

Encouraging YOU to know JESUS

It is better to give than to receive

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

A very warm welcome to everyone watching this online service from Newton Wallacetown Church. As always, the Extraordinary Times will be available from 12 noon and we begin our prayer time together at 12.30pm, beginning with the Lord's Prayer and continuing with your own personal prayers. The Foodbank will be open as usual this afternoon. Jane and Nick Sibley will be there from 2pm – 3pm.

There will be a virtual Communion Service on Sunday 2nd August. To explain: After the sermon and a hymn there will be a very short service, in which you are invited to have a small glass of sherry or wine or juice and a small piece of bread.

After a prayer and the breaking of the bread, you are invited to eat your bread after I say the words, "This is my body which is broken for you; do this in remembrance of me." And after the words, "This cup is the new covenant sealed by Christ's blood; whenever you drink it, do so in remembrance of him," please take a sip of your own wine/juice. This will be followed by a closing prayer and hymn.

If you are not comfortable with this, please just watch the service. I know other ministers have conducted a small Communion service in this way.

Finally, I am sorry to give you the sad news that Mrs Rosina Flett, Claremont Care Home, died on Friday 10th July. She was a very regular attender at the church, until she was too frail to attend. The funeral service is at Masonhill Crematorium on Tuesday 21st July. We will be remembering her daughter Maureen and the family later in the service.

Call to worship from Psalm 121:

*"I lift up my eyes to the hills,
where does my help come from?
My help comes from the Lord,
the Maker of heaven and earth."*

Hymn MP 870 "Jesus is the name we honour"

Prayer

Let us pray,

Lord God, we come before you this morning, people with all different kinds of experiences, but we are one in you, we are your people.

We have known moments, when in very difficult situations, we have felt your presence and a true sense of peace. Even when we have been bewildered and confused, we know that you understand, because you made us and you are with us.

Lord God, help us to understand that in everything that really matters, and at all the other times too, you are there with us, and even when we are not aware of your presence, it is your love that holds us in being. What else can we do, Eternal God, but open our hearts to you in praise.

We are filled with wonder at your glory and your love.

But we have to confess Loving Father that we are not the people you want us to be, we are not the people we long to be.

Sometimes we reach out to the life you offer us, but too often, we are content with second best.

Sometimes we glimpse eternal joy, but too often we are content with passing pleasures. Sometimes we do believe in your love, but too often we act as if you are not to be trusted.

Father, we long to do better. We know that you will accept us as we confess our failures, and in a few moments of silence, we bring our personal sins to you...

Loving Father, we thank you that we know that we have been forgiven. Help us always to remember that we are your people, not burdened by our past, not frightened by the future, but joyful in the eternal present.

This we pray through Jesus Christ our Lord, who taught us to pray together saying,

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 each 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 and ever, Amen.

Bible reading (1) Colossians 3: 5 -11

5 Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry. 6 Because of these, the wrath of God is coming. 7 You used to walk in these ways, in the life you once lived. 8 But now you must also rid yourselves of all such things as these: anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language from your lips. 9 Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices 10 and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator. 11 Here there is no Gentile or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave or free, but Christ is all, and is in all.

Bible reading (2) Luke 12: 13 – 21

The parable of the rich fool

13 Someone in the crowd said to him, 'Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me.'

14 Jesus replied, 'Man, who appointed me a judge or arbiter between you?' 15 Then he said to them, 'Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed: life does not consist in an abundance of possessions.'

16 And he told them this parable: 'The ground of a certain rich man yielded an abundant harvest.

17 He thought to himself, "What shall I do? I have no place to store my crops. 18 'Then he said, "This is what I'll do. I will tear down my barns and build bigger ones, and there I will store my surplus grain

19 And I'll say to myself, 'You have plenty of grain laid up for many years. Take life easy: eat, drink and be merry.'

20 'But God said to him, "You fool! This very night your life will be demanded from you. Then who will get what you have prepared for yourself?"

