**Queensferry PC and Dalmeny Kirk**

**Thursday morning services for March 2023**

**Theme: Waking / awakening**

Inspired by new seasons: spring, the post-pandemic world and a new era for QPC and Dalmeny

**Week 1: 2nd March – waking**

Leader Into a dark world a snowdrop comes

a blessing of hope and peace,

carrying within it a green heart, symbol of God’s renewing love

**ALL: Come to inhabit our darkness, Lord Christ**

Leader: May nature’s white candles of hope remind us of your birth,

**ALL: and lighten our journey through Lent.**

Leader: Choose this day whom you will serve;

**ALL: We will choose the living God.**

Leader: The road is narrow that leads to life;

**ALL: We will walk the way of Christ.**

Leader: We offer more than words, O God;

**ALL: We offer our lives.**

**Music**

**Psalm** 40: 1-11

**Prayer**

Leader:

God of new beginnings, during these winter months, we have longed to see the first signs of spring. Father, we always knew it was your promise, that season will follow season, spring will always follow winter, yet we are heartened by these signs of earth’s renewal. First the snowdrop, and then the crocus. The nodding daffodil, with tulips to follow. The light returned to the sky in time for breakfast, the song of the birds before dawn. A tiny green bud on a dry, dead stem, just waiting to burst into life.

Father, sometimes we too experience times when there is less evidence of your life in us than we would want to see. We may have felt as dry and lifeless as these stems, where now we can spot just the merest hint of green. Awaken us. May our lives blossom too, so the world may see the signs of your renewing power, take heart and discover fresh hope for their own lives.

**ALL: Behold, I make all things new.**

And now, as Jesus taught us, we pray:

**Our Father…** (Lord’s Prayer)

**Bible Reading: Genesis 7 and 8, passim**

7:11. When Noah was 600 years old, on the 17th day of the 2nd month, all the outlets of the vast body of water beneath the earth burst open, all the floodgates of the sky were opened and rain fell on the earth for forty days and nights… The flood continued for forty days, and the water became deep enough for the boat to float. The water became deeper, and the boat drifted on the surface. It became so deep that it covered the highest mountains; it went on rising until it was seven metres above the tops of the mountains… The water did not start going down for 150 days.

8:1 God had not forgotten Noah and all the animals with him in the boat; he caused a wind to blow, and the water started going down… The water kept going down, and on the first day of the 10th month, the tops of the mountains appeared…

When Noah was 601 years old, on the first day of the first month, [the following year] the water was gone… By the 27th day of the 2nd month the earth was completely dry. God said to Noah, “Go out of the boat, with your wife, your sons, and their wives. Take all the animals with you, so that they may reproduce and spread all over the earth. So Noah went out of the boat with his wife, his sons, and their wives. And all the animals and birds went out of the boat in groups of their own kind…. Noah built an altar to the Lord…

And [the Lord] said to himself, “Never again will I put the earth under a curse because of what man does… As long as the world exists, there will be a time for planting and a time for harvest. There will always be cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night.”…

God blessed Noah and his sons and said have many children, so that your descendants will live all over the earth… God said… I promise that never again will all living beings be destroyed by a flood; never again will a flood destroy the earth… I am putting my bow in the clouds. It will be the sign of my covenant with the world. Whenever I cover the sky with clouds and the rainbow appears, I will remember my promise to you…

**Reflection**

**Prayer time**

**Closing responses**

Leader: The world is waking…

Into the night-time of our fears

Into our Lenten journey of prayer

God promises to be ever-present with us through Jesus Christ.

**ALL: Be present with us, Christ Jesus, our Saviour**

Leader: Each morning you gift us a new day,

with no mistakes in it… yet

**ALL: Be present with us, Christ Jesus our Saviour.**

Leader: Into the day you lead us on,

Into new situations and new challenges

**ALL: Be present with us today, Christ Jesus, our Saviour**

Leader: In every moment of our lives, we need you

**ALL: Be present with us always, Christ Jesus, our Saviour**

Leader: Be visible in our lives, Lord.

And bring hope to a weary world.

ALL: **Be present with us all, Christ Jesus, our Saviour.**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2ntwGWzdCwc>

Casting Crowns – O Glorious Day!

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**Week 2: 9 March 2023**

**Theme: Waking or sleeping. The call to stay awake, and the need for rest**

**Opening responses**

Leader: To everything there is a season and a time for every purpose under heaven.

A time to be born, and a time to die. A time to plant, and a time to harvest.

**ALL: He has made everything beautiful in its time**

Leader: A time for sadness and a time for laughter. A time for mourning, and a time for celebration.

A time to pull down the old, and a time to build new.

