

Encouraging YOU to know JESUS

*Christ's love creates unity in the midst of diversity*

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

## The Minister's Message

Good morning and a very warm welcome to you all to this online service from Newton Wallacetown Church. This is Father's Day. I remember when working full time, Tom used to say to me I spoke about Mother's Day, but not Father's Day!

I do hope all fathers and all the men watching, and everyone, fathers, grandfathers, boys and girls, young folk and ladies too, I hope you all have a great day.

**Intimations** – This service will be available in the Extraordinary Times from 12 noon and we join together for our prayer time at 12.30pm. We begin with the Lord's Prayer and then we follow with our own personal prayers.

If you wish to donate to the Salvation Army Foodbank, please come to the church this afternoon between 2pm and 3.30pm. This week it will be run by Ian and Irene Gibson.

It was announced on Thursday that, in Phase 2, churches are opening for private prayer. However, this would mean a restricted attendance, social distancing in a church ready for this and strict hygiene at entry and when leaving.

All Kirk Sessions have to agree when their churches are ready to be open. The Church of Scotland, along with the Scottish Government, has produced a 26-page document which has to be followed, and then a risk assessment has to take place. This will take time and no church will be opening for some time yet.

Finally, some sad news. Abi's father, Pierre, sadly passed away on Thursday after a long illness. John, our Session Clerk, has spoken to Abi on the phone and passed on the condolences from everyone in Newton Wallacetown Church. We will remember Abi, Elisée and the family in our prayers later in the service.

Our Call to Worship this morning is from Psalm 133: *"How good and pleasant it is, when brothers and sisters live together in harmony."*

**Hymn MP 428**     *"Lord for the years,"*

## Prayer

Let us pray,

Living and Loving God,  
we come before you this morning to offer you our praise and our worship. We acknowledge you are our God and we worship you for your greatness and power. We marvel at your great love and compassion for each and every one of us and we come before you in awe and wonder.

Eternal and ever-blessed God,  
draw near to us and help us to draw near to you. Come to us, through your Holy Spirit and help us to open our hearts to the risen Christ. Speak to us through the worship offered to you today, touch each of our hearts in the way that we need.

Loving Father, we know Jesus forgave his enemies, even when he was in agony on the cross, but there are times when we find it hard to forgive.

Forgive us, Loving Father, that there are times when we do not hear your voice, and there are times we do not want to hear what you are saying to us.

Forgive us that it is our own selfishness, or own blindness that prevents us from recognising you in every part of our lives. In a few moments of silence, let us confess our own personal sins to our Heavenly Father....

Have mercy upon us, O God, and help us make a new beginning. Teach us, we pray, to trust in your strength rather than our own.

Accept all these our prayers, in the name and for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord,  
Amen.

Let us hear the word of God. The Bible passages will be read this morning by Samuel Williams and David McMahan.

### **Bible reading (1)     Ephesians 4:1 - 6**

*Unity and maturity in the body of Christ*

<sup>1</sup> As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received. <sup>2</sup> Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. <sup>3</sup> Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. <sup>4</sup> There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to one hope when you were called; <sup>5</sup> one Lord, one faith, one baptism; <sup>6</sup> one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.

### **Bible reading (2)     John 17: 20-26**

*Jesus prays for all believers*

<sup>20</sup> 'My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, <sup>21</sup> that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also

be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me. 22 I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one – 23 I in them and you in me – so that they may be brought to complete unity. Then the world will know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.

24 ‘Father, I want those you have given me to be with me where I am, and to see my glory, the glory you have given me because you loved me before the creation of the world.

25 ‘Righteous Father, though the world does not know you, I know you, and they know that you have sent me. 26 I have made you known to them, and will continue to make you known in order that the love you have for me may be in them and that I myself may be in them.’

Praise Band will sing **Hymn MP 1151** “Amazing Grace!”

### **Sermon** “The Body of Christ”

Let us pray, “May the words of my mouth, the meditations of all our hearts, be acceptable in your sight, O Lord, our strength and our redeemer.” Amen.

We read in the Gospels that Jesus had a tremendous concern for every individual. After the death of George Floyd, the positive side of “*Black Lives Matter*” has been to highlight how racism is still such a real problem in our society today in America, here in Great Britain and all over the world. I know this also has opened the way for those intent on causing riots and violence to surface once again.

However, we saw on Wednesday evening that when the four football teams from the English Premier League resumed that , during the first 12 matches, every player’s name on their shirt was replaced with “*Black Lives Matter*.”

They also “took a knee” as well as having a minute’s silence before kick-off for those who had died through Covid 19.

