

WEEKLY BULLETIN

Sunday 13th December 2020

grantonchurch.org.uk

Granton



The Church of Scotland

Join this Sunday's service at 10.30am

By computer/smartphone - go to grantonchurch.org.uk and follow the link.

By telephone - just follow these steps:

- Phone 0131 460 1196
- Then enter the meeting ID : 982 2448 2457
- Then enter #
- Then enter the meeting password : 905841
- Then enter #

You will now be able to hear the service and you will also be able to speak to everyone as well if you wish.



facebook
LIVE

Catch up on Sunday Services

If you are not able to catch the service on Sunday mornings yet still want to catch the service later, we broadcast the services on Facebook Live. Check out the church website or go straight to our Facebook page.

People have been asking how they can support the ongoing work of the congregation. Go to the website and look at the top of the page where you will see a Donation button. Click it, then either donate via card or click on the Paypal button. Your donation will help our church to keep making a positive impact on our community and beyond.

DONATE



Bright Hope
for
Tomorrow

Thoughts for The Day (Weekly Digest)

Monday Dec 7: Norman Smith

When it was time for Elizabeth to have her baby, she gave birth to a son. Her neighbours and relatives heard that the Lord had shown her great mercy, and they shared her joy.

On the eighth day they came to circumcise the child, and they were going to name him after his father Zechariah, but his mother spoke up and said, "No! He is to be called John."

They said to her, "There is no one among your relatives who has that name."

Then they made signs to his father, to find out what he would like to name the child.

He asked for a writing tablet, and to everyone's astonishment he wrote, "His name is John." Immediately his mouth was opened and his tongue set free, and he began to speak, praising God. All the neighbours were filled with awe, and throughout the hill country of Judea people were talking about all these things. Everyone who heard this wondered about it, asking, "What then is this child going to be?" For the Lord's hand was with him.

Luke 1: 57 - 66

Do you like a good mystery? There was a lot of mystery surrounding John's birth. His parents were too old, his father had become mute throughout the pregnancy due to his encounter with the angel; only nobody new that since he couldn't tell them! The mystery continued when Elizabeth said to call him John. Why John? Who was John? None of his relatives were called John! The only person for whom this wasn't a mystery was God himself. John

had been called by God to be a prophet and God had a hand in everything that was happening.

How often have you had to work with incomplete information where so much was a mystery? That is when you learn to trust, when you don't have full information. This is the essence of faith.

Prayer: Lord God, I trust you. It's tough when life is hard. Help me to trust you more.

Action: Hold onto your trust in God.

Tuesday Dec 8: Mary MacLeod Rivett

His father Zechariah was filled with the Holy Spirit and prophesied:

"Praise be to the Lord, the God of Israel, because he has come to his people and redeemed them.

He has raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David (as he said through his holy prophets of long ago), salvation from our enemies and from the hand of all who hate us—to show mercy to our ancestors and to remember his holy covenant, the oath he swore to our father Abraham: to rescue us from the hand of our enemies, and to enable us to serve him without fear in holiness and righteousness before him all our days.

Luke 1: 67 – 75

Zechariah had spent about nine months in silence! He was an educated man who could write what he needed, but he must have been missing words and conversation, as he watched and

supported his wife through her pregnancy, labour and delivery. He had seen God's word fulfilled in the birth of a son in his old age, and he hadn't been able to speak about it. Now, as he obeys God's instruction to name the boy John, his tongue is freed, and he bursts out with praise, using the words from the Old Testament prophecies and psalms that were so familiar from his work as a priest. He is seeing and participating in God's redemption of Israel.

Prayer: Lord as we watch and wait through Advent, we offer you our praise and thanks for all the people of God who have gone before us. Thank you for their words and stories kept for us in the Bible, thank you that they and we are part of your redeeming plan. Amen

Action: Think about how God has been working in your life during the past year - what have you learned?

Wednesday Dec 9: David Moodie

There was a man sent from God whose name was John. He came as a witness to testify concerning that light, so that through him all might believe. He himself was not the light; he came only as a witness to the light.

John 1 : 6 – 8

John the Baptist was an incredible Prophet. The people hadn't seen anything like him in Generations and his message of repentance and baptism attracted many disciples. People wondered if he might be the Messiah: John was so compelling, his ascetic lifestyle so inspiring, surely he was the one God had promised? But John was not the Messiah.

