



The Church of Scotland

## Place for Pause

A WEEK OF PRAYER FOR CHURCH AND COUNTRY  
17th - 22nd August 2020

**FRIDAY 21ST AUGUST • TO THE MOUNTAINS TO PRAY**

### **Reading - Matthew 14:22-33**

Immediately he made the disciples get into the boat and go on ahead to the other side, while he dismissed the crowds. And after he had dismissed the crowds, he went up the mountain by himself to pray. When evening came, he was there alone, but by this time the boat, battered by the waves, was far from the land, for the wind was against them. And early in the morning he came walking toward them on the lake. But when the disciples saw him walking on the lake, they were terrified, saying, "It is a ghost!" And they cried out in fear. But immediately Jesus spoke to them and said, "Take heart, it is I; do not be afraid." Peter answered him, "Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water." He said, "Come." So Peter got out of the boat, started walking on the water, and came toward Jesus. But when he noticed the strong wind, he became frightened, and beginning to sink, he cried out, "Lord, save me!" Jesus immediately reached out his hand and caught him, saying to him, "You of little faith, why did you doubt?" When they got into the boat, the wind ceased. And those in the boat worshiped him, saying, "Truly you are the Son of God."

### **Reflection**

I stopped in at the reception to ask for a map and some suggested local walks. One was pointed out that I thought sounded good and off we went, Kathryn and I together. I was promised a view of the villager below. I wondered what 'below' would mean; the ground was terribly flat where we were. But right enough, we caught one glimpse through one gap in the hedge and then, more open, we could see all the roofs of the village not far from us.

A change in perspective and I was now looking down at someone else's parish - and I was also thinking, I'm going to enjoy my couple of days away, I'm going to enjoy time with Kathryn, time with a book, time with the sea lapping in and out where I would sit with a picnic.

But I also knew that I'd be going home to Clydebank and ready to serve in Faifley, sure that I wanted to put myself at God's disposal. The simplicity of a change in perspective brought a desire to see God at work in me and in others.

## **Prayer**

Gracious God, we see that Jesus was always in demand -  
the ordinary people wanted to hear from him, to be touched by him, to be blessed by him.  
As his hands and feet on earth now,  
strengthen us that we might be available to others  
where our love and support and listening and encouraging are what's required.

But we see too that Jesus took time out,  
time to be on his own, time to be with you -  
as we read in today's passage, on the hillside through the hours of the night  
Help us, Loving Lord, to find rhythm in our own lives -  
time to do and act and time to be still, to be refreshed in you.

And then there are times when we find ourselves in the boat in the middle of the lake.  
And you come to us - sometimes to snooze in the stern,  
sometimes to command wind and waves,  
sometimes to invite us out of the boat into a whole new level of trusting you.

Wherever we are today, may we be still to know that Jesus is near, that Jesus is here.

"The Lord bless you  
and keep you;  
the Lord make his face shine on you  
and be gracious to you;  
the Lord turn his face toward you  
and give you peace. "  
AMEN.

## **Daily Activity**

### **"Smelly Worship"**

Can you worship God with your sense of smell?  
Remember the account in the Bible where Jesus' friend pours beautiful perfume over him to show how much she loved him? Imagine the wonderful smells that must have created.  
As you walk today, go slower. What can you smell? Are there different smells along your route?  
Are they nice smells or not so nice smells?  
If you're in your garden, take a few minutes to do nothing, breathe deeply and discover the smells in your garden. Or open your window, lean out a little (safely!) and do the same.  
Each time you smell something new, pause and wonder. What does that smell remind you about God? Or about Jesus? Say a prayer of praise or thanks.  
What about if you can't smell any nice smells?  
What about if you're smelling pollution or rubbish?  
Perhaps it reminds you of the wrong in our world,  
can you use it to turn your thoughts towards God's love and plans for our messed up world?  
Can you say thank you to God for his plan to send Jesus?