

Focus On Fetteresso – 30 Nov 08

The morning service was led by the Rev Mark Rodgers, a member of the Hospital Chaplaincy team in Aberdeen. He focused on two areas of the bible for our thoughts for the service Isaiah 2 and Romans 13 v 8 – 14. The children's address focused on Knots some easy ones such as reef knot, sheepshank, clove hitch finishing up with a surgeons knot that was easily recognised by some young folk. His theme went on to other "Nots" mentioned in the bible – "Fear-not" (366 times); "Fret-not", "Feint-not" and "Forget-not" giving the youngsters some thought provoking ideas to go into Sunday school with.

In Isaiah 2 v 1 to 18 God provided Isaiah with a gift of seeing into the future. At this time, God showed Isaiah what would eventually happen to Jerusalem. Revelations 21 depicts the glorious fulfillment of this prophecy. However, Isaiah 2 focuses on the teachings of the Lords' ways, that enable us to walk in his paths turning our swords into ploughshares and spears into pruning hooks. Nations will not take sword against nation, nor will they train for war anymore.

Christians understand Romans 13 v 8-14 in different ways. All Christians agree that we are to live at peace with the state as long as the state allows us to live by our religious convictions. Working in harmony without compromising their beliefs and moral values revealed by God. However, this is not possible for many in the world where they are threatened, beaten, thrown into jail, tortured, or executed for their convictions. So as we go into Advent, we need some wake-up calls – literally and not expected. Sometimes we pay attention to faith and sometimes not. Sometimes things are private and personal such as money and costs and maybe we do not have the reserves we think we have.

At times we concentrate on other issues rather than the one that needs attention. Advent is a wake-up from sleep – physical / regular good sleep – rest / peace the type that God provides when we pray for release. Rest / quiet – after a time of tension. We should not become complacent about Jesus particularly as we approach Christmas and the ever glare of material things we should be strong in our faith working, living and practicing all those actions our Lord taught us through his word. His continuing word tells us to walk in the light of the Lord but many only use their faith in a crisis to seek and sustain us through turmoil.

Faith is not a do-it-yourself project where we just go through the motions once or twice a week faith takes work, we need to nourish it, tend to it and live it – walking in the light. Each day we need the armour of light – put on Jesus everywhere we go and in everything we do, let us be Jesus from head to foot reach out into every aspect of society to change the world through faith. Clone yourself with the Lord Jesus – feel the healing touch of Christ. Both Isaiah and Paul wrote that it is God who will bring change about in the world Jesus will come back. It is important that we stretch ourselves through exercising our faith – it's a wake up call so we are wide awake by the end of advent.

The evening service at 7pm was taken by Sarah Dickinson and the church was transformed into a service of light with a variety of readings and time for reflection so as we all could create a space for God and open ourselves up to be touched by him. The whole service was interactive with "Gods Mob" singing, one soloist playing the flute and a couple on guitars. Several of "Gods Mob" and a few from the congregation read readings from: Hosea 6:3; Luke 1: 78-79; Isaiah 2:9; John 1: 4-5; 1 Peter 2:9 and 1 Thessalonians 5:5. The congregation had to write one or two words on a paper star to express their prayer for the month of Advent – these were collected in and re-distributed to each of us so we received a different prayer to carry each day. All in all, the service provided peace and quiet to start the Advent season. The light came among us and was one of us - Shine Jesus Shine.