



LIVINGSTONES

LIVING STONES



Now, we are entering the second year of our strategy 'Let us Build a House' where we build up from 'Sure Foundations' to the 'Living Stones.'

Living stones - quite the anomaly! We all know stone is inanimate matter and stated in the dictionary as 'a hard, solid substance found in the ground that is often used as a building material.'

Since the beginning of time stone has been used in many different ways and for many different purposes - for shelter, defence, weapons, markers, memorials, worship- and you can probably name several more. Think of the Calanais Standing Stones on the Isle of Lewis or the Standing Stones of Stenness on Orkney, neolithic monuments involved in ritual activities and ceremonies of their time and situated to make a visible statement for miles around.

Far back in the Bible, we come across the use of memorial stones. In Genesis 28 we find that Jacob set a pillar in Bethel to commemorate a powerful vision of God that he experienced while sleeping there; Joshua used stones to mark the Israelites' entrance into the Promised Land (Joshua 4:1-9); Samuel erected the Ebenezer Stone after God thwarted the Philistines' attack (Samuel 1:7-12). These stone markers were all used as reminders of God's faithfulness and the fulfilment of his promises.

Stones in the Bible represent strength, stability and enduring faith.

But living stones? That's where we, Christ's followers, come in. Looking back to last year's 'Sure Foundations' and the laying of the crucial cornerstone i.e. the first stone laid, the reference point for all the others, giving total stability, we are called to be the building stones laid on the cornerstone, Jesus, the foundation of our faith. The living stones building God's kingdom on earth, being ambassadors for Christ. 'We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making His appeal through us' (2 Corinthians 5: 20 NIV).

Contents

Living Stones	2
Bible Readings	4
Suggested Hymns	5
Prayers	6
Sample Worship	12
Reflective Worship	16
Bible Study	22
Drama	26
Ideas for meetings	28
Ideas for meetings without a speaker	29
Other resources	30
Discussion topic	31

LIVING STONES

Put simply, God is the architect and planner, Jesus is the cornerstone and foundation, and we are the building material all bound together by the Holy Spirit. ***'As you come to him, the Living Stone - rejected by humans but chosen by God and precious to him - you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light (1 Peter 2: 4-9, NIV.)***

Each stone is necessary in this construction. Some are specially shaped to fulfil a distinct purpose, but each stone relies on the support and strength of those around it.

Over the years I have brought various sized pebbles back from places I have visited and placed them in my garden. Some of them have small, irregular markings or flaws but this makes them interesting anyway. I love to choose a round, smooth one that sits perfectly in the palm of my hand. There is a comfort to its form and as I hold it, it becomes warm and feels perfectly at home there.

Is that not how we are with our Saviour? He holds us in the palm of his hand, he brings us comfort and warmth and makes us feel safe, accepted despite all our failings and at home in his love and care for us.

It is we, the people, who are Christ's church, the beating heart, the willing hands, the living stones. So let us build his house and take on the task of being his ambassadors on earth. Let us encourage others to explore and grow their faith by spreading his light wherever we go, by sharing his love with others at every opportunity and by kindling hope where it is needed most.

Let us be the living stones and share the Good News!

Christina Paterson

National Convener

BIBLE READINGS

What does the Bible tell us about 'Living Stones'?

In the Old Testament

Gen 28: 11–19

Ps 118 v22

Exodus 20: 2–17 The 10 Commandments

Isaiah 28: 16

In the New Testament

1 Peter 2: 1–12

Matthew 16: 18

1 Corinthians 3:11

Ephesians 2: 19–22

Acts 2: 41–47

Readings from different translations

Joshua 4:19 – 24 God's Memorial Living Stones, Good News Bible

The people crossed the Jordan on the tenth day of the first month and made camp at Gilgal, east of Jericho. There Joshua set up the twelve stones taken from the Jordan. He said to the people of Israel, "In future, when your children ask what these stones mean, you will tell them about the time when Israel crossed the Jordan on dry ground. Tell them that the Lord your God dried up the water of Jordan for you until you had crossed, just as he dried up the Red Sea for us. Because of this everyone on earth will know how great the Lord's power is, and you will honour the Lord your God forever.

1 Peter 2: 4–9 The Message

Welcome to the living Stone, the source of life. The workmen took one look and threw it out; God set it in the place of honour. Present yourselves as building stones for the construction of a sanctuary vibrant with life, in which you will serve as holy priests offering Christ-approved lives up to God. The Scriptures provide precedent: "Look! I'm setting a stone in Zion, a cornerstone in the place of honour. Whoever trusts in this stone as a foundation will never have cause to regret it." To you who trust him, he's a Stone to be proud of, but to those who refuse to trust him, "The stone the workmen threw out is now the chief foundation stone." For the untrusting it's, "a stone to trip over, a boulder blocking the way." They trip and fall because they refuse to obey just as predicted. But you are the ones chosen by God, chosen for the high calling of priestly work, chosen to be a holy people, God's instruments to do his work and speak out for him, to tell others of the night-and-day difference he made for you – from nothing to something, from rejected to accepted.

Look at **www.biblehub.com** for more translations?

SUGGESTED HYMNS

	CH4	MP	SGP
Safe in the shadows	20	73	
Go tell everyone	34		
How lovely is thy dwelling place	52	247	
O God you search me and you know me	97		
For I'm building a people of power	151		
God is building a house	184		
Let us build a house	198		
I am the church, you are the church	204		
O God of Bethel	268	903	
We have a gospel to proclaim	363	617	
How sweet the name of Jesus sounds	461	251	
My hope is built on nothing less	473		
All that I am, all that I do	505		
The church is wherever	522		
Forth in thy name, O Lord, I go	529	55	
Will you come and follow me	533	118	
You are the vine, we are the branches	643		
You are called to tell the story	680		
Go in grace and make disciples	682		
The Lord created families	684		
Let us talents and tongues employ	673	65	
Come and find the quiet centre	716		
I'll go in the strength of the Lord	862		
I'm living my life for Jesus	863		
In the street of every city	866		
Brother, sister, let me serve you	964		
Help us accept each other			41
Humbly in your sight			46
Those who wait on the Lord			106
We are one in the Spirit			111

Why not look at www.hymnary.org for other hymns?

PRAYERS

Calls to prayer

As we gather, Lord, we ask blessings on our Guild and pray for those who, for whatever the reason, cannot be with us today.

We are here to show our commitment to the teachings of Jesus, your son, and in whose name, we pray.

Merciful God, we come praising your name in worship, prayer and action. Hear us now as we join together in prayer.

