



The Church of Scotland

stepps parish church

# PROSPECT

[www.steppsparishchurch.org](http://www.steppsparishchurch.org)

At the heart of our community,  
celebrating faith and life to the full,



Scottish Charity No. SCO14212

April 2020, Issue 389

## Pastoral Letter



*Dear Friends  
Even those like  
myself who can  
get out and  
a b o u t f e e l*

*isolated. We feel we are lost in the wilderness of  
fear and confusion caused by the outbreak of  
Coronavirus (Covid 19).*

*I am lost. I feel that I am prevented from being  
who I am called by God to be: a Minister of Word  
and Sacrament. I am not free to visit you all. Our  
church services are suspended indefinitely. I am  
in a new unknown, a wilderness, I am searching  
for new ways to tell of and share God's love.*

*(You can find out about our increasing use of  
Facebook and other social media elsewhere in  
Prospect)*

*You may feel the same way about your life and the  
way all of us have had our lives upturned.*

*Lost in the wilderness.*

*The Hebrew people had been in slavery for  
decades, captivity had become 'their new normal'.*

*Now God had set them free. They went into the wilderness, physically lost and also lost in the wilderness, searching for new ways to live in what would become their new normal. Moses led them into this new normal. Like those who lead us now, he was facing new territory an uncharted unexplored future. He too was frightened of what may lie ahead for him and all God's people.*

*Then the Hebrews faced a huge physical barrier. Before them the sea, behind the chasing hoards of Pharaoh's armies. Pharaoh had changed his mind; now he wanted his slaves back.*

*So what do they do?*

*The people complain to Moses, "Why did you not leave us alone to serve the Egyptians."*

*Moses responded "Fear not, stand firm, and see the salvation of the Lord, which he will work for you today."*

*God's Word came to Moses, '*

*"Why do you cry to me? Tell the people to go forward!"*

*The people went forward, taking that first step into the sea and on further into the wilderness.*

*They went forward, trusting in God. Their faith restored, their determination to serve God renewed.*

*We are all lost, facing challenges that we would never have predicted. We all live in a new normal. How might we respond? We might just give up, cower in a corner with no hope of rescue. We might, like Moses, wait for God to do something, anything to stop all that is scaring us.*

*Or we can listen for the God's Word for us today. God tells us we are not alone. God does not want his children to be paralysed in fear, waiting for 'someone else' to sort things out for us.*

*God's Word to us, today is to **Go Forward**.*

*We may be facing new challenges in this new normal.*

*Know that God, the God of Moses the God we know in Jesus of Nazareth says to us*

*Go forward, go into the unknown in the full knowledge that God goes with you. Jesus who came to search for the lost and the lonely, comes among you and says "follow me and we will go on reaching out to the vulnerable and the lost, telling all that God loves them and cares for them all*

## **Bible Class**

Sadly, the Bible Class and Club Nights, like all other church organisations will be suspended until further notice due to the Coronavirus restrictions on meetings and social gatherings. It was great to see so many of the group at our last meeting on Sunday 16th March. We felt the Bible Class was beginning to settle down to a more normal routine after all the breaks and disruptions and was planning to have a Film Night and Club Night in the next few weeks. These plans will now have to be put on hold for quite some time it would seem while we all try to keep ourselves and our families safe, protected and hopefully, avoid catching the virus.

The leaders will be in touch with all the young people as soon as we are able to think about and can resume our activities. In the meantime, we would wish our young people well and good health in these uncertain and worry8ng times. Also their families, relatives and friends. A special thanks to parents and carers for your support and encouragement in sending your young people to Bible Class and it's associated activities, despite the many demands on yours

and their time. Love and Peace of Christ be with you all.

***Marvyn Mackay, Anne Bunyan, Lorraine Robertson and Yvonne Wallace, Leaders***



*Chestnut  
Café*

Sadly, along with all other church activities, the Chestnut Café is closed until further notice.

However, it seemed like a good time to review what the Café has been doing since it was first opened in October 2018 and share with you some of the highlights of the last eighteen months.

