

THE CARLOPS REBUILDING

**A service to mark the tenth anniversary of refurbishing
Carlops Church
Sunday 24th March 2019, at 10am**

Designed and led by

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THE GATHERING

Welcome & Intimations

THE FOUNDATION

Call to Worship

Minister	Unless the Lord builds the house
All	They labour in vain that build it.
	If the disciples keep silent
	These stones would shout aloud
	Lord, open our lips
	And our mouths shall proclaim your praise.

Hymn 200 *Christ is made the sure foundation*

Prayer

The psalmist says "How I love to be in your presence, Lord
God, How I want to be here! With my whole being I sing for
joy in the living God."

In the company of the faithful down the ages
We gather in this place to celebrate life
And to worship you O God:
The God of Abraham and Sarah,
Of Jesus and Mary,

Of Columba and Ninian,
Of Martin Luther King and Mother Theresa,
Of all who have ministered in this community,
Of all who have served you in this church,
Praised you and prayed to you,
Who have laughed and cried together,
Who have shared stories of faith,
Held hands through difficult times,
Imagined a new together,
And been the body of Christ,
Bearing witness to your life and glory.

We praise you for your church, for our church;
For treasured memories and struggles overcome;
For sins forgiven and mercy received;
For regrets forgotten, and hope awakened;
For acceptance, worth and wholeness offered;
While acknowledging our faults, our frailty and our fragility.

For all you have given and what we have yet to receive,
We praise your holy name
And acknowledge our presence in the communion of Saints,
Before us and beside us and those yet to come,
With whom we offer you praise and glory in the name of Jesus
Christ our Lord,
Whose words he taught his followers to say together:

Our Father, who is in heaven, Hallowed be your name.
Your kingdom come, your will be done on 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 yours is the kingdom, the power, and the glory for ever.

Amen

THE BUILDING SITE

Reading *Matthew 7:24-28; Two house builders*

So then, anyone who hears these words of mine and obeys them is like a wise man who built his house on rock. The rain poured down, the rivers flooded over, and the wind blew hard against that house. But it did not fall, because it was built on rock.

But anyone who hears these words of mine and does not obey them is like a foolish man who built his house on sand. The rain poured down, the rivers flooded over, the wind blew hard against that house, and it fell. And what a terrible fall that was!

When Jesus finished saying these things, the crowd was amazed at the way he taught.

Phase 1 *Where to build?*

I decided to use the same readings today as those used at the original refurbishment service in 2009, and the hymn we just sang ... *Christ is made the Sure Foundation*.

Don't be stupid enough to build a house on sand, because sand is unstable, it shifts and moves with the tide. Strong foundations are important. No one would, if they could choose, build on unstable land.

Where I lived previously, new houses were built down near The Gyle. For those who are unaware, that whole area was once a loch ... well swamp land ... The Gogar Loch ... and as housing developments began to go up, local people who knew the area well said that it was a stupid idea. But the builders went ahead. Some families moved in to new homes and within months, had to move out again as the houses shifted and cracks appeared, and locals stood outside shouting "I told you so!"

But in some parts of the world of course, people have no such choice, and they neither have the money to build strong foundations for their homes, or the landscape is so unstable that they have no option but to build and take the risk. And then a cyclone arrives and washes their homes and families away.

Sometimes we have to build on unstable ground ... whether it is plans or hopes or schemes, we can never be 100% sure they are firmly and solidly based. We have to create the foundations we can, do the digging, the preparation, but ultimately have to take the risk of building a future.

When this church was first built, it was built on faith ... with the shifting religious and political sands of the day. It began with those who walked out of the national church which had become so thirled to the state and to landowners and to the powerful that many believed they required more freedom to preach and meet. They took a real risk. But on those shifting sands, they built a new vision for Christian community, not on the security of what they knew, but on the risk of faith

When people built this church, refurbished this space, there was always uncertainty as to its future, but there was faith that there was a purpose and vision rooted in a foundation of the life and teaching of Jesus.