Opening prayers

Dear Lord, in your name we gather, thankful that we can meet in this way, Living Stones here to fulfil your work in this place. As Living Stones give us the courage and the faith to reach out to those around us. We pray for each of our members, knowing that you called them by their name and that you have them in the palm of your hand. May we be Living Stones within our congregations finding opportunities to serve you. Guide and support us as we come together and glorify your name through worship, prayer and action. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen

Dear Lord, thank you that we are free to meet today, to worship and enjoy fellowship. As we listen and discuss, show us new ways to serve you in our church and community. Bless our speaker and those members not able to join us today. These things we ask in Jesus' name. Amen

Dear Lord, we come before you with grateful hearts. We thank you for bringing us together and for the opportunity to connect and share with one another. May your light shine upon us and guide our steps. Father, bless us with courage and determination to face each challenge that comes our way. Help us to be Living Stones and not dead weights, to remain steadfast in our faith even during times of uncertainty and doubt. We trust in your infinite wisdom and power, knowing that with your help all things are possible. In the name of our Saviour, our Cornerstone, we pray. Amen

Gracious Father, we are grateful for your presence with us today. Our lives are built on the sure foundation you provide and your love which enfolds and guides us. Your spirit brings hope especially when we face tough times; strengthening our resolve and giving us courage, knowing that you walk beside us. Let us be beacons for your Word, sharing your love and blessings in our Guild and wider community. This we ask in your name. Amen

Lord, as we gather together, stepping into this moment and this space, we take a moment to remember the many generations of members who have come before us, and laid the foundations of what the Guild is today. As we now build on these foundations, continuing the work of the Guild in new and inspiring ways, we pray that you would be alongside us on our journey, giving us strength and encouragement and holding us together in love and faith in You and one another. Lord, we seek to build our lives on you, eternal and unchanging and unbound by time or place. Amen.

Prayers for others

Lord, bless our Guilds Together, National Council, Convener and Vice-Conveners, as they help us to find the way forward for the Guild through changes in the church and Guild. We pray for your healing hand upon those who suffer in body, mind or spirit. Your comforting presence will bring them peace. We pray for the hungry and those who are struggling through the cost-of-living crisis. Thank you for the folk who provide our food banks and community larders. We pray for those whose countries are at war and who live in fear. God of love, Father of all, in faith we pray. Amen

Compassionate God, God of love, you feel the hurt and sorrow we endure. You are our refuge, our strength and cornerstone in times of trouble. We pray for those who are sick and suffering. Ease their pain and grant them peace. Let them feel your loving presence and know you are walking beside them. We name in our hearts those known to us who are ill or in need at this time. Wrap them in your arms and give them the solace that only you can give. We trust the days ahead to your care, living stones, knowing that you are always with us. Amen

God, we bring you our prayers for others, seeking your blessing on all for whom we pray. For those whose spirit fails them, may they be strengthened in their faith; for those whose outlook on life is poor, may they find hope and purpose. We pray for those cast down by grief, may they find hope and the comfort of your love. We bring before you the broken and despised, the marginalised and downtrodden, the victims and the dispossessed, the refugees and the homeless. Your kingdom belongs to them all. Lord, you are our cornerstone, our strength and our support. We ask for your presence and guidance in all that we do. Amen

Father, open our eyes to ways we can work with you, to glorify your name and work for justice for our neighbours. Renew our compassion, that we can be bold in feeding your lambs and taking care of your sheep. Amen



PRAYERS

Offering prayers

Dear Lord, our Father and Provider, we give thanks for all that you enable us to do. Please take our offerings and use them for the benefit of all in need. Amen

Lord Jesus, our Saviour and Redeemer, we are grateful for the blessing you give us each day. We give willingly and as a sign of our deep love for you. Take the gifts we bring and use them for the work of your kingdom. Amen

Lord, take these gifts we offer. May they be used wisely in your name. Amen

Loving Father, the owner of all things, we remember that everything we have belongs to you. We bring our gifts willingly and realise that they are a poor substitute when we remember the gift of your Son, our Saviour, who gave the greatest gift of all, when he gave his life for us. Help us to show that love in our willing giving. Amen

Heavenly Father, you are a generous God. You have given us so much. Remind us that our giving is not a transaction but an act of trust in your constant love for us. May our gifts of time and talents and money be used for the work of your kingdom in this place and throughout the world. This we ask in your name. Amen

Closing prayers

Father, we thank you for being with us throughout this meeting. We have felt your presence in this place. Lord, as we leave this place, let us go out and be the salt and light. May we put into practice what we have discussed and learned. Help us to make a difference in the world, for the glory of your name. When we have said things which do not bring glory to your name, forgive us. In Jesus' name, we believe and pray. Amen

Dear Father, we thank you for your blessing on our meeting today. It has been good for us to leave aside the duties of the day, to share this time of fellowship. Be with us as we go our separate ways. Speak to us as we reflect on this day closing. Whisper our names in the silence before we sleep. Remain with us this day and always. May the Lord of Peace, who is our source of peace, give us peace at all times and in every way. Amen

As we leave our meeting and return to our homes, we thank you for your wisdom and strength that inspires us. We thank our speaker _____ (insert name) for sharing the love and compassion provided by their work/organisation. We thank you for the friendship and fellowship we have shared today. We ask your blessing on our members and families. We ask this in your name, Lord Jesus. Amen

Thank you, Father, for our Guild meeting. For building friendships and the fellowship and love shared here today. Keep us safe and well as we journey to our homes. With God's every blessing till we meet again. Amen

PRAYERS

Dear Father, as we come to the close of our meeting, we thank you for your presence with us. Help us to become Living Stones in our communities, reaching out to those still to learn of your love. Send your Holy Spirit to live in our hearts and keep Christ as our cornerstone. Father, as we journey home to our families, we ask that you watch over us until we meet again. These prayers we ask in Jesus' name. Amen

Heavenly Father, we thank you for the time we have had in your presence. Help us to remember in the hustle and bustle of daily life, that the time with you is what matters most. Help us to be your Living Stones as we build your kingdom. Father, we ask your blessing on our members, our families and friends. As we leave this place fill us with your peace, love and joy. Through our Lord, Jesus Christ, whose we are and whom we serve. Amen

Benedictions

Living God, our worship is over, but our service continues. Help us to serve you in our communities as your Living Stones. Send your Holy Spirit to guide and protect us. Bless our homes and our families and keep us in your love always. Through Jesus, we pray. Amen

