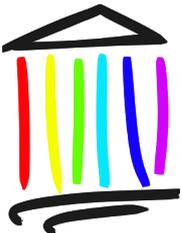


WELLINGTON CHURCH

Welcome one another as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God. (Romans 15:7)

We welcome into the life and worship of our congregation all people whatever their ethnic origin, gender, background, age, sexual orientation, mental or physical ability.
We affirm our diversity and the dignity of each person.

Love one another, as I have loved you. (John 15:12)



SUNDAY, 22ND MARCH 2020

Fourth Sunday in Lent

Gathering music

Words of welcome

Call to worship

Led by God to green pastures
we come to worship Him

By the still waters
we find our souls revived.

In the dark valley
we have no fear.

Anointed by His love,
**we dwell in the Lord's house,
surrounded by his love and mercy.**

Prayer of Approach

God of new and renewed community,
where two or three are gathered in your name,
you promise to be there.

You promise also
to be in parishes that meet this week online,
and in congregations that courageously keep on keeping on,
and in churches that try something very different today,
and even when we find ourselves alone.

Our children sing in Sunday school that the
church is not a building.

Let us be the church together, wherever we are,
gathered by your Spirit, as only your Spirit can gather.

And may we find you already in our midst,
as we close our eyes in prayer.

**Artist of souls,
you sculpted a people for yourself
out of the rocks of wilderness and fasting.
Help us as we take up your invitation to prayer and simplicity,
that the discipline of these days
may sharpen our hunger for the feast of your holy friendship,
and whet our thirst for the living water you offer
through Jesus Christ. Amen.**

Sung: For your generous providing (CH4 655)

Mark 12, 28-34: The First Commandment

One of the scribes came near and heard them disputing with one another, and seeing that he answered them well, he asked him, 'Which commandment is the first of all?' Jesus answered, 'The first is, "Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God, the Lord is one; you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength." The second is this, "You shall love your neighbour as yourself." There is no other commandment greater than these.' Then the scribe said to him, 'You are right, Teacher; you have truly said that "he is one, and besides him there is no other"; and "to love him with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the strength", and "to love one's neighbour as oneself",—this is much more important than all whole burnt-offerings and sacrifices.' When Jesus saw that he answered wisely, he said to him, 'You are not far from the kingdom of God.' After that no one dared to ask him any question.

Reflection

Sung: I waited patiently on God (CH4 31)

Prayers of gratitude and concern

Strong, sheltering God,

As we find ourselves unexpectedly restricted in our movement,
we bless you for all the beautiful things of home;
warmth and shelter when the wind outside is bitter
food for the body and for the soul
treasured gifts and treasured memories
stability, acceptance, care.

We bless you for the chance to be ourselves
for the tasks that weave the pattern of our days
for the sweet, familiar round of ordinary things.

Blessed are you, strong, sheltering God

Blessed are you, strong, sheltering God

In these days of great uncertainty,
we call to mind and give thanks for many blessings;
for those who speak from reason,
who know the science,
whose profession it is to protect.

May we hear the voices of informed wisdom,
and give thanks for what is already here:
the knowledge that overcomes ignorance,
the love that overcomes fear,
the community that includes the grace we all need.

Blessed are you, strong, sheltering God

Blessed are you, strong, sheltering God

As we become increasingly aware of our interdependence,
we call to mind, and give thanks for those many people,
who, with courage, commitment and cheerfulness,
are working long hours to keep us safe, provisioned and cared-for;
all NHS staff, especially those on the frontline of treatment,
for all carers, at home and in the community,
for food producers, distributors and providers,
for cleaners and all who provide essential public services,

Blessed are you, strong, sheltering God

Blessed are you, strong, sheltering God

(continued)

God of the good news that spreads faster than fear,
God of the courage that comes from the heart:
Be with us as anxieties rise and with us as uncertainty grows.
Be with us when children ask difficult questions,
and with us when parents seem farther away.
Remind us that to be a community does not always mean
to be physically present beside those we know well.
It also can mean being spiritually present
with those who feel very alone;
and so we pray especially for Wellington Church,
for all our members, especially those who are elderly,
vulnerable or isolated,
for our neighbouring churches, and for our community.
Blessed are you, strong, sheltering God
Blessed are you, strong, sheltering God

In the days and months to come
Be in the kind word we extend,
the offer of help, the note or phone call of concern.
Be in the prayer that we whisper,
and the laugh that we share,
so that even in a time of chaos,
we might breathe into life a new creation.
May these days of great disruption
bear out what is always true:
that we can reach others
with the love you provide
when our roots remain in you.
In the name of Jesus, who taught us to pray together:

**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.
Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours,
now and forever, Amen.**

Sung: Longing for light (CH4 543)

Closing responses

On our hearts and our houses

the blessing of God

In our coming and going

the peace of God

In our life and believing

The love of God

At our end and new beginning

**the arms of God to welcome us
and bring us home.**

And now may the God of hope fill us with all joy and peace in believing,
that we may abound in hope in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Amen

Grateful thanks to the Corrymeela Community, Northern Ireland, for many of
the prayers.

