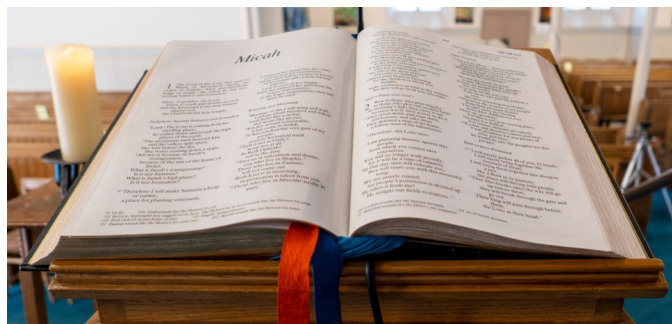




THE WORD FOR TODAY

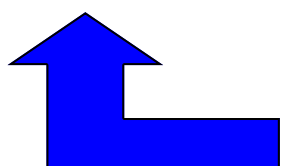
JOHN 17, 20-26— JESUS PRAYS FOR ALL BELIEVERS

John relates the last words of Jesus to his disciples before he was arrested and crucified. He talked to them about his being the true vine, with his followers the branches, which is the reason for the pictures of vines and vineyards on all the panels you will read. His long talk to them ends with prayers—for himself, for his close disciples, and finally here for all believers, i.e. the people who will come to Christ in the future because of the disciples and those they in turn encourage to be disciples.

His message is one of unity and love, both of which are sadly lacking in so many aspects of life in our world today. There are so many conflicts going on around the globe and so many instances of people being displaced and ignored. In the aftermath of Covid and with the explosion of technological advances and AI, there is a yearning for community and relationships. Jesus prays that his church would continue to be of one mind and full of love, just as he and his father are. What a challenge that is!



Follow the words of John Chapter 17, verses 20-26, on seven panels around the church. The first is just round the corner on the north wall of this little building and the others are on benches round the sides and back of the church building. You will be directed to them. The translation of the Bible used is the New International Version, and you can look it up on the internet under Bible Gateway.



Turn immediately left to find the first Bible extract on the bench

**“My prayer is not for them alone.
I pray also for those who will believe in me
through their message,
that all of them may be one, Father,
just as you are in me and I am in you.”**

1

What trust Jesus had in his motley crew of disciples, many of whom he knew would abandon him when he was arrested. He knew that, with the help of the Holy Spirit, they would be able despite their shortcomings to fulfil his commission to *“go and make disciples of all nations”**. He knew they would pass on the baton and the building of his worldwide church would continue.

It’s a sobering thought that the baton has reached his church today in the 21st century and here in Liberton. Can we pass it further? How can we be as close to each other as Jesus was to God? Surely Jesus teaches us that the way is by constantly being in touch with God through prayer.



*Matthew Chapter 28, verse 19

***Lord, I want you to trust me too to help others to welcome you into their lives.
Give me the courage to speak of you and the difference you make.
I need your help, Lord, as I try to be one with my fellow Christians.***

(No. 2 is on the bench just round the corner of the church building you are looking at. This might mean having to walk on the grass if scaffolding is in the way. If so, and if you want to avoid this, take the left-hand path and walk round the church clockwise until you find No. 2)



THE WORD FOR TODAY

**“May they also be in us
so that the world may believe
that you have sent me.”**

2

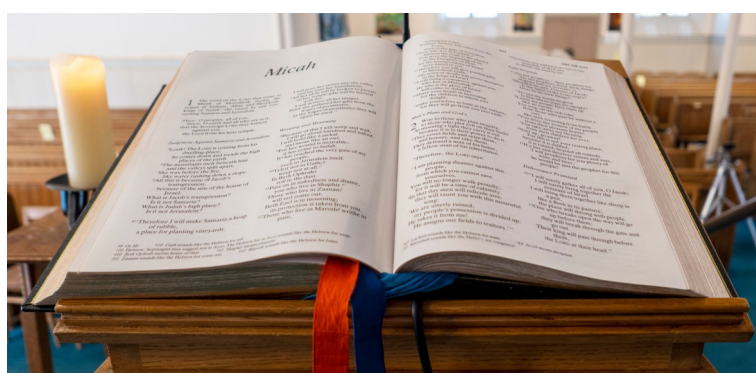


One way that people will be drawn to following Jesus is if they look at people who are already Christians and see in them something attractive and something which they want for themselves. There is nothing like a hint of hypocrisy or greed, or a lack of empathy, to put people off.

