

OneKirk Worship

working for an inclusive, affirming and progressive church

www.onekirk.org

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Worship Resources for Sunday 17 May 2009 Sixth Sunday of Easter

Introduction

In light of the extensive media coverage prior to the 2009 General Assembly many ministers have spoken of a desire to have materials to help in the preparation of worship.

OneKirk recognise the need for sensitivity in our congregations when worship is prepared and as a network we feel it is important for our congregations to be informed and allowed space to prayerfully consider the decisions that are before the General Assembly.

This worship material is offered in a spirit of harmony among our differences.

OneKirk pray that you find this material of some use as we all attempt to guide our congregations through the difficult subjects that are before us. In all that we do however, we remain united to all of God's family through his love and acceptance of us. Feel free to adapt the material presented as you prepare for worship this coming Sunday.

OneKirk hope that through the worship you lead, that people may be inspired to lead lives of love and acceptance of all God's children in their midst.

Lectionary Readings

Acts 10: 44-48

Psalm 98

1 John 5: 1-5

John 15: 9-17

Other Resources

Church of Scotland Starters for Sunday has some helpful ideas for this week:
<http://www.churchofscotland.org.uk/worship/wpstarters.htm>

Mucky Paws, resources for the church from Roddy Hamilton at Abbotsford Parish Church:
<http://abbotsford.org.uk>

World News in Prayer has a topical intercessory prayer each week drawing on current world events:
<http://www.worldinprayer.org>

Laughing Bird Liturgical Resources:
<http://www.laughingbird.net>



Gathering

Setting the scene

After the roar of Easter
the white and gold of resurrection
there was quieter budding
the slow crimson growth of the church in the world
learning to live and change and be

From the budding there comes a leaf
a vine leaf
grafted to love
implanted with heaven
bearing the fruit of following

Called into the world
called by your name
to remain
to stay
to hold
to suffer
to grow
to live
to love
for God

You did not choose me
I chose you.



Call to Worship

Leader: We gather in this house of prayer,

All: unified by our hopes and dreams.

Leader: We meet with friends around us,

All: and share together in our faith.

Leader: We gather round to worship,

All: to sing our praise to God.

Leader: So let us gather, a people united by faith

All: and loved by God, each and every one.

Confession Prayer

Vine grower

Grape crusher

Love maker

Hear us

a new community

here because of love

and no other

God mould in us

a new community

beyond what culture shapes in us

further than what denomination calls us to

more than just 'of the moment'

May we turn from the fears these bring

confessing the pain that has gone with them

and recreate a new community

chosen by you

lived by us

God, mould in us

a new community

that has no common goal other than love

that proclaims no single message other than love

one raison d'être

one language

called love

And may we turn from the fears these bring

confessing the pain that has gone with them

and recreate a new community

chosen by you

live by us

God, mould in us

a new community

that does not select but accepts

that does not define but affirms

without limit

And may we turn from the fears these bring

confessing the pain that has gone with them

and recreate a new community

chosen by you

lived by us

now

forever

named by love

that endures

So be it, Amen.

The Root Command: A Litany & Response

As people arrive give each a different coloured slip of paper roughly 10cm long, 3cm wide and access to a pen or pencil. Before the litany is read invite them to remember their favourite or more meaningful, or encouraging story of Jesus and to write it's title or draw an image of it on the slip of paper. Following the litany and during the singing of a song, invite people to come forward and lay their slip of paper on the communion table or other place forming a circle. This image than can be used during the intercessory prayer and left over the next few weeks as a symbol of the gathered community coming together from many different experiences and encounters with Jesus.

This requires four readers. Voices 2-4 come from the congregation and as they speak each time they lay a slip of paper on the table beginning to create the symbol that the rest of the congregation completes.

Voice 1: And they asked Jesus,
'What shall we do when you are gone?'

And he asked them,
'What have I commended you?'

And they asked Jesus,
'You have asked many things of us.'

And he asked then,
'Well tell me what you remember.'

Voice 2: The loaves and fish and the 5,000 fed

Voice 3: The vine and the branches and the bearing of fruit

Voice 4: The daughter 'asleep' then woken and eating

Voice 2: The bent over woman, renewed in community

Voice 3: The beaten up man taking the Samaritan's help

Voice 4: The tables being turned and the poor being set free

Voice 2: The woman in adultery sinning no more

Voice 3: The calling of the fishers onto a journey unknown

Voice 4: The sending of twelve with only faith as their staff

Voice 2: The salt and the light in a world too cosy

Voice 3: The walking on water and the call to step out

Voice 4: The breaking of bread and the sharing of promise

Voice 2: The parable of sowing and a harvest of plenty

Voice 3: The rejection in Nazareth and the question of miracles

Voice 4: The faith of a woman who eats from the crumbs

Voice 1: And Jesus said to the disciples,
'You have remembered well.'

And the disciples said to Jesus,
'But what is your command when you are gone?'

And he said to them,
'Go and live out these stories again and again.
Make yourself at home in my love.
This is my root command.'