I have a friend who always asks himself, "Is this a Jesus thing or a Church thing?" Because sometimes both are the same, but sometimes they appear not. Those people chose the Jesus thing.

And today we seek to do the Jesus thing as we clearly build on shifting sands ... we live in a shifting and uncertain political landscape ... shifting ecological landscape with the effects of climate change and pollution ... shifting cultural landscape ... and a shifting religious landscape as the church no longer has the place or position in social life.

If we wait for stable and secure ground on which to build, then we may well have a long wait ... but we build a life and a community on the foundations of the faith of those gone before us, who risked following Jesus rather than the security of what they had known. Because in the risk, they discovered life.

THE BUILDING

Reading 1 Chronicles 22:2-10; Building the temple

King David gave orders for all the foreigners living in the land of Israel to assemble, and he put them to work. Some of them prepared stone blocks for building the Temple. He supplied a large amount of iron for making nails and clamps for the wooden gates, and so much bronze that no one could weigh it. He had the people of Tyre and Sidon bring him a large number of cedar logs. David thought, "The Temple that my son Solomon is to build must be splendid and world-famous. But he is young and inexperienced, so I must make preparations for it." So David got large amounts of the materials ready before he died.

He sent for his son Solomon and commanded him to build a temple for the Lord, the God of Israel. David said to him, "Son, I wanted to build a temple to honour the Lord my God. But the Lord told me that I had killed too many people and fought too many wars. And so, because of all the bloodshed I have caused, he would not let me build a temple for him. He did, however, make me a promise. He said, 'You will have a son who will rule in peace, because I will give him peace from all his enemies. His name will be Solomon, because during his reign I will give Israel peace and security. He will build a temple for me. He will be my son, and I will be his father. His dynasty will rule Israel forever.'"

Phase 2 What to build?

When David got his son, Solomon, to build the first Temple around 1,000BC, it was regarded as indestructible, and yet within 500 years, it was destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar and the Israelites were taken into slavery in Babylon. Some returned later to partially rebuild the temple, but then Herod gave it the full refurbishment which lasted through till the Romans destroyed it again in the 1st century. Ever since the day Moses built his small chapel or tabernacle, a place of worship and a focus on God's presence was built and rebuilt, knocked down and destroyed, refurbished and renovated.

The building symbolised the gathering place for the people ... where legal deals were done and binding ... where goods were bought and sold ... where life was lived in the outer and the inner precincts of the temple ... and at its heart was the sanctuary – the holy of holies – where it was recognised that God abided. At the heart of the worship, at the heart of the community, at the heart of faith was this hospitable God who called and welcomed all people. A God not contained by nor confined to the building, but a sacred space where people could gather and remember the one upon whom all their life was grounded.

So here there was a more modest design ... meeting first in Patie's Mill, Mrs Dunbar's house now, then in another building before this church was built. A modest building for a modest people ... skilled workers and shepherds who lived in the countryside of God's grandest design. But the faith that made them break away nurtured a strong-minded and radical community of faith whose journey shaped their spirit and whose spirit gave them the vision and confidence to rebuild and reshape where they met.

There are many TV programmes about house building or refurbishing, with one called *Love it or List it* in which someone's own home is refurbished in a way they had not imagined. Having thought they needed to move home and move on, they began to realise and recognise the imaginative opportunities that lay where they were. Renewal and refurbishing is the context of an evolving world. Rarely can we nor do we get rid of everything and start again. Of course, sometimes we must, like the families in Mozambique today whose world has been washed away and who have no option but to rebuild; because there is little if anything left to refurbish.

But we renew and refurbish with the joys and the pains of the past.

For us, this is symbolised in the resurrection, where something must die in order for the new to come. But the new carries with it the scars of the past, just as Jesus, in his risen

presence, carried the scars and wounds of his suffering. We refurbish rather than rebuild ... renew rather than relinquish what has gone.

