



## Isla Spey Deveron Group of Scottish Episcopal Churches

(SC001009)

*St Marnan's Aberchirder, St Michael's Dufftown  
Gordon Chapel Fochabers, Christ Church Huntly,  
Holy Trinity Keith*

[www.islaspeydeveron-churches.org](http://www.islaspeydeveron-churches.org)

**Sunday 18th July 2021 - Pentecost 8**

**Congregational Hymns** (CC- Christ Church) (GC - Gordon Chapel) (HTK - Keith)

**Gradual** 323 (GC & HTK) 246 (CC)

**Offertory Hymn** 249 (GC) 199 (HTK) 186 (CC)

### **Collect for Pentecost 8**

O God of power and might, all good things belong to you: sow in our hearts the love of your name, and make us grow in the life of faith; nurture the things that are good, and tend them with your loving care; through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, world without end. **Amen**

### **2 Samuel 7.1-14a**

Now when the king was settled in his house, and the Lord had given him rest from all his enemies around him, the king said to the prophet Nathan, 'See now, I am living in a house of cedar, but the ark of God stays in a tent.' Nathan said to the king, 'Go, do all that you have in mind; for the Lord is with you.'

But that same night the word of the Lord came to Nathan: Go and tell my servant David: Thus says the Lord: Are you the one to build me a house to live in? I have not lived in a house since the day I brought up the people of Israel from Egypt to this day, but I have been moving about in a tent and a tabernacle. Wherever I have moved about among all the people of Israel, did I ever speak a word with any of the tribal leaders of Israel, whom I commanded to shepherd my people Israel, saying, 'Why have you not built me a house of cedar?' Now therefore thus you shall say to my servant David: Thus says the Lord of hosts: I took you from the pasture, from following the sheep to be prince over my people Israel; and I have been with you wherever you went, and have cut off all your enemies from before you; and I will make for you a great name, like the name of the great ones of the earth. And I will appoint a place for my people Israel and will plant them, so that they may live in their own place, and be disturbed no more; and evildoers shall afflict them no more, as formerly, from the time that I appointed judges over my people Israel; and I will give you rest from all your enemies. Moreover, the Lord declares to you that the Lord will make you a house. When your days are fulfilled and you lie down with your ancestors, I will raise up your offspring after you, who shall come forth from your body, and I will establish his kingdom.

He shall build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom for ever. I will be a father to him, and he shall be a son to me. When he commits iniquity, I will punish him with a rod such as mortals use, with blows inflicted by human beings.

**Psalm 89.20-37**

- 20 'I have found David my servant; •  
with my holy oil have I anointed him.
- 21 'My hand shall hold him fast •  
and my arm shall strengthen him.**
- 22 'No enemy shall deceive him, •  
nor any wicked person afflict him.
- 23 'I will strike down his foes before his face •  
and beat down those that hate him.**
- 24 'My truth also and my steadfast love shall be with him, •  
and in my name shall his head be exalted.
- 25 'I will set his dominion upon the sea •  
and his right hand upon the rivers.**
- 26 'He shall call to me, "You are my Father, •  
my God, and the rock of my salvation;"
- 27 'And I will make him my firstborn, •  
the most high above the kings of the earth.**
- 28 'The love I have pledged to him will I keep for ever, •  
and my covenant will stand fast with him.
- 29 'His seed also will I make to endure for ever •  
and his throne as the days of heaven.**
- 30 'But if his children forsake my law •  
and cease to walk in my judgements,
- 31 'If they break my statutes •  
and do not keep my commandments,**
- 32 'I will punish their offences with a rod •  
and their sin with scourges.
- 33 'But I will not take from him my steadfast love •  
nor suffer my truth to fail.**
- 34 'My covenant will I not break •  
nor alter what has gone out of my lips.
- 35 'Once for all have I sworn by my holiness •  
that I will not prove false to David.**
- 36 'His seed shall endure for ever •  
and his throne as the sun before me;
- 37 'It shall stand fast for ever as the moon, •  
the enduring witness in the heavens.'**

### **Ephesians 2.11-end**

So then, remember that at one time you Gentiles by birth, called 'the uncircumcision' by those who are called 'the circumcision'—a physical circumcision made in the flesh by human hands— remember that you were at that time without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. For he is our peace; in his flesh he has made both groups into one and has broken down the dividing wall, that is, the hostility between us. He has abolished the law with its commandments and ordinances, so that he might create in himself one new humanity in place of the two, thus making peace, and might reconcile both groups to God in one body through the cross, thus putting to death that hostility through it. So he came and proclaimed peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near; for through him both of us have access in one Spirit to the Father. So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are citizens with the saints and also members of the household of God, built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the cornerstone. In him the whole structure is joined together and grows into a holy temple in the Lord; in whom you also are built together spiritually into a dwelling-place for God.

