

# **FAILTE GU EAGLAIS GHÀIDHEALACH NAM MANACH LIATH**

Welcome to today's Gaelic service at Greyfriars. Although there is a Gaelic service here every week (a fact of which we are very proud, given how few weekly Gaelic services survive in modern Scotland) today's service is special in that we welcome the Moderator of this year's General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, the Right Rev Dr Shaw James Paterson, minister of Strathaven Trinity Parish Church in Lanarkshire. This continues what has now become a long-standing tradition of the Moderator coming directly to this service after conducting the Assembly service at St Giles. We have put together the following notes for your guidance through today's service.

**Form of worship:** Traditional Gaelic worship in the Presbyterian tradition is a combination of praise, prayer and the preaching of the Word. Its most distinctive feature is the unaccompanied signing of psalms (and, usually, only psalms) led by a precentor. Today we welcome as our precentor young Calum MacLeod, whose late father, John MacLeod, former President of An Comann Gaidhealach, performed the same role at Assembly services over many years. Calum represents a new generation of precentors intent on continuing and promoting the art of "putting out the line", as it is sometimes known.

Today we depart a little from the exclusive psalmody tradition in that we are also pleased to welcome the **Lothian Gaelic Choir** who will sing an *Athchuinge* (a prayer or petition) as the Moderatorial procession enters the church.

**Formalities:** We stand as the Moderatorial procession enters, then remain seated for the rest of the service until the Moderator gets up to pronounce the benediction (in Gaelic, a challenge to which successive Moderators have risen over the years) and we then remain standing as the procession exits the service. As that happens the choir will sing a version of Psalm 108 arranged by the well-known composer and performer, Blair Douglas.

**Sermon:** Today's preacher is the Very Rev Angus Morrison, himself a former Moderator. Of Harris stock, Angus was raised in Oban and, after a lifetime spent in the ministry, is now in what is perhaps most accurately described as semi-retirement in Edinburgh. Like the rest of the service, the sermon will be in Gaelic but a precis of it in English is available.

## **After the service**

Immediately after the service a light buffet will be served at the back of the church. This is an opportunity for the Moderator and those with him to meet with the rest of the congregation and other visitors. We hope you can join us for that.

We thank you for being with us today and pray that, although you may not have understood all you've heard, you will have found your participation to be a blessing.

Gach beannachd.



**Coithional Eaglais nam Manach Liatha  
(The Gaelic Congregation of Greyfriars Kirk)  
19<sup>th</sup> May 2024**

**Those taking part:**

**The Sermon:           The Very Reverend Dr Angus Morrison  
The Reader           Donald John Macdonald and Viktor Korpi Kardell  
The Precentor:       Calum MacLeod  
The Lothians Gaelic Choir conducted by Jackie Cotter and Angus Tully  
The Benediction:   The Right Reverend Dr Shaw James Paterson, Moderator of the  
Church of Scotland and Minister of Strathaven Trinity Parish Church Lanarkshire  
,  
[The Moderator is accompanied by his wife, Christine and one of his Chaplains, Rev.  
Robert Allen, Falkirk and his wife.]**

## **ORDER OF SERVICE**

**Lothian Gaelic Choir: Prayer**

**Welcome**

**Psalm 133**

**A song of ascents. Of David.**

<sup>1</sup> How good and pleasant it is  
when God's people live together in unity!  
<sup>2</sup> It is like precious oil poured on the head,  
running down on the beard,  
running down on Aaron's beard,  
down on the collar of his robe.  
<sup>3</sup> It is as if the dew of Hermon  
were falling on Mount Zion.  
For there the LORD bestows his blessing,  
even life forevermore.

**Prayer and Lord's Prayer**

**Reading From Old Testament**  
**Joel 2 :28-32**

**The Day of the LORD**

<sup>28</sup> "And afterward,  
I will pour out my Spirit on all people.  
Your sons and daughters will prophesy,  
your old men will dream dreams,  
your young men will see visions.  
<sup>29</sup> Even on my servants, both men and women,  
I will pour out my Spirit in those days.  
<sup>30</sup> I will show wonders in the heavens  
and on the earth,  
blood and fire and billows of smoke.  
<sup>31</sup> The sun will be turned to darkness  
and the moon to blood  
before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD.  
<sup>32</sup> And everyone who calls  
on the name of the LORD will be saved;  
for on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem  
there will be deliverance,  
as the LORD has said,  
even among the survivors  
whom the LORD calls.