Almighty God, as our meeting concludes, we seek your blessing on each person here. In our hearts and in our homes, may we remain in your love always, as we seek to serve you as your Living Stones. Amen

Gracious God, for all this day has brought us we give you thanks. May the peace of God surround us, may the love of God embrace us. May the power of God uphold us, today, tomorrow and always. Amen

Father, as we leave this place, going our separate ways, we are grateful for the fellowship enjoyed this afternoon/evening, with our friends in the Guild. Help us to show love to all whom we meet every day. In Jesus' name. Amen

Prayer for the Church of Scotland

Almighty Father, we pray for the Church here in Scotland. Presbyteries have been changed and new parishes have been created. Yes, we know that a radical shake-up was necessary. Loving Father, help us to be patient because it will take time for this change to work smoothly. Heal the hurt in communities who have lost their church. Friend Jesus, comfort them and walk beside them. Many of us have lost the art of doing mission. We have lost the skill of taking your Good News into our communities. We ask for your guidance. In Jesus' name. Amen

PRAYERS

Prayer for Creation

God of Creation, you gifted us the Earth with all its beauty. We delight in the morning sunrise and the glorious sunsets, the scenery and nature around us. We thank you for clean air, fresh water, food and shelter that you have provided in your love and mercy for us. Forgive us when we take Earth's resources for granted and are wasteful and destructive. Help us to treat the Earth with respect and not destroy it through our thoughtlessness and greed. We pray for those who are suffering the effects of climate change, floods, storms and heatwaves. Help us to respect the rights of all species and peoples. Amen

Prayer for the Local Community

Loving, caring God, we give thanks for the many talents you have given us. Talents we use for the benefit of our communities and the wider world. Help us to build a sure foundation of fellowship and love in our community, our church and our Guild. Bind us together in love as Jesus asked us to do. Help us to share the talents you gave us as we work and serve in your name. Amen

Prayer for the Sick

Abba, Father, we bring you those who are sick at home or in hospital. Loving Jesus, be beside them and hold them by the hand. Help them through difficult times. God of all situations, be with those who get worrying news. Help them to be strong and give them a hug. Jesus, be with the frail and infirm. Help them through their day and keep them safe. Walk with them and their carers. We bring all this to you, whose we are and whom we serve. Amen

Prayer for the Bereaved

Loving Heavenly Father, you said, "Blessed are those who mourn for they shall be comforted." We ask this blessing on those today who are going through great sadness; where there is no sparkle or joy but the stark reality of loneliness and the bitterness of tears. Where they find it difficult to praise you. We ask that you be with them and give them the assurance of your faithfulness while they go through this time of sorrow. Lead them to new beginnings and a new dawn. We ask these things in the name of your precious Son, Jesus. Amen

Prayer for Peace

Prince of Peace, we come before you with a heart burdened and restless. Grant us the inner peace that surpasses all understanding. Calm the storms within us and fill us with the assurance of your presence. Help us to cast our anxieties on you and to trust in your perfect peace. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen

Prayer for the Projects

Heavenly Father, we are pleased to be working with our Project Partners at home and abroad, enabling us to express our faith in action. We ask your blessing on everyone contributing to these Projects. To Guild members for their prayers and the varying and imaginative ways they raise funds. For the benefits we get from sharing the love of Jesus, knowing that you are with us each step of the way, as your Living Stones. We bring before you the Projects we support: Bibles for Bairns, the Sunflower and Daisy Chain Projects, Build my Church and Operation Egypt. These prayers we offer in Jesus' name. Amen

Prayer for the Wider World

Heavenly Father, we thank you for the beauty of the world you have created, and we say sorry that we do not look after it as we should. We ask for your guidance as we try to support those in our community who need help, who are suffering from ill health, poverty, addiction or unemployment. We pray too for those who can no longer live safely in their own land and put themselves in danger to escape and find a better life. Stay with them all and surround them with your loving care. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen

Prayer for Young People

Loving God, we give thanks for all the young people we know in our churches, schools and community. We ask for your love to be shown to them, as many are stressed and concerned about exams and where their future lies. They are exposed to information through the media that they find difficult to understand and are easily influenced. We especially think of youngsters who are involved in drugs or alcohol and pray that they find a way out of their situation. We pray they find their 'living stone' to point them in the right direction in life. These things we ask in Jesus' name. Amen



SAMPLE WORSHIP 1

Give everyone a little stone and a pearl bead.

Hymn

When we walk with the Lord, in the light of his word
What a glory he sheds on our way,
while we do his good will,
He abides with us still
and with all who will trust and obey.
Trust and obey for there's no other way
To be happy in Jesus, but to trust and obey.

Reading

1 Samuel 17: v 39-40

Prayer

Loving God, we thank you for walking with us every day. You have given us a strong foundation. Help us to be like David, by being faithful, obedient and courageous. David prayed "Lead me in your truth and teach me." We would say that same prayer today to you. Amen

Reflection

The five smooth stones that David carried in his pouch, represented what he had in his heart:

Faith.

Trust.

Courage.

Obedience

Praise.

We have other stones today which represent these same values.

Pearl: Faith.

Rose Quartz: Trust.

Amazonite: Courage.

Bloodstone: Obedience

Turquoise: Praise.

David was a shepherd boy. This story reminds us of Christ (the Good Shepherd) who laid down his life for his sheep.

Hymn

Great is thy faithfulness

SAMPLE WORSHIP 2

Hymn

CH4 204: I am the church! You are the church! We are the church together!

Readings

Matt 16:13 – 20 Peter declares that Jesus is the Messiah

Reflection

In this passage from Matthew Jesus says, "I tell you; you are Peter and, on this rock, I will build my church..." This passage is not as straightforward as it seems. In the Greek language, Peter is petros meaning a small stone, but Jesus is petra, meaning the rock on which the church is built: the cornerstone. Jesus is the cornerstone, the rock on which we build our lives. Peter and the disciples were living stones, and we are living stones today. How do we build our lives upon the rock? We develop a relationship with Jesus through prayer and getting to know his Word. We commit to his church and serve in his name.

Prayer

Father, we are here as part of your church. We are gathered in your name to share the love you gave us. To be friends to one another and care for one another as you taught us to. As Jesus built his church on Simon Peter, the Rock, 2000 years later we serve you as members of the Guild, as Living Stones given the responsibility to take your church into communities here in Scotland and abroad, and to tell others about your Son, our Lord, Jesus, whose we are and whom we serve. Amen

Closing Hymn

For I'm building a people of power!



