



Hope Park & Martyrs Parish Church, St Andrews

NEWSLETTER

JUNE 2020

FROM THE MANSE

Looking back it seems so long ago since we last worshipped together inside the church. These have been extremely unusual weeks. Circumstances unknown in our lifetimes. There is no getting away from the reality that things have been tough. Members of the congregation have died, we may know others who have lost loved ones, some people who are shielding have felt particularly vulnerable, those employed in essential services have been working extremely hard, and that is simply the start of a long list demonstrating how day to day life has changed substantially. I was due to be a Commissioner at the General Assembly but it was cancelled – the first time it has not met in over three hundred years. A cousin whom I had lost touch with until recently and who I've not seen in over twenty five years was due to visit from the United States but that has been postponed for a year! We each will have our own stories of disappointments but I hope some joys too.



The church has been keeping in touch with members through district elders and church visitors and I have enjoyed chatting to some people on the phone. We are each unique individuals and there is no need to feel awkward because we feel sad, strange, depressed, bored, frustrated or distressed. Likewise in calls I have found determination, resilience, faithfulness, encouragement and compassion towards others. Although things have been different there has been, driven by necessity in many cases, new growth. People have learned to do new things, or do old things in new ways. Technology has allowed people to meet by Zoom or Microsoft Teams – things many of us would not have heard about until lockdown.

It has been good to be silent, to listen to the quietness with few cars on the road making a noise: the birds seem louder, the good weather has helped for it always helps lift spirits, the natural world, through the reduction in pollution, due to the lack of air and vehicle transport, seems to have the creation singing God's praise- echoing the words of Isaiah 55:12 ...*before you mountains and hills will break into cries of joy, and all the trees in the countryside will clap their hands.*

It is a good time to make more time to pray, to re-connect with God or deepen our relationship with God. When our lives are busy, time and space for prayer can seem difficult to find.

Thanks to everyone who has given me feedback about the weekly audio worship which is available online at any time and by telephone at 10am on Sunday mornings. I know many of you are appreciating it.

Lorna Hutcheon is the only member of staff (apart from me) not on furlough and she has been busy working hard (you can read about the imaginative things she has been up to a little later).

I am writing this on Pentecost Sunday. Our congregation alongside many other congregations throughout the Church of Scotland have shared in worship led by the Moderator of the General Assembly. I found it moving and a fine example of what new technology can allow. People from households throughout Scotland participated. We must, as we go forward, be open to God's Spirit prompting us to do new things, and even old things in new ways. That can be challenging but also a profound opportunity. May God grant us the wisdom to discern innovative ways to proceed and bravery enough to grasp them.

The church is still the church even with the building closed. It is the church in the caring phone call, the shopping bought for the person unable to leave home, the gift to the work of the Waddells, Storehouse or some other charity. God is in the middle of all these good things.

Of course as I write this the very first easing of firm lockdown has taken place and we can meet outside with one other household a day. I know people have enjoyed seeing – if not hugging – loved ones again. Sometimes at funerals I use verses from Ecclesiastes chapter three, within them these words, *a time to embrace and a time to abstain from embracing* – how resonant these words have been and still are for us today. I don't know how long until it either makes sense to or we are permitted to worship together inside the church building again. In terms of the Scottish Government's route map through and out of the crisis phase four states "all ceremonies could now take place with any necessary precautions." At present we have only entered phase 1 so it could be a considerable time before we reach phase 4. The church head office has been sending regular updates on how things stand and I'm confident that will continue. Please be assured we will move forwards sensibly.

Take good care, continue to stay safe and may you sense God's presence, peace and blessing,

Allan

FROM THE SESSION CLERK

On Saturday 16th May I should have been attending the opening of the General Assembly but as Allan has said it was cancelled. So rather than sitting in the Assembly Hall on the Mound I sat in my living room and watched online while Rev Dr Martin Fair was installed as Moderator of the General Assembly. The hall would normally be packed full of people and the singing just inspirational, however this year things were different with only a handful of people in the hall and a few people taking part remotely. Dr Fair's year as Moderator is certainly going to be different.