A time to collect stones, and a time to throw them away.

**ALL: He has made everything beautiful in its time**

Leader: A time to stand still, and a time to ceilidh. A time to sleep, and a time to stay awake.

A time to work, rest and play. A time to pray.

**ALL: You have made everything beautiful in its time**

**Music here / later / not at all. Suggested song: Be Thou my Vision (ie waking or sleeping)**

**Psalm 23**

**Prayer**

Leader: Lord, like Samuel sleeping in the temple, sometimes you call us to wake up and pay attention.

**ALL: Help us to set aside those things that distract us, and hear your voice.**

Leader: Like the disciples at night in Gethsemane, sometimes you call us to stay awake and watch with you.

**ALL: Give us strength to watch and pray, when we are struggling to do so.**

Leader: And on the seventh day, God rested.

Creator of time and eternity, in your economy, that sabbath day was neither lost nor wasted.

Sometimes, when keeping going is doing us more harm than good, we fail to recognise our own need to stop.

**ALL: Help us know when it is time to let go, to trust in you and rest.**

Leader: He restoreth my soul.

Other times we may feel so weary, we are almost ready to give up.

**ALL: Restore us in body, mind and soul.**

**Leader:** And now, as Jesus taught us, we pray:

**Our Father**… (Lord’s Prayer)

**Bible Reading 1** 1 Kings 19: 1-9a Elijah (optional)

**Bible reading 2** Mark 14: 32-42 Gethsemane,

**Reflection – with suggestions for leader**

The call to stay awake. “You must be alert to be able to pray” – how do we do this? (Do we?)

The call to be ready, even when sleep is bound to overcome us (ten bridesmaids)

God-given insomnia – when God puts something on your mind that just won’t go away

The call to sleep - how to put down burdens when we know this is what God wants

Exhaustion, and the importance of knowing when it’s time to stop - Eutychus, who fell out an upstairs window during the sermon

**Prayers** for the world, our own community, our church, for those known to us personally, ourselves.

These may involve words prepared or spontaneous, of one speaker or many, spoken or unspoken, music, silence…

**Closing responses**

**ALL: Waking or sleeping, thy presence our light.**

Leader: Whether it be day or night, make us ready to hear your voice. Teach us to use our time wisely. On nights when we are kept awake with worry, help us know when this may be a call to prayer, or if you are truly calling us to lay down our burdens and rest. Laying down a burden sounds so easy, but often we struggle to let go. Help us bring all our cares to you, and like a child in its mother’s arms, to fall asleep in confident trust. Father, you know we find this easier said than done.

**ALL: Waking or sleeping, thy presence our light.**

Leader: We pray for those who are called to watch through the night – sitting by the bed of a loved one who is sick, or pacing the floor with a crying child. We pray for doctors and nurses on long, long night shifts, and for those who will fall asleep with an alarm at their side, ready to answer a call, whenever it may come. We pray especially for our own firemen and lifeboatmen in South Queensferry, and for the paramedics on call up at Ferrymuir. We remember those who will lie awake tonight, straining to hear the sound of a car in the drive, or a key in the lock.

**ALL: Waking or sleeping, thy presence our light.**

Leader: Lord Jesus, you know what it is to climb a mountain and pray all night. You understand.

Help us remember that we are never alone.

**ALL: Waking or sleeping, let your presence be our light.**

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**Week 3: 16 March 2023**

**Theme: “While you were sleeping” Of dreams and visions**

**Leader:** Samuel heard a voice. Jacob saw a ladder. Pharaoh saw cattle. Joseph saw famine.

The Wise Men were advised to take a diversion home. Peter saw a banquet of food, followed by a knock at the door. The night before his trial, Peter’s chains fell off and he followed an angel out of prison – thinking it must be a dream.

‘In the last days,’ God says, ‘I will pour out my Spirit upon all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy. Your young men will see visions, and your old men will dream dreams.’

(Acts 2:17 NLT)

**Opening responses**

**ALL: Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening.**

**Leader:** Jesus says, I have come that you may have life – life in all its fulness

**ALL: Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening.**

Leader: Jesus says, Love your neighbour as you love yourself**.**

Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you.

**ALL: Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening.**

**Leader:** Whatever you did for the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me.

Do for others what you would have them do for you

**ALL: Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening.**

Leader: I, the Lord of sea and sky,  
I have heard my people cry…  
I will speak my word to them,  
Whom shall I send?

**ALL: Speak, Lord. Is it me, Lord?  
I have heard you calling in the night.**

**Music** suggested: I will build a house? (‘their dreams & visions heard’), I, the Lord of sea and sky?

**Psalm 63**

**Prayer**

**Leader:** Father, you speak to us in many different ways.

in the words of a friend, the touch of a hand, sometimes through a simple flower.

