



The Church of Scotland

Place for Pause

A WEEK OF PRAYER FOR CHURCH AND COUNTRY

17th - 22nd August 2020

SATURDAY 22ND AUGUST • A NEW SONG

Reading - Psalm 98

Sing a new song to the Lord, for he has done wonderful deeds.
His right hand has won a mighty victory; his holy arm has shown his saving power!
The Lord has announced his victory and has revealed his righteousness to every nation!
He has remembered his promise to love and be faithful to Israel.
The ends of the earth have seen the victory of our God.
Shout to the Lord, all the earth; break out in praise and sing for joy!
Sing your praise to the Lord with the harp, with the harp and melodious song, with trumpets and the sound of the ram's horn.
Make a joyful symphony before the Lord, the King!
Let the sea and everything in it shout his praise!
Let the earth and all living things join in.
Let the rivers clap their hands in glee!
Let the hills sing out their songs of joy before the Lord, for he is coming to judge the earth.
He will judge the world with justice, and the nations with fairness.

Reflection

The Psalmist invites us to 'Sing a new song to the Lord.'
Why, I wonder? What's wrong with the old ones?
I mean, this is how we do things around here, right?

Surely this is about more than the songs we sing. Might it be a call for us to open ourselves to the new things that God is doing?

Oh I know, God is constant, that goes without saying - and I'm glad of that.
'We blossom and flourish as leaves on the tree -
and wither and perish, but naught changeth Thee.'
I'm glad that God is like that.

But saying that God is unchanging needn't lead us to conclude that God isn't in the business of doing new things.

From so long ago, we have this from the prophet Isaiah:

“Do not call to mind the former things,
Or ponder things of the past.
“Behold, I will do something new,
Now it will spring forth;
Will you not be aware of it?
I will even make a roadway in the wilderness,
Rivers in the desert.”

Friends, the God who is unchanging says: ‘I will do something new.’
And asks, ‘Will you not be aware of it?’
And if so long ago, why not now?
If our God never changes then surely God is still in the business of doing new things?

So, might God’s people begin to sing a new song to the Lord -
and in the singing, might we become aware of what God is doing and is going to do among us -
even making a way in the wilderness before us and causing rivers to flow in the desert?

Today, what new song will you sing?

Prayer

Unchanging God, we love to hear the old, old story. And it’s a story worth remembering - of how you have loved us and chosen us and made us your people. And all of these stories we see coming together beautifully in the life and death and rising again of Jesus - this Jesus who is present to us even now through the Holy Spirit.

This morning, Lord, we pray that as you have put breath in our lungs so you will put a new song in our hearts - and that, from a growing awareness of the new thing that you are doing.

Forgive us for when we have been welded to the past such that we’ve been blinded to the present, and to what you are saying to us now and to where you are leading us now.

In the singing of a new song, remind us that you have called us to be people of the way and that it is in walking that way that we’ll discover you walking with us.

Gracious God, would you feed us and would you lead us - into this day and into the new day.

And as you go:

May the road rise up to meet you.
May the wind be always at your back.
May the sun shine warm upon your face;
the rain fall soft upon your fields
and until we meet again,
may God hold you in the palm of his hand.

In the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
AMEN.

Daily Activity

Chalk the Walk

At the beginning of lockdown, limited to essential travel and exercise, many of us enjoyed a daily walk. It was an opportunity to up our step count, see other people from a distance and pass familiar places along the way. As the Moderator and friends take to the mountains during a week of prayer for church and country, so we are invited to join in. As well as 'zoom in,' 'climb every mountain' and participating in morning and evening prayers, so we are encouraged to take to the streets and prayer walk. On your journey you might pause outside a school, a health centre, a police station, a church, a shop, etc. Wherever it is, we are invited to pause, pray for that place and people and, before setting off again, simply chalk our walk, drawing around our feet using any colour of chalk that you like, leaving our mark so that others might know that we have been there and care.