches) instructed legal action against the Scottish Government while most other Churches, including our own, saw that closure was a necessary public health measure to stop the transmission of the virus. It will be interesting to see how the legal challenge plays out.

This needs to be stated; the closure of our buildings cannot be spun as a 'ban on worship'. I've worshipped every Sunday throughout the pandemic, in a building on a handful of occasions and, otherwise, joining with others online. And I've sought to worship in spirit and in truth every day. Sometimes I've sung my heart out while walking along the beach; every day I've read scripture and prayed and offered my life in service.

Who says we've not been able to worship?

Now this is a million miles away from saying that I haven't missed corporate in-person Sunday worship. Not being able to meet together to sing our praises, to pray together, to reflect together on the preached Word of God - and yes to hang out together over coffee afterwards - has been awful. I've missed it more than I can describe and especially 'this year' when I'd been so looking forward to worshipping with brothers and sisters all over the country and beyond.

But I've still worshipped, and no pandemic restrictions have put a stop to that... nor will they.

All that said, I'm genuinely intrigued as to what Church is going to look like in the time to come? To that end, I was recently asked, 'When will we see packed churches again?' I was about to answer 'Oh that may be some time away yet' but I stopped and returned the question with 'Was your church packed before the pandemic?' My questioner responded that it hadn't been, and that it had been declining for longer than she could remember.

With few exceptions, that's the picture across much of the country. We were declining numerically and had been for sixty years and, most worryingly, the decline in numbers of young people had been nothing short of catastrophic.

So I'm pretty sure that whatever Church is going to be like, it can't be the same as it was. What was, wasn't cutting the mustard. It's not that we're finished, but more that we need to find new forms - new wineskins for new wine as Jesus put it.

And some new priorities.

Actually just one. Mission.

Let it be asked of every worship service; is it being designed with younger people in mind, or those who have never been, or is it with a 'we like it this way' attitude?

Let it be asked of every group and organisation; is it being run with the express intention and hope of engaging with new people?

Let it be asked of every pound spent; is this expenditure intended to keep the show on the road or to bring good news to the poor, liberty to the captives, sight to the blind?

I love the Church. Christ has called me into it - to share in its life and to serve God through it. Will you join me in praying for it, daily?

Martin Fair.

SERVING OTHERS AT CHRISTMAS

The Worship Core Group would like to thank everyone who donated food parcels for our reverse Advent calendar.

We were delighted that we were able to deliver over 60 bags of food to Warddykes Primary School's food pop up shop, set up for families who are struggling.

We received the following message from them. "Thanks

again for today. We really were quite overwhelmed with how generous everyone had been. Please pass on our thanks to everyone involved!" They went on to say they have about 30 families who accessed the food bank before, but knew there were other families out there who could make use of it.

"Then the king will answer, 'The truth is, anything you did for any of my people here, you also did for me.' Matthew 25:40.

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ST. ANDREW'S ARBROATH**Member Records****February 2021****Baptisms and Blessings** - None**Weddings** - None**Funerals** - None**IMPORTANT DATE****MARCH EDITION****Word Processed files, as attachments, should be
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Perseverance

Travelling at around 24,600 miles per hour, it took Perseverance 7 months to reach Mars.....but the final 7 minutes of its journey were the most crucial...nick-named "The 7 minutes of terror" when the world held its breath. But land it did, and safely.

I've always been fascinated with the vastness of space and time and the distances involved as human beings look to the stars for answers to how it all began.

Google "Pale Blue Dot" and take a look at the Earth from a distance of 4 billion miles.....it is truly staggering...The Pale Blue Dot photo was taken by the Voyager I probe at the request of Carl Sagan who convinced NASA that the photo was worth the cost even if it had no scientific value. The picture, he said, would show us "our place in the Universe". From that one picture Carl Sagan made the following speech....aptly named "The Pale Blue Dot".....