In the past you spoke through prophets and angels. Once you even spoke through a donkey.

Now, through your Son Jesus – the Word incarnate – you have told us so much more.

When we ourselves are lost for words, the Spirit speaks to you on our behalf.

Sometimes yours is a small quiet voice in our head. Sometimes you speak through silence.

And sometimes we wonder, do you speak still in dreams and visions?

**Leader:** And now, as Jesus taught us, we pray:

**Our Father**… (Lord’s Prayer)

**Bible reading 1** 1 Samuel 3: 1-10 (the boy Samuel sleeping in the temple)

**Bible reading 2** Matthew 2: 7-12 (the Wise Men)

**Reflection** – suggestions for leader: Have you ever had a dream or a vision?

Was God telling you about something? Or asking you to do something? Do you know?

Have you ever had a dream and acted on it? What happened?

Many people ‘have a dream,’ but how do you know if a dream is your own, or if it comes from God? Sometimes the distinction is blurred. It could be both!

Do you know anything about how God is using dreams to speak to people in places where evangelism is forbidden?

**Prayers** for the world, our own community, our church, for those known to us personally, ourselves.

These may involve words prepared or spontaneous, of one speaker or many, spoken or unspoken, music, silence…

**Suggested film clip.**

You might like to include this video here? It’s a children’s book, written by Desmond Tutu, read by a Mrs Tsagalakis. Whatever our age, we are all children of God. It’s about 3½ minutes long.

[**https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TnDDvOkdHgM**](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TnDDvOkdHgM)

**Leader:** God in my living

There in my breathing

God in my waking

God in my sleeping

God in my resting

There in my working

God in my thinking

God in my speaking

Be my everything

God in my hoping

There in my dreaming

God in my watching

God in my waiting

God in my laughing

There in my weeping

God in my hurting

God in my healing

Be my everything

Christ in me the hope of glory

You are everything

Christ in me the hope of glory

Be my everything

Taken from the lyrics of Tim Hughes’ Be My Everything.

Or you might want to just play it from YouTube

Eg at this link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0bhJHMoDsdE>

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**Week 4: 23 March 2023**

**Theme: Waking up Jesus**

**Leader**

I believe in the sun when it isn’t shining

I believe in love when I am alone.

I believe in God even when he is silent.

Graffiti discovered in 1945 on the wall of a basement where a Jewish believer is thought to have been hiding from the Gestapo

**Psalm 121** (shall not slumber nor sleep)

**Music** – O Lord, hear my prayer, the Taize chant. (Psalm 102: 1-2)

at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RuPcxLjVxtg> as far as 3 mins 27.

Or here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8BWKmahZgLM> also stopping at 3.27

Or you could read the words

**Leader:**

First there is prayer

And where there is prayer there may be miracles

But where miracles may not be, there are questions

And where there are questions there may be silence

But silence may be more than absence

Silence may be presence, muted

Silence may not be nothing, but something

To explore defy accuse engage

And this is prayer

And where there is prayer there may yet be miracles…

Pete Greig, Engaging the Silence (from God on Mute)

**ALL: Dear God,**

**We are full of wishes, full of desires, full of expectations.**

**Some of them may be realized, many may not,**

**but in the midst of all our satisfactions and disappointments, we hope in you.**

Henri Nouwen (was written in 1st person singular, ‘I’, not ‘we.’)

**Leader:** And now, as Jesus taught us, we pray:

**Our Father**… (Lord’s Prayer)

**Bible reading 1** Psalm 44: 1-3, 9-10, 17-19, 23-26 (Wake up, Lord! Why are you asleep?)

**Bible reading 2 (opt.)** Mark 4: 35-41 (Jesus asleep in the boat)

**Reflection**

**suggestions for leader:**

How do these readings make you feel? What do you think about what Jesus said to the disciples? Was he angry? Perhaps tired and grumpy about being woken up? Did he think they should have let him sleep?

What about the Psalmist? Do you feel free to be completely honest with God like this?

How do you react when God doesn’t seem to be rushing to the rescue? How should we respond when God appears to be ‘on mute’? How do you cope with unanswered prayers?

**Prayers** for the world, our own community, our church, for those known to us personally, ourselves.

These may involve words prepared or spontaneous, of one speaker or many, spoken or unspoken, music, silence…

**Closing responses / Prayer**

Leader: Father, we bring you our joys, our thanks and our praise

**ALL: In you alone we put our trust.**

Leader: We come to you for wisdom, for guidance and protection

**ALL: In you alone we put our trust.**

Leader: We bring you our requests, for help, for healing,

We bring you our sorrows and our fears

**ALL: In you alone we put our trust.**

Leader: Father, you have never asked for anything less than our complete honesty.