SAMPLE WORSHIP 3

Hymn

Let us build a house

Opening Prayer

Heavenly Father, we thank You for the love You have for each one of us. We praise You that though we may fail You, Your love for us is constant. We thank You that You have a plan for each one of our lives and ask that we will be willing to be guided by You, for Your glory. Amen

Reading

Matthew 7 v 24-25

Reflection

God needs to get us into the right shape, to fit us into the right place.

In Matthew 7 v 24-25 we are reminded of the man who built his house on the rock and when he experienced problems, his house stood firm. Jesus is the Rock, and we believe that He is with us when we experience problems; Jesus is also the Cornerstone. The Cornerstone is the strongest, steadiest stone, so we must build on His foundation. In 1 Peter 2 v 5, Peter describes us as 'living stones being built into a spiritual house

Once a man stopped to watch a master builder at work. He was one of a team of builders building a church. The man watched as the builder chose a stone and started chipping away at it, taking great care. After a wee while, the man asked him why he was taking so long, suggesting he maybe could have chosen a different stone which didn't need so much work done on it. The builder replied, "this stone is for a specific place and I need to shape it so that it will fit perfectly".

That's what God, the Master builder, is doing with us – His living stones, as we are being built into a spiritual house. God is tenderly making us into the people He wants us to be, preparing us for a specific spot – He is chipping away at the 'not so nice bits' we all have, carefully shaping us to fit His masterplan - His people, as living stones, fitting in the right place, connected together as the body of Christ.

Closing Prayer

Heavenly Father, we thank You that You want us to fit into the place You have planned for us. We know we have rough edges, and we pray that you will gently make them, smoothed into the shape you need us to be so that we fit together into the right place, for Your glory. Amen

SAMPLE WORSHIP 4 - Bear Necessities

Hymn

We Stand Forgiven at The Cross - Keith Getty and Stuart Townend

Reading

Matthew 8: 1-4

Reflection

Before this miracle, Jesus had just finished His great Sermon on the Mount. The things He said there carried a message of deep and transformative truth. Everyone was amazed and touched, and without a doubt, they recognised in Jesus someone different, someone with authority (Matthew 7:28-29). This caused large crowds of people to want to hear and see more, so they followed Him. And here is where the story takes a strange turn: in the midst of the large crowds following Jesus, a man with leprosy appears. What's strange about this? The fact that he shouldn't have been among people, especially in large crowds. The Law of Moses prohibited lepers from being there, but this man stands before Jesus, worshipping Him, and asks to be cleansed of his leprosy. Jesus also acts in an unusual way: instead of avoiding any closeness or contact with this man, He says some of the most powerful words in the entire Gospel: "I am willing; be clean", and Jesus touches him. Just as with leprosy, the first symptoms of sin are the loss of sensitivity, followed by death, so sin makes the human heart insensitive to the greatest danger for every person—that every sin leads to death (James 1:14-15). Sin infects the heart with spiritual leprosy and makes a person unable to feel or realise that the wages of sin is death, that the fate of anyone who doesn't know Jesus, doesn't believe in Him, and doesn't confess Him as Lord and Saviour is eternal death. That's why Apostle Matthew begins his account with this story, because this is a story about Jesus Christ, who can cleanse not only the leprosy of the flesh but, most importantly, the leprosy of the hearts of every single person.

Prayer

Lord Jesus, we thank You that You are our God. We thank You that You found us, and even though we were bound in the bondage of sin, through the power of Your love revealed on the Cross, You freed us from sin and made us Your children and Your Church. Lord, today we see how many people do not know You and deeply realise their hopelessness and the fact that they will perish in hell. Therefore, Almighty God, we pray, give us a spirit of Wisdom and revelation and teach us what to do for them, and send us to do it. Send us to illuminate them with the Gospel and the way to You, where their salvation is. We want to serve the perishing world as ambassadors of Peace and Salvation, and You, God, stretch out Your Hand and support the word of our testimony about You. Amen.

Hymn

When Peace Like a River - Horatio Bonar

REFLECTIVE WORSHIP 1

This worship provides the opportunity to reflect on how, as individuals and as Guild Members, we can be living stones for Christ who is our foundation living stone - the supreme original living stone - whose we are and whom we serve. We will also consider God's faithfulness on which we can rely for our strength to be the best living stones possible.

Resources

Some small stones/ pebbles/small rocks. Need sufficient for everyone present to have at least one. (You can choose to forward plan and invite people to bring their own).

Permanent markers/paints if it is planned to decorate the stones e.g. with crosses or hearts or chosen words etc.

Hymn

Great is thy faithfulness

Readings

1 Corinthians 3: 11 and 1 Peter 2: 4-5

Reflection

Distribute the stones/pebbles/rocks and invite everyone to hold one in their fist and to conjure up a treasured memory of a stoney beach, a pebble path or a rocky walking route which reminds them of special times spent with family, friends, pets or even on their own. (These memories can be shared or not).

Think about: Was the weather fair or rainy/stormy? Were you surefooted or cautious because it was slippery, wet, muddy? Did you wonder how many stones/pebbles/rocks were underfoot and nearby?

Was there noise or silence?

Did you think about the wonders of God's nature all around you? Did you marvel at your surroundings? Or did you just take it all for granted?

Leader: Your memories will have been many and varied but remember it is the stone/pebble/rock in your hand that has helped you to recall them-- and today we are going to think about God, our rock, and about our own capability as living stones. We have sung of God's faithfulness and constancy which provide us daily with strength, hope and endless blessings, and in our Bible readings have heard of God's placing Jesus as the original living stone, the cornerstone, the foundation of our Christian faith.

I am sure you will all be familiar with Old Testament references to God as a never changing rock. These images emphasise the strength, stability, durability, and security which a rock can offer, and as a result, for us as Christians, the metaphor of God as a rock reminds us not only of God's strength but of his steadfastness and his being a place of refuge for those in need. When our personal terrain (our stones, our pebbles, our rocks) become a bit rough or slippery, He is always there to catch us, support us, hold us up and see us through.

But the main stone- themed metaphor we are thinking about today is of course our requirement to be living stones (active Christians), shaped and nurtured by the Holy Spirit working within us. So, what exactly is required of us? What can we as individuals or Guilds do? Before considering that, let us first listen to the words of Hymns 619 and 620, spoken in prayer.

Prayer

CH4 619 and 620 spoken in prayer.

REFLECTIVE WORSHIP 2

For those with access to screen projection try to source a photo of Ailsa Craig for reference in Reflection.

