

Encouraging YOU to know JESUS

All my hope on God is founded

Please note that our Interim Moderator and Locum, Rev. Rona Young, will be visiting those with pastoral needs by telephone during the Covid-19 pandemic. If in need of pastoral care, please contact Rona by telephone on (01292) 471982.

The Minister's Message

Welcome and Intimations

Good morning and a very warm welcome to everyone watching this online service from Newton Wallacetown Church.

As always, the Extraordinary Times will be available after 12 noon. The very first one was sent out on 22nd March and we would never have thought then, that we would be at edition 31 with no idea of when the pandemic will be over. Thanks again to Sheila for producing this week after week.

We also continue to have our prayer time at 12.30pm beginning with the Lord's Prayer and continuing with our own private prayers. The box for the Foodbank is in the vestibule every Sunday.

If you wish to book a seat for next Sunday's service, please phone Sheila Innes on 01292 269705 on Thursday between 9.30am and 12.00noon. You can also email her at sheilainnes11@gmail.com between 12.00noon on Thursday and 12.00noon on Friday.

There will be a Zoom Presbytery meeting on Tuesday evening when it is to be agreed that no church will be able to call a minister before May 2021. This is not good news but I like to keep you up-to-date with what is happening.

Presbytery has now approved our risk assessment forms for the reopening of the church halls and thanks are due to Nick Sibley, Hugh Cree and Phil McAnespie for all their work. Each hall will be cleaned thoroughly then the halls will be opened gradually beginning with Room Sixty.

Call to Worship from Matthew's Gospel:

Jesus said, *"Come to me all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest."*

Hymn "I will enter his gates"

Prayer

Let us pray,

Almighty God, you are far beyond our understanding, and yet you call us to approach your holy presence. Whether we are at home or here in the church, we come before you with adoration in our hearts. Your thoughts are not our thoughts, neither are your ways our ways, and yet you call us to know your way and to think about your truth.

We cannot see you, yet in every part of the universe, in the earth, sea and sky, you make your beauty and your grandeur for everyone to see, and in your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, you have revealed yourself in your majesty and your love.

Loving God, draw near to us, we pray, and help us to draw near to you. Come to us through your Holy Spirit, speak to each one of us through this act of worship and deepen our faith, we pray.

But Loving Father, before we continue to worship you, we have to confess our many faults and failings. So often, we are concerned with our outward appearance more than our inner reality. We fool ourselves into thinking that all is well, when in our hearts we know that much is wrong.

Loving Father, we believe that all our sins are forgiven through the death of Jesus upon the cross.

In a few moments of silence, let us confess our own personal sins about our relationship with our God, our relationship with others, and the things that we have said or done that are wrong.....

Lord God, through the empty tomb and the resurrection of Jesus, we know that you do forgive us, and you are with us as each new day dawns. Make us your people, unburdened by the past, unafraid of the future and joyful in the present.

This we pray through Jesus Christ our Lord,

Amen.

Children's Talk – Kay Bell

Hymn *“Jesus' love is very wonderful”*

Bible reading: **Genesis 32: 22–32** – John Hay

Jacob wrestles with God

22 That night Jacob got up and took his two wives, his two female servants and his eleven sons and crossed the ford of the Jabbok. 23 After he had sent them across the stream, he sent over all his possessions. 24 So Jacob was left alone, and a man wrestled with him till daybreak. 25 When the man saw that he could not overpower him, he touched the socket of Jacob's hip so that his hip was wrenched as he wrestled with the man. 26 Then the man said, 'Let me go, for it is daybreak.' But Jacob replied, 'I will not let you go unless you bless me.'

27 The man asked him, 'What is your name?' 'Jacob,' he answered.

28 Then the man said, 'Your name will no longer be Jacob, but Israel, because you have struggled with God and with humans and have overcome.'

29 Jacob said, 'Please tell me your name.' But he replied, 'Why do you ask my name?' Then he blessed him there.

30 So Jacob called the place Peniel, saying, 'It is because I saw God face to face, and yet my life was spared.'

31 The sun rose above him as he passed Peniel, and he was limping because of his hip. 32 Therefore to this day the Israelites do not eat the tendon attached to the socket of the hip, because the socket of Jacob's tendon was touched near the tendon.

Hymn *“King of kings, majesty”*

Sermon **“The God of Jacob”**

Let us pray,

May the words of my mouth and the meditation of all our hearts, be acceptable in your sight, O Lord, our strength and our Redeemer. Amen

In verse 3 of Psalm 146 are the words, “*Blessed is he whose help is **the God of Jacob.***” There are 150 Psalms divided into five books and Psalm 146 is obviously in the fifth section. We know that David wrote many of the psalms but this is an anonymous psalm.

