



# The Church of Scotland

## Weekly Worship 7<sup>th</sup> March 2021

### **Taking part in today's service is**

Rev William Wilson - Burnside Blairbeth Church  
Rev Allan McCafferty - Hope Park and Martyrs, St Andrews  
Dorothy Urquhart – Fullerton, Irvine  
Rev Fiona Reynolds - Monifieth Parish Church  
Naomi and Becca Wylie - Burnside Blairbeth Church

With music from members of Burnside Blairbeth Church and Fischy Music

### **Introduction – The Right Reverend Dr Martin Fair, Moderator of the General Assembly**

Hi everybody.

Well, we are well into March now; might we begin to say that Winter is behind us?

Certainly, the signs of Spring are all around us and we delight in that.

But here's the thing, seasons come and go, you know, everything changes but God endures and is faithful through every season of life and the word of the Lord is forever.

So, with these things in mind we gather to worship from all across the country and beyond.

I want to thank those who have contributed to today whether producing material or technically behind the scenes.

Thank you to them and now all of us let us worship God

### **Song – Come, now is the time to worship - Members of Burnside Blairbeth Church**

Come, now is the time to worship

Come, now is the time to give your heart

Come, just as you are to worship

Come, just as you are before your God

Come

One day every tongue will confess You are God

One day every knee will bow

Still the greatest treasure remains for those

Who gladly choose You now

One day every tongue will confess You are God

One day every knee will bow

Still the greatest treasure remains for those

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Come, now is the time to worship  
Come, now is the time to give your heart  
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Come, just as you are before your God  
Come  
Come

### **Prayer of Approach** – Allan McCafferty - Hope Park and Martyrs, St Andrews

Let's pray

Creative and ever-present God, at this time of lockdown we gather now from different parts of Scotland and beyond.

What do we do when we feel pleasure as we look around us?

If we live in an urban area and see a sparrow or pigeon how it pecks for food or flies up into the sky free from the constraints of the earth.

If we live in a rural area the lambs seemingly fluffy and light full of buoyant life, the sheep keeping a wise eye on them.

The delight of the cows when they emerge from the byre, their sound echoing in the air, joy that the darkness of Winter is behind and the warmth and light of Spring and Summer lie ahead.

If we remain indoors television can transport us to the depths of the oceans, to the midst of the rainforests or the whiteness of the Arctic and Antarctic.

What do we do when we look at the world and feel pleasure?

We bow down before you in awe and worship

You the God who created all we see and appreciate and all we cannot see but which is part of your planet earth, the world you formed so lovingly and so we pray creator God, accept our worship now.

In this season of Lent our eyes turn towards Jerusalem and all the events that played out there.

If we have ignored you and turned a blind eye to those in need, forgive us.

If we have been selfish or unethical in our financial dealings like the money changers in the temple precincts, forgive us.

If we have neglected to respond faithfully to your call on our lives, forgive us we pray.



Turn over our ingratitude, our selfishness, our neglect.  
Help us to make amends and reenergize us in your service.

Over and over you lift the heaviness that weighs on us so that with lightness we can thank you for your forgiveness.

May all we do be done in the footsteps of the one who died and rose again in three days.  
The one who loves us all, Jesus Christ our Saviour,  
Amen

### **Scripture Reading - Naomi Wylie and Becca Wylie - Burnside Blairbeth Church**

Today's reading is from John chapter 2 verses 13 to 22

#### **Jesus Goes to the Temple**

It was almost time for the Passover Festival, so Jesus went to Jerusalem. There in the Temple he found people selling cattle, sheep, and pigeons, and also the moneychangers sitting at their tables. So he made a whip from cords and drove all the animals out of the Temple, both the sheep and the cattle; he overturned the tables of the moneychangers and scattered their coins; and he ordered those who sold the pigeons, "Take them out of here! Stop making my Father's house a marketplace!" His disciples remembered that the scripture says, "My devotion to your house, O God, burns in me like a fire."

The Jewish authorities came back at him with a question, "What miracle can you perform to show us that you have the right to do this?"

Jesus answered, "Tear down this Temple, and in three days I will build it again."

"Are you going to build it again in three days?" they asked him. "It has taken forty-six years to build this Temple!"

But the temple Jesus was speaking about was his body. So, when he was raised from death, his disciples remembered that he had said this, and they believed the scripture and what Jesus had said.

Thanks be to God for his word.

### **All Age Talk - Dorothy Urquhart – Fullerton, Irvine**

Good morning.

How are you today?

I'm quite busy today because I've been setting up my playmobil cause I want to show you something later but first I want to ask you a question. Have you ever been really really angry?