### **Mark 6.30-34, 53-end**

The apostles gathered around Jesus, and told him all that they had done and taught. He said to them, 'Come away to a deserted place all by yourselves and rest a while.' For many were coming and going, and they had no leisure even to eat. And they went away in the boat to a deserted place by themselves. Now many saw them going and recognized them, and they hurried there on foot from all the towns and arrived ahead of them. As he went ashore, he saw a great crowd; and he had compassion for them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd; and he began to teach them many things.

When they had crossed over, they came to land at Gennesaret and moored the boat. When they got out of the boat, people at once recognized him, and rushed about that whole region and began to bring the sick on mats to wherever they heard he was. And wherever he went, into villages or cities or farms, they laid the sick in the market-places, and begged him that they might touch even the fringe of his cloak; and all who touched it were healed.

### **Prayer after Communion**

O God, as we are strengthened in these holy mysteries, may our lives be a continual offering, holy and acceptable in your sight; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

### **Contact Details**

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### **Next Sunday 25th July — Pentecost 9**

2 Samuel 11.1-15 Psalm 14 Ephesians 3.14-21 John 6.1-21

### **This Week's Notices**

#### **Sunday 18th July — Pentecost 8**

10:00am Holy Communion from the Reserved Sacrament  
at Gordon Chapel Fochabers

10:30am Holy Communion at Christ Church Huntly

11:30am Holy Communion from the Reserved Sacrament  
at Holy Trinity Keith

3:00pm Holy Communion at St Michael's Dufftown

6:00pm Evening Prayer (*via Zoom*)

#### **Wednesday 21st July**

6:00pm Evening Prayer (*via Zoom*)

#### **Sunday 25th July — Pentecost 9**

10:00am Holy Communion at Gordon Chapel Fochabers

10:30am Holy Communion from the Reserved Sacrament  
at Christ Church Huntly

11:30am Holy Communion at Holy Trinity Keith

6:00pm Evening Prayer (*via Zoom*)

*For access details for all Zoom Events please contact Rev'd Michael*

*Some of our churches are small and due to Covid restrictions have limited seat capacity. For current availability of seats please contact Rev'd Michael*

### **Other Notices**

**To allow for permanent ceiling repairs**

**Christ Church Huntly will be closed for the first three Sundays of August**

Harvest Festival will be on Sunday 3rd October

Friday 1st October to Sunday 3rd October Bishop Mark will be doing an  
Episcopal Visitation to the Isla Spey Deveron Group of Churches.

*(More details nearer the date)*

Details of Online Worship, Daily Prayer & Lighting a Candle on a Sunday  
Evening at 7:00pm can be found on the SEC website

[www.scotland.anglican.org](http://www.scotland.anglican.org)

## **Reflection for Pentecost 8 by Rev'd Canon Michael Last**

Those who use daily prayer will be aware that the Scottish Episcopal Church has a calendar, and throughout the year we are encouraged to reflect on particular characters, their lives and ministry. These are often New Testament characters such as Peter, Paul Andrew or Matthew, but on other occasions they are figures from church history Francis of Assisi (4th October) & Finnbar of Caithness (25th September). The last General Synod added Jane Haining (17th July) to that list.

For those not familiar with Jane Haining's story, she was born in Dumfries and Galloway, lived in Glasgow and felt called as a Church of Scotland Missionary in Budapest, Hungary. Her mission work was caring for Jewish children. At the outbreak of World War II, she was asked to return to Scotland but refused. She was subsequently arrested and transported to Auschwitz having refused to abandon the children in her charge. She is the only Scot known to have died in Auschwitz.

Rarely do we stop, look back and reflect on characters from the Old Testament, but our Old Testament reading from 2 Samuel highlights Nathan.