But why does this psalmist say, “*the God of Jacob?*” Why not the God of Abraham or the God of Moses or the God of Elijah? Why the God of Jacob?

The phrase the “*the God of Jacob*” is used 12 times in the psalms, and therefore it had particular appeal to the psalmists – and it was also used by the prophets. It seems that they prayed with greater confidence when they remembered it was to the God of Jacob that they were praying. They also sang with more enthusiasm when they reflected that it was the God of Jacob who was listening to their praises.

And they faced life with greater courage when they knew that the God of Jacob was with them. Whatever the reason, they found that if they called God, the God of Jacob, they had a real sense of strength and of comfort.

So, this morning, let us think about why we might turn to the God of Jacob as our strength.

First of all, if he is the God of Jacob, then he is **a God who will make something out of ordinary, fallible human beings.**

As I said, we could refer to God as the God of Abraham. He was that, but somehow Abraham towers above us, and he is the kind of person who might only appear once in a century.

We could refer to God as the God of Moses. He was certainly that, but Moses was hidden in mystery and darkness and in solitude when he met God on the mountain top.

We could also refer to God as the God of Elijah. He was that too, but at the end of his life Elijah went up in a whirlwind to heaven.

So, we could think of the God of Abraham, the God of Moses or the God of Elijah, but when we say the God of Jacob – we feel that is different. When we remember the God of Jacob, **then we know there is hope for us all.**

Isaac and Rebecca had twin boys Jacob and Esau. Jacob was the younger twin, born after Esau. Jacob was very cunning and cheated his brother out of his birth-right, and then pretending to his father that he was Esau, he stole his father’s blessing.

To escape from Esau’s threat of killing him, Jacob escaped to go to his uncle in Haran. On the way there he had a dream, in which he was promised by God, that all of his descendants would possess the land of Canaan, the land through which Jacob was travelling.

We read in Genesis chapter 28 about Jacob’s dream at Bethel. The Lord said, “*I am the Lord, the God of your father Abraham and the God of Isaac. I will give you and your descendants the land on which you are lying....all people on earth will be blessed by you and your offspring.*”

Jacob was a mixture – he made many mistakes, he sinned, he repented. He was an ordinary human being, and so if we think of **the God of Jacob**, we know that God can use us too. Perhaps there are times when we think that our very ordinariness is shutting us out from God.

One day, Robert Burns was walking along Princes Street in Edinburgh with a fashionable acquaintance, when he saw a poorly dressed peasant, a man from Ayrshire. He ran up to him and, with both hands, greeted him with warm affection.

Later, when he re-joined his companion, the companion said, “*Really you shouldn’t...that common creature...that peasant...*”

Burns’ eyes flashed with fire. “*You fool,*” he cried, “*It was not the clothes that the peasant was wearing that I spoke to, but the man within!*” It is not our ordinariness that God sees, but the person within!

If God could work a spiritual miracle out of Jacob with all his faults and failings, then he can also do the same with you and me. Blessed is the person who has **the God of Jacob** to help them.

Secondly, if he is the God of Jacob, he is a **God who guides and plans our lives.**

Many of you will remember the Paraphrase, "*O God of Bethel*" and it was there at Bethel, Jacob stopped for the night because the sun had set. He took a stone and put it under his head like a pillow, and lay down to sleep.

It was there that he had the dream that I referred to earlier. He dreamt that he saw a stairway leading up to heaven, with angels going up and coming down on it. Then the Lord spoke to him, saying at verse 15, "*I am with you and will watch over you wherever you go.*"

When he woke up, he said, "*Surely the Lord is in this place and I was not aware of it.*" Jacob made the great discovery that there is an unseen God, who guides and plans our lives. Jacob discovered that he was walking on a path that had already been prepared for him.

This was one of the great discoveries of his life, and it is also a new beginning for us, when we discover that God is with us every step of the way. As I know I have said before, it is so often when we look back, that we see that God has been guiding us, but it is when we are aware that God is guiding us each and every day, that life becomes much more meaningful.

So, do we really trust God to guide us? We have never lived through a pandemic like this, and it seems to be getting harder and harder every day. I do not believe that God meant this pandemic to happen, he did not plan it but he's with us through it. We hear of the number of people with the virus rising, not only here in Great Britain, but throughout Europe as well and the thought of the winter ahead, with perhaps stricter restrictions in Scotland, means that we can feel quite depressed. Let us hear again the words of Jesus from Matthew chapter 11 – the same words we heard as our call to worship this morning: "*Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.*"

And, in the 1st letter of Peter, chapter 5, he says, "*Cast all your anxieties upon him (God) because he cares for you.*" It is not easy to do, but unless we give all our worries to God, then we do not experience the release and freedom this brings us. Let us remember God knows all that we are going through.