So angry that you shouted. So angry that you threw things around, oh dear.

I know I have. I think you probably have too, but you might be very surprised to hear that Jesus has been very angry. Angry enough to shout and angry enough to throw things around.

Hmmm that's interesting.

Let's find out a bit more about that because the Bible says that Jesus never did anything wrong, but I can assure you he got angry and he threw things. Let me show you around my model first.

This is a wee bit like Jerusalem at the time of Jesus. So down in this level here we've got the marketplace where people are selling things. We've got a boy here who's got some geese and a lady with vegetables and here, somebody with chickens and out in the fields with got rabbits and horses and ducks on the pond and when people were going to worship God at the temple they would go up these steps here and come to this part which is the court of the gentiles or this is the part for people who were not Jews and they could come into this bit and come close to the temple so that they could pray to God there. Oh, but actually this looks more like a marketplace than down there because over here we've got a man selling a cow and how this worked was in the olden days at this time, if you wanted to come to God and say sorry for your sins



you had to bring something so if you want had a lot of money you could buy a cow and bring it to God at the temple. If you didn't have so much money you could buy a lamb and bring the lamb to God at the temple. If you couldn't afford a lamb, you could buy a dove or a pigeon and give that to God at the temple. If you still didn't have enough money for a dove, you could still change your money over here for special temple money, but I'm sorry to tell you that the people at the money changing part, they weren't being honest they were taking more money from themselves and cheating the people that were coming, but you couldn't come into the temple, the Jewish people had to have something with them before they could come in. if they did come in the men would be on one side and the ladies would be on the other side and this part is the special holiest place where only the priests could come. So, Jews only in this part and people who are not Jews praying out here. So let me tell you what happened when Jesus and his friends came to the temple one day and I think they looked around the market and thought hmmm, very quiet down here and then Jesus came up the steps and stopped and looked around. what is going on? This should be a part where people are praying and it's not and do you know he got a whip in his hand, out of rope and he started cracking the whip, crack, crack, and he pulled on the fence and the cow got out moo moo and started down the stairs running through all the people and folk chasing and then he went over to the lambs and he said this is not right let the lambs out Bah Bah Bah. They're running all over the place and people are trying to catch them he said to the people at the birds, let these birds go.

This is ridiculous, and then he went over to the money and he did this shhh shhh. He picked up the table and tipped it right over and the man behind it would be so angry, wow what a drama. Jesus is going completely scripto in the marketplace. it's not the marketplace. It should be the gentiles court for prayer. what was that all about? Come over here with me and we'll see if we can understand it. I want to know why did Jesus get a whip and crack a whip and chase all the animal out? I want to know why did Jesus throw all the money on the floor and tip the table over? Why did he do that? and I think it's because he cared about other people. Jesus wasn't getting angry for himself he was getting angry because the other people were being stopped from coming to God. The other people weren't being allowed to pray to God and the other people were being cheated. what about us?

Do we get angry? Do we care enough to get angry when other people are being cheated?

Do we care enough to get angry and do something when other people are being spoken about horribly online? Do we care if someone's being bullied or left out and do we make a fuss and change it?

I think that's something that we could learn from Jesus. Don't get angry when you don't get your own way.

Get angry because you care about other people. Here's my last wee thought for older children and adults. I love this picture of Jesus who was the sacrificial lamb who offered himself to take away our sins, chasing away the other little lambs because they're not needed anymore.

Jesus gave his own life so that we could come to God because he cares.

Thank you Jesus.

## **Song – We all need encouragement - Fischy Music**

C'mon c'mon c'mon c'mon c'mon c'mon  
C'mon c'mon c'mon c'mon c'mon c'mon

Well done (ECHO)  
That's great (ECHO)  
Good job (ECHO)  
Come on (ECHO)  
Just right (ECHO)  
Join in (ECHO)



Keep going (ECHO)  
Cool song (ECHO)

Sweet music pure music  
Sweet music to my ears

'Cos we all need encouragement I do believe  
We all need encouragement like the air we breathe  
We all need encouragement I do believe  
We all need encouragement like the air we breathe  
Hhh (SPOKEN)

You're great (ECHO)  
You're smart (ECHO)  
You're cool (ECHO)  
You're kind (ECHO)  
You're right (ECHO)  
You're sound (ECHO)  
You're in (ECHO)  
You're fine (ECHO)

C'mon c'mon c'mon c'mon c'mon c'mon  
C'mon c'mon c'mon c'mon c'mon c'mon

### **Sermon – William Wilson - Burnside Blairbeth Church**

Hello. My name is William Wilson and I am the minister of Burnside Blairbeth church in Rutherglen just outside Glasgow. It is my privilege to be with you today.