Organist: Alan Kitchen

TODAY - SUNDAY 22ND MARCH

**Worship Online - Morning Service - Fourth Sunday in Lent
Lenten Appeal Service**

conducted by the Rev. Dr. Kathy Galloway

NEXT SUNDAY – 22ND MARCH

Worship Online - Morning Service - Fifth Sunday in Lent

Minister's Blog – Week of 23rd March 2020

Psalm 37 – A Psalm for Fretters

By the Rev Dr Roger Sturrock



For those of us who are now obliged to self isolate and avoid normal social contacts in the light of the COVID-19 outbreak, life will become increasingly frustrating!

As time goes on we may be tempted to fret about our situation - especially if you are prone to fret like me!

I have always found that reading Psalm 37 is a good antidote to fretting.

The psalm is attributed to King David and suggests that David was going through a particularly tough and frustrating time when he wrote this psalm – he refers to his adversaries ‘the wicked’ in almost every verse. In our current situation replace the wicked with coronavirus. It gives a new dimension to the psalm!

What are the antidotes to fretting? David highlights 5 words that we should apply to ourselves:

1. Trust in the Lord and do good. Verse 3.
2. Take delight in the Lord. verse 4.
3. Commit your way to the Lord. verse 5.
4. Be still before the Lord. verse 7.
5. Wait patiently for Him. verse 7.

Barak Obama former president of the United States emphasises that a change in attitudes begins with ourselves:

“Change will not come if we wait for some other person or some other time. We are the ones we've been waiting for. We are the change that we seek.”

As we begin a new week with all of the uncertainties that may lie ahead, reflect and meditate on the 5 key words in the Psalm. They will do us all good!

A Celtic Rune of Hospitality – A Reflection by Dr Kathy Galloway

We saw a stranger yesterday.
We put food in the eating place,
drink in the drinking place
music in the listening place;
and with the sacred name of the triune God,
she blessed us and our house,
our cattle and our dear ones.
As the lark says in her song
'Often, often, often goes the Christ in the stranger's guise'

In the old days in the Highlands of Scotland, there was a tradition that at every meal, in addition to those laid for the people living in the house, an extra place should be set, even if no guest was expected. Then, if a stranger should unexpectedly arrive, they could be welcomed and fed without any difficulty.



This was the essence of highland hospitality, the belief that when you welcomed a stranger, however poor or unimportant they were, you were welcoming Jesus.

Welcome and hospitality is, of course, central to the life of Wellington Church, as it is, or should be, in all churches. We share bread and wine in communion, remembering the last supper of Jesus with his disciples. We sing hymns, listen to the choir anthems, or to Alan playing great music on the organ.

But we also enjoy conversation and make connections with friends and newcomers over tea or coffee and biscuits in the hall after worship. We attend recitals given by our choral scholars from the Royal Conservatoire of Music. We enjoy monthly congregational lunches, and serve soup and bread to students every day in the crypt. Eating together is a very important part of our common life.

But it's not the only thing we do together. We share the Word-and we share words: in Bible Studies and the Questions of Faith group, in the English Language Conversation Corner and the Prayer Groups. We even dance together, in congregational ceilidhs and the International Welcome Club. We do so much together. What will it mean for us, that not just for a holiday week, but for many weeks, for a length of time we don't yet know, we cannot be together? How can we sustain our relationships in this time of physical distancing?

In Mark 12, Jesus sets human relationships within the context of the two great commandments: *You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength and you shall love your neighbour as yourself.* Jesus always refused to place limits on the definition of who a neighbour is and told parables and performed healing acts which were characterised by inclusion. Jesus makes action the final criterion of neighbourliness, specifically, the practice of justice and

mercy, of compassion. We will be judged by how we love. It is only action that transforms, that brings about actual change, not just in the situation but also in us. Wherever love and compassion are found, God is there. Like the prophets, Jesus foresaw no rose-strewn path for the people of God. But even in the midst of disaster, persecution and chaos, his followers were neither to panic nor flee, nor to become fanatical and obsessed. Instead, he told them they should stand firm, and lean on the Holy Spirit.