"From this distant vantage point, the Earth might not seem of any particular interest. But for us, it's different. Consider again that dot. That's here. That's home. That's us. On it everyone you love, everyone you know, everyone you ever heard of, every human being who ever was, lived out their lives. The aggregate of our joy and suffering, thousands of confident religions, ideologies, and economic doctrines, every hunter and forager, every hero and coward, every creator and destroyer of civilization, every king and peasant, every young couple in love, every mother and father, hopeful child, inventor and explorer, every teacher of morals, every corrupt politician, every "superstar," every "supreme leader," every saint and sinner in the history of our species lived there - on a mote of dust suspended in a sunbeam.

The Earth is a very small stage in a vast cosmic arena. Think of the rivers of blood spilled by all those generals and emperors so that in glory and triumph they could become the momentary masters of a fraction of a dot. Think of the endless cruelties visited by the inhabitants of one corner of this pixel on the scarcely distinguishable inhabitants of some other corner. How frequent their misunderstandings, how eager they are to kill one another, how fervent their hatreds. Our posturings, our imagined self-importance, the delusion that we have some privileged position in the universe, are challenged by this point of pale light. Our planet is a lonely speck in the great enveloping cosmic dark. In our obscurity - in all this vastness - there is no hint that help will come from elsewhere to save us from ourselves.

There is nowhere else, at least in the near future, to which our species could migrate. Visit, yes. Settle, not yet. Like it or not, for the moment, the Earth is where we make our stand. It has been said that astronomy is a humbling and character-building experience. There is perhaps no better demonstration of the folly of human conceits than this distant image of our tiny world. To me, it underscores our responsibility to deal more kindly with one another and to preserve and cherish the pale blue dot, the only home we've ever known."

Carl Sagan's famous Pale Blue Dot speech given at Cornell University in 1994.

"To me, it underscores our responsibility to deal more kindly with one another and to preserve and cherish the pale blue dot, the only home we've ever known."

Words to contemplate during this Season of Lent.

Ian Gray

7th Arbroath BB

It has almost been a year since we entered Lockdown and life has changed for us all. In these unprecedented times the BB has offered a great service to engage with the boys with BB@Home or other social media platforms. We have informed our boys over the year, but it would appear none have taken up this challenge. We entered our 60th year as a company in September 2020 but have been unable to meet, and our year will end in much the same manner. On a good note, we have two boys who are reaching the end of

their Queen's Badge Course and this has been down to the hard work in replanning the course work by our National Team. The boys have been able to do work from home and the final part would normally be a residential weekend at Carronvale House, our Scottish Headquarters. Due to the current restrictions this will take the form of a Zoom meeting which the boys will be informed of in due course. It is hoped that a formal presentation to the boys will be able to take place in the summer.

Captain W. H. Ewart.

Theophilus

The First Commandment

You shall have no other gods before me Exodus 20:3

You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. Matthew 22:37-38.

The essence of true Christianity is to enthrone the Lord God in our lives. To honour, obey and serve him first of all. Yet how easy in our age of materialism to worship 'other gods' — a home, a sport, a bank balance, a thing, or perhaps that most secret rival of all to the Lord, 'self'.

Lord, I understand with my mind that you are God; that you have filled this teeming world with all its treasures. I know that you have entrusted us with all that you have made to enjoy and care for. And I know Lord, that I am to worship only you, for the gift of your love is that you should be my God.

Yet Lord, as I am alone before you, this Word of your first commandment convicts me of my failure. I find uncovered 'other gods' which try to gain first place in my thoughts and

affections. I have not enthroned you in my heart or served and loved you above all else.

The more I ponder your Word, the more I realise that I have not appreciated the privilege of your friendship. Blindly and madly I have run after fleeting fancies. I have raised up idols in my heart which I have adored, and which have absorbed all my efforts day after day. You, Lord, have often been forgotten.

My child, many times I have called you, but you have gone away refusing my voice. I have stood in your pathway, to confront you with my Presence, but you have turned aside. To win you with my love, I have answered your prayers. But you have hurried on without me. This is the sin of all humanity, to ignore my Word and spurn my call.

Lord, forgive my sin. Open my eyes anew to see your glory. Unstop my ears to hear your voice. Bend my proud will to turn to you truly. Melt my heart hard to receive you humbly.

Child, you call me LORD. And so I am. I have loved you eternally that you may love me in return. For I have made you for myself, and your heart can only find its rest in me.