21 'This is how it will be with whoever stores up things for themselves but is not rich towards God.'

Hymn MP 782 "Worthy O worthy are you, Lord"

Sermon "The Parable of the Rich Fool"

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

I heard about a comedian who had a skit which illustrated how we can place money ahead of everything. He says that he was walking down the street when suddenly he was approached by an armed robber. The robber said, "*Your money or your life!*" There is a long pause when this man thinks and does nothing. Then the robber asks, "*Well?*" He replied, "*Don't rush me, I'm thinking it over!*"

The parable that we heard this morning makes us think about our money and our life. In this passage, Jesus speaks about both of these.

The background to this parable is an incident that occurred in Galilee as Jesus was teaching a large crowd. A man in the crowd said to him, "*Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me.*" In these days, people often took their unsettled disputes to a respected Rabbi, but Jesus refused to be mixed up in anyone's disputes about money.

However, Jesus was concerned with the larger implications of the preoccupation with things of this world. We heard that he said, "*Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; a person's life does not consist of the abundance of their possessions.*"

He then illustrates this with a parable: Once there was a man who had been very successful, and so his barns were not big enough to hold all his crops. His solution was to tear down these barns and build bigger ones. Then he could sit back and enjoy life – his philosophy was: "*You have plenty of good things laid up for many years. Take life easy; eat, drink and enjoy yourself.*"

Perhaps when we hear this story, we might be rather envious of the man. But Jesus concludes the story by saying this man was a fool.

So, what did he do wrong? To answer that question, we have to realise that this is not a parable about money, it is a parable about values and what is important in life. As we think about this parable, we can see four ways in which this man was a fool.

1 First of all, he was a fool because he had full barns but an empty heart. This man was rich in the sight of others, but poor in the eyes of God.

Leo Tolstoy wrote a story about a successful peasant farmer who was not satisfied with his life. He wanted more of everything. This is how Tolstoy told the story: One day, a farmer received an interesting offer. For 1,000 roubles, he could buy all the land that he could walk round in one day. The only catch in the deal was that he had to be back at the starting point by sunset.

So, early the next morning, he started walking at a fast pace. By midday, he was very tired but kept going to cover more and more ground. Well into the afternoon, he realised that his greed had taken

him far from his starting point. He quickened his pace, and as the sun began to sink in the sky, he began to run, knowing that if he did not make it back by sundown the opportunity to become an even bigger landowner would be lost.

As the sun began to sink below the horizon, he came within sight of the finishing line. Gasping for breath, his heart pounding, he staggered across the line just before the sun disappeared. He immediately collapsed and died! The title of Tolstoy's story was, *"How much land does a man need?"* Jesus, like Tolstoy, is warning us that we had better not put our trust in materialism: if we do, we will be sadly disappointed. Jesus might have asked, *"How big a barn does a man need?"* Today, we might ask, *"How much storing space does a person need?"*

We are to remember that the only resource that can meet our deepest longings is God. It is God who is our rock and security, not what is in our savings. The man in this parable was a fool, because he trusted in his full barns.

2 Secondly, the man was a fool because he over-estimated himself. He thought about himself. *"What shall I do? I have no place to store my crops. This is what I'll do. I will tear down my barns and build bigger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods."*

In two verses the man uses the word "I" five times and the word "my" four times. He does not think about others, or even God, but only himself. Jesus was not bothered about his wealth, but the fact that he was foolish and self-centred.

I read that someone who worked for a PhD degree in agriculture said that, in his estimate, nature provided 95% necessary to produce a crop, and the farmer provided 5%. Yet, in Jesus' story, this farmer uses the words, "I" and "my" as though he is the only one involved.

There is a film in which James Stewart plays a farmer during the American Civil War. He began each meal with a prayer, "Lord, I ploughed the land, I planted the seeds, I gathered the harvest. If I had not put the food on the table, it would not be there. But, thank you anyway."

We all have to understand that there is grace and mystery in life, or we will think too highly of ourselves.

