

**St. Margaret's Community Church of
Scotland Dunfermline**

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Jesus said these words,

"I assure you, those who listen to my message and believe in God who sent me have eternal life. They will never be condemned for their sins, but have already passed from death into life."

These are not the words of a philosopher or a theologian or a churchman – these are the words of the Son of God and as such we have to listen seriously to them because our life and destiny depends on how we respond to them.

Every parent has been there. We are speaking to our children and it is evident that their mind is elsewhere – "Are you listening to me?" we might say, more than exasperated. How often do we, like them, hear words but are not really listening – paying proper attention to what is being said?

How many times did we say throughout our lives that we wished we had "listened" to the advice of our parents? What do we mean by that? Surely not hearing it again but rather applying what they told us.

The Christian faith is in part about application. We are after all disciples or apprentices of Jesus. He has given us clear teaching and example – are we applying these to our lives? This is what Jesus meant by "listening to my message."

What is the second thing Jesus says? – "believe in God who sent me." But of course we believe in God, why else

would we come to Church? But there is a big difference between believing about God and believing in God!

Take the following example of how we use language. "I believe in acupuncture." What do we mean by that? Surely we mean that we are convinced that it works and we are personally committed to using it as a form of therapy. There is a big difference to saying that we know about acupuncture and that we believe in it.

Many of us have grown up, perhaps around Church, believing about God and perhaps we have even formed a personal view of what He is like: But have we committed our lives to Him? Do we believe **in** Him?

This is not just the throwing around of ideas – it is crucial – our lives and ultimate destiny depends upon this! To have a clear commitment to God and to the teaching and example of Jesus is the core of what being a Christian is – it is life changing.

Now the superb part of all of this passage is the promise made by Jesus - two incredible things. First of all Jesus promises that we will never be condemned for our sins. We have taken that step of faith and commitment to Christ that guarantees the forgiveness of our sins.

The second promise that Jesus makes is that we have passed from death into life. When? When we die? No, right here and now with the guarantee of eternal life beyond this life.

So let me ask you to listen carefully, attentively and with faith to Jesus for he alone, as Peter said, has the words of eternal life.

Iain

Intimations

Services will be at the normal times on Sunday – Facebook will go on at 9am, Zoom at 9.45 and the Main Service at 11am in the Church.

Zoom Service on Wednesday

On the week beginning the 30th November, the Newsletter will be delivered to everyone, along with a wee gift! We are also going to be inviting every member, if they are able and willing, to make a Christmas donation to the Church. This year we have not had any Christmas fundraiser and so our income will be down – it is an opportunity to close the financial gap which we and every other church in Scotland faces. If we can show a good financial position by the end of this year it will go a long way to clearly showing the viability of St. Margaret's for the future and in our negotiations next year when Presbytery looks at the viability of congregations and buildings!

Christmas Gifts! This year is going to be an especially hard year for many in our Parish [thank you to all who have given so generously to the food trolley – people have spoken to me about the difference this has made]. I am going to open the Church on Saturday 5th December from 10-4 for people to bring gifts for Adults and Children in order that we might distribute them throughout the Parish.

Christmas Concert. We are going to have this on Zoom – bringing in the best in Christmas music from around the world – this will be from 7pm on 15th December. If you would like to be linked in please contact me on email. Cost will be £6 and there will be a drop off during the day of home baking for us to enjoy “during the interval” – just a different way of accommodating our current

circumstances. **Only 2 people so far have indicated that they wish to attend this, so we will not run it if there is no further interest.**

A picture began circulating last November. It should be "The Picture of the Year," or perhaps, "Picture of the Decade." It won't be. In fact, unless you obtained a copy of the paper which published it, you probably would never have seen it. The picture is that of a 21-week-old unborn baby named Samuel Alexander Armas, who is being operated on by a surgeon named Joseph Bruner. The baby was diagnosed with spina bifida and would not survive if removed from his mother's womb. Little Samuel's mother, Julie Armas, is an obstetrics nurse in Atlanta. She knew of Dr. Bruner's remarkable surgical procedure. Practising at Vanderbilt University Medical Centre in Nashville, he performs these special operations while the baby is still in the womb.

During the procedure, the doctor removes the uterus via C-section and makes a small incision to operate on the baby. As Dr. Bruner completed the surgery on Samuel, the little guy reached his tiny, but fully developed hand through the incision and firmly grasped the surgeon's finger. Dr. Bruner was reported as saying that when his finger was grasped, it was the most emotional moment of his life, and that for an instant during the procedure he was just frozen, totally immobile. The photograph captures this amazing event with perfect clarity. The editors titled the picture, "Hand of Hope."

The text explaining the picture begins, "The tiny hand of 21-week-old fetus Samuel Alexander Armas emerges from the mother's uterus to grasp the finger of Dr. Joseph Bruner as if thanking the doctor for the gift of life." Little Samuel's mother said they "wept for days" when they saw the picture. She said, "The photo reminds us pregnancy isn't about disability or an illness, it's about a little person." Samuel was born in perfect health, the operation 100 percent successful.