**Reading From The New Testament**  
**Acts of the Apostles 2: 29-47**

<sup>29</sup> "Fellow Israelites, I can tell you confidently that the patriarch David died and was buried, and his tomb is here to this day. <sup>30</sup> But he was a prophet and knew that God had promised him on oath that he would place one of his descendants on his throne. <sup>31</sup> Seeing what was to come, he spoke of the resurrection of the Messiah, that he was not abandoned to the realm of the dead, nor did his body see decay. <sup>32</sup> God has raised this Jesus to life, and we are all witnesses of it. <sup>33</sup> Exalted to the right hand of God, he has received from the Father the promised Holy Spirit and has poured out what you now see and hear. <sup>34</sup> For David did not ascend to heaven, and yet he said,

""The Lord said to my Lord:

"Sit at my right hand

<sup>35</sup> until I make your enemies  
a footstool for your feet.""<sup>[a]</sup>

<sup>36</sup> "Therefore let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Messiah."

<sup>37</sup> When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, "Brothers, what shall we do?"

<sup>38</sup> Peter replied, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. <sup>39</sup> The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off—for all whom the Lord our God will call."

<sup>40</sup> With many other words he warned them; and he pleaded with them, "Save yourselves from this corrupt generation." <sup>41</sup> Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day.

### **The Fellowship of the Believers**

<sup>42</sup> They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. <sup>43</sup> Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles. <sup>44</sup> All the believers were together and had everything in common. <sup>45</sup> They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. <sup>46</sup> Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, <sup>47</sup> praising God and enjoying the favour of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.

### **Psalm 96 7-8**

<sup>7</sup> Let the sea resound, and everything in it,  
the world, and all who live in it.

<sup>8</sup> Let the rivers clap their hands,  
let the mountains sing together for joy;  
<sup>9</sup> let them sing before the LORD,  
for he comes to judge the earth.

He will judge the world in righteousness  
and the peoples with equity.

**SERMON**  
**(English Precise)**  
**Pentecost: What does it mean?**  
**Readings: Joel 2: 28-32; Acts 2: 29-47**

Luke tells us this about the great crowd that had gathered in Jerusalem on the Day of Pentecost: *All were amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, 'What does this mean?'* (Acts 2: 12).

Acts 2 is a particularly interesting chapter, not least for its account of the birthing of the Christian Church. What happened on that day was so surprising and transformative that those who witnessed it could only respond in awed wonder, 'What does this mean?' It's an important question, evoked by supernatural events that were beyond human capacity fully to grasp. The answer to their question remains one of abiding and deep significance for the life and witness of the church in our time, as in every other age.

*What does this mean?* If we attempt to address this question – in a slightly wider sense than was originally intended – there are at least three things we might say about the meaning of Pentecost.

**Firstly**, this day spoke of the coming down of the Holy Spirit on people of every kind, without distinction of race or language. At the beginning of that day, we see two distinct groups in Jerusalem. The disciples of Jesus were there, along with 120 others of his followers. What were they doing? They were waiting, longingly, for something Jesus, prior to his departure, had promised to send them. He would send them his Spirit and they were instructed to remain in Jerusalem until that took place. The other significant group in Jerusalem that day was an enormous crowd of pilgrims who had made their way from every corner of the Roman Empire to celebrate this great Jewish Spring festival. It's likely the scene is set in the courts of the temple. Suddenly they hear and see inexplicable things – a roaring gale-like sound and tongue-like flames resting on the heads of the apostles. Even more astonishingly, the disciples began to speak in the many languages represented by this large international body of people. Whatever could it mean? Some concluded that the apostles must have been rather early on the *chianti*.