First, the Café has been open every Thursday morning since its first day, apart from two weeks each Christmas, one week at Easter and two weeks in the Summer. It has built up a customer base now of nearly 30 people of whom around 20-25 come each week. As there are 40 settings available at any one time, this still leaves space for a few more each week. If you have not visited us yet, once the Café reopens later in the year, please give it a try, you will be made most welcome and have an enjoyable snack. You could



also try out the range of 8 barista style coffees, a variety of teas and hot chocolate. Scones, pancakes, toasted tea loaf and sweet cakes are on the menu and from about 11.45am, soup and rolls in the winter and sandwiches in the summer are served. Payment is by Donations only and every week the Café more than covers its costs.



Every Thursday, from 11.00am to 12.00noon social and recreational activities are run alongside the Café. These have ranged from carpet bowls, craft and artwork, flower arranging, carol singing, music and reflection, family history tree and, more recently, the most popular Tai Chi and Qi Gong movements classes attracting up to 16 participants. These activities are designed to improve the health and well-being of adults and older people in the community. From much favourable feedback, it seems people who attend them are appreciating the benefits. A small

donation of £2.00 is requested to help cover the cost of instructors and materials, and to help them be self-sustaining. Free Wi-Fi is available at the Café.

Similarly appreciated, is the social aspect of just meeting for a warm drink and a snack and several regular customers simply come for this aspect of the café.

Other unintended benefits have also accrued since opening of the Café. Recently, the Chestnut Café contributed £500 towards the redecoration of the Small Hall. Before that, two brand new stockpots were donated to each of the Lodging House Mission and the church. The dishwasher, essential for the Café to operate, was purchased and installed by the Café but is available for use by the church and other organisations using the kitchen. Again, recently the Chestnut Café received an unannounced inspection from North Lanarkshire Council, Environmental Health Services. The Café passed all aspects of the Inspection and was awarded a Certificate of Approval for the preparation and serving of food in a safe and hygienic manner.

Finally, the regular team would like to thank the additional volunteer helpers who come to cover for the holidays and absences of the regular team



and without whom it would be difficult to sustain the regular frequency of opening. More volunteers would still be welcome and anyone who would be able to assist should speak to a member of the Team.

*Liz Ashmole, Jim Burns, Esther Hyndman and Marvyn Mackay*

*The Chestnut Café Team*

## **Covid-19 (Coronavirus)**

Sadly, following the necessary decision to suspend all worship services from the 17th March 2020 we have had to all get used to the idea of working remotely and continuing to provide worship in ways we never thought possible before.

Following the announcement from the Church of Scotland we have been working hard to get the message out amongst our worshipping congregation and by now all will be aware that we can no longer meet face to face until the situation at large settles down. However, in times like this we often find ourselves rising to new challenges and that old Dunkirk spirit is ignited in us.

I am only three months into my new role and already I seem to have encountered more than I could ever have expected as Session Clerk. I am only glad the position did not have an obligatory 3-month probationary period, or I would have by now been finding myself out of a job. Managing to empty the church was not something I thought I would ever have expected but we are where we are. Now we find ourselves entering the 21st Century and going all virtual. We have managed to connect Gordon into the scary world of Facebook. If not, already I urge you all to log onto your smart phone or iPad / tablet devices and follow us on the following link: <https://www.facebook.com/steppsparishchurch>

There you will find some daily reflections, prayers, worship podcasts, video posts, blogs or just a means of keeping us all connected. Who knows perhaps we can even all log in after our online Sunday worship one week and have a virtual catch up over Tea / Coffee?

Most importantly of all the one thing we must do is to continue to support each other. To keep talking, sharing our good news our concerns and communicating with each other by whatever means we can.

Already we have seen great examples of support – online advice, support networks out there and we are here. This indeed may change how we go forward in our outreach mission for ever.

Gordons Ministry is facing a challenge that we never could have imagined, and I reckon he will continue to find new and original ways to support us all through these most unusual of circumstances that we find ourselves in.

Stay well and I hope to see you all soon.