As we shall sing from MP 269:

"I do not know what lies ahead,
the way I cannot see;
yet one stands near to be my guide,
he will show the way to me.

*I know who holds the future,
and he'll guide me with his hand;
with God things don't just happen,
everything by him is planned.*

*So, as I face tomorrow,
with its problems great and small,
I'll trust the God of miracles,
give to him my all."*

God is with us in all the different circumstances of our lives.

And, there is a third reason why it is important to realise that the God of Jacob will help us. We know that he uses ordinary, imperfect human beings, that he is a God who plans and guides our lives, but he is also a **God of infinite patience.**

Despite his experience of the night at Bethel, we cannot help but feel that we expect that Jacob would still to go back to his old ways of scheming and cheating people once again. There is no

evidence that he does that, but Jacob has not given himself completely to God, and in his infinite patience God refuses to give up on Jacob.

In chapter 32 we read that Jacob is preparing to meet his brother Esau again. Jacob sent his cattle and donkeys, sheep and goats and man servants and maidservants.

He is told that his brother is coming to meet him with four hundred men. Jacob is frightened and distressed, but then he prays to God. At verse 10, he says to the Lord, *"I am unworthy of all the kindness and faithfulness you have shown to your servant"* and then at verse 11, he prays, *"Save me, I pray, from the hand of my brother Esau, for I am afraid he will attack me and my wives and my children."* This is the first time that we read about Jacob praying to God.

Jacob takes his two wives, his two maidservants and his eleven sons and crossed the ford of the Jabbok, a tributary of the river Jordan. Then he sent on all his possessions until he was left alone.

As we heard at verse 24, he wrestles all night with an unknown man. Maybe he was thinking, *"Who can this be?" "Is it Esau?" "Is it an angel?" or "Is it God himself?"*

As dawn approached, it seems that Jacob thought he was going to win the struggle, but then he is struck on the hip and it is thrown out of joint. At that moment, Jacob came face to face with his own powerlessness and he encountered his own weakness.

The man said, *"Let me go, for it is daybreak,"* but Jacob replied, *"I will not let you go until you bless me."*

The man said, *"Your name will no longer be Jacob, but Israel, because you have struggled with God and have overcome."* His new name means a new beginning for Jacob, a new identity, and a new life. Jacob called this place Peniel, which in Hebrew means *"the face of God."* He believed that there he had seen God face to face.

"Blessed is he whose help is the God of Jacob." When we think of the God of Jacob, we know that we are worshipping a God who accepts us as ordinary human beings with all our faults and failings, a God whom we can trust to guide us, even during these dark days of a pandemic and a God who is infinitely patient with us. He wants us to acknowledge deep in our hearts that he is our God, and that we have given our lives to him.

Do you feel that God is within you? As it says in the hymn, have you given God your all?

Amen.

Hymn *"I do not know what lies ahead"*

Prayer

Let us pray,

Living God, we thank you for your constant goodness throughout our lives, the way you strengthen us, the way you challenge us, and the way you renew us day by day.

We thank you that you speak to us through your Word, and offer us instruction for daily life. We rejoice too, Lord God, that you care for us as individuals – each chosen, valued and special in your sight. We thank you that you have been watching over us during the past week, that you are with us now, and you will always be with us whatever the future may hold.

Eternal and Ever-blessed God, we pray now for all those who feel frightened of the future, those who are really anxious at the present time.

Once again Loving God, we are remembering all those who have lost a loved one due to coronavirus, those who are ill in hospital, especially those in an ICU. Bless all the members of the NHS and all Carers having to fight against Covid for a second time. We pray for all world leaders and those in Government who are faced with making such difficult decisions in England and the three devolved parts of the United Kingdom.

We ask your blessing on Newton Wallacetown Church, knowing now there is no hope of being allowed to call a minister before May of 2021. Continue, we pray to strengthen and uphold all the Office Bearers and members of this congregation through the months that lie ahead. May they continue to put their trust in you, Loving God.

We pray now for the members of this church family, and others known to ourselves, in special need of our prayers this morning. Bless Chrissie Martin now in Station 12 after a spell in the HD unit at Ayr hospital, Jean Allardyce in the Biggart hospital and Elsie Burgess seriously ill in Berelands Care Home. Bless too all their relatives having to cope with all present restrictions when they visit.