Many of us are having to do things differently at the moment. Who would have thought that we would either be going online to the Church website (www.hpmchurch.org.uk) or dialling in on a Sunday morning to hear Allan rather than attending worship at Hope Park and Martyrs? I hope that you are finding these short acts of worship helpful. Several people have said to me that it is very comforting to hear Allan's voice. A big thank you is due to Allan for putting these acts of worship together and to everyone who has taken part so far. You should already have the details of how to access the weekly worship by phone but if you don't please contact your District Elder/Church Visitor or the Minister or myself.

Some of you will have received this newsletter by email. Thank you to everyone who has given us a contact email address so that we can keep in contact with news from the Church. If you have received a paper copy of this newsletter but would be happy for the Church Office to have your email address so that we can send you church news then please email me sessionclerk@hpmchurch.org.uk with the details.

Stay Safe

Elaine Dowie, Session Clerk

Christian Aid

Sadly, plans for the annual coffee morning and door to door collection didn't materialise this year. Hopefully, when the church is able to return we shall go ahead with some sort of fund raiser.

Donations can of course be made anytime. Please see the CA web site for details:

www.christianaid.org.uk

Church Garden

Despite the current Covid-19 crisis we have managed to prevent the Church garden from becoming a total wilderness! Many thanks are due to *Ewing Forrester* and *Ian Jarvie* for all their help. Plants will be delivered for potting during the first week in June and will require watering twice a week throughout the summer season. Could anyone who feels able to volunteer to help with this task please give your name to *Ewing Forrester*

GREEN SHOOTS DEVELOPMENT

It's possibly quite appropriate that the last conference I attended, on March 12th, was run by the Church of Scotland Faith and Nurture Forum to consider questions around engaging with the local community and discerning where God is leading us!

Just a few days later and, as lockdown loomed, several local folk from churches, Community Hub, University and business community got together and we set up Community Aid St Andrews (CASA) to mobilise support in response to COVID-19. You may already know of the work done recruiting and co-ordinating volunteers to help with shopping, collecting prescriptions and even dog walking!

My involvement to date has been threefold:

- collating a list of the various church worship services across the town and how to access them, available at <http://communityaidstandrews.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Details-of-Church-Services-2.pdf>
- co-ordinating a distribution of seedlings from the Botanics across 4 churches
- liaising with local primary schools, nurseries and other agencies to support families and children most affected by the current situation by providing 100 bags of craft materials for primary aged children and 100 bags of craft materials for pre-school children. This has entailed fundraising around £2000 and I'm grateful to individual people, to the three chaplaincy churches, St Andrews Community Council, Ecoeats delivery service, Tesco St Andrews, the Hamish Foundation and to CASA for generous donations. The bags have been "going down a storm" and much appreciated by schools and families alike.

Aside from CASA, Messy Church continues its online presence and it's been encouraging to note that our last four videos have reached over 5.8K screens! You can view the Pentecost video here:

<https://www.facebook.com/267363323364070/videos/264210334934341/>

Messy Church Pentecost bags filled with windmills, bubbles, balloons, Bible story, activity sheet, flame coloured tissue paper and home-baked cupcakes have been delivered to 24 children and it was great to see some of them again, socially distanced on doorsteps!

It's also been good to keep in touch with friends from our Wednesday breakfast get together, TOAST, through email, Facebook and chats on the phone.

On the Eco Congregation front, we have a team of student volunteers, some new, some who have already helped us, ready to go whenever the situation allows. I enjoyed attending the online Eco Congregation Scotland AGM via Zoom and continue to keep in touch with a small group from other churches in the town interested in pursuing eco activities together.

It will be interesting to return to the notes I made at the conference in the light of subsequent events but let's be encouraged that we are still making a valued contribution within the community and learning lots along the way!

With best wishes to all, especially at this time,

Lorna Hutcheon

Pastoral Care

Moira Kerr writes: I don't know about you but I'm really missing seeing people at church and getting the weekly chat of what is going on in their lives- births, deaths, children's and grandchildren's achievements and things of the like. News from near and far.