We know now what we need to do to love our neighbours; both the ones in this church, and the ones who live next door, the ones we work with, the ones we socialize with. We need, as a matter of extreme urgency, to give each other space. We need to stay at home, not go visiting, work at home if possible, stay away from the streets except for absolutely necessary journeys. Our exercise should be confined as much as possible to walking at a two-metre/six-and-a-half-foot distance from others. Even with our families, or those we live with or must meet, we should observe this distance as much as possible. We need to observe good hygiene, wash our hands thoroughly very frequently, refrain from touching our faces and use tissues. It is especially important if we are over 70, have an underlying health condition or are pregnant.

There are so many losses in this regime. We will miss our families, especially, some of us, our grandchildren, whom we are used to looking after at times. We will miss the physical presence of friends, our social activities, our outings, the colleagues we are used to seeing every day at work.

But even so, there is still much support we can give one another. Phone calls, social media messages, letters and cards for those who are not internet users, just checking in in these ways with those who live alone, will all become much more important. Doing some shopping for a neighbour who can't get out. There are many people for whom this is a truly terrifying time; because they are worried about losing their jobs or even their homes, because they are fearful of catching the virus or for their families, because they are already very isolated. There are some whose lives, grim already, will likely become even grimmer-people who are homeless or living in extreme poverty. If we can afford to, even small monetary donations to food banks, homeless and refugee charities will make a huge difference at this time.

And perhaps we may find, in time, that there are also gifts in this time. The gift of time, for a start, to not need to rush so much, to read, to listen to the radio or watch programmes we always meant to watch. And this is also a time for reflection and prayer. Though it happens in diverse locations, in solitude, praying for each other is actually one of the important ways in which people can connect, even while apart. Though it may be personal, it is never private. It is a bit like logging in to a network or weaving oneself into a web; it is the prayer of a community. Praying for other people can be an opening ourselves up to the reality, the gift, the struggles and suffering of others, being present to and with them insofar as we are able, even if it's only for one hour on one day of a week.

And perhaps this might bring us closer to Jesus at this time of Lent, when we remember the forty days he spent in solitude in the desert. As we set out on this journey, on a path we have never been down before, and don't know where it will lead us, let's commit ourselves to the guidance of the Holy Spirit, as Jesus urged. I want to end by sharing with you a poem which someone posted on the Wellington website this week, which I think speaks to our condition.

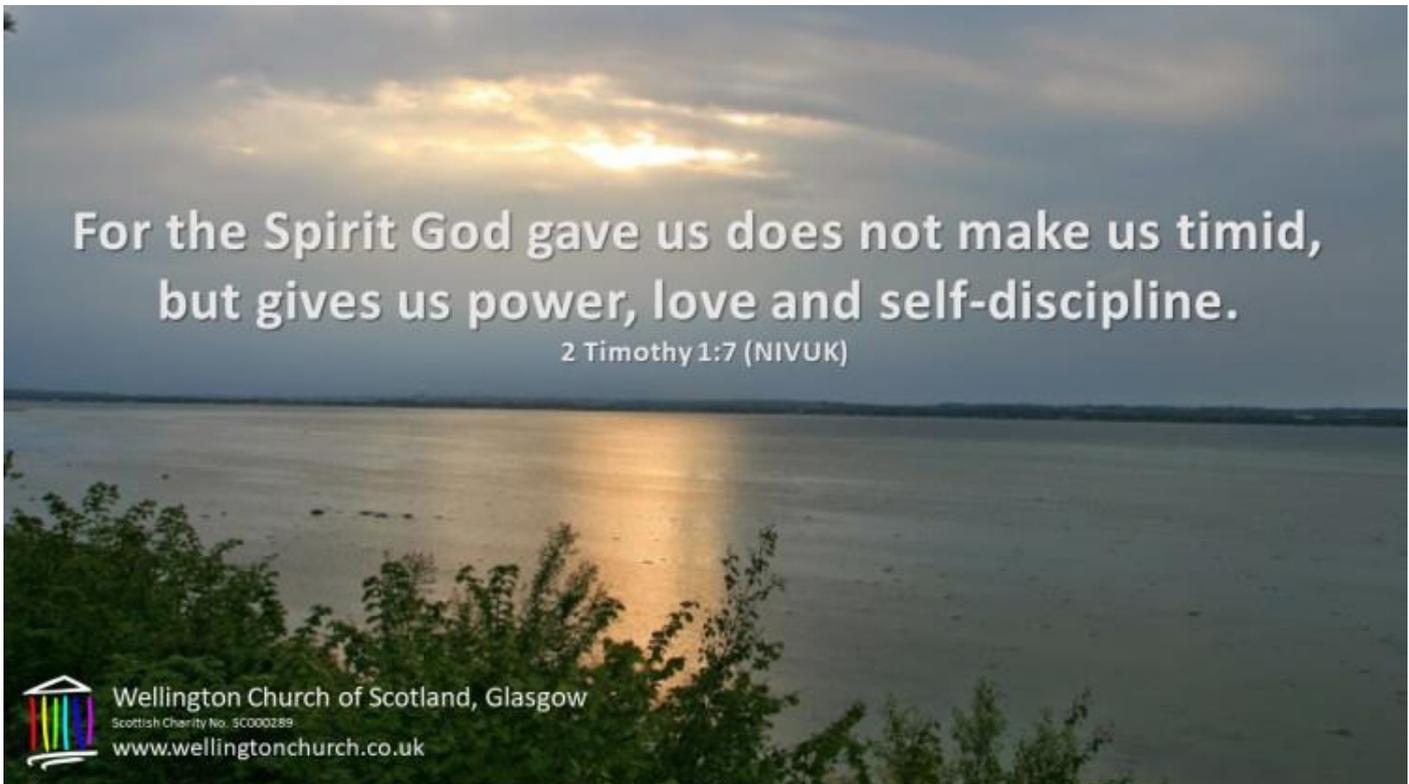
It's called *Pandemic*:

