

Making meaning



National Pet Month

Making us better people

by Gillian Cooper

Pet-keeping is really quite a strange activity. We know humans need friends. But why would we make friends with species so different from ourselves? Not everyone is in favour of pets; some people believe they divert our attention

and resources from more deserving human beings. If we turn to the Bible, we find dogs as a metaphor for violent gangs (Psalm 59:6), and domestic animals are assumed to be there to be herded and eaten. How then can we justify lavishing on pets so much of our love and our money?

Perhaps it is because they make us better people. Their trust demands our care and attention. There can be no anger, because our pet will not understand our apology. There can be no neglect, because they cannot fend for themselves. Through them we learn how to love fully, and to be closer to the people God intended us to be. 🐾

Heather Smith *reflects on* Philippians 2:5-11

Today Jesus enters Jerusalem and the crowd welcomes him, but as the week goes on it becomes clear that the welcome was simply one of people carried away by the moment and that they are capable of a shocking turnaround. Ask any leader or politician and they will tell you that your supporters can turn in an instant when circumstances change or someone else is offering a better chance of advancement. It all seems so meaningless and unfair, with people playing games to obtain a little more power without caring who gets hurt in the process.

We human beings search for meaning and we rail against cruel or distressing events that seem to

have none. If the events of Holy Week were simply the meaningless disloyalty of a crowd and pointless cruelty of those afraid for their own positions, we might still be struggling to find meaning for our own lives. But today's reading from Philippians gives us the meaning we desire. Christ emptied himself and humbled himself to death on a cross, but God exalted him, thus making his story the most meaningful narrative that has ever occurred. So Philippians encourages us to "Let the same mind be in [us] that was in Christ Jesus". We too may suffer, but his suffering gives our suffering, and the whole of our lives, the meaning we all search for. 🙏

Suffering Saviour, share with us your strength in the face of suffering and grant us your vision as we tread the path through this world. Make us firm in faith as we seek to walk in your ways. Amen.

Palms

by Julian Smith

Every year the bundle of dried palm branches is unwrapped in preparation for Palm Sunday. The branches are old and dusty, but every year they are passed around the congregation and carried in procession.

If the palms could speak what stories they would tell of the hands that hold them. Hands young and old, soft and gentle,

gnarled from work or arthritis, hands that are excited, joyful, bored or sorrowing – the hands of those joining with Jerusalem pilgrims of long ago.

What would God say about these hands, now raised with palms uppermost, waiting to receive Holy Communion? These are hands that seek love, acceptance, forgiveness, the grace and strength to face the week ahead. God knows us by the hands that serve, outstretched for communion. For God every Sunday is a palm Sunday. 🙏

“If I am in sickness, my sickness may serve Him; in perplexity, my perplexity may serve Him; if I am in sorrow, my sorrow may serve Him.

John Henry Newman (1801-1890), cardinal, poet and theologian

Church of Scotland: Orphir and Stenness Parish

www.orkneycommunities.co.uk/ORPHIRANDSTENNESS

Interim Moderator: Rev June Freeth 721449

Locum Minister Rev Martin Prentice 851139

Session Clerk: Nicol 811242

Kirk Information There is a loop system. Adjust hearing aids to benefit. Switch off phones. They cause interference with the organ. Thank you.

A warm invitation is extended to everyone to meet in the hall at the back of the church, after the service, for a cup of tea or coffee.

Intimations

Today 11:15am: Communion Service

Tuesday 16th April 7-8pm Fellowship, final evening before the summer break. Bring and Share supper. All welcome.

Tuesday 8 pm: Choir

Thursday 10am – 12noon: Community Café in the kirk hall

Thursday 7.30 pm: There will be a session meeting in the Kirk

Sunday 21st April 8am: Early morning Easter service at The Round Kirk at The Bu, followed by breakfast in the kirk hall. Easter service in the Kirk at the usual time of 11.15am.

Volunteers: Required to help garden tidy up, contact Olivia 811392 evenings.

Readings: Philippians 2: 5-11: *Imitating Christ's humility*
Luke 19:28-40: *Jesus' Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem*

Hymns: **367** Hosanna loud hosanna
198 Let us build a house
365 Ride on, ride on in majesty
664 (1-4) Here, O my Lord I see thee face to face
664 (5-7) Too soon we rise

Prayer and Lord's prayer:

.... we proclaim your greatness and sing your praise in the angels' song:

Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might,

heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest.

Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.

Doxology: (Hy. 786)

May the God of peace go with us as we travel from this place;

May the love of Jesus keep us firm in hope and full of grace.