

Quiet Time Service

17th January 2024

Good evening and a very warm welcome to our Quiet Time service, coming from Giffnock Orchardhill Parish Church in Glasgow. We are delighted that you are here to join us for prayer, readings, music and reflection. Whether you are present in the Sanctuary, joining us in your own homes through “Zoom” or listening later on the podcast you are most welcome.

In tonight’s reading the description or imagining of creation, before God creates the heavens and earth, there is only a formless void, complete darkness and endless water. God’s first act is to create light, and then to separate light from dark, day from night – the first day.

This week, we are looking at ways in which God’s Spirit moves to shake things up and begins new things.

Let’s pray together:

Living God, in the beginning
you called all life into being to reflect your creativity:
we celebrate your generosity.

At his baptism you called Jesus to reflect your purpose:
we celebrate his coming among us.

Today you call us to receive your Holy Spirit, and
to reflect your love in the world:
we celebrate your trust in us.

All powerful God, you shake us out of complacency,
you remind us of the meaning of service,
you restore our relationship with you and others,
you empower us with your spirit and bless us with your
grace,
you speak your words of reassurance over us.
Thank you for each new day, each new beginning,
and each touch of your grace in our lives.
Amen.

Our reading is from Genesis Chapter 1, verses 1 – 5.

The Beginning

1 In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. **2** Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters. **3** And God said, “Let there be light,” and there was light. **4** God saw that the light was good, and he separated the light from the darkness. **5** God called the light “day,” and the darkness he called “night.” And there was evening, and there was morning—the first day.

A Reflection:

‘Blah, blah, blah!’ Who would have thought that these three words – are they even words? – would be the start of a serious challenge to a group of powerful politicians and world leaders? The young Greta Thunberg was

referring to a series of climate change conferences, suggesting that they were 'just talk' and that serious action should be taken before it was too late. 'Blah, blah, blah!' was no use when serious, far-reaching, action was needed. The courage and foresight of this young girl was and is a catalyst for action.

Over the centuries people have spoken words or carried out actions that have triggered action or new movements. The civil rights movement in America was triggered and strengthened by the actions of people such as Rosa Parks, the woman who refused to sit in the area designated for black people on a bus; or in the powerful words of Martin Luther King in his speech 'I have a dream'. That might remind us of the words of another Martin Luther, generations earlier, who said, 'Here I stand, I can do no other', triggering the reformation with his words and actions.

The ultimate example, of course, is the 'wind from God, sweeping over the face of the waters' dividing light from darkness and bringing order from chaos – the word and breath of God in action. This week's Psalm offers other examples of the power of the voice of God: 'The voice of the Lord shakes the wilderness', 'The God of glory thunders', 'May the Lord bring peace to his people'. There is much 'stirring up' in the pages of the Bible, such as the story of John the Baptist. He certainly stirred things up, and paid the ultimate price for it. He proclaimed a new start, with people acknowledging their wrongdoing and turning their lives around – beginning again. He announced the coming of Jesus who

would bring another new start through his death and resurrection, and the sending of the Holy Spirit. The effects of this were seen by and in the people whom Paul baptized in Corinth; and the effects are seen in people today, filled with and stirred up by the Holy Spirit.

Action and stirring to action are the name of the game when God's Spirit moves. And there is just as much need today for us to look out for signs of God's spirit 'moving over the waters' and bringing new life and new beginnings. Let it never be said of us that we are just 'Blah, blah, blah!'

Let us listen to Lord of Creation

Our Prayers for Others:

Faithful God,
you have led us through the ups and downs of the year
that is past.

Today, you call us onwards to new adventures of faith.

Help us to trust your voice
and to follow where you lead us.

We turn to you, O God:

Help us to walk in your light.

Faithful God,
as a new year begins,

we pray for the ability to pay attention
to the signs of your presence all around us.
We pray for all who have lost their way
for the doubters, the dispossessed and the distressed,
and ask that you would shine your light into their lives.
As a new year begins, we ask for fresh vision amongst
our political leaders;
for the light of wisdom, kindness, truth and grace to
shape debate;
for the will to build a more just society where resources
are shared
and for the determination to make sure that no one
goes hungry.
We turn to you, O God:
Help us to walk in your light.

Faithful God,
may the light of your healing wrap around us
and bring us new life.
We ask you to be with all who wait at the bedside of the
sick and the dying
and we pray especially for people who are experiencing
any kind of suffering in mind or body.
Today we offer to God today our prayers for those we
know who are ill:
May they know your care and your love.
We turn to you, O God:
Help us to walk in your light.

Faithful God,
we give thanks for the love we receive from friends and family
and pray for all who tonight will weep alone.
Make our communities into spaces where love grows;
where we challenge each other to live into our baptismal calling
and learn to become the people you want us to be.
May the lost find a place to belong with us;
may the hungry be fed;
may hope be rekindled and our vision expanded
so that your light will shine into our homes and our neighbourhoods.
We turn to you, O God:
Help us to walk in your light.

Faithful God,
though the way ahead may be dark and the cost may be high;
give us courage to speak up for those in need;
to use what we have to serve others
and to sing of your goodness when hope seems lost.
We pray for all areas of the world living under the shadow of death and conflict:
remembering especially all children who suffer in adult wars.
In the stillness of our hearts
let us name to God the parts of the world in desperate need today.
(silence)

Bring light into the war-torn places in our world
and may our communities be beacons of hope in a
troubled world.

We turn to you, O God:

Help us to walk in your light.

Faithful God,

we pray for open hearts to hear the cry of our planet for
healing and justice.

We weep with you for the damage caused by our
destructive choices.

May we live more simply in the year ahead, trusting that
you will provide for us.

Lighten the pathway ahead as we walk with you, one
step at a time;

keep our eyes fixed on your great love for us;

keep our feet in the pathway you have set for us

and keep our ears open to hear your direction.

We turn to you, O God:

Help us to walk in your light

Let us come together to say the Lord's Prayer:

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be Your name; Your
kingdom come, Your will be done on earth as in heaven.

Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we
forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time
of trial and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the
power and the glory are Yours, now and for ever. Amen

**And now, as our Quiet Time comes to a close, a
Blessing:**

May the peace of God reign in this place
and the love of God forever hold you tight,
May the Spirit of God flow through your life
and the joy of God uphold you day and night.