I don't know about other religions but within the Christian church, buildings have always managed to evoke strong feelings. Ask anybody who tried to make changes in their church buildings and I'm sure you'll find that it wasn't straightforward. Controversy is often never far away.

On a slightly different tack, it's now getting to be a thing of the past but many of us have memories of respectable people at church tut tutting and saying why are those children running around? Where's the reverence, they would say? Regrettably too often today we're simply asking where are the children?

In our reading today Jesus seems to bring these two things together. He stirred up a hornet's nest around buildings with the temple – but he also appears to be the one asking, "where's the reverence?" Before we think about that in more detail let's take a step back. I don't know whether you noticed that this incident is recorded in John 2 – near the beginning of the gospel. That has raised all sorts of discussions about whether there was more than one temple cleansing and chronology in Jesus' ministry.

You'll either be relieved or frustrated to hear that we're not going to focus on that – but it is worth noticing that John places this account straight after the beginning of Jesus' ministry, when he changed water into wine. In the same section of the gospel, we have Jesus the party maker and Jesus the party pooper.

Turning the water into wine points to the Jesus who is able and willing to meet our needs – while turning over the temple tables points us to the Jesus who reserves the right to turn things upside down. This is the same Jesus and we can't have one – the Jesus who answers our prayers – without the other – the Jesus who challenges and changes us.

The angry Jesus who confronted the temple traders, we're told, was consumed with zeal for His father's house. His challenge was about "where's the reverence" because he was confronting religious corruption



and a culture where the religious institution was getting in the way of the God it purported to worship. It seemed like a market place and Jesus wanted to get the traders out of there. He revealed his authority as he very deliberately threw out the traders and referred to the temple as His father's house – making an outrageous claim to those around that God was His father – and planting seeds in the minds of his disciples about who he was and why he had come.

Regrettably, religious corruption and scandal have never been far away. You can think of examples – and while it's easiest to point to examples that don't affect us, the blunt truth is that we know there have been times when our religious practices and institutions have obstructed rather than helped worship. There are people who say the thing that stops me following Jesus is the bad behaviour of the church. The sad truth is that there will be more religious scandal before too long – I say this not because I have particular knowledge of what that might be, but because there always has been and will be – it's a function of human nature.

As he cleansed the temple Jesus challenged us not to protect institutions or rely on religious practice but to focus on worshipping God and to have a zeal for His glory above anything else. Don't let anything get in the way. We need to copy the ruthlessness of Jesus who was determined that nothing should stand in the way of godly worship.

When he was challenged about what gave him the authority to behave as he did Jesus seemed to pour fuel on the fire. He said "destroy this temple and I will raise it again in three days." Now of course the disciples realised some time later, and we well know that Jesus was predicting His death and resurrection. This is another reminder to us that all of His ministry was building up to that as the focus of His mission. But why did Jesus use such provocative language? He well knew how central the temple was to the life of the nation, and the huge effort that had gone into its building. He also knew that most of his listeners wouldn't understand what he was on about and indeed would misunderstand it. This was a conversation that came back to bite him later, as he was on trial for his life because it allowed his enemies to accuse him of blasphemy. So why use this language?

Jesus is pointing to how he was changing the way that worship would take place. The people who heard him were used to worshipping in the temple – in fact some of them would have been on pilgrimage for the Passover so they could worship him there. And Jesus was effectively saying to them that He was the living temple. Worship was no longer about a place or even about a religion, but it was about a person – Him. We sometimes talk about worshipping God in the name of Jesus. That was symbolised with the tearing of the temple curtain at Jesus' death which meant that ordinary people could come to God. We come to God in the name of Jesus who died and rose again. It simply means that because of Jesus ordinary people like all of us can worship God and know God's love. A theologian called Leslie Newbigin has put it in these radical terms – the action of Jesus is more than an example of prophetic protest against corrupt religion: it is a sign of the end of all religion."

Imagine that – you've tuned into a Church of Scotland service today that talks about the end of religion – that's maybe not what you expected. But Jesus the disrupter turns things upside down, including religion. He says worship God and don't let anything get in the way – not corruption, not religion. But come to God because through Jesus ordinary people can.

There was an incident where Jesus got into a theological discussion with the most unlikely person – a Samaritan woman. She'd had five husbands and was living with another man. They talked about where worship should take place and Jesus effectively said to her the place doesn't matter. That's good to hear if you're worshipping in your front room or if you're feeling the loss because you haven't been able to go to your church building for months because of our current situation. Of course, if you're a churchgoer it won't feel the same as worshipping with the community of people that you love – but it's still great for us to hear just now. Jesus said "true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for these are the kind of worshippers the Father seeks."