His job was to point people on to the person who was coming, Jesus. In this regard we are all following in John's footsteps. Our mission as Christians is to point people to Jesus. Our goal isn't to build up fame or praise for ourselves, but to help others share the faith we have. We have had an experience of Jesus's light in our own lives, and so we are called to share that light with other people.

It's been said that being a Christian is a bit like being a disco ball (hear me out). A disco ball just as an object isn't very pretty, nor can it generate light on it's own. But a shine a light onto it, even a single beam, and it will light up a whole room. This is our call, to reflect Jesus's light out into the world.

Prayer: Light of the World, please use me to reflect you light into every corner of my life. Help me to point people beyond myself and towards Jesus

Action: Is there a situation in your life that you want God to shine light into? Pray for help in bringing God's light to that place.

Thursday Dec 10: Mary MacLeod Rivett

In the sixth month of Elizabeth's pregnancy, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin's name was Mary.

Luke 1: 26 – 27

Mary was a young woman, probably a teenager, living in a small town. She was a cousin of Elizabeth's, but much younger than her, and she was not yet married. Nothing that is written in the gospels suggests that Mary was unusual - her life was following the normal course for a woman of her time and place. Her fiancée was a descendant of the great king of the Jewish people, David, so he came from a respected family, and we know from elsewhere in the Bible that he was a good and kind man. Altogether, Mary's life was going well, and we can imagine that she was contented and excited, looking forward to her marriage and family life.

And then God sent an angel, a supernatural messenger, to this ordinary woman, of an ordinary family, in an ordinary town. And then, nothing in the entire world, including Mary's life, would ever, in the whole of history, be the same again.

Prayer: Father God, your work in our lives can come as a shock. You break into our plans and our routines and change everything. Help us to welcome the changes that you bring - help us to be open to you and your messengers. Amen

Action: think about who might be a messenger from God to you, and where you might hear God speak unexpectedly in your life. Has God been asking you to change something about your life?

Friday Dec 11: Dan Docwra

The angel went to her and said,

"Greetings, you who are highly favoured! The Lord is with you."

Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be.

Luke 1: 28 – 29

Mary was in the presence of a heavenly being bringing a message from God - how many people receive that ultimate greeting?

We know that Mary was devout in her worship of the Lord. She regularly attended the Synagogue and found peace and comfort there. She would have been familiar with the stories of God speaking to Abraham, Jacob, Joseph, Moses and many more who became known as The Prophets.

But Mary was just an ordinary girl, growing up in the Jewish faith and following the traditions that were part of her everyday life. So the shock must have been terrific, mind-blowing and even scary! To be in the presence of an angel of the Lord would be hard to accept, but accept it she did.

What had she done to deserve this visit? What else was the angel going to say? Was she going to be able to understand his words. This is beginning of the greatest story ever told.

Prayer: Father, when we are alone and at peace, let us feel the wonder of your presence.

Action: Feel thankful when you are in the presence of family and friends, but be

prepared for times when you are alone and imagine what Mary must have felt when the angel came into her presence.

Saturday Dec 12: Karen Docwra

But the angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary; you have found favour with God. You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus.
Luke 1: 30 – 31

“Don’t be afraid” is allegedly the most used phrase in the Bible. It turns up in literally hundreds of verses throughout and, let’s be honest, many of those are circumstances where it would absolutely be human nature to feel fear: when the disciples witness Jesus walking on water; when Peter, James and John see Jesus chatting away with Moses and Elijah on a mountain top; when the women at the tomb hear that Jesus is risen and - before all those examples - in these verses when Mary, a teenager from Nazareth, is told by an angel that she will become pregnant and bear God’s son.

We all experience fear at some time in our lives; maybe you’re fortunate and it’s a rare and fleeting feeling or maybe being in a state of fear or anxiety is a more familiar emotion to you and it’s something you struggle with. The last few months have certainly been ones that will have engendered fear at some point for most, if not all of us.