As we know, a very important part of the Good News is that every person matters to God, but it is also true that Jesus calls us as individuals, not to stay in isolation, but to join in the community of God’s people, in other words to belong to the family of God.

No doubt you are thinking, we cannot be the family of God during lockdown! I am speaking in an empty church – apart from Neil at the back – and we are not together as a congregation.

But as I mentioned two weeks ago, details appear on Facebook of comments by church members and others watching, and so we are united in Spirit on a Sunday morning through these online services. I looked at the numbers and 107 watched the service last Sunday morning, in the evening it had been seen by 212 people and on Monday evening by 286 people! It is truly wonderful how modern technology has helped us during all these weeks of lockdown - to God be the glory!

In chapter 2:20 of Paul’s letter to the Ephesians he says, “*You are members of God’s household, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone.*”

The cornerstone was the most important stone in the church. The church was first built up by the apostles, and then Paul, and now well over 2,000 years later, it is up to us to build up the church family in NWC. Even in lockdown, and although this church has now been vacant for over a year, through our online services, we are coming together and growing as God’s people in this church.

As we think of Jesus as the cornerstone of the church, we remember that he is also the cornerstone of our lives. We sang in the first two lines of the last verse of our first hymn, “*Lord for the years*”

“*Lord for ourselves, in living power remake us –  
self on the cross and Christ upon the throne.*”

Jesus is to be first in all of our lives, and I hope that all of you watching this morning, feel that is true for you in your lives.

Jesus said that love was to be the hallmark of his disciples – and he prayed that by the loving unity of their lives together, others would know and believe the truth about him.

This is exactly what happened in the Early Church. As the apostles worshipped together, prayed together, worked together and witnessed together, day by day, God added to their number, those who were being saved.

However, we know that down through the centuries, and even in the present day, the church has not remained united in this way. There must be hundreds of different Christian denominations throughout the world, and they are not always united and loving towards one another.

Coventry Cathedral, dating from the 14<sup>th</sup> century, was reduced to ruins in one air-raid during the night of Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> November, 1940. On that night, Coventry suffered the longest air-raid of any one night on any British city, during the Second World War.

However, the cathedral was destroyed by fire bombs and not high explosives, and so the outer walls, the west tower and the spire remained intact, but the wooden roof, the heavy oak ceiling, the pews, the floor and the screen were completely destroyed.

The decision to rebuild the cathedral was made the following day, although it was 16 years before the foundation stone was eventually laid. It was decided to build the new Cathedral, leaving the shell of the medieval building, to serve as a fitting reminder of the futility of war.

Within the new Coventry Cathedral, there is a Chapel of Unity that stands as a witness to the faith that we should, and the hope that we will all be one.

It would be a place where Christians of different denominations could grow together – by mutual understanding, common prayer and joint service to the community. Part of the Declaration of the Council to administer the chapel, reads,

*We, who belong to different denominations, now set apart this place as a Chapel of Unity, for the worship of God, and acknowledge our Lord Jesus Christ as Saviour of the whole world.”* This Declaration was re-affirmed in September 1960 by the successors of the original members, when the foundation stone inscribed *“That they may all be one”* was laid at the entrance to the present chapel.

Our Gospel reading was part of Jesus’ prayer for his disciples shortly before his death. He prayed, not only for own disciples, but for those who will believe in him in the future, and that means you and me.

We heard in chapter 17: 21, *“I pray that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you.”*

Jesus is saying something truly wonderful here. There is the unity between Jesus and his Father, and Jesus prays that his followers may know the same unity.

Unity is not something that is forced upon the church, it is something that people who belong to the Body of Christ know deep in their hearts. At verse 23 Jesus says, *“May they be brought to complete unity....”*

Jesus is speaking about spiritual unity. When a person is born again, they belong to Christ and therefore realise, that they belong to everyone else who belongs to Christ.

This is not the same as the different denominations coming together as one. Jesus is speaking about a unity from within, whereas different denominations coming together, are often groups of people trying to relate to one another, without considering first their relationship with God.

Our first Bible reading was from Ephesians chapter 4. Paul is writing to the Ephesians about *“Unity in the Body of Christ.”*

At verse 4 we heard that he describes the basis on which our Christian unity is founded. *“There is one body and one Spirit – just as you were called to one hope when you were called.”*

There is one body – Jesus is the head of the body and the church is the body. The oneness of the members of the church is essential for the work of Jesus Christ.