**Hymn 52 (Psalm 84) *How lovely is thy dwelling place
(sung unaccompanied)***

THE BUILDERS

Phase 3 *Who builds it?*

Involved in the building of the (Biblical) temple were royalty, soldiers, craftsmen and women who came and went, names known and unknown joined in the building of the temple.

Reflected in the commitment here of the whole community participating in the renewing of and sharing in the building which celebrates life, community, and the renewing creative love of God. For the church to be incarnate, then it is local and reflects and is shaped by the living community.

A stained-glass window here made by Emma Aiken ... someone with local connections. Stained glass, a piecing together of misshapen pieces, various colours, textures, tints and shades, into something beautiful. Like the piecing together of a community which, when the light shines through creates patterns and dances life within those who encounter it.

My colleague John is about to retire, and already he has signed up to do a course on building dry-stone walls. He has grown to love them when he walks in the hills, always fancied doing it, and promised his son that he would build one for his family at their new house. The thing about dry-stane dykes is, as many of you know better than I, that across the land they look different, because they use local stone, so a wall in Yorkshire looks different to that in Shetland, to that in Wiltshire, to that in The Borders. They are created with local stones that are lying around, all sizes and shapes, smooth and sharp, and the stonemason finds a place for them all as his eye scans each one, knowing there is a moment it will have its purpose. Each become the rock for the next and together they create a

structure full of holes. And it needs the holes ... for the holes are neither an error nor a weakness, but a necessary part of the strength of the structure – to let the wind blow through rather than blow the wall down.

Whatever is built, it is local, where everyone has a place and a purpose and there is room for the spirit to blow through. Whatever the building shape, size, colour, architecture, it is the people through whom the spirit blows. And if a building can help to nourish that, challenge that, shape and direct it, then the building is fit for purpose.

It is a place where we gather, but a space which helps us focus and reshape ourselves, refurbish and renew us into a people more fit for purpose. Like the building, fit to glorify God. And that is the same purpose for which they built that temple, and why those people walked out of the General Assembly and down to Carlops, and why we will leave here, giving thanks for the faith of all those upon whom our faith is built.

Hymn 619/620 *Spirit of the Living God*

Remain seated to sing and, as we do, we each take a stone as a symbol of thanks for the faith of those gone before us, for Jesus the rejected cornerstone, and that we are called to be living stones.

Stones/pebbles are handed round, reminding people of the faith on which their own faith is built, the foundation stone that is Jesus, or ourselves as living stones being built into a church for our time.

Offering

Prayer *Gratitude & Concern*

For the imagination, graft, creativity and trust
Of those who gave of their wisdom,
Their time,
Their faith,
Their money,

Their talents
To plant this place,
And reshape and tend this space
That people might gather in hope and community
To discover the connect between the creator and the created.

For those who have gathered in this place:
When water has been blessed and sprinkled on the brows of
bairns;
When bells have rung on the day of love's marriage;
And have tolled as the mourners tearfully walked through these
doors;
For the children who crafted and played in this space;
And those who have prayed and sung and listened;
As teachers and preachers have comforted and cajoled us;
Where bread has been broken and wine has been blessed;
Where tea has been sipped and biscuits unwrapped;
Where conversations have informed, and meetings have made
plans;
Where creator and created have been nurtured and nourished;
Faith reawakened
And lives renewed.

So let us remember those who have shared this journey with
us ...
Let us give thanks for those who come to mind today ...
Let us pray for people's homes destroyed by flood ...
Where families have been destroyed by famine ...
Where terrorism has threatened to destroy hope ...
Where government risks destroying our trust ...
Where neglect risks the destruction of our habitat ...

God, reawaken us to listen ...
Redirect us in our actions ...
Refurbish our lives in your image
That we might participate in the renewing of the earth,
The restoring of hope,
The reaffirming of love,
And the reimagining of a world grounded and rooted in your
will.
In and through the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen

THE PURPOSE

Hymn 198 *Let us build a house where love can dwell*
All say *Amen*

BENEDICTION

All sing Hymn 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.

END