At which point Peter rose to deliver the very first sermon of the Christian Church. He began with a touch of humour. 'Wine at nine' as an explanation really was pushing the bounds of credulity. Rather, they were witnessing the fulfilment of ancient prophecies, notably that of the prophet Joel. In 'the last days' God was going to pour out his Spirit on all flesh. Spiritual elites would be no more. A new age had now dawned in which every single believer, without exception, would receive the gift of the Holy Spirit in order lovingly to serve others as good stewards of the grace of God.

This remains good news for the church in difficult and challenging times. The Spirit did not come at Pentecost for a little visit but to remain with us for good. He has come to equip and empower us to work for the building of our Lord's kingdom.

**Secondly**, Pentecost means that because the Spirit has come, the world's rightful King has also come. While Pentecost is, in so many ways, the 'Day of the Spirit', it is remarkable that the focus of that day's apostolic message was someone else. When the Spirit comes and undertakes his work, he has one great aim in view – to direct the attention of people to Jesus, as King of kings and Lord of lords. Visiting family near Lincoln recently I was, as always, impressed by the beauty and magnificence of its Cathedral. It's an awesome sight when illuminated at night. These powerful lights remind us of the role of the Spirit in relation to Jesus Christ. 'He will glorify me,' said Jesus. Peter's message is that Jesus Christ truly is Lord of all, and that he is therefore the one Saviour of all. Not only does he offer a solution to humanity's deepest needs. He *is* the solution. Anyone at all who believes in him will be saved. All humanly constructed dividing lines have been eliminated.

The church has still no greater responsibility than to proclaim by word and action the loving Lordship of Jesus Christ. It's the most important message a broken, confused and hurting world needs to hear.

**Thirdly**, Pentecost means one more thing. Because the Spirit has come and the King has come, the church of the new covenant has come to birth. Through Peter's Christ-focussed message some 3,000 of these international pilgrims came to faith. They were formed by the Holy Spirit into the first Christian community. In it we glimpse those characteristics which are permanent marks of the Spirit-

formed community. As Christians and churches, we may quite rightly differ, in love, on many issues of secondary importance. The church in all ages, however, is bound to demonstrate as the hallmark of its unity the same fourfold commitment shown by this community of Pentecost – commitment, that is, to apostolic teaching, to worship, to sharing and caring, and to mission. These are our indispensable priorities and always the marks of a community in which the Spirit dwell.

Recently, I heard Rowan Williams, one-time Archbishop of Canterbury, say that in the church we must begin to ask ourselves difficult questions, about how we have allowed ourselves in the church to be distracted from our principal priorities, especially from Christ whose life is the very heart of the church. It's a challenge to which we all do well to take heed.

Let us close, though, on a note of strong encouragement. The Holy Spirit has come to stay. This is not a time for any of us to be looking back with nostalgia, or forward with foreboding. It is time for us to get to work, after the example of the church of Pentecost. We are fellow workers with the risen, reigning Christ in his great mission of reconciliation, peace and justice. His kingdom is coming. And through the ministry of his Spirit, he is with us for the whole of every day. Let us face the future together in that liberating confidence.

***To God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit, be glory and praise, now and for ever.  
Amen.***

### **Prayer**

#### **Psalm 122: 7-9**

<sup>7</sup> May there be peace within your walls  
and security within your citadels."

<sup>8</sup> For the sake of my family and friends,  
I will say, "Peace be within you."

<sup>9</sup> For the sake of the house of the LORD our God,  
I will seek your prosperity.

### **The Benediction**

#### **Lothian Choir**

#### **Psalm 108 arranged by Blair Douglas**

Thank you for joining us today. A light sandwiches and savouries lunch will be served at the rear of the church immediately after the service. Please join us and take advantage of the chance to meet the new Moderator.

### **RETIRING COLLECTION**

There is a plate for a retiring collection at the door, should you wish to make a donation on your way out.

**The Ministry Team wishes to thank Roddy John Macleod for co-ordinating this Service and undertaking the printing of the Gaelic Order of Service, and the Gaelic Congregation for their generous hospitality.**