

JOURNEYS

Carlops Parish Church Eco Service, 2017

Hymns are Church Hymnary, Fourth edition (CH4)

Welcome

We'd like to extend a very warm welcome to everyone worshipping with us this morning. And we would like to thank you, the congregation, for giving us the opportunity to present this eco-service.

The theme is journeys, actual and spiritual. Journeys which have many causes, from war to climate change. This quotation is from an early Eastern poet, Lao-tze c550BC ...

A journey of a thousand miles must begin with a single step.

First hymn – No 198: Let us build a house where love can dwell ...

Children's address

Props: chocolate raisins & jelly beans

If you feel like giving yourself a treat you should try buying a packet of chocolate raisins. Pop them into your mouth two or three at a time, and enjoy the taste of the chewy raisins covered with the sweet smooth chocolate. Mmm – very yummy!

But it is not often that we stop to think about how and where our treats were produced and the journey they made to get to us.

First of all, let's take the chocolate which is made from the cocoa bean ...

Ninety percent of the world's cocoa is grown by about six million farmers on small or very small family plots. The ideal condition for growing cocoa beans is a hot, rainy climate with lots of lush vegetation to provide shade for the cocoa trees – and this is found mainly in tropical areas. Almost half of the world's supply comes from The Ivory Coast in Africa.

Farmers must protect their trees from wind, sun, pests and disease. The trees are five years old before they produce a reasonable crop and only maintain it for ten years. For all their hard work, the farmers themselves reap very little reward from what is a very profitable global cocoa trade.

If we buy Fair Trade products – which cost us a little more – the extra premium is invested in giving a liveable income to producers like these cocoa farming families.

Now let's think about the raisins ...

The sultanas and raisins used to make the Fair Trade chocolate raisins that we buy in packets come from the Orange River region of South Africa. This area is very dry because it is near the Kalahari Desert. Not many crops can thrive there, but farmers, with a lot of hard work, can manage to grow vines, harvest grapes and dry them to produce raisins.

Elizabeth Mentoor lives on the island of Eksteenskuil in the Orange River, working on the small family vineyard caring for, and harvesting, their crop of grapes. She used to spend much of her day walking backwards and forward carrying two buckets of water at a time from a canal almost a mile away from the farm. Now, Elizabeth can spend her time working with the vines, because she can get her water from a pump outside her house. This pump was paid for by the Fair Trade premium. It has also provided machinery that can be used by the whole community.

So, our chocolate and our raisins come together and make the long journey to the UK and to our FairTrade stalls here in Carlops.

Hopefully, having heard the chocolate raisin story, we will be more than happy to pay the premium on all the goods marked with the Fair Trade logo.

I'm afraid there is a 'not-so-happy' postscript to this story ...

Traidcraft have recently sent a message to customers saying "The firm that has been manufacturing *Traidcraft Fair Trade Chocolate Raisins* is under new management and no longer wishes to make this product for us – and so it will no longer be in our range."

Many of us will miss our chocolate raisins – perhaps we will switch to Fair Trade jelly beans – but that's a different story, for another day!

Prayer

This is a prayer for climate change by David Osborne, a member of the Iona Community.

O God, Creator of all that is, of seas and clouds, rain and rivers, grass and trees, insects and fish, humans, animals, birds and reptiles, of all life connected, sharing this one earth – we are profoundly affecting the earth's climate, that many people are in danger of flood or drought, that some are greatly impoverished, and the whole fabric of life is in danger.

To those who make international policies, give wisdom and courage; to those who direct industry and commerce, give a concern for the common good; to those who struggle for justice, give strength and hope; and to us all give the grace to change our ways for the good of all that lives and for your glory.

Amen

Second hymn – No 245: It's a world of sunshine, a world of rain ...

Reading

We now have a poem by Susan Miller, taken from *New Prayers from the Iona Community* ...

You go before us, God of the prophets,
In the green places and in the hard places.
You go before us
With a vision which unsettles us,
With words which transform us.
You look into the heart of life
And turn us away from the shallow
Towards the truth.

You go before us, Jesus,
On the long and dusty road to Jerusalem.
You go before us
With courage which inspires us
With compassion which embraces us.
You look into our hearts

And lead us away from the powers of the world
Towards freedom.

You go before us.
You bring us the promise of your kingdom –
With food for the hungry,
Healing of the sick,
With freedom from harm,
And peace.

You go before us.
Sometimes we see you.
Sometimes we just miss you.
We want to follow you but we are afraid.
We are afraid of the cost to ourselves.
We hurt you and one another
And we pray for forgiveness...

But then, deep within us,
Your word comes to us.
We hear your voice:
“Follow me”
For where we are, you are.
When we are lost, you are there.
When we are in pieces, you make us whole.

