

QUEENSFERRY PARISH CHURCH

MIDWEEK SERVICES

FEBRUARY 2022

This material is adapted a little from the material used last February. It is amazing how relevant the themes are a year on. The overall theme is **“Hope and Renewal in times of Change.”** We are in a time of uncertainty in our country and there is still a degree of fear regarding Covid. In the Church of Scotland Presbyteries are undergoing major structural changes. There are also structural changes in the central administration of the Church. Congregations are facing changes because of Presbytery planning. We also face a shortage of Ministers and many congregations find it difficult to recruit office-bearers and other leaders.

Week 2 – Exile

Leader:

The Lord says: When the time comes, I will answer the prayers of my people.

Opening Responses

I will betroth you to myself forever

**WITH INTEGRITY AND JUSTICE, WITH TENDERNESS
AND LOVE**

I will betroth you to myself with faithfulness

AND YOU WILL COME TO KNOW ME

I will say: You are my people

AND WE WILL ANSWER: YOU ARE OUR GOD

For once you were outside mercy

BUT NOW YOU HAVE BEEN GIVEN MERCY

THIS IS OUR HOPE, OUR LIVING HOPE. WE SHALL BE GLAD.

Read: Genesis 47 verses 1 – 6 and/or Exodus 1 verses 1 - 14

Include here a hymn or song or other music with a theme of exile or longing or feeling lost or excluded

Read: Psalm 42

Prayer

God beyond borders we bless you for strange places and distant dreams; for the demands and diversity of a different world; for the distance that lets us look back and evaluate experiences; for new ground where broken stems can take root, grow and blossom. We bless you for the friendship of strangers; the richness of other cultures; and the precious gift of freedom.

BLESSED ARE YOU, GOD BEYOND BORDERS

But, if we have overlooked the exiles in our midst; if we have heightened their feelings of exclusion by our indifference; if we have tacitly given permission for a climate of fear, or tolerated a culture of violence:

HAVE MERCY ON US, GOD WHO TAKES THE SIDE OF JUSTICE; CONFRONT OUR PREJUDICES; STRETCH OUR NARROWNESS; GRANT US THE PENETRATING INSIGHT OF YOUR SPIRIT UNTIL GENEROSITY IS OUR ONLY MEASURE.

Hear us now as we pray in your Son's words, saying:

OUR FATHER

Read: Luke 4 verses 18 - 21

Reflection

This should take the form of a short introduction from the leader.

You could reflect on what situations have made you feel excluded, and/or reflect on what the scripture passages say about exile and exclusion.

This part of the service might involve music; it might involve the use of something visual; it might involve silence. **You might use props which symbolise barriers or exclusion e.g. passports, a No Entry sign etc.**

Prayer

This is a time for prayers for the world, for the communities in which we live; for the Church and in particular things going on in our congregations; **for refugees; for all who experience exclusion because of poverty, gender, race, religion;** for those known to us to be in particular need of our prayers; for ourselves.

CLOSING PRAYER

For all that God can do within us
For all that God can do without us

THANKS BE TO GOD

For all in whom Christ lived before us
For all in whom Christ lives beside us

THANKS BE TO GOD

For all the Spirit wants to bring us
For where the Spirit wants to send us

THANKS BE TO GOD

Listen, Christ has promised to be with us in the world as
well as in our worship

WE GO TO MEET AND SERVE HIM

AMEN.