

QUEENSFERRY PARISH CHURCH

MIDWEEK SERVICES

FEBRUARY 2021

Last February the overall theme for our midweek services was “Hope and Renewal in times of Change.” That included change in our country and change in our country and also in the Church of Scotland where Presbyteries and the National Church were, and still are, undergoing major structural changes. The ability to make progress with these changes has been delayed by the pandemic. Progress in dealing with vacancy process has resulted in delays for congregations and for those seeking charges. We lack a sufficient number of Ministers and many congregations find it difficult to recruit office-bearers and other leaders. But we have not stood still and many congregations have found imaginative ways of continuing the worship of the Church as well as continuing its administration. We are always in a time of change, but we are also in a time of uncertainty and anxiety too. So, the overall theme this February is:

“Hope and Renewal” The individual themes for each week provide four different aspects to think about. The introduction and the opening responses for each week are the same.

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

**You might want to read here a hymn or song or poem
with a theme of exile or longing or feeling 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 an introduction from the leader of 5 – 7 minutes **maximum**, and designed to stimulate discussion on the subject.

You could reflect on what situations have made you feel excluded, and/or reflect on what the scripture passages say about exile and exclusion. Then allow others to share their experiences and reflections.

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 in a time of restrictions on what we can do; **for refugees whose plight has disappeared from our media at present; 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.