Hymn

We are one in the spirit - SGP 111 (the chorus reflects our reading from John, reminding us 'they'll know we are Christians by our love '.

Reading

John 13: 34-35

Reflection

Leader: Jesus's new commandment which we have just read from John's gospel requires us to show our love for others and as a result be known as disciples of Christ. Sounds simple and straightforward – but is it?

How can we individually or through our Guilds live up to our calling to be living stones for Christ? As we experience at different levels the consequences of the re-organisation of both the Guild and our beloved Church of Scotland, do we question our resilience? – do we think we have played our part over the years? Will we just leave it to others? As an individual do you ever question your significance or value? Are your efforts still worthwhile? Do we still meet the requirements to call ourselves living stones? What size or quality of living stone can we claim to be?

Consider this: One of the strongest stones on the planet is granite, quarried across the world, with the largest quarries in USA but with India and Brazil being the largest exporters. Granite quarrying in the UK is on a very much smaller scale so it is perhaps surprising that it is from the tiny uninhabited island of Ailsa Craig, off the Ayrshire coast, that some of the strongest and densest granite ever discovered is harvested, and it is this granite which is used to craft curling stones for use



REFLECTIVE WORSHIP 2

at Olympic and World Championships. The quality of the granite from this insignificant little island is of worldwide value.

Granite comes in many colours; deep reds to pinks, gold, greens, greys and blacks and being a natural stone no two slabs are identical. It does not crumble or break over time, its only weakness being the risk of chipping.

So, let's take our inspiration from the granite of Ailsa Craig. Just as the little-known Ailsa Craig granite has its own universal importance, so too do we have an important place within God's universal and unconditional love. To Christ, we are each individually valued - no matter who we are or where we are from. As living stones for Christ, no two of us are identical, each stone is precious, each stone is needed and has a unique part to play, supporting and being supported as we live our life by Christian principles. We must aim to be walking adverts for Christ, so that from our example others might want to know him too. God's Holy Spirit leads us to display respect, to show care and compassion, to be honest, responsible, forgiving, gracious and peace loving. We must use all our skills, including leadership. We must serve where we can, replicating God's love for all. And just as the chipped granite will have a granite specialist to repair any weaknesses and cracks, we too have our specialist, God, our rock, who repairs and covers our cracks and accepts and forgives our failures.

As a Guild, we have the opportunity together to show our Christian love through supporting our guild projects and other chosen charities. We can support other Church groups and community groups and should never underestimate the importance of providing a Guild cuppa or a listening ear. Guild baking and knitting are legendary! And for those less able, never underestimate the importance of praying with or for others.

For well over 130 years Guild members have undeniably been committed living stones, expressing faith through worship, prayer, action, and fellowship.

Before leaving today, let's determine not to become standing stones, set in one place without movement - let's pledge to acknowledge what we can contribute and ask ourselves whether we can do better.

Before leaving today, let's determine not to become standing stones, set in one place without movement - let's pledge to acknowledge what we can contribute and ask ourselves whether we can do better.

Prayer

Loving Jesus, our friend and constant companion, we thank you for the love you show us every day. Help us to use that love and to share it with others, as you did. Make us disciples building your kingdom, with you as our cornerstone. We know you are the cornerstone of every Guild meeting whether large or small; local or national. We ask that the love we share will shine like a beacon in all we do and say as Guild members. We ask this in your name. Amen

Blessing

(sung or spoken)

REFLECTIVE WORSHIP 3

Reflecting on the words of the hymn "Let us build a house". Talk together in one group or smaller groups.

Sing

verses 1 and 2

What are your hopes and visions for the Guild/Church?

Prayer

We pray that the Church will grow with the Guild as an important part of that growth. As Living Stones, we will help that growth through our worship, prayer and action. As Living Stones, we will follow the example of the disciples and the prophets and build your kingdom with you as our cornerstone.

Sing

verses 3 and 4

As a Guild/Church do we reach out into the community, as Living Stones? What do we do? Could we do more? Could we do it better? How do we show our faith as Guild members?

Prayer

We promise as Living Stones of the Church that we will go beyond the walls of our Guild meeting. We will show love to one another in our community and in the world through supporting our Projects at home and abroad.

Sing

verse 5

Do you feel valued in the Guild/Church?

Prayer

God of love, help us to share the love you have given us, so that everyone will feel welcome and be welcoming to others. Forgive us when we have not spoken to someone or offered help to someone. Remind us that you showed us the meaning of love and help us to grow that love as we share it with others.

Make a list together of all the things you could do as a Guild to grow the Guild and the Church.

Hymn

We are marching in the light of God

Closing prayer

Lord Jesus, our cornerstone, we promise as your Living Stones, to build your Church, with you as the foundation stone, strong and sure. We promise to say and do whatever we can to grow your kingdom. And as the kingdom grows, we pray that our trust in you will remain sure and our faith will grow, as we grow the Guild/Church brick by brick.

REFLECTIVE WORSHIP - CrossReach

Hymn

Jesus is the name we honour

Prayer

Heavenly Father, we thank you for bringing us all together safely. We pray for your wisdom, guidance and love as we support the work of CrossReach, giving children and families the best possible start in life. As we show the practical side of our Christian faith, may our efforts bring hope to families in challenging situations or at breaking point, giving them the tools to thrive.

All this in your name. Amen.

Reading

Psalm 127:3

“Children are a gift from the Lord; they are a reward from him.”

The Bible often cites children as gifts from God and blessings to families.

Children are a reward and a privilege that require nurturing and guidance to grow into healthy, thriving human beings. Our work with CrossReach, to give children the best possible start in life, is an incredible opportunity not only for them but for us all.

Reflection

Let us consider. A new parent struggling to provide for their baby, working as much as possible, no support system and diminishing hope for a better future. This parent has already faced one of the most difficult days of their life, losing a child just one year before. This heartbreak alongside daily challenges is taking its toll, mental health is at its worst, stress and anxiety are building and then the thoughts start. Should I end this, it would be better if I wasn't here anymore.

We are expected to provide, be happy with our blessings but that's far from the truth of many. Your friend, a family member, member of this group or someone you are yet to meet could be facing these struggles in silence and this also takes its toll.

As children, we learn an invaluable amount from our surroundings and our carers. Learning social cues, developing our brains into the characters and people we will become. A parent not coping themselves won't be able to provide this scaffolding their baby needs without support.

Families across Scotland are facing more challenges than ever with the cost-of-living crisis, fallout from COVID 19 lockdown, less support from statutory services and funding cuts.