*What if you thought of it
as the Jews consider the Sabbath-
the most sacred of times?
Cease from travel.
Cease from buying and selling.
Give up, just for now,
On trying to make the world
different than it is.
Sing. Pray. Touch only those
To whom you commit your life.
Centre down.*

*And when your body has become still,
Reach out with your heart.
Know that we are connected
In ways that are terrifying and beautiful.
(You could hardly deny it now).
Know that our lives
Are in one another's hands.
(Surely, that has come clear).
Do not reach out your hands.
Reach out your heart.
Reach out your words.
Reach out all the tendrils
of compassion that move, invisibly,
where we cannot touch.*

*Promise this world your love-
for better or for worse,
in sickness and in health,
so long as we all shall live.*

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For the Spirit God gave us does not make us timid,
but gives us power, love and self-discipline.

2 Timothy 1:7 (NIVUK)



Wellington Church of Scotland, Glasgow

Scottish Charity No. SC000289

www.wellingtonchurch.co.uk

MORE NOTES & DATES

LENTEN APPEAL - Three projects were chosen by the Mission and Outreach Committee for our support: **Dash Club, CrossReach** and **Families Together Project**. We are encouraging those still to donate to send your donations to the church. If a Gift Aid Envelope is required, please email the church office at: wellingtonchurch@btinternet.com and one can be sent out by post. Cheques should be made payable to: **Wellington Church of Scotland**.

WELLINGTON NEWS The deadline for material for the April edition is **Wednesday, 25th March at 12 noon**. If you have any news or articles for inclusion we would be very pleased to hear from you: email contributions: wellingtonchurch@btinternet.com or linda.m.brown@btinternet.com

LIFE AND WORK - Catherine Shaw Dunn has the current edition at home and will contact subscribers to arrange delivery.

MEMORIAL SERVICE - Thank you for coming to the Japanese curry lunch and the 9th anniversary meeting for the East Japan Earthquake. Donations of £276.34 were raised, which will be sent to Noda and Fudai Village Offices, Iwate, Japan, both along the Pacific coast and affected by tsunamis. Fumi and Yushin

INTERIM MODERATOR

Rev. Dr. Stewart Gillan

Tel: 07341 822058

Email:

SGillan@churchofscotland.org.uk

ASSISTING MINISTER

Rev. Dr. Roger Sturrock

Tel: 0141 942 8001

Mob: 07970 535358

Email:

RSturrock@churchofscotland.org.uk

LOCUM

Rev. Liz Johnson Blythe

Tel: 07885 536984

Email: lblythe@wellingtonchurch.co.uk

WELLINGTON CHURCH

77 Southpark Avenue, Glasgow, G12 8LE

www.wellingtonchurch.co.uk Telephone 0141 339 0454

Email: wellingtonchurch@btinternet.com

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