“Don’t be afraid” is a big ask, depending on the circumstances. However, I’m guessing we’re not talking here about never feeling fear or anxiety but, rather, at moments when we experience those emotions, being able to try to find our way

through them, with God’s help. We need to understand and believe that God ‘has our back’ at all times. By turning our fear over to God, we can take up the opportunity that is offered to us to enter into God’s peace; into that “Peace which passes all understanding” (Philippians 4:7)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, we give you thanks for your message of “don’t be afraid”. When we face fearful situations, we ask that you will give us the courage to turn to you, trusting that you will be with us. Help us to know your peace. Amen.

Action: Take a few moments in quiet to read the whole of the Annunciation story and to imagine yourself in Mary’s shoes. How do you feel when you hear Gabriel’s message?

Sunday Dec 13: Caroline Lockerbie

He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over Jacob’s descendants forever; his kingdom will never end.”
Luke 1: 32 – 33

Rev Dr Caroline Lockerbie is a Minister of the Church of Scotland, now living in Vernon BC Canada. Caroline recently became a member of our congregation remotely and contributes to our Thought for the Day.

Wait for it!... Ah the familiar tone of the mobile phone alerting you to the incoming message from Granton Church. Your day has begun!

Now, think of me writing from western Canada where there is an 8 hour time

difference. That same familiar and much appreciated alert arrives here just before midnight. At first it was jarring, often waking me from early slumber. But now it is one of the most comforting sounds in my day. Even if I don't read the message, just knowing that it exists is a profound comfort. You see, I know from that tone that a new day has dawned in Scotland. The world has not ended and I can rest easy through another night of this chaotic, frightening, senseless and unconnected time.

It was during such a time that God came with the promise to Mary, a promise of a child to take the throne, a throne that will point to peace and stability, a throne that will bring security to God's world forever. I have always loved this passage. It speaks to me of God's majesty, God's care for creation and God's permanence, all couched in human images to which we can relate. David and Jacob had their moments, but through their stories they became for us real characters wondering about God as they responded to their calls to leadership. Mary trusted those images when God called her.

All of us are part of God's promise to

bless the world and provide for the 'kingdom that will have no end'. Every night I am reminded of that promise when I hear my mobile phone tone and know that as Edinburgh lives so does God's world. Every night there is hope and on this Second Sunday of Advent that hope is of peace.

Prayer: God, we pray that through their stories we might hear the ancients of scripture shouting to us our Creator's words of hope. We pray that we can hear those same words of hope through the love and actions of our friends and neighbours. We pray for patience, comfort and peace as we walk through these dark days of winter and the even darker days of pandemic.

Action: Listen for the sounds of promise that God is sending you. Be an instrument of hope for the people around you. You can do this! Granton gives me hope each evening through something as simple as a ring tone. You, with your own simple acts, will be the hope our world needs to know that the kingdom has not ended and that God's promise is totally trustworthy.

Our Church Values

Everything we do is rooted in **JESUS CHRIST**

EQUALITY is based on who you are and not what you have

EVERYONE is valued and everyone has gifts that can be offered to God

COMMUNITY brings with it respect across the generations and cultures



Advent & Christmas Services

Sunday 13th Dec. 10.30am Mary's Song of Praise
Joining with Mary to give thanks for Jesus and Christmas
(In-Person & online)

Sunday 20th Dec. 10.30am Emmanuel
God is with us! You are not alone!
(In-Person & online)

Christmas Eve 4.30pm Christingle
Reminding ourselves of the Christ light in our lives
(In-Person only)

Christmas Eve 6.30pm Christingle
Reminding ourselves of the Christ light in our lives
(In-Person & online, Pre-Booked)

Christmas Day 10.30am Arrival!
We celebrate the day of Jesus birth
(In-Person & online)

Sunday 27th Dec. 10.30am Blessings of the New Covenant
A year end reminder of God's promises to us
(In-Person & online)

Highlighted Resource....

Every week a different resource will be highlighted that can help you. This week...

The Church of Scotland has drawn from a wide variety of people across the whole church to create an Advent Calendar that you can get delivered to your email every day.

You can find it at:

<https://churchofscotland.org.uk/worship/advent>



Highlighting the same resource through December
Go sign up for it!

For more info about anything in the Bulletin,
snap the QR
code or visit



grantonchurch.org.uk

If you have access to the internet, check www.grantonchurch.org.uk and click SUBSCRIBE to get Thought for the Day delivered every day.

If you no longer wish to receive this by post, or want to update your contact details please call Norman on 0131 551 2159

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