I've spoken with a number of church people who all seem happy that they have regular contact with others and arrangements in place for shopping.

It's great how our church elders are trying to ensure people in their district are being cared for.

However, if you are someone who would benefit from help with shopping or a chat on the phone do please ask. It's always good to talk and the pastoral care team are always keen to do this.

Moira Kerr.

MISSION

During our weeks of lockdown we have been able to keep supporting our Mission Partners in Zambia.

Unfortunately, Covid-19 has reached Zambia too. On 1st June there were 1089 cases and there had been 7 deaths. It has spread throughout the country with scattered cases, except in the NE of the country and Lusaka, the capital, where there are large numbers. Lockdown is starting to be lifted but Ida feels it is too soon, e.g school exams are starting this week, market traders are open, civil servants are back at work.

In mid-April Ida was getting geared up to deal with the virus in the UCZ health centres and hospitals. There were generous donations from HPM and Strathkinness amounting to £4100 sent out to help with purchase of PPE, supplies of oxygen for Mwandu and a fence to close off the hospital. There are no ventilators, so these are the only treatments they have available. So far Mwandu is Covid free but there are 5 cases in Livingstone nearby. The Mwandu ambulance had to go to Lusaka to get the oxygen filled—600km each way. You may remember all the articles in the papers about our church funding the repair of this and other vehicles.

Until this week Keith, Ida, Mubita and Ellie had been in Mwandu for a while, self-isolating, but are back in Lusaka at the moment to coordinate the distribution of the PPE and testing of children back at school. They are also supporting their daughter Catriona who is pregnant with the baby due in early August. Hopefully, they can return to Mwandu next week. It is rural and should be safer.

Obviously, this June we cannot have our usual plant sale and coffee morning to raise funds for the Waddells' work but if you would like to give a donation contact me.

The Mission Group hope to have plants available in the autumn instead, if regulations allow.

Muriel Gray

STOREHOUSE

Storehouse demand has been rising. Each week they indicate online what they are needing most. Here is what they said at the end of May:

Storehouse is currently most grateful for donations of:

- *Pet food (Cat Food & Dog Food)*
- *Laundry Detergent*
- *Washing up liquid*
- *Tinned meat (as always)*
- *Sugar*
- *UHT Milk*

The list of items most needed is updated weekly at www.storehousestandrews.com

If you would like to donate to Storehouse financially you can use the following link

<https://kingdomvineyard.churchsuite.co.uk/donate/fund/e6cjrjxvp>

Spring Financial Report

The first four months of 2020, inevitably, have seen unprecedented changes at our church. Apart from the building being closed to all users – no Sunday services (or any services), no Roundabout Café, no Messy Church no groups meeting and no staff – all, except our Greenshoots Development Worker, have been furloughed and thanks to the HMRC grant are being paid their full salary.

Other expenditure continues with a little respite on reduced fuel bills so HPM's outgoings are only marginally less. On the other hand, income has taken a knock.

No Sunday services results in no offerings being received via the 'plate' and no Freewill Offering envelopes being received. The Café income normally supports the salaries of two staff. Part of our income comes from the interest and dividends earned from funds invested with the Church of Scotland but, as a consequence of the general stock market situation, that's reduced too. With the whole building being out of use there is no rental income from other groups.

In 2020, to the end of April, we held 11 services from the 17 Sundays in that period and suffered an income reduction approaching £7,000.

To keep our 'books' balanced we have sold some investments and everyone who presently contributes using the Freewill Offering scheme is being asked to consider making use of a Bankers Standing Order.

Ian Jarvie

Church Contacts

Minister: *Rev Allan McCafferty*

Email: AMcCafferty@churchofscotland.org.uk tel: 01334 478287

Session Clerk: *Elaine Dowie*

Email: sessionclerk@hpmchurch.org.uk

Church Website: www.hpmchurch.org.uk

Church Office: tel: 01334 478144