3 Thirdly, this man was a fool because he forgot what life is really about. All this man thought about was being rich and comfortable, but Jesus thought that the real meaning of life was deeper than that.

I am sure you are all familiar with Charles Dickens' book, *"A Christmas Carol."* In one scene, Jacob Marley, Scrooge's deceased business partner, visits him one evening in a ghostly appearance. Marley is chained with large books and large ledgers. *"These are the links I forged in life,"* he says. This puzzles Scrooge and he protests, *"But these are the things of your business."* Marley groans back, *"Business! Mankind was my business. The common good was my business."*

Jesus is suggesting that our business in life goes far beyond our investments and tax forms. Our real business is that of humanity. We too can spend so much time concentrating on what we want to become that we lose sight of who we really are.

Many years ago, there was a film entitled, *"The Doctor."* This particular doctor was very business-like and had no rapport with his patients. One day, he had in his office a farmer and his family. Tests had been done, and it was discovered that he was very seriously ill. In a very straight way, the doctor said to the man, *"Sir, if I were you, I would put my affairs in order."*

The farmer put one arm round his wife and the other arm round his children, and says, *"My affairs are in order."*

So how do we see life? Is it to have more and more material possessions, or to grow closer to the mind of God? I wonder if many people's priorities have changed due to Covid-19? Do some people

now see, that their family and their friends are more important than their work? Surely, what matters most is not to be materially rich, but to love people.

Our first Bible reading this morning was from Paul's letter to the Colossians, in which he spells out the lifestyle and values that he expects from these people.

Verse 9: *"Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in the knowledge in the image of its creator."*

Paul uses the past tense because, when they became Christians, they became new people. They let go of their old sinful persons and have assumed the role of a new person guided by the Holy Spirit. Christianity makes such a difference to our lives, the old ways become new. Sometimes we sing the hymn, *"I am a new creation."*

4 And fourthly, this man was a fool because he forgot about the time. His whole attitude was that time did not matter. In this parable, God said to the man, *"You fool! This night your very life will be demanded of you."*

Nowadays we are used to having the exact time. Every time we put on our mobile, or look at a tablet, the time is there on the screen. As Christians, it is very important that we do not just think of the time just as it is just now. This is how the world looks at time, but Christians see time as moving towards something.

In this passage, and in other parts of the Gospels, we know that Jesus never tells us to lead reckless lives but what he is telling us to do, is not to worry, or have anxious thoughts about our future. He tells us, wherever we are, we are to do our best each day, and leave the rest to God.

Let us remember that the clock is always ticking - regardless of what we do, or fail to do, the clock keeps ticking and we do not know how much time we have.

This man was a fool because he had full barns, but an empty heart. He was a fool because he over-estimated his own value, he was a fool because he thought life was all about possessions and he forgot about people. He was also a fool because he forgot about time.

So, does this parable have anything to teach us today? Do we think too much about our possessions, do we over-estimate our own worth, forget about people, or do we forget about time?

What do we feel is important in our lives?

Amen.

Hymn MP 590 "Seek ye first the kingdom of God"

Prayer

Let us pray,

O God our Heavenly Father,

we come before you now with our prayers of thanksgiving. We thank you that throughout these days of lockdown and now as the restrictions are easing, in many ways the future is uncertain, but you are still guiding us and helping us to cope with each day as it comes.

We thank you that, although so often we fail to make time for you, you still accept us and respond to us. Lord God, whenever we really needed you, you were there.

Help us, we pray, even in the difficult circumstances of our lives at the present time, to count our blessings, to recognise everything that is good in our lives, to remember that your love will never fail us, and your grace is sufficient for all our needs.

Eternal and Ever-blessed God,
we pray this morning for all those who are facing difficult and demanding questions –
for world leaders and our own governments both in London and in Edinburgh.
Grant them wisdom and guide them in the best way forward for everyone.

Living God,
we ask your blessing on NWC. We give thanks for the elders, the leaders of the Friendship Club and
others who regularly phone members of this congregation. We give you thanks, too Loving God, that
there are so many people watching these services and we ask you to bless each one, wherever they
may be.