Heavenly Father, we know that in Jesus, we see your great concern and love for the world, and for each and every one of us. Help us in the week that lies ahead, to turn to you and be strengthened by you, the God of Jacob.

This we pray through Jesus Christ our Saviour and Lord,
Amen.

Hymn "Be thou my vision"

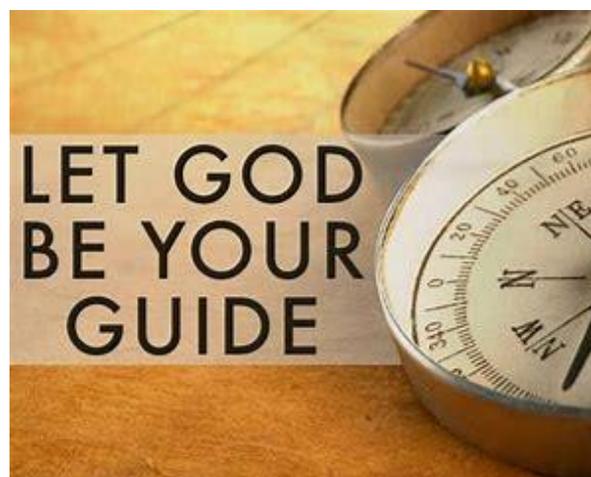
Benediction

*And now may the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ,
the love of God*

*and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit,
be with you all, and all those you love
this day and for evermore.*

Amen.

Rona



Please remember in your prayers this week all of the people below in hospital, care homes or in their own homes:-

Mrs Margaret Burgess (Berelands Care Home)	Mrs Christine Martin (back in Ayr Hospital)
Mrs Nettie Clarke (now home from hospital)	Mrs Jean Allardyce (in Urquhart Ward, Biggart)
Mrs Anne McRonald	Mrs Maude Smillie
Mrs Rae Beattie	Mrs Heather McLeod
Mrs Betty McPherson	Mrs May Wilkinson
Mrs Maie Dickie	Mrs Catherine MacDonald
Mrs Isa Lawrie	Mrs Jean McCamily
Mrs Anna Irving	Mrs Patricia Fraser

Please let the Session Clerk know of any member/relative who goes in to hospital or is ill at home. For those in hospital, please ensure you have their given Christian name which may not necessarily be the name by which s/he is usually known.

Prayer Chain Anyone having a request for prayer may contact Sheena Hunter on 01292 570200 or e-mail her at sheenachunter@hotmail.com

NWC is open for worship The church is now open for worship at 11.00am on Sundays. To comply with Scottish Government and Church of Scotland Guidelines, places available in the church building are limited therefore systems are in place at present for booking seats. Please be aware that, depending on demand, it may not be possible for you to worship in church every week so that we can be fair to all members of the church family. To book a seat, please either phone Sheila between **9.30am** and **12.00noon** on **Thursday** or e-mail her between **12.00noon** on **Thursday** and **12.00noon** on **Friday**. Her contact details are on page 8.

Our streamed service online will continue as normal at 11.00am on Sundays.

Salvation Army Foodbank Please remember that donations should now be left in the box in the vestibule as you come to worship. There is no longer an afternoon collection on Sundays.

Difficult times While these are times of worry and hardship for many people, the Church is also struggling financially. If you are able, we would be most grateful if you would consider making an extra donation (according to means) to help cover ongoing bills etc.. Please contact Janis Meredith whose details are on page 8. Anyone wishing to donate to Ayr: Newton Wallacetown Church online can use this link:- <https://www.churchofscotland.org.uk/news-and-events/news/2020/support-your-local-church-with-our-new-online-donations-system> Thank you. *John Bell*

Online Donations Do you shop online? If you do please remember that you can raise donations for the church at no extra cost to yourself. All you have to do is go to <https://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/> and register Newton Wallacetown Church of Scotland as your charity, then shop at the many different retailers who donate through the site. Remember though, that you have to go to the retailer through easyfundraising.

You can also raise donations when you shop at Amazon. Instead of shopping at the usual site go to <https://smile.amazon.co.uk/> and register Ayr: Newton Wallacetown Church of Scotland as your charity and the business will make a donation to the church on qualifying purchases.

Remember **Streaming of our morning service** conducted this week by Rev. Rona Young and next week by Gary McCleary will commence at **11.00am** then our **prayer time** starts at **12.30pm** with the Lord's Prayer followed by personal prayers. This helps to bring us together to reach out to him in prayer while we are distancing physically.

Birthdays This week we wish a very Happy Birthday to each of the following:-

21st October Fay Cooper (90 years young) and **22nd October Warren Corrigan**



Ayr: Newton Wallacetown Church of Scotland

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