There is one Spirit - the word *“pneuma”* in Greek means both spirit and breath. Unless we have breath in our bodies, then we will die, and the vitalising breath of the body of the Church is the Holy Spirit.

There is one hope to our calling – we are all striving to the one goal – a world redeemed in Christ.

And so, Paul writes in verse 5, *“there is one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of us all, who is over all and through all and in all.”*

There is one Lord – the nearest to a creed in the Early Church was the short sentence, *“Jesus Christ is Lord.”*

There is one faith – by faith, the New Testament nearly always means the complete commitment of the Christian to Jesus Christ.

And, there is one Baptism – In the early Church this usually meant adult baptism, because men and women were coming direct from Judaism or paganism into the Christian faith. Baptism was therefore a public declaration of faith.

Therefore, the unity Paul means is a spiritual unity that comes from within. It is not something we can create or organise, it is given by God, and we are called to recognise it and nurture it.

It is extremely significant that love is an important element in the passage we heard. Paul says in verse 2, *“Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love.”* Further on in verse 15 he says, *“speaking the truth in love,”* and at the end of verse 16 he says, *“From him (Christ) the whole body ..... grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.”*

True Christian love involves concern for one another, and for us all to minister to one another, even in lockdown! Where there is love, we can all have different opinions, love encourages an open atmosphere of sharing and growing.

Jesus knows we all have our faults and failings. He saw different examples of this in his own self-seeking disciples, when they became ambitious for positions of influence within the future kingdom of God, and they also argued amongst themselves, as to who was the greatest.

But Jesus never withdrew his love from his disciples, instead he loved them unconditionally, and he still loves each and every one of us unconditionally today.

Paul says that God has given us different gifts, to equip his people for service and to build up the body of Christ. No one is gifted for everything. Things get done when we work together and draw upon the great variety of gifts given by God.

Even these services during lockdown, need someone or some people with the technical knowledge, those who are musical to play for the hymns, people to read the Bible passages and someone to preach.

There are so many people phoning each other or emailing one another these days, and so together we are continuing to build up the Body of Christ in this church – and beyond. We all need each other to be encouraged, strengthened in our faith.

So, although not together this morning, we are united as the Body of Christ by our love for Jesus. There has never been a time like this, when we cannot share the warmth physically, but that the love for each other is still there.

Amen.

**Hymn MP 411**      "Let there be love shared among us."

**Prayer**

Let us pray,

Sovereign God,

We give you thanks that we belong to the Body of Christ in this church. We know that over the centuries you have called people to serve you, from all different walks of life, with all different kinds of backgrounds.

We rejoice that today, you have called us to be your people, your disciples. We thank you for the friends we have made, for the faith that we share and for the love that binds us together even although we are not gathered together this morning.

Loving God,

Having heard the sad news about Abi's father, we pray for him, Elisée, all their family and the wider Ngunga family. Strengthen and uphold them at this difficult time.

We bring before you now, the members of our church family who are in hospital, who have been in hospital, or who have a family member seriously ill at the present time.

Lord God you know all their names and in a few moments of silence, we pray for those we know in special need of our prayers today.....

Bless each person Lord. You know their needs better than we do, and we pray you will meet their needs.

Gracious God,

We pray now for the wider family of the church. Ayr Presbytery has asked each church to pray for the people in Malawi. Lord God, we hear that they are to vote for a new President on Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup> June, but the campaign has led to people being killed through houses being set alight, people being beaten up and judges having to take leave before their retirement.

We pray Lord, that there will be no more violence and loss of life in Malawi and that the election will take place in calmer circumstances.

But, Loving God, we give thanks that Jailos and the Kirk Session in Nhkata Bay Church have received the £250 from NWC to help improve their sanitation to prevent Covid 19.

We give thanks, too, Lord God, that Scotland is moving into Phase 2 in the way out of lockdown, but we remember once again each family who have been bereaved in recent weeks, those seriously ill in hospital and everyone caring for them. We rejoice a drug has been found to treat those very seriously ill with the virus, and pray that further progress will be made to find a cure to eradicate this disease.

Compassionate God,

This morning we pray for all those who have been made redundant because of lockdown, and for those who are so anxious that they will lose their job or their business will fail because of closure in these last three months.

Loving Father,

We pray that you will continue to strengthen, uphold and bless the congregation of Newton Wallacetown Church, although we are unable to meet together in this building.