*Invite people to sing and come forward with their own slips
to create the symbol of community grown out of love.*

Prayer of Dedication

God of love,
You gave to your people a new way
of living and loving those others saw as different.
But through your eyes
we see that all people are the same
united by your love for them.
So may the gifts that we give
and that we ask you to bless
help us transform this place
into a place of openness and love
acceptance and unity.
and so may all see in us,
and in this place,
the love of God,
for all and in all.
Amen.

Intercessions

Use the symbol from the Litany if it was created. With each stanza (and make your own up as is appropriate for this weeks events) place a newspaper or a candle in the centre of the circle symbolising the world, surrounded by love. Otherwise this prayer could stand on it's own.

Creating God
Loving Creator
May this world be encircled
be held together
and make a home
in your love

We remember the world-wide community
(add particular concerns)

May we be the prayer we ask
encircling each concern
with your justice and grace

**May we make a home in your command
to love one another as you have loved us**

We remember the church are her needs
(add particular concerns)

May we be the prayer we ask...

We remember our neighbourhood and community
(add particular concerns)

May we be the prayer we ask...

We remember our friends and family
(add particular concerns)

May we be the prayer we ask...

Music Suggestions

Singing the Psalm

61 Oh, sing a new song to the Lord
62 Sing a new song to the Lord

Possible gathering and songs

147 All creatures of our God and King
173 Sing to God new songs of worship

Possible closing hymns and songs

547 What a friend we have in Jesus
644 O Jesus, I have promised

Other hymns and songs

MP 1 A new commandment that I give to you
MP 32 An army of ordinary people
MP 982 Far and near (Say it loud)
549 How deep the Father's love for us
503 I will offer up my life
551 In heavenly love abiding
510 Jesus calls us here to meet him
MP 411 Let there be love shared among us
527 Lord, make us servants of your peace
115 Love is the touch of intangible joy
357 This is my will, my new command
641 Seek ye first the kingdom of God

Singing united with the world church

359 He came down that we may have love
801 Ubi caritas et amor
516 We are marching in the light of God

Unless otherwise marked from Church Hymnary 4th edition. MP = Mission Praise.

Blessing

Leader: We came as people ready to worship,

All: we go as people ready to love.

Leader: We came celebrating all that makes us who we are,

All: We go delighting in the love of God that unites us.

Leader: As we go from this place,
may God's love go with us,
may His grace surround us

**All: and may his love inspire us,
from this moment on, forevermore.
Amen.**

Exploring the Word

All-Age Talk

Invite people to raise their hands if they have a sister or a brother. Have them show how many sisters and brothers they have with their fingers. See who has the most siblings.

Collect ideas of what sisters and brothers do together such as play games, share a bedroom, do chores, live in the same house, and maybe even fight.

Explain that sometimes people in the church call one another "sister" and "brother." The church is like a family—like sisters and brothers.

Collect ideas of how we are together in church. Compare this list with the previous list of ideas of what sisters and brothers do together.

Explain that we are all part of God's family in church and that we are united by his love, not just with our sisters and brothers in our own congregation but with sisters and brothers throughout the world. God loves all of his people equally and although we are all different, and do

different things, we are still loved by him.

In the Bible Jesus told his friends to love the people they met to show that God loves them too. God tells each of us who know that we are loved by God to share his love with other people.

Explain that in our churches there are lots of people who do different things, live in different places, some come to church a lot and others cannot make it too often but to God, we are all the same—we are all part of his family. No matter who we are, or what we do, God loves each and every one of us.

Wouldn't that be a good thing to share with our friends and our families? God loves us all.

Main concept of All-Age talk inspired by Seasons of the Spirit materials for 17 May 2009 from Woodlake Publishers in Canada.

Supporting OneKirk

OneKirk is an inclusive network of ministers, deacons, elders, members and friends of the Church of Scotland.

As such, there is no dotted line to be signed to join OneKirk or statement of scriptural interpretation that must be adhered to. To join the mailing list, please email us via the website (www.onekirk.org) or call Peter Johnston on 01698 828633.

However, if you would like to also become a Supporting Member then your contributions would be gratefully received to enable OneKirk to provide resources to assist and encourage members and clergy of the Church of Scotland.

We suggest an annual contribution of £15 (or £5 for unwaged).

Please either use the online system through the OneKirk website (www.onekirk.org) or make cheques payable to 'OneKirk' and send c/o Rev Peter Johnston, 332 Glasgow Road, Blantyre, Glasgow, G72 9LQ, United Kingdom.

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Welcome to OneKirk >>>

OneKirk is a new network for ministers, members and friends of the Church of Scotland.

OneKirk is committed to working for an inclusive, affirming and progressive church. We hope to encourage, challenge, and provide opportunities for discussing how our Christian faith and today's social culture can speak to one another productively.

If you would like to find out more about OneKirk then please have a look through the pages of this website to find out more. [READ MORE >>>](#)

Church Schism? >>>

A press release from OneKirk reveals that the talk about a schism in the Church of Scotland has been based on inflated figures from an online petition.

