THE RUGGED PATHWAY

In 2011, the Revd. Jennifer Macrae, St. Mary's, Haddington, the Revd. Joanne Evans-Boiten, St. Mary's, Whitekirk and the Revd. David D. Scott, Prestonkirk, East Linton along with members of neighbouring congregations re-established the pilgrimage from St. Mary's, Haddington to St. Mary's, Whitekirk. A future medieval pope had made his pilgrimage to Whitekirk and the Duke of Hamilton had established a popular healing pilgrimage in the latter quarter of the twentieth century but it had fallen into abeyance.

It was styled 'The Rugged Pathway' from the Love Maria Willis' hymn, 'Father, hear the prayer we offer' which featured life as a journey where we may 'tread rejoicingly' on the rugged pathway and not necessarily walk in green pastures. It encouraged people of faith and none to participate. There was an act of worship in both the St. Mary's.

There were also seven stopping points along the way and a Psalm Book was created by Liz Traill and Wendy Wilson from St. Baldred's Episcopal Church, North Berwick and David D. Scott, Traprain. It was A6 in size and fitted neatly into any outdoor jacket! It was simple in format – a description of the location bringing out its spiritual significance and a psalm which could be read together or responsively. A Gospel Book and an Epistle Book followed but the Psalm Book remained the most popular.

PSALM BOOK

There are seven stopping places on the pilgrimage where a psalm will be read.

Three psalms are to be said responsively. The bold type should be said by the whole group.

If you get separated from the main group, feel free to say the psalm to yourself when you arrive at each stopping place.

The words of the psalms are taken from the New Revised Standard Version of the Bible.

After each recitation of the psalms, everyone says the Gloria together:

Glory be to the Father
And to the Son
And to the Holy Spirit
As it was in the beginning
Is now and shall be forever - Amen

1. The Nungate Bridge

Bridges can divide communities or they can join them together. History might tell of such attitudes of separation not only here but in so many places. Yet the Psalmist knows that it is 'good and pleasant when kindred live together in unity!' We too can be bridges across divides in our families, our communities, our world. As we cross this bridge let us reflect on how unity can be celebrated in the diversity of God's people as well as his wondrous creation.

Psalm 133

How very good and pleasant it is
when kindred live together in unity!
It is like the precious oil on the head,
running down upon the beard,
on the beard of Aaron,
running down over the collar of his robes.
It is like the dew of Hermon,
which falls on the mountains of Zion.
For there the Lord ordained his blessing,
life forevermore.

2. St. Martin's Kirk

Martin, fourth century friend of Ninian and reluctant Bishop of Tours, famously split his soldier's cloak in two and gave half to a wintry beggar. In a dream, he discovered his true identity. It was the living Christ. Christianity's abounding grace was an unsurpassed gift offered first to the people of Scotland at Ninian's Candida Casa.

Psalm 113;1-3,7-9

Praise the Lord.
Praise, O servants of the Lord;
praise the name of the Lord.

Blessed be the name of the Lord
from this time on and for evermore.

From the rising of the sun to its setting
the name of the Lord is to be praised.

He raises the poor from the dust,
and lifts the needy from the ash heap;

to make them sit with princes,
with the princes of his people.

He gives the barren woman a home
making her the joyous mother of children.

Praise the Lord.

3. The Abbey Bridge

Jesus prayed. He taught his friends the Lord's Prayer and in extremis on the cross, he used the Psalms. Worship in Temple, synagogue and church has been inspired by this wonderful collection of songs and prayers. People in different cultures and at different times have sung their own distinctive song – plainsong in the Abbey, metrical psalms in the kirk, prose psalms in Anglican cathedral and all making a joyful noise to the Lord!

Psalm 100

Make a joyful noise to the Lord,
all the earth.
Worship the Lord with gladness;
come into his presence with singing.
Know that the Lord is God.
It is he that made us, and we are his;
we are his people,
and the sheep of his pasture.
Enter his gates with thanksgiving,
and his courts with praise.
Give thanks to him, bless his name.
For the Lord is good;
his steadfast love endures for ever,
and his faithfulness to all generations.

4. The Vaults

This is a folly, a grandiose project built on a foundation of pride. Only the vaults remain for they alone were built. Contrast the grandeur of God's creation built out of nothing on a foundation of love.

Despite our folly, he has made us a little lower than the angels through the visitation of the Christchild under the sign of star and cross.

Psalm 8;1-5

O Lord, our Sovereign,
how majestic is your name in all the earth!
You have set your glory above the heavens.

Out of the mouths of babes and infants
you have founded a bulwark because of your foes,
to silence the enemy and the avenger.

When I look at the heavens,
the work of your fingers,
the moon and the stars
that you have established;

What are human beings
that you are mindful of them?
Mortals that you care for them?

Yet you have made them a little lower than God
and crowned them with glory and honour.

5. Athelstaneford

The Saltire has its origins here. The cross of St. Andrew shapes the nation and the national character. God is our refuge and strength. The foundation of his kingdom is to be found in the prayerful stillness. The path of self-forgetfulness leads to righteousness and peace.

Psalm 46;1-3,10,11

God is our refuge and strength,
a very present help in trouble.
Therefore we will not fear,
though the earth should change,
though the mountains shake
in the heart of the sea;
though its waters roar and foam,
though the mountains tremble with its tumult.
Be still, and know that I am God!
I am exalted among the nations,
I am exalted in the earth.
The Lord of hosts is with us;
the God of Jacob is our refuge.

6. The Big Wood

Trees are such an important part of our world. Where they are felled, life can disappear; where they are planted, life can be renewed. Refreshment and renewal can happen when we spend time among the lilies and trees of the field. With the birds of the air our hearts can soar in the setting of God's creation. Each aspect of creation praises its maker in a different way – with the trees of the forest may we sing for joy!

Psalm 96;1-3,11-13

O sing to the Lord a new song;
sing to the Lord, all the earth.
Sing to the Lord, bless his name;

tell of his salvation from day to day.
Declare his glory among the nations,
his marvellous works among all the peoples.
Let the heavens be glad,
and let the earth rejoice;
let the sea roar, and all that fills it;
let the field exult and everything in it.
Then shall the trees of the forest sing for joy
before the Lord; for he is coming,
for he is coming to judge the earth.
He will judge the world with righteousness,
and the people with his truth.

7. Prestonkirk

Baldred of the Bass, Celtic saint from Strathclyde or Lindisfarne, established the kirk on a hilltop above the Tyne. His well is woven into the folklore of the people. Prayer on the Rock led to great missionary endeavour. Land and sea have been blessed by his presence, an encouragement to value God's gifts – fresh running water, the seed sown secretly, the longing heart.

Psalm 42;1-3,5

As a deer longs for flowing streams,
so my soul longs for you, O God.

My soul thirsts for God, for the living God.
When shall I come and behold the face of God?

My tears have been my food day and night,
while people say to me continually,
Where is your God?

Why are you cast down, O my soul?
And why are you disquieted within me?

Hope in God:
For I shall again praise him
my help and my God.
David D. Scott, Liz Traill and Wendy Wilson