The donations, prayers and awareness the Guild is raising as part of the 'Let's Build a House' project are a beacon of hope for parents just like these. Not only being a catalyst for change now but also a path for the future child in five, 10, even 50 years from now. Life-changing and lifesaving seems understated when considering the life behind each person coming to CrossReach for help.

Things we can do

Our impact together, is as big as our drive, prayers and actions are.

- We can pray for families at breaking point
- Share the work of CrossReach and the impact the Guild has as a result
- Raise vital funds to allow the Daisy Chain and Counselling services at CrossReach to help more families

Prayer

Almighty God, we thank you for enabling us to meet as the Guild and make a tangible difference in your world. We pray you guide each of us in the exciting days ahead, giving us strength to help all in need now and those who may look to us in the future. In your loving name. Amen

Hymn

Hands to work and feet to run



OLD TESTAMENT BIBLE STUDY

Have you ever watched someone build a dry-stone wall? If so, talk about how it was done. If not, see if you can find a video online to watch.

Reading

Isaiah 40: 3–5 Prepare the highway for our God

We are all very good at complaining about potholes! Imagine you have been given the task of repairing one without using tar or any machinery!! Maybe they could learn a lesson from the Romans. When the Romans built their roads, once they had levelled the route as much as possible, they began with large stones. Then they filled the spaces with smaller stones. Finally, they added in gravel and grit to fill even the tiniest gaps. The roads can still be seen today thousands of years later.

If we are to prepare the way for our God to come into the lives of all his people, what part can we play? We are the living stones he wants to use. What role could we play?

Are you good at levelling things out so that the work can begin? What might you have to do?

Who were the large stones of our faith in the early years? What framework did they set?

Who the large stones are in our church life today? How do they form the framework for everything else? What would happen if they were not there?

There are many smaller stones in the Old Testament, some mentioned only once or twice, like the mother and sister of Moses or Rahab, the prostitute who gave shelter to Joshua's spies. Why were they important? Can you think of others?

Why are the smaller stones and gravel of equal, if not greater, importance than the larger ones? If the same is true today, what do they do to keep the Church strong?

What can you do to make sure God's road is still fit for purpose in thousands of years' time?

Prayer

Loving Father, thank you for the range of talents and skills you have given to us and to all the peoples of the world to enable us to work for you in so many different ways. Help us to share our gifts with others and to be willing to receive help with good grace when we ourselves are in need.

Be with those who feel there is nothing they can do for themselves let alone for others. Help them to know that without them your family would be incomplete. Open their eyes to the things they can do. Help us all to prepare the way for others to travel with us and make your family strong and enduring. Amen

OLD TESTAMENT BIBLE STUDY

Scottish Bible Society

Read

Joshua 3: 14 – 4: 1-9

Back Story

The book of Joshua tells the story of the leadership of Joshua after Moses has died. Joshua has been called by God to lead the people of Israel into the promised land. Joshua has spent a lot of time with Moses - being with him, working with him, praying with him. He has been called by God and is ready to take on his leadership responsibilities, even if he is terrified. In Joshua 1: 6-10, God tells Joshua three times to be bold and strong.

Start your time together discussing these questions...

Share about a time in your life that God asked you to do something that was terrifying?

What happened?

Who or what helped you to know God was with you?

Read

Joshua 3: 14-17

Imagine you are one of the Israelites standing at the edge of the Jordan. Joshua has already told you that the water is going to stop so you can get across safely. What would you be thinking, feeling, doing?

Is there anything in your life at the moment that seems like the Jordan river? Something you want, something to change but it feels impossible.

Chat together about these things, and commit to pray for each other in these situations.

The ark of the covenant represented the presence of God for the Israelites as they passed it while crossing the Jordan. What do we have in our lives that can remind us of God with us?

Read

Joshua 4: 1-9

Imagine you are an Israelite standing on the banks of the Jordan river many years after this event, you have a small child with you, four or five years old. They ask you, "Why are these stones piled up here?" How would you tell the story to them? What would you include? What would you want them to remember the most?

What story do you think the Church in Scotland needs to be telling the children of this generation? How can we tell them this story? What do you want to include? What is the most important thing you want them to know?

Chat together about any families you know who have had a baby this year. Can you invite them to be part of Bibles for Bairns? To receive the story of the Bible into their family?

Prayer

Lord Jesus

Thank you that you want us to pass on your story to the next generation

Thank you for the people who passed it on to us

Help us to do the same

Amen

NEW TESTAMENT BIBLE STUDY

Read

'Living Stones' passage in 1 Peter 2: 4-8 'The Message'

Commentary: 'Living stones' is a metaphor in spiritual 'building speak' to embody the idea that we are part of a community who are interdependent on one another – Christ being the critical element – the cement – holding us together. The relationships which bind us together can become unstable and sometimes can crumble when, because of our sinfulness, selfishness, prejudice and thoughtlessness – we become 'stumbling blocks'. So, discord results – in the Church and in the Guild.

Question

What are the obstacles we put up in our daily lives, in the Church and in the Guild? And how could we overcome these obstacles?

We're called to be 'living stones' in God's kingdom, freed up from the constraints that keep us back. So, let's change the metaphor and imagine how it works out in practice:

Now note the following from Colossians 3:9-11 (The Message)

'You're done with that old life. It's like a filthy set of ill-fitting clothes you've stripped off and put in the fire. Now you're dressed in a new wardrobe. Every item of your new way of life is custom-made by the Creator, with his label on it. All the old fashions are now obsolete. Words like Jewish and non-Jewish, religious and irreligious, insider and outsider, uncivilized and uncouth, slave and free, mean nothing. From now on everyone is defined by Christ, everyone is included in Christ.'

Activity

Imagine you are customizing a T-Shirt or fleece for yourself with a message of who you are in Christ. What words or image would you use? You could use felt-tip pens/paper to draw your design.

Read

Colossians: 3: 12-14

'So, chosen by God for this new life of love, dress in the wardrobe God picked out for you: compassion, kindness, humility, quiet strength, discipline. Be even-tempered, content with second place, quick to forgive an offense. Forgive as quickly and completely as the Master forgave you. And regardless of what else you put on, wear love. It's your basic, all-purpose garment. Never be without it.'