The only way to make sure we stay on the right track is to stay close to our Maker and Saviour, expanding our knowledge through the Bible, and discerning the way to go through speaking and listening in prayer.

***Lord, keep me close to you in prayer.
Help me to read my Bible not just when I remember but regularly.
Draw me closer to you day by day, I pray.***

(No. 3 is further along this side of the church)



THE WORD FOR TODAY

“I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one; I in them and you in me.”

3



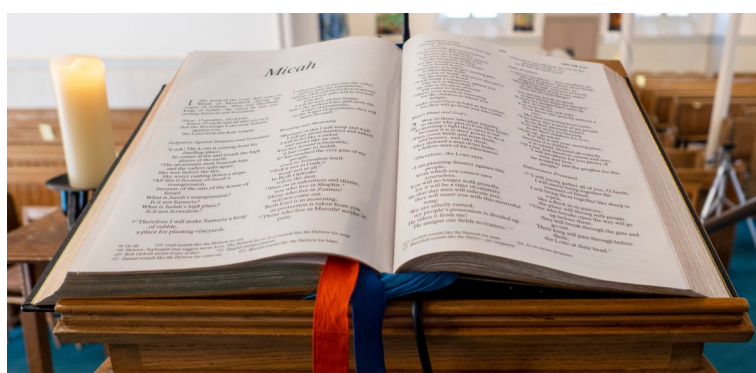
Closeness like the closeness Jesus had to his father God is something to be aimed for, but we can be sure that Jesus understands that unity among Christians is not going to be easy.

We are going to need some help, and that comes from the gift of the Holy Spirit, which is in effect the risen Lord Jesus with us and in us to guide and strengthen and to be our friend.

We can walk with his glory lighting our way day by day, because this Holy Spirit is a free gift to anyone who accepts Jesus as their Lord. What a wonderful gift from a wonderful God!

***Lord, thank you for the gift of the Holy Spirit—
for the chance to know your glory and power within us—
for the help the Spirit gives us constantly to follow your ways.***

(Walk along the back of the church to find No. 4 on the bench)



THE WORD FOR TODAY

**“May they be brought to complete unity
to let the world know that you sent me
and have loved them
even as you have loved me.”**

4

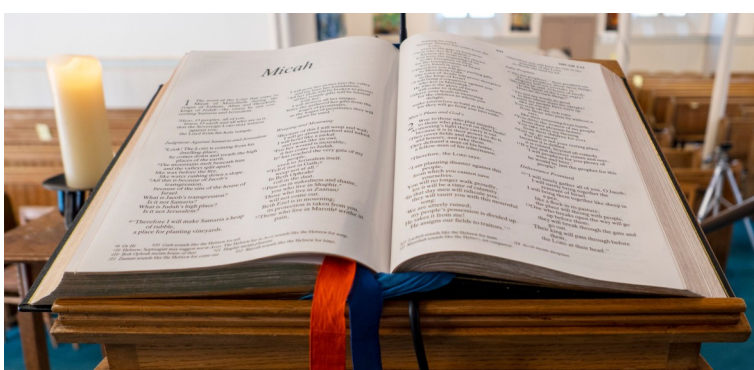
The Christian Church around the world is made up of a myriad of different churches, each with different ways of worshipping the same God. Jesus presents a real challenge here because he says we must be united if people are to come to know the God we all worship. He doesn't mean that we all have to conform to the same way of doing everything or interpret things in exactly the same way, but he does mean there is no room for sectarianism and bigotry.