And so we bring you the things that confuse us, the things that frighten us or worry us,

things that frustrate or even anger us,

Knowing they will be safe in your hands

**ALL: In you alone we put our trust.**

Leader: We long to hear your voice

**ALL: In you alone we put our trust.**

Leader: And we ask all these things in Jesus’ name,

Scarcely daring believe that we are privileged to be able to ask in this way.

**ALL: Amen.**

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**Week 5: 30 March 2023**

**Theme: Waking up singing – I shall wake up the dawn!**

**Leader** In the middle of a cold winter’s night, a robin sat on a street-lamp. It opened its mouth and it began to sing. It warbled and it trilled. And the song rang out along the empty street.

Who was he singing for, Lord? Was it you?

Leader: Give thanks to the Lord, because he is good

**ALL: his love is eternal.**

Leader:Give thanks to the greatest of all gods;

**ALL: his love is eternal.**

Leader: Give thanks to the mightiest of all lords

**ALL: his love is eternal.**

Leader: He alone performs great miracles

**ALL: his love is eternal.**

Leader: by his wisdom he made the heavens

**ALL: his love is eternal**

Leader: he built the earth on the deep waters

**ALL: his love is eternal.**

Leader: He made the sun and the moon

**ALL: His love is eternal**

Leader: The sun to rule over the day

the moon and the stars to rule over the night

**ALL: his love is eternal.**

Leader: Give thanks to the God of heaven

**ALL: his love is eternal.**

**Music** Suggested songs: See what a morning? Great is thy faithfulness?

**Psalm 57** (I will sing… I will wake up the sun!)

**Prayer**

**Leader:** The sun comes up, it's a new day dawning.

It’s time to sing your song again.

Whatever may pass and whatever lies before me  
Let me be singing when the evening comes

You’re rich in love and you’re slow to anger.

Your name is great and your heart is kind.

For all your goodness, I will keep on singing

Ten thousand reasons for my heart to find.

**ALL: So bless the Lord, O my soul,**

**O my soul, worship his holy name**

**Sing like never before, O my soul**

**I'll worship your holy name**

Leader: From the rising of the sun,

to the going down of the same,

The Lord’s name is to be praised.

**ALL: Bless the Lord, O my soul,**

**O my soul, worship his holy name**

Leader: Praise him in the morning.

Praise him in the noontime.

Praise him when the sun goes down.

**ALL: Bless the Lord, O my soul,**

**O my soul, worship his holy name**

Leader: Lord, we have come to worship you,

We have come to bow down,

We have come to say that you’re our God.

Leader: And now, as Jesus taught us, we pray:

**Our Father**… (Lord’s Prayer)

**Bible reading 1:** Genesis 1: 1-19 (God creates the first day, the stars and the light)

**Bible reading 2** Job 38: 1-7, 12-15, 19-20

(to include: when the stars sang and the angels shouted for joy… Have you ever commanded a day to dawn? Do you know where the light comes from?)

**Reflection**

**suggestions for leader:** The psalmist says, ‘Wake up, my soul! Wake up, my harp and lyre!

I will wake up the sun!’ How do you relate to exuberant singing in the early morning?

Are you a lark, or an owl? When are you most likely to pray? Read the Bible? (Or sing?)

Jesus would go up a mountain and pray all night. How do you most like to pray? What gets in the way? What helps? When you think about prayer, do you think of it first and foremost as a duty, as a joy, a help, or something more like breathing?

Do you think about singing to God in the same way? Are worship songs just for Sunday morning? Must worship always be cheerful? Are there any other feelings or topics you think our worship songs miss? Is worship just singing? How can we get more worship into our lives?

**Prayers** for the world, our own community, our church, for those known to us personally, ourselves.

These may involve words prepared or spontaneous, of one speaker or many, spoken or unspoken, music, silence…

**Leader** Thou my best thought, by day or by night

Waking or sleeping, thy presence my light

Lord, we have so many preferences

Our favourite time to pray, favourite translation of the Bible, our favourite songs of praise. Our favourite style of worship, formal or informal, contemplative or rafter-rattling.

Favourite musical instruments. Favourite building. Even our favourite pew.

But in the end, none of these is really important. We may find few if any of them in heaven.

Lord, help us to remember this one thing: it is all about you.

Not us.

You.

Creator, Father, Saviour, Friend.

Be thou our vision, O lord of our hearts. Always and forever.

Amen.