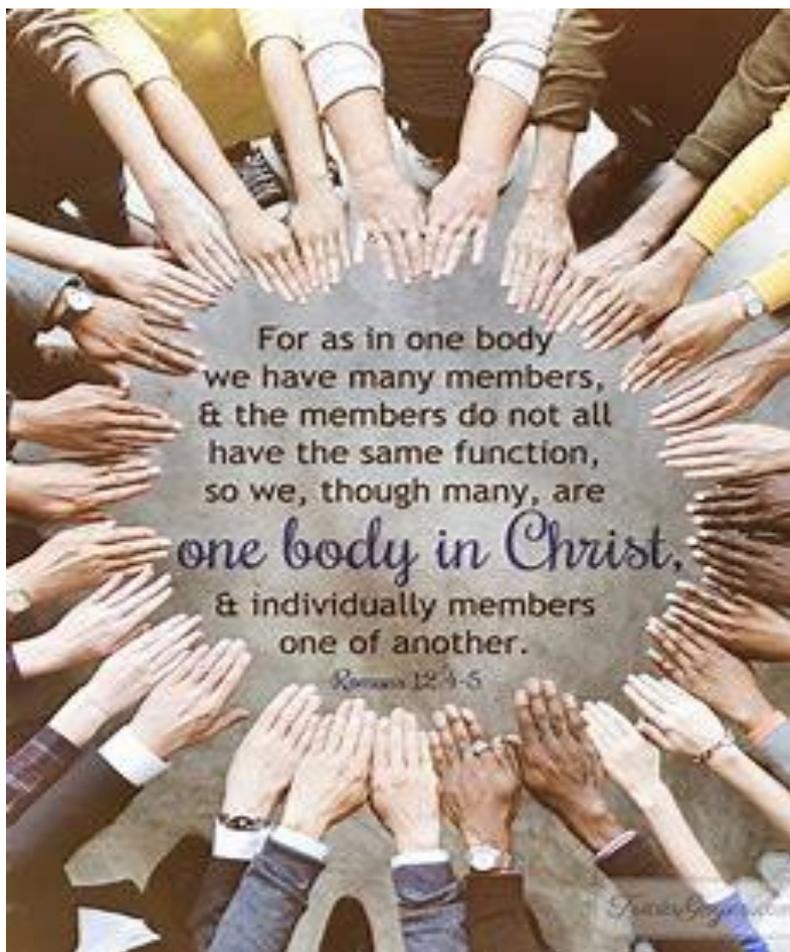
This we pray through Jesus Christ our Saviour and Lord,      Amen.

**Benediction**

May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you, and all those you love, now and for evermore,

Amen.

*Rona*

**Prayer quiz answers**

1. To whom was Jesus talking when he taught the Lord's prayer? **c) Disciples**
2. At which battle were the Israelites defeated because Joshua didn't pray first? **b) Ai**
3. How many times is the word 'prayer' mentioned in the Bible (KJV)? **b) 114**
4. Into what did Jesus say the priests had turned his house of prayer? **c) A den of thieves**

**Prayer Chain** Anyone having a request for prayer may contact Sheena Hunter on 01292 570200 or e-mail her at [sheenachunter@hotmail.com](mailto:sheenachunter@hotmail.com)

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

Mrs Ann Shaw	Mrs Margaret Burgess
Mrs Jeanette Steel	Mrs Edith Gray
Mrs Christine Martin	Mr John Cassells
Mrs Aileen Alexander	Mr James Alexander
Mrs Heather McLeod	Mrs May Wilkinson
Mrs Betty McPherson	Mrs Jessie Rennie
Mrs Ellise Wilson	Mrs Alison Wilson
Mrs Anna Irving	Mrs Mary Ferguson
Mrs Catherine McDonald	Mrs Helen McGill

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.

**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 9. 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*

**Salvation Army Foodbank** A big thank you to all who have donated on past Sunday afternoons. Please note that donations will be accepted between **2.00** and **3.30pm**. Only leave your car when the person before you has gone and, if possible, please place your contribution directly into the boot of the receiving car.

Everything is distributed to those in need in our area and to Newton Primary School which is also a centre for collection for other schools with vulnerable families.



We wish a very **Happy Birthday**  
on **27<sup>th</sup> June** to **Janis Meredith**.

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

Please join us for the service if you can and take part in the prayer time which many are finding valuable and some find comfort.

There is only one God,  
There is only one King,  
There is only one body –  
That is why we sing:

*Bind us together, Lord,  
Bind us together  
With cords that cannot be broken;  
Bind us together, Lord,  
Bind us together,  
O bind us together with love.*

**Ayr: Newton Wallacetown Church of Scotland**

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60 Main Street, Ayr, KA8 8EF

Twinned with Nkhata Bay Presbyterian Church, Malawi

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