This is neither helpful nor conducive to an open and honest debate and dialogue within the Church of Scotland. [READ MORE >>>](#)

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OneKirk Journal: New Issue >>>

In the Spring 2009 issue of [OneKirk Journal](#) you can read an extensive conversation with Rev Scott M Rennie, currently minister of [Brechin Cathedral](#), and minister-elect of Queen's Cross Church, Aberdeen.

Copies of the OneKirk Journal are available in print (to receive, please find out about [OneKirk Membership](#)) or downloadable from this website. We hope these will stir thought and discussion for you. [READ MORE >>>](#)



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Sermon Starters

Acts 10: 44-48

God Ignores Human Boundaries

First it was the Samaritans, then the Ethiopian; now here, the historic enmity between Jews and Gentiles proved to be another boundary that God chose to ignore. The good news of the gospel was and is for everyone!

The Acts reading reminds us that many of the boundaries we observe are human-imposed. The walls of separation between peoples, between economic classes, between men and women, between straight and gay, are rendered meaningless by the message of salvation through Jesus Christ.

What walls do we continue to erect to separate ourselves from those considered different or outcast?

This passage speaks of God's Spirit at work to bring about inclusion into the family of the church. Notice that the Spirit moves long before the church legitimises the inclusion of gentiles through baptism. God is at work in our church today, bringing about inclusion, and the institution is still playing catch up.

Let the Church say, "Amen!"

Wouldn't the church be a different place if we followed Peter's precedent and continued to simply say "Amen" to what God is doing? This openness to continuing inspiration of the Spirit and reform of the community of faith would result in a very different church.

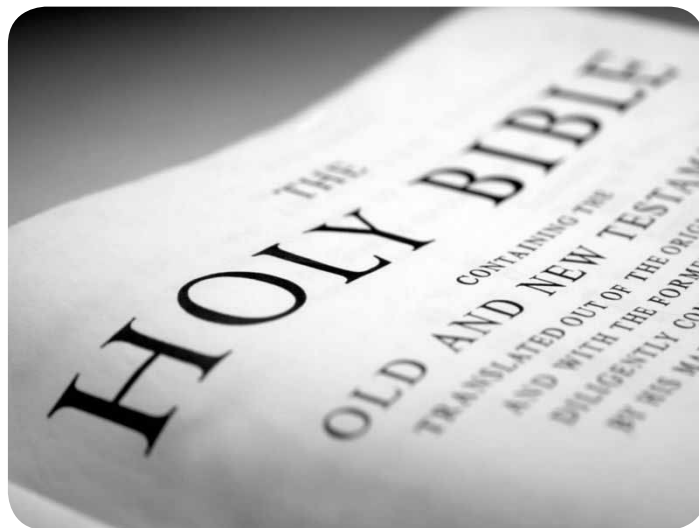
As we look forward to the General Assembly in our preaching this Sunday, instead of being defensive about our positions, or getting mad with others who do not share our perspective, let's preach this gospel of hope—the inclusive love and character of God, as we find it in the New Testament!

John 15: 9-17

The Command to love

This week's passage from the Gospel of John contains the bottom line of what it means to be a Christian: "This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you."

As Jesus nears death, he makes a farewell address to his followers, and the theme of love is powerful throughout. He could not be clearer: "As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you" (15:9). These words about love help us to understand Jesus' command to abide/remain in him, to understand ourselves as living our lives within his own reality, as part of him in the Body of Christ, or to use last week's image, as branches of a vine that bears rich fruit for a world hungry for love. These words about love help



us to understand what love really is, and what it means to abide, in Jesus.

As Jesus loves us, so are we are to love each other. How does Jesus love us, then? Surely the answer is: freely, without limit or exception. We are known and held and loved, but we are commanded, too, to belong to one another, to care for one another, to love one another. This love is not about how we live and act. Just as Jesus is prepared to give his life, so we are called into a way of living in which we put other people first, in compassion, love and care. We are called to a way of living in the world

The word "commandments" isn't legalistic and doesn't refer to a harsh code of burdensome laws. John's Gospel doesn't focus on the commandments of the law as the other Gospels do. Rather, John's theme is love, and to obey is to love.

This command is not the "but" in "I love you, but..." Rather, it's the "and," as in, "I love you, and I want you to love one another."

What kind of community?

This unselfish love that binds us together in community just as it binds us in relationship to Jesus. It is, he tells us the path to true joy in life. In the light of the week facing the Kirk, the Gospel has much to say to us about making space for each other, in our diversity of views, and it should encourage us to turn away from exclusionary actions which limit God's love.

Jesus also reminds us that he calls us—we do not call him. This may seem blindingly obvious, but how often do we hear talk of God as if he is ours, in our service, and belongs to us. The opposite is true—God is the one who calls many different people to love and service. Our priority is then to love, not exclude. It is to serve, and not to judge.



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