Who was Nathan and what do we know of his life?

Nathan is a prophet who ministers during the time of King David, and their lives are intertwined with Nathan being a man who is not afraid to bring God's message to the King, even when that message is uncomfortable and challenging for David to hear. One example of this is today's reading.

David's position as king has been established, Jerusalem has become his capital; a palace has been built. Now David draws up plans to build a temple.

Behind that plan, thought, is the question of motive; what is it that drives David's plan? His piety and a desire to do something for God, who has so richly blessed him, despite his failings? Or is there an element of self-legitimation: put a temple in the capital and David consolidates his control over the kingdom still further? Is David using God for political purposes? Is he, in a sense putting God into a box both literally and figuratively?

It is during this planning process that Nathan comes into the scene: and what God must do, through the prophet, is remind David who exactly is in control - God! God will not be confined to one place or one temple. God is a God who moves with his people in his own way and timing. David does not need to build a temple to have God's presence with him. Instead, he just has to trust in God's promises: "Your house and your kingdom shall endure for ever before me; your throne shall be established forever."

David wanted to use God for his own ends and at times, we do the same. We want a God who does not challenge us or ask us awkward questions. How often do we prefer a God who acts like a crutch when we need him? But a God who makes us uncomfortable, we may not be so keen on. Nathan is the mouthpiece of God – bringing God's challenge. In the end, David is prevented from building the temple; instead, he learns about the nature of God. There is another occasion where Nathan has to stop David and challenge him. On this occasion it is with a strong rebuke that makes David repent for effectively murdering Uriah, so that he could satisfy his desire for Bathsheba, Uriah's wife.

On this occasion Nathan uses what could best be described as a parable - the story of two men, living in the same town. One is rich and has everything, the other poor. He paints a vivid almost poetical picture of the poor man who had nothing but this one lamb: a lamb who was fed at his own table and lived like a treasured daughter.

The rich man needs lunch, but he does not want to kill his own sheep, even though he has

many. He wants to offer hospitality, but not at his own expense. Coldly and callously the rich man takes the one lamb the poor man has and offers it to his guests as a meal. When David hears the story his sense of justice aroused, and he looks to condemn the rich man, only for Nathan to turn the spotlight right back on him.

For Nathan to challenge the king in this way is, to put it mildly, dangerous. To point the finger directly at King David many well have been like trying to go through a solid wall of resistance as a cynical and desperate man tried to cover his tracks. Again, it reminds us that bringing God's message may not always be easy or welcomed.

So often saying nothing is the easy way out, the way of least resistance. I am reminded of the saying "all it needs for evil to flourish is that good people do nothing". As good a King as David was, the act of taking Bathsheba was a clear sign that power was changing him, and not for the better. He had to understand that he was still accountable to God for his actions. For us, being God's prophetic people may involve the same; bringing a message that may not always be welcome or wanted and, at times, may be uncomfortable to give. But we need to be prepared to challenge where challenge is needed.

Look around the world and we see so many examples of power covering up or trying to cover up the truth; we see so many situations of greed, ignoring or trampling on the needs of the poor and the innocent. How often do we speak out?

It would be unfair on Nathan to only see him as the bringer of God's judgment. Clearly, he is someone King David trusts and respects because as the end of King David's life draws close, it is to Nathan that the king looks to ensure a smooth transition to his son Solomon.

King David said, "Call in Zadok the priest, Nathan the prophet and Benaiah son of Jehoiada." When they came before the king, he said to them: "Take your lord's servants with you and set Solomon my son on my own mule and take him down to Gihon. There shall Zadok the priest and Nathan the prophet anoints him king over Israel. Blow the trumpet and shout, 'Long live King Solomon!'

What then does Nathan's story say to us?

- That being prophetic, bringing God's word, is not always comfortable. The challenge of God is not always welcomed, but must be heard.
- We need to be clear where our primary loyalty lies. It would have been easy for Nathan to be first and foremost loyal to David to bring the message David wanted to hear; but no, he was first and foremost loyal to God.
- Different roles for different people. Nathan was called be God's voice – challenging, questioning, looking to see God's plan go forward. David was called to establish the kingdom; he was to go no further; it was not his role to build the temple. Solomon was to build on the foundations David had laid. Each of us is called our specific role in God's much greater plan.