Prayer

Let us pray for refugees and all in peril on the sea. This is by Peter Lloyd, recently returned to Scotland, following actively supporting migrants through the leadership of the project “Out of Africa into Malta”

Eternal father, strong to save, today we pray for all in peril on the sea. We especially pray for those desperate refugees, men, women and children, fleeing conflict and persecution, risking their lives crossing the Mediterranean in unsafe boats and exploited by people traffickers. And to those working on the rescue ships, saving them from drowning.

We confess that we need to try and understand what others are going through. Help us and guide us, to maintain our effort to support people in distress.

We will now say together the Lord's Prayer ...

Our Father, which art in heaven,
Hallowed be thy name.
Thy kingdom come.
Thy will be done in earth,
As it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our debts,
As we forgive our debtors.
And lead us not into temptation,
But deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
The power and the glory,
For ever.

Amen

Third Hymn – No 258: When the hungry who have nothing share with strangers ...

Reading – Luke: 10, 25-37, The parable of the good Samaritan

Fourth Hymn – No 253: Inspired by love and anger ...

Address

Life is a journey.

Looking back to the past – do we keep diaries, photos, family trees? Are they hard copies which can be preserved, or are they only an on-line record, too easily lost?

How will the generations to come remember us? What resources will they have? Family photo albums, or inaccessible personal computers?

Migration is a journey.

Most of us have ancestors who migrated, probably for education or for work. One side of my family came from Banbridge in Ireland with the Irish linen trade, but before that, they'd travelled from Scotland as farmers. The other side of my family moved around a lot, from Orkney, to Montrose, to London, to India, and finally retiring to Edinburgh.

Migration can be caused by war and famine. Most of the people crossing the Mediterranean and Aegean Seas today are running from situations we cannot imagine.

Would you not do the same, if staying at home had become impossible? We all want our children to have the best opportunities. We certainly do not want to see them hurt and destroyed by terrorism.

The UK government promised to provide safety to 3,000 unaccompanied child refugees from Europe. The so-called "Dubs amendment" was named after campaigner and Labour peer, Lord Dubs, who came to the UK as a child refugee before the outbreak of World War Two.

Lord Dubs' amendment required the UK government to provide assistance to 3,000 unaccompanied child refugees, who arrived in Europe with no family connections. But only about 200 children entered the UK under the scheme last year and none has arrived in 2017, the Home Office confirmed at the end of July. The rest are still in refugee camps, with no adult family, increasingly at risk from people smugglers or abuse.

David Pratt, writing in the *Herald* on 21 July 2017, talked about finding remains of large rubber rafts, lying semi-submerged among the rocks and sand of an otherwise deserted cove while on holiday and hiking along the Andalusian coast. Just a few miles away across the Straits of Gibraltar, is the continent of Africa. It is so close that come nightfall, it's possible to see the harbour lights in the Moroccan port city of Tangier.

Just a few years ago, when he was covering the mass exodus of refugees from Turkey to Kos, David Pratt would come across endless heaps of orange "life jackets" abandoned on the beaches. Many were fake, lined with nothing more than bubble wrap. Unsurprisingly, many of the people wearing these drowned during the crossing from Turkey.

These tragic events have not featured in our newspapers this year, but only because the press have moved on to the next big story, currently Brexit. It looks as though this latter story will be making the headlines for the next two years or more. Are we such an inward-looking country that we can forget about the tribulations of other people?

What does our journey through life say about us?

On this Harvest Sunday we particularly think about the food we eat and the journey it makes from sowing, to growth, to harvest and finally to our plates. It is important to try to reduce our carbon footprints, and to try to buy produce which has been grown closest to home, if not in our own gardens, then perhaps from local farmers or producers. The shortest distance travelled makes the lowest carbon footprint.

Often, we cannot grow our favourite foods, so we have no choice but to buy bananas, coffee, rice and chocolate which have been transported many miles to reach us.

In Carlisle, we support Fair Trade products, running a stall at our local market and using the products for church catering.

Every day, Traidcraft helps people to transform their lives through trade. Its whole ethos is one of fairness and justice. They give hope for the future to people and communities around the world.

Dainess, one of Traidcraft's suppliers, started beekeeping in 2007 because she wanted the opportunity to have more income to help her family into the future.

“Producing honey is easy for me to manage. I started with five hives which I bought myself. After the first harvest, I saved some money to invest in more hives. I used the extra money to take my children to school.”

Through beekeeping and the support she has had from Traidcraft, Dainess is able to give her children an education – her legacy to them.

Fair Trade means that farmers are paid fairly for what they produce. So if you are buying products from abroad, please check they are Fair Trade. Buying fair trade changes lives.

Offering

Prayer

Heavenly Father we bring our offerings to be used in your service and ask that the money is spent wisely, according to your will.

Amen

Fifth Hymn – No 226: God, whose form is all creation ...

Blessing

A journey blessing by Peter Millar, former warden on Iona

May our journey ahead be blessed with God's

Laughter
Silences
Risks
Challenges
Healings
Questions
Promises
Protests
Answers
Tears
Solidarity
Often uncomfortable peace
And
Compassion-filled surprises

Perhaps all in one day.

Triple amen