David Searle

Guild News

Our February meeting was a craft evening when every member received material through the post to make a Valentine card, as a reminder of how much Jesus loves us, and also Bible verses to show how we can learn to love Him more.

Our meeting on the 22nd of February included a speaker! - though obviously not in the physical sense. We had invited Carla, our Youth Co-ordinator, to come along to give us an insight into the work she does - and still does, during these times of lockdown, although not face to face. May God continue to bless this work.

Our next meeting is on the 8th of March when we will hear how the Guild projects are progressing during this difficult time. As a Guild it's been very difficult to do our usual fundraisers for our projects but, as mentioned previously, we have been making Afternoon Tea deliveries. These have gone well and we really hope we can fulfil our outstanding orders once the no delivery rule is relaxed. We are also looking forward to our new projects which will be 'announced' around mid-April.

"Whose we are and whom we serve."

Messy Church

The month of February has marked an exciting milestone in the mission of our Messy Church outreach as we have delivered our 2,000th activity pack to families within our community!

When it was clear that our monthly Messy Church would have to be cancelled in March 2020, we felt that we had to try to replace it in some way as we had been building in strength and numbers over 2019 and early 2020 and I did not want to lose this momentum. We decided to move to a pack format for families to work through at home which included: a game, two crafts, a Bible story, a quiz, a colouring sheet, a worksheet, a link to a song and lyrics, a prayer activity and finally the words to the Messy Grace (along with all the materials required).

Initially, the intention was to offer this to families who were already part of our Messy Church. However we quickly de-

cided to open it up wider and posted on the 'Arbroath Online' Facebook page. We could not have predicted the fantastic response we had through this channel, which led to over 200 children signing up to a pack from more than one hundred families. We have delivered this resource to their doorsteps on the last Sunday of each month but have more recently had to change to a 'flatpack' format while we are not allowed to physically deliver - so have packed the activities in envelopes to be sent by Royal Mail. My hope and prayer is that we are able to continue with this resource provision until we can invite these families to a physical Messy Church some time in the future!

This is a fantastic example of how we have been maintaining contact with our children and families while also widening our reach to others within our local area as we have journeyed through the pandemic. If you would like any more information about the work we are continuing with, please contact Carla through email - (youth@arbroathstandrews.org.uk).

A QR Lent Journey

As you all know, Lent began on the 17th February - Ash Wednesday. We can't meet together as a church - however, we can still journey together! The Worship Core Group has set up a QR code event for Lent, with one to be added for each week 'till Easter. For those that don't know, QR codes are like barcodes that you scan with the camera on your mobile phone (although some older phone models may need an

app to use QR codes) which, once scanned contain information. In our case we will have URL links to songs, videos or readings that will help us each week as we go through Lent.

These QR codes will be tied to the railings outside the church. The first one has already been put up, so why not use your daily exercise to head on down and join us as we head towards Easter.

Dalitso Update

Dalitso Online Event - March 17th

On Wednesday 17th March at 7pm on Zoom, we will be holding our ZooMalawi event. We will be hearing from those supported by The Dalitso Project - children finishing primary and secondary school, young people in skills training and further education - and we will be reconnecting with young adults who left the programme a few years ago and are now working and supporting their families. AGM business will also be included at the event.

With supporters all over the world, this is a great opportunity to bring everyone together as we share videos of some of the young people who are benefiting from The Dalitso Project. Through your support, 100s of children and young people are being provided food, healthcare and education

every day.

Sign-up now by contacting us at

info@dalitso.org

speaking to any of the team

or giving me a call/text on 07877 256236.

Zoom details will be sent out a few days prior to the event. Even though you will need to provide your own tasty treats, no Malawian cakes this year :-(, it is an evening not to be missed. In what has been a challenging year for charities across the world, The Dalitso Project team are so grateful for the continued support that has allowed us to continue caring for over 300 young people. On their behalf, we thank you. We hope to see many of you online on the 17th.

Charis.



17th March 2021

JOIN US AS WE GET UP CLOSE TO SOME OF THE FOLKS IN OUR **DALITSO** PROGRAMMES





A Valentine card reminding us of Jesus' great love for us all.



Isobel built this lovely Guild snow-person who is looking very smart in Guild mask and scarf.