Compassionate God,
we ask your blessing on Rosina Flett's daughter Maureen, her husband Keith, the grandchildren and
great grandchildren. It is wonderful for someone to live for 96 years here on earth and to have been
a member of this church since her youth.

We bring before you now our concern for the people we know and love, remembering those who
are ill at home or in hospital and those who care for them. Bless all those now in a Care Home, and
bless each person who has been shielding. Bless too, Loving God, those who are worried about a
loved one at this time. Be especially near to those who we name in a few moments of silence....

Bless each person, Lord, may they know the peace of your presence, the touch of your healing hand,
and the assurance that whatever is happening in their lives, you are with them.

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

Hymn MP 932 "Standing on the promises of Christ my King"

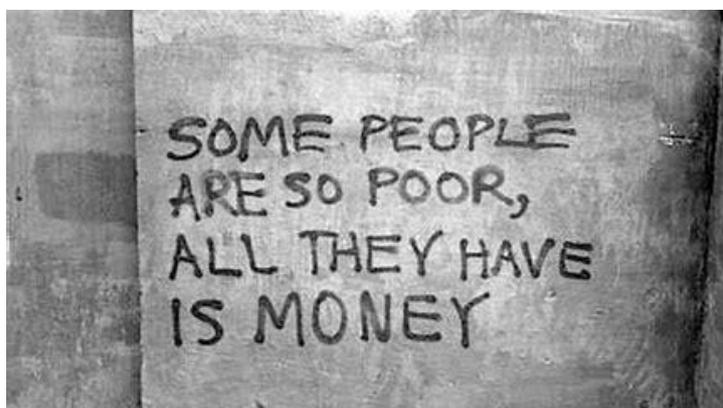
Benediction

Grace, mercy and peace

from God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit

be with you all, 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	Mrs Irene Gibson
Mrs Jeanette Steel	Mrs Ann Shaw
Mrs Maude Smillie	Mr John Cassells
Mrs Betty McPherson	Mr James Alexander
Mrs Christine Martin	Mrs May Wilkinson
Mrs Ellise Wilson	Mrs Heather McLeod
Mrs Catherine MacDonald	Mrs Alison Wilson (now in Berelands Care Home)
Mrs Helen McGill (now in Claremont Care Home)	Mrs Anna Irving

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

Sad news Today we mourn the passing of Mrs Rosina Flett who passed away on Friday 10th July in Claremont Care Home. Rosina was married in this church in 1944. Having lived elsewhere for some time, she returned to Ayr and loved worshipping with us regularly until her health began to fail a few years ago. Our thoughts and prayers are with her daughter Maureen and the extended family at this sad time. Rona will conduct the funeral service at Masonhill Crematorium on Tuesday 21st July.

Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Matthew 11:28

Congratulations! This week, **John and Mary Turnbull** will celebrate being married for half a century! We all wish them a very happy **Golden Anniversary** on **24th July**.

Birthdays In the coming week, we wish a very Happy Birthday to three of our lady members:-

21st July Elizabeth Mitchell

25th July Ellise Wilson

24th July Sadie Paton who will be 90 years young!



Salvation Army Foodbank A big thank you to all who have donated on past Sunday afternoons. Please note that donations will be accepted in the church drive between **2.00** and **3.00pm**. 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.

Can you help? Newton Primary School is looking for a fridge (any size) and a washing machine for a family moving into the area. They have the means to PAT test any such donation. If you can help, please contact Irene Gibson at irenesgibson31@gmail.com

God of love, we long to know
What will make us truly blessed.
Jesus taught us long ago
Wealth won't give us peace and rest.
You are our security!
Safe in you, we serve, O Lord,
May we find we're rich indeed
when we're sharing with the poor.

Ayr: Newton Wallacetown Church of Scotland

A Scottish Charity Reference Number SC001994

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Twinned with Nkhata Bay Presbyterian Church, Malawi

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