

**DALMENY KIRK AND QUEENSFERRY PARISH
CHURCH**

MIDWEEK SERVICES

JUNE 2022

This month we are looking at 3 of the Minor Prophets. We began with Joel and the theme of Visions and Dreams. We now turn to Habakkuk. This short book has immense significance. It laid the foundation for the Apostle Paul's understanding of justification by faith and thus helped shape the Protestant Reformation. It would be good if you could read the whole of the book before we "meet." This material is for 23rd June.

**Week 4 – Response to God's "Absence" –
Habakkuk**

Leader:

Patience to watch and wait and weep,
though mercy long delay;
and courage our faint souls to keep,
with faith in thee always.
(verse 5 of "Lord, teach us how to pray aright" by James
Montgomery – 545 in CH4)

OPENING RESPONSES

Father God you welcome us

WE ARE GLAD TO CALL YOU OUR FATHER

Father God, you shelter us

WE ARE GLAD TO CALL YOU OUR FATHER

Father God, you delight in us

WE ARE GLAD TO CALL YOU OUR FATHER

Hymn or song: You might like to read all the verses of Hymn 545 or Hymn 94 which is a version of part of Psalm 137 (one of the Psalms set down to accompany Habakkuk in the Lectionary.)

Read Psalm 95 verses 1 - 9

Prayer

God of the great and the little in creation, you have made everything to work together for good. We worship you, climbing to high places to catch a glimpse of your face.

We often feel small and of little account, for you are too great for our understanding to grasp. Yet you care and provide for the smallest and the least, and the weak and powerless are held in the palm of your hand.

ALWAYS AND EVERYWHERE WE GIVE YOU OUR JOYFUL PRAISE

We are sorry for the times when we have made others feel small

FORGIVE US WE PRAY

We are sorry for the times we made no effort to tell others of your love

FORGIVE US WE PRAY

We are sorry for the times when we doubted your promises

FORGIVE US WE PRAY

Give us eyes to see you when a crowd of things gets in the way.

Lift us up to meet you when we feel tied to the ground by daily tasks.

Call us down from our high horse whenever we get on it.

Come into our homes to be with us, bringing your saving and forgiving love.

And now hear us as we pray further in the words Jesus taught his disciples, saying:

OUR FATHER

Read: Habakkuk 1 verses 1 – 4 and 2 verses 1 – 4
Romans 1 verses 16 - 17

Reflection

You might want to reflect on times when you have felt God to be absent in your life, or in the lives of those around you; you might think about times when you have been waiting for an answer from God and have shouted: “How long?”; or you might reflect on things that you would like to write about God’s promises on “tablets of clay” for people to read.

This part of the service might involve music or something visual; it might involve silence.

This monologue by Habakkuk might help your thinking:

Climbing

If all else fails, climb. Everything changes when I climb. I don't know why, and I don't know what I expect to see, but nothing looks the same from higher up, whether it's a hilltop, a tree – or a tower.

It's a hard place down there on the level. Who would choose to live in these times? How did we allow this? Did we bring it on ourselves? Did we get complacent, faithless, proud?

All around is corruption and injustice. Wealth seems to be prized over compassion, and violence is the answer to every disagreement. Never mind the powers of Babylon – we are turning into our own oppressors. Yet God says nothing. God does nothing. Nothing changes.

But when I climb, everything changes. The city looks small and the land looks broad. Nature lives in harmony. The smell in the air is of flowers, not fear. Here, heaven may remain silent, but the earth speaks and the earth is still the Lord's.

Morning follows night, and again I climb, and I stay here a while and I wait. Morning follows night and God takes no heed of my cries. How much longer?

From "Fig Trees and Furnaces" edited by Ruth Burgess and published by the Iona Community (slightly abridged.)

Prayer

This is a time for prayers for the world; for the communities in which we live; for the Church and those who minister here in any capacity; for those known to us to be in particular need of our prayers; for ourselves.

CLOSING RESPONSES

May God our Father bless us

MAY WE BE STRONG AND BRAVE AND TENDER

May God our Mother bless us

MAY WE BE CARING AND ADVENTUROUS AND LOVING

My God our friend bless us

MAY WE SHARE WONDER, SADNESS AND LAUGHTER

May God who loves us bless us

MAY WE LIVE TOGETHER IN JUSTICE AND IN JOY

AMEN.