In this area we work closely with the Roman Catholic and Scottish Episcopal Churches in SEECAT (South East Edinburgh Churches Acting Together) and have many joint events and services—why not join in? It is a powerful witness, for example, when we worship together in public on Good Friday (in Morrisons Car Park). You will find a programme and a current newsletter (Crosstalk) in the Offering House or Kirk Centre Entrance.



***Lord, help us to be prepared to accept the differences
between us and other Christian denominations.
Give us the grace to get to know each other better
and learn from each other's point of view.***

(Walk further along the back of the church and turn right to find panel 5 on the prayer bench)



THE WORD FOR TODAY

**“Father, I want those you have given me
to be with me where I am,
and to see my glory, the glory you have
given me because you loved me
before the creation of the world.”**

5



Jesus is praying for us here, praying that we will one day be with him in heaven to see his glory. Jesus is the one who died on the cross for each and every one of us, to save us from our sins. He is the one who rose again from the dead to give us the hope of eternal life with him in heaven. Now he confirms that he wants us all there to see and experience his glory at first hand.

Like the Holy Spirit, our Guide and Friend, this prospect of eternal life is a free gift if we just believe. How privileged we are that Jesus died and rose again to give us all of this! How privileged we are that he prays for us!

***Lord, thank you for the prospect of eternal life offered by your death and rising again.
Thank you for a future to look forward to.
Let me be worthy of your prayers for me.***

(You will be able to see No. 6 on the first bench before the tower)



THE WORD FOR TODAY

“Righteous Father, though the world does not know you, I know you, and they know that you have sent me.”

6

One of the names given to Jesus when his birth was foretold was Immanuel, and that means “God with us”.

If we are looking for guidance on how to behave, we need look no further than Jesus, because Jesus is God in human form and is the perfect example for us. It’s difficult sometimes to realise that this was God’s way of showing us just how much he loved us, and that his hand was in everything Jesus said and did on earth. If we take Jesus into our hearts then God himself is with us.



***Lord God, thank you for sending Jesus to earth
and for the perfect example he gives us.
Help us to follow in his footsteps
and so to know you better each day.***

(You will find No. 7 beside the Covid Memorial and the Cairn, just past the tower)



THE WORD FOR TODAY

“I have made you known to them, and will continue to make you known in order that the love you have for me may be in them and that I myself may be in them.”

7

In the end it all comes down to love. We sometimes sing a song* which reminds us that “they’ll know we are Christians by our love”, but it’s not easy to love people we don’t like and people who do bad things. If the love that God has for us—the love that sacrificed Jesus to save us from our sins and bring us back to him—was shown by all of us, just think what a better world it would be. Just think how many people would be drawn to wanting such love within themselves.

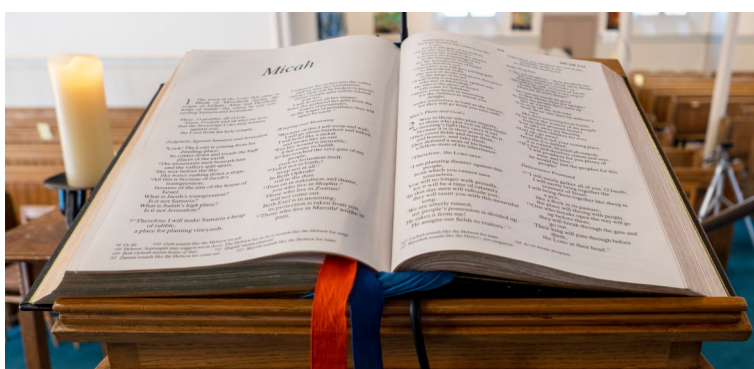
How can we find it in our hearts to have such love for all those around us? To love and want the best for everyone? It is not easy. We definitely need some help!



* “We are one in the Spirit” by P. Scholtes, © FEL Publications Ltd. USA

***Lord, thank you for your unconditional love for me.
Help me through your Holy Spirit to love other people,
even those I find difficult to love.***

***Liberton Kirk has no minister at the moment, but if you contact us at minister@libertonkirk.net
your request will be dealt with by an appropriate person.***



THE WORD FOR TODAY

PHOTOGRAPHIC CREDITS

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