Prayer

Living God, all we need is to be your people. All we need is to clothe ourselves in love. All we need is to be bound in perfect harmony. May we bring joy to you as living stones in building your kingdom. Amen

NEW TESTAMENT BIBLE STUDY

Operation Hope: Egypt

Read

1 Peter 2: 4-8 and Ephesians 2: 19-22

Overview

The Apostle Peter was writing to Christians in the first century who were experiencing opposition because of their faith. In this section of the letter he encourages them by reminding them of their status before God in Christ. Despite being rejected by the world, Jesus has become the living cornerstone in God's great building project. Consequently, all those who believe in him are also incorporated as living stones. In place of the shame that they receive from the world they find honour and acceptance with God.

Questions

- Building on an Old Testament picture, both Peter and Paul describe Jesus as the 'cornerstone.' Why is it essential for God's people to be built around Christ? What does this look like in practice?
- As 'living stones' in this spiritual house we are able to offer 'spiritual sacrifices' acceptable to God. What do you think Peter means by this?
- The spiritual house built around Christ is a single structure where every living stone is joined together. How does this challenge the individualism we so often see in Western spirituality? How should it impact the way we relate to Christians in other parts of the world?
- Despite the rejection Jesus experienced from the world, he was chosen and precious in God's sight. What comfort can persecuted Christians, like those supported by Operation Hope in Egypt, take from these verses?
- Should we also expect to face some level of opposition because of our faith in Jesus? Why?



DRAMA 1

Scene:	Mother and daughter on a beach gathering stones.
Daughter:	Here are some very pretty stones and funny-shaped ones to take home for my collection. What did you do, Mum, with the stones you collected as a girl?
Mother:	I think they are now part of Grandmother's path in her garden.
Daughter:	But you should have kept them to remember where you picked them up!
Mother:	There are more important things in life, like "Living Stones".
Daughter:	What are living stones?
Mother:	People who have played an active or memorable part in your life, especially your Christian life. Someone like a Teacher, Sunday School Teacher, Minister, Boys Brigade, Girls Brigade, Scout or Guide leader, or even a neighbour or close friend. All of these are more important than a collection of stones and will stay with you forever!
Daughter:	I now understand and can think of some who have made an impression on me and have helped me on my Christian journey. Let us put the stones back and thank you for showing me what is important in life.

DRAMA 2

This is a generic drama that can be used during any theme as it is an encouragement to utilise the theme guide.

Scene: Two chairs at a small table set out as in a coffee shop. One person (Mary) seated there with a large bag containing the new Guild theme guide waiting patiently for her friend, Beth.

Beth comes rushing in, harassed and anxious, in a panic

Beth: Oh Mary! I've no time for coffee - You'll have to help me!
Our Convener's ill and she's asked me to take the meeting THIS AFTERNOON! What am I going to do?
I can't write a prayer!
Where will I find an appropriate bible reading?
I'll have to think of a hymn!

Mary: Beth, calm down, you'll do yourself a mischief. Come and sit down.
Don't worry. I have the very thing to help you out.
(She takes out the new theme guide from her bag and holds it up for Mary to see.)
Everything that you need is in here!
Right - need a prayer? Turn to these pages - all in here!

Beth: Oh! Ok. *(Beth hesitates, looking worried again)*
But I'll need another prayer at the end to dedicate the offering, I've never done that before either.

Mary: Yes! But look - it's all in here ready for you. - on page 11
Take your pick.
What's next - a bible reading? *(She turns to pages 24 and shows Beth)*
Look! all in here!

Beth: And what about a bible reading? And a hymn? Is there a suitable one in there too as I don't know where to look in the Bible and I haven't time to trawl through the hymn book, I wouldn't know where to start.

Mary: *(Finding the list of suggested readings and hymns, shows Beth)* You choose, there's great selection of appropriate readings and hymns here.

Beth: I can't believe it!! All there and I had no idea. How marvellous. It would be great if everyone had access to that.

Mary: But it IS for every Guild member. ALL Guild Conveners are sent a copy, and it's also sent out from Guild Office electronically so you can copy it for members and always have it handy.

Beth: *(Looking very relieved and sounding very surprised)* Amazing, you don't have to start from a blank page, it's all there for you. My - any one of us could take the meeting - what was I panicking for? Time for a coffee?

IDEAS FOR MEETINGS

Icebreakers

Getting to know you bingo!

Make a grid of squares with questions or statements that will apply to people in the group. Find someone to whom the statement or question applies. Try to have a different name in every square.

Two truths and one lie!

Everyone says three things about themselves; two are true and one is a lie.

Unique and shared!

Groups of three or four and find one thing which everyone has in common and one which is not shared by anyone else in the group.

One word at a time!

Person one says a word; next person adds a word and continues till there is a whole sentence, e.g.

Person one - The...

person two - man...

person three - had...

person four - a... and continue till the end of the sentence.

Intergenerational

Board games

Self-explanatory! Can be great fun and bring back memories or get young people away from "screens!"

Make a music playlist!

Check Playlist for Life, the music and dementia charity. You could share music while you work.

Show and tell!

Get to know one another by talking about a treasured possession or photograph.

Pots of love!

Decorate a pot and plant it with flowers or vegetables which can be given as gifts or enjoyed at home.

IDEAS FOR MEETINGS without a speaker

Bible object day

Ask folk to bring an object linked to a Bible reference, e.g. Lamp - Ps119v105

Folk can speak to their own. Or write the reference on separate labels and see if you can match verse to object. Depending on how you have organised things, items could be offered for sale (donation) towards a project.

Talents

Knowing your own Guild members, ask two or three to speak about or demonstrate a hobby /talent for no more than 10 minutes.

Invite a church or local youth group to entertain you in some way.

Scripture cake

Have fun decoding the old scripture cake recipe. A way, I've read, mothers encouraged their daughters to know their Bibles. Discuss how we were encouraged to learn our way around our Bibles.

Old Scripture Cake

KJV / NIV

2 ¼ cups 1st Kings 4 v22, ¼ cup (4 oz) Ps 55 v21, 1 cup Jerimiah 6 v20, 1cup 1st Samuel 30 v12(2nd item), ½ cup Numbers 17 v8, ½ cup Judges 4 v19(2nd item), 1 cup Nahum 3 v12, 3 Isaiah 10 v4, a pinch of Leviticus 2v13. Season with 2nd Chronicles 9v9, 1 teaspoonful of Amos 4 v5. Mix and bake as fruit cake.

Arts and crafts ideas

Let us build a house

Why not try making simple origami houses? All you need is a sheet of paper per person and some pens to decorate the house.

See how easy it is How to fold / make an easy Paper "Standing House" - Origami Tutorial for Beginners (youtube.com)

Stone feet

What will you need?