**Lorraine Robertson**

**Session clerk.**

Useful Contact Details:

**Pastoral Care support:** Rev. Gordon MacRae remains your first point of contact.

He is unable to visit you directly but is keen to use telephone ministry or social media to support you either through **Facebook, WhatsApp, email or Face Time etc**

**Minister**

*Rev Gordon MacRae BD MTh*



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Session Clerk

*Lorraine Robertson*



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[sessionclerkspc2020@gmail.com](mailto:sessionclerkspc2020@gmail.com)

A volunteer group of all elders will be keeping in constant touch and be able to try assist the congregation in any way we can if you find yourself isolated or socially distanced. Please do not hesitate to contact Gordon or myself and we

will ensure help or urgent supplies are door  
dropped for you if needed.

Stay safe and well all.

God Bless

*Lorraine.*



**Find us on Facebook:**

**Stepps Parish Church**

You don't need a Facebook account to access the  
page.

Simply type into the search bar:

<https://www.facebook.com/steppsparishchurch>

Simply click the link...



If the thought of Facebook doesn't appeal a buddy system or phone partner could be set up to keep you in touch with your friends.

- Phone your elder who will be more than happy to help and have a catch up.

- 



A pool of volunteers is available to help with messages etc for those who find themselves in need or isolation. Contact Gordon in the first instance who will contact the volunteer coordinator.

Above all else we remember the Church is not a building, the Church is not a place, the Church is you and me.

## **Worried about Covid-19 (Coronavirus)**



**Helpful contact numbers: NHS 24 – 111**

**Self-Care advice is updated each day on NHS Inform website**



**<https://www.nhsinform.scot/illnesses-and-conditions/infections-and-poisoning/coronavirus-covid-19>**

**Advice on Social Distancing can be found on the Government UK webpage. See link below:**

**<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-on-social-distancing-and-for-vulnerable-people/guidance-on-social-distancing-for-everyone-in-the-uk-and-protecting-older-people-and-vulnerable-adults>**

**Health Protection Scotland:**

**<https://www.hps.scot.nhs.uk/>**

**Stepps Pharmacy: 0141 779 3363**





**Local GP's:** For urgent Telephone advice (most surgeries now triaging calls)

**Stepps Surgeries:**

**Dr. Nalagatla:** 0141 779 2330

**Dr. Kennedy:** 0141 779 4445



Many of you have kindly asked about your offerings and how you can continue to support your Church. Perhaps this is a good time to think about on-line giving. If you haven't already done so you can still set up a direct debit to take away the worry of not being able to freely give allowing us to strengthen our resources for the glory of God.

**Acts 20:35 “**

**In everything I did, I showed you that by this kind of hard work we must help the weak, remembering the words the Lord Jesus himself said: It is more blessed to give than to receive”.**

Please speak to you elder who will be happy to drop off a mandate form for you to complete and set up with your bank.

And finally, whilst we may not be able to share Sunday Worship for a while together the Church will be open at the following times to allow some time for personal devotion -prayers or reflections whilst Gordon will work from his Vestry being mindful of social distancing if necessary.

**Please use it as you need -We are here for you all.**

**Church opening times:**

**Tuesday 2.00pm – 4.00pm**

**Wednesday 2.00pm- 4.00pm**

**And Thursday 10.00am – 12 Noon.**

## **Lodging House Mission Temporary Closure**

Sadly, the Lodging House Mission had to close its doors on Monday 16th March after some staff developed virus-like symptoms. With insufficient staff and volunteers to maintain the Day Centre, the difficult decision was taken to close. LHM will remain closed only for as long as necessary to prevent the risk of spreading the Covid 19 virus. As far as possible, our service users are being re-directed to other centres providing free food.

The Glasgow Winter Night Shelter, hosted by LHM, has also closed (two weeks earlier than planned).

As we take refuge in our comfortable homes with ample food stocks, let us remember and pray for the homeless and destitute during this difficult period. Check the Lodging House Mission Facebook page for suggestions on how we can continue to help those most in need.



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