Don't get hung up on buildings or locations or the kind of hymns or rituals and all the things that we get hung up on. Come to worship God invited by Jesus – the Jesus who says I am able and willing to meet all your needs, but I reserve the right to turn your life upside down. In Jesus we meet God and we know God. He invites all to come to Him and through Him we meet the creator, the Lord of all. Now that is truly amazing. There is nothing that Jesus won't disrupt. No wonder that when talking about Aslan – the lion who represents Jesus in C S Lewis's Narnia tales we hear the following conversation.

"Aslan is a lion- the Lion, the great Lion." "Ooh" said Susan. "I'd thought he was a man. Is he- quite safe? I shall feel rather nervous about meeting a lion"..."Safe?" said Mr Beaver ..."Who said anything about safe? 'Course he isn't safe. But he's good. He's the King, I tell you."

All can worship God anywhere through Jesus but what we can't do is hang up a "do not disturb" sign over our lives.

Amen and thanks be to God for His word.

### **Prayer of Intercession – Fiona Reynolds - Monifieth Parish Church**

God of abundant life,  
the stars of the night sky are too numerous to count,  
so, too, are the blessings you bestow upon us:  
the air we breathe,  
the water we drink,  
the roofs over our heads,  
the food in our bellies,  
the security to worship,  
the warmth of fellowship,  
the support of families  
the peace of unconditional love;  
These are not things for us to own  
but blessings that give us life:  
and we bring you our thanks.  
As we offer ourselves into your service,  
we pray you may continue to bless us,  
so that others might hear and know  
the good news you offer  
of abundant life for all.

Abundance, however, is still far off for many,  
so we offer our prayers for the many areas of need.  
We pray for all those who are far from home  
who have been displaced because of conflict,  
who are wandering in a desert of destitution,  
who are longing for a place to call home,  
all who are ignored by international regulations,  
or left out of decisions that affect them;  
May those who are often overlooked be ignored no more.

We pray for all those who are struggling close to home  
who have been unsettled by a change of circumstances,  
who are wandering in a desert of insecurity,  
who are longing for a job, good health or companionship,





who feel overlooked by the rapid pace of life,  
all who are struggling to see the next step amongst a life turned upside-down;  
May those who often go unacknowledged be disregarded no more.

We pray for all those who are struggling financially  
against whom the economic system is stacked;  
For all who are wading through a deluge of debt,  
who are finding it hard to make ends meet,  
who are excluded because of unfair trade  
and for those fighting tirelessly to make their voices heard;  
May every table of injustice be overturned.

We pray for those who are close to our hearts,  
at the forefront of our minds at this time:

... ..

May your Kingdom come, and your will be done.

God of abundant life,  
we give thanks for all who have gone before us  
inspiring us in this life and praising you in the next,  
asking you that you guide us safely  
until we join with them in your unending glory,  
through Christ Jesus our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you  
and the Holy Spirit, One God, world without end AMEN.

### **Song – When the Music Fades (Heart of Worship) - Members of Burnside Blairbeth Church**

When the music fades  
All is stripped away  
And I simply come  
Longing just to bring  
Something that's of worth  
That will bless Your heart

I'll bring You more than a song  
For a song in itself  
Is not what You have required  
You search much deeper within  
Through the way things appear  
You're looking into my heart

I'm coming back to the heart of worship  
And it's all about You,  
It's all about You, Jesus  
I'm sorry, Lord, for the thing I've made it





When it's all about You,  
It's all about You, Jesus

King of endless worth  
No one could express  
How much You deserve  
Though I'm weak and poor  
All I have is Yours  
Every single breath  
I'll bring You more than a song  
For a song in itself  
Is not what You have required  
You search much deeper within  
Through the way things appear  
You're looking into my heart

I'm coming back to the heart of worship  
And it's all about You,  
It's all about You, Jesus  
I'm sorry, Lord, for the thing I've made it  
And it's all about You,  
It's all about You, Jesus

I'm coming back to the heart of worship,  
And it's all about You,  
It's all about You, Jesus  
I'm sorry, Lord, for the thing I've made it  
And it's all about You,  
It's all about You, Jesus

**Blessing – The Right Reverend Dr Martin Fair, Moderator of the General Assembly**

Now go in peace  
And may the blessing of God almighty;  
Father, Son and Holy Spirit  
be with you and remain with you now and forevermore.  
Amen.