A piece of thin wood or thin card approximately 12cm square per person

Strong glue

A large pebble per person and five small stones per person

Get them to glue the large stone onto their wood or card and then arrange the five smaller stones as if they were toes. You can even decorate your toes! You can even put everyone's foot on a path as if you were all walking together.

Pebble painting

You will need a pebble per person and some good pens or paints.

Let everyone decorate their stone, perhaps with a cross design, as a butterfly or ladybird.

The possibilities are endless.

OTHER RESOURCES

Books

Living Stones by Susan Sayers – various books on worship and prayer

Music

- Christ is our cornerstone - Christian Worship Hymnal 914
- Our God has built with living stones - Baptist Hymnal (Tune Arlington)
- Carnival of Animals, The Fossils (real Living Stones) - Saint-Saens
- Four Seasons, Allegro from Spring - Vivaldi
- Ode to Joy - Beethoven
- An Ending, A Beginning - Dustin O'Halloran
- Living Stones Quartet (YouTube)

Poems

- Living Stones by Michael P. Johnson
- God's Dry Stone Wall by Dave Hopwell
A poem reflecting on 1 Peter 2:2-10's image of the church as the "living stones" which God is building into a temple for his glory.
- Living Stones by Mausi
- Living Stones by Bob Gotti

Introduction

Living Stones: encouraging one another through Fellowship and Friendship.

Building on the 'Sure Foundations' of our faith, this year the discussion topic will focus on how we enhance our work as the people of God through fellowship and friendship by encouraging one another within our Guild branches, our congregations and our communities.

The biblical framework described in the 2024/25 theme guide is worth considering again, as we endeavour to build on our discussions around the 'Living Stones' theme for this year.

Discussion

- Is all about communicating and encouraging you to air views on specific/important issues.
- Gives you the opportunity to hear the views of others which can trigger new ideas/thoughts of your own.
- Gives you the confidence to know you are not alone in your thoughts/concerns.
- Gives a focus to identify areas of concern/issues/wishes.
- Clarifies 'where you are' at present and can often identify next steps and perhaps how these can be shared with others.



DISCUSSION TOPIC

A Guild meeting using the Discussion Topic

Encouraging one another

Setting the scene:

A friendly inviting atmosphere: comfortable seating: perhaps using a different room or venue - a community venue? Or if you have a small Guild, meet in someone's home? Or invite the minister and perhaps use the manse? It would be helpful to create an atmosphere which is conducive to building on fellowship and friendship, where everyone is encouraged to share their thoughts/ideas, where every suggestion is listened to and valued. Explain this will be a discussion evening around the theme 'The Living Stones', how we enhance our work as the people of God through fellowship and friendship by encouraging one another within our Guild branches, our congregations and our communities.

You could start by using a fun icebreaker to help people relax and get to know one another a little better. There are lots of different icebreakers to be found online. 'Getting to know you Bingo' is fun and the first to complete the grid could be rewarded.

Introduction and Bible Reading

In 1 Peter chapter 2 verses 4 - 5 we read:

'As you come to Him the Living Stone-rejected by men but chosen by God and precious to Him - you also like Living Stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a Holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ'.

As members of the Church of Scotland Guild, we are a fellowship of believers, friends in Christ, whose we are and whom we serve. As 'Living stones' we work for our Lord within the Church family and the wider community. As Living Stones, we need to build up each member of that family and community. 'Living Stones' used to build a house of love and faith can achieve much:

- They connect and relate to each other - many parts forming one body.
- They can build each other up both spiritually and emotionally.
- They can offer a safe space i.e. one that is supportive and secure, where members feel comfortable and are enabled to share.

DISCUSSION TOPIC

Suggested opening prayer

Heavenly Father,

We are called to be your living stones, chosen by you, precious to you. Strengthen us in our faith so that we may play the part you have created for us in building your spiritual house: that we may share with others the wonder of you; that we may use the talents you have given us to enhance the lives of others and show them your love through prayer and action.

Give us the encouragement and confidence to be the living stones, to play our part in building your Kingdom here on earth all to your glory. You bless us in abundance, help us to share these blessings with others so that they may seek your presence in their lives and know your unconditional love, your infinite grace, your unending faithfulness.

We pray this in the name of our Saviour, our cornerstone - Jesus Christ, whose we are and whom we serve. Amen

What are living stones?

We are the Living Stones - everyone who trusts in God and Jesus as Saviour. As the Living Stones, we are tasked to carry out God's work on earth.

But how do we enhance our work as the people of God through fellowship and friendship?

How do we encourage one another within our Guild branches, our congregations and our communities?



DISCUSSION TOPIC

Activity - Split into pairs

Discuss ways you have been encouraged in the past and by whom.

In what way were you encouraged/supported?

Is there one single experience/event that stands out?

How did this have an impact on your faith?

Come together in small groups of four/five. Discuss:

- The way your Guild branch of 'Living Stones' relate to one another/work as a team. Consider the way all your branch members support and encourage each other especially as they plan their annual programme and consider roles of responsibility. How can we encourage others to become 'Living Stones'?
- How do we encourage the 'Living Stones' to build on their past experiences?
- Guild members have a plethora of talents and skills and therefore have much to offer. Can you think of small group activities for your Guild, Church and Community to help build on fellowship and friendship e.g. a fellowship walk, a craft group, a hospitality group within your congregation etc.
- The 'Living Stones' carrying out the Lord's work within our congregations and communities need to be continually encouraged in their faith. They need to know they are loved and valued. Consider ways in which the Guild could contribute to this.
- Consider different ways of encouraging the wider Church family in the faith. Feedback to the whole group.



Closing prayer

Gracious and loving Lord we come to you, ever conscious of all the blessings you have given us.

Today we thank you for the fellowship and friendship found within our Guild.

We are the 'Living Stones' connected in Christ, the cornerstone. Faith, Fellowship and Friendship have been described as the sure foundation of the Guild movement.

As your 'Living Stones' within this Church and Community may we share that sure foundation with all whom we connect with.

Give us the strength and the confidence to encourage others in the faith that is so precious to us, so that others may know that He lives.

Let us together build a house where the 'Living Stones' connect and show the love of Christ to all.

Build us, your 'Living Stones', into a house of love and faith.

Go with each one of us as we leave this place today, may we know that we can trust in you for everything, that you have called us by name, you know the number of hairs on our head, and you will be with each one of us as we step out in faith, empowered by you and encouraged by the 'Living Stones' within our congregations.

We pray all this in the name above all names, our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

There are hymn suggestions on page five and bible readings on page four

