



The Church of Scotland

stepps parish church

PROSPECT

www.steppsparishchurch.org

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



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July/August 2020, Issue 392

Letter from the Session Clerk

Dear Friends,

*Well it is hard to believe
that we are fast approaching
the summer holidays, a time*

*when many of us would have been looking
forward to being able to go away on day-trips or
holidays abroad.*

*Instead, many of us will simply just look forward
to being able to spend more time outdoors or
visits with our families closer to home. Life as we
know it has been very different these past 3
months but as lockdown slowly eases and we
enter a different phase we slowly look forward to
a little more freedom. Whilst things have been
challenging in many ways for us, we hope that we
are encouraged by the thought of being able to
perhaps get back into our Church building again
soon. Of course there needs to be a little bit of
planning to put into action the necessary
measures before we can once again open our
doors, so please bear with us whilst some work
goes on in the background to ensure that all the*



correct procedures are put in place for everyone's safety.

It is perhaps fortunate that this falls during a period of what would normally be a Summer recess so allows us some breathing space to take the time to thoroughly plan and assess the risks whilst adhering to all the necessary procedures as laid out by UK and Scottish Governments as well as the Church of Scotland.

*In addition, we are excited at the thought of being able to install new Audio- Visual equipment in the Sanctuary allowing us to Live Stream our Sunday worship services. This comes courtesy to being awarded £16,660 from the **Scottish Government Wellbeing Fund** enabling us to enhance our digital technology. Some of this money will also help to provide a telephone ministry service that will allow those not able to attend or access worship online through their home telephone so watch this space.*

Meantime, I have many people to thank for all their diligence in helping to keep things ticking over and checking in on the buildings and planning for our re-opening.

I am grateful to all in the finance team for ensuring all the accounts and bills are settled in a timely manner. To the many Elders and members who are checking in on their districts or friends / neighbours looking out for those most in need and to all who are supporting me in the background at a time of rapid change.

And of course, to Gordon who keeps us spiritually nurtured. It has certainly been a steep learning curve these past few months, but I know that we will rise again to the challenge of whatever lies ahead sure in the knowledge that we are all in this together. So, whilst your holiday plans may not be as you had hoped this year. There will I hope to be some brighter days ahead when we can all come together with thanksgiving for all that we have missed so dear these past few months if not in person then certainly, I hope in our new virtual way of doing Church.

With every blessing

Lorraine Robertson, Session Clerk

Website Upgrade

We are currently working on upgrading our website to make it more current and easier to maintain and keep it up to date. We hope that we will be able to go live with this for the start of August. If anyone is keen or willing to become a regular website administrator allowing information to be updated and altered in a timely fashion and to keep it up to date, please contact L o r r a i n e R o b e r t s o n a t sessionclerkspc2020@gmail.com

It is hoped that perhaps a small team of 4-5 may be able to work together on this to lessen the burden of work.

Training will be provided.

Many Church members have been expressing their dismay and distress after reading a column in *The Herald* newspaper that accused the Church of issuing guidance that is cruel to people in vulnerable groups. The opinion piece attacked the Church for its guidance to congregations on

reopening buildings, which have been closed during the COVID-19 pandemic. We disagree entirely with the author's interpretation of the guidance and reject completely her characterisation of our Church and its people. To set the record straight, the Principal Clerk, the Chair of the General Trustees, the Convener of the Assembly Trustees and the Chief Officer sent the letter below to The Herald – which is included for your interest.



Dear Sir,

We write in response to the Opinion piece by Rosemary Goring which appeared on Wednesday 17 June and its utter misrepresentation both of the Church of Scotland itself and of the guidance issued to our congregations last week on the anticipated re-opening of church buildings.

Accepting that Ms Goring is entitled to express her personal opinion, even if in gratuitously offensive terms, we nevertheless take issue with the accuracy of what she has reported. We do not recognise our Church, then or now, in what she says.

She says that parishioners with serious underlying health conditions and those over 70 are explicitly urged not to attend church services, and characterises this as “crass”, “cruel” and “negligent”. This is simply not true.

The guidance in fact suggests that those over the age of 70 should consider carefully whether they should be attending church, and that anyone who is in the extremely vulnerable category, who has been advised by the NHS to shield at home, would be best advised not to come to church for the time being. This follows the clear and unequivocal advice which has been consistently given by the Scottish Government, the NHS and the Chief Medical Officer to the effect that anyone who is in the clinically extremely vulnerable group should stay at home.

It is also consistent with the advice published by all faith communities to their members. With them, we echo the sentiment expressed in the Government guidance:

“We would not ask you to do this if it was not necessary. We believe that it is needed to save lives and protect the NHS”.

Our published guidance is also explicit in expecting congregations to take steps to ensure that those people who are in the vulnerable category must be appropriately supported in their choice to participate in church life in a way that meets their own individual needs and preferences whilst safeguarding their own health, safety and welfare and those of the wider congregation.

It is perfectly legitimate for Ms Goring to express her view that we should all be able to assess risks and choose for ourselves – regardless of age and health – whether or not to follow medical and Government guidance in the current crisis. We do not agree with this view, and we imagine that most of your readers also do not agree with it. Taken to its logical conclusion, it would result in the collapse of the consensual approach to the

crisis which has been taken by both Scottish and UK Governments and would necessitate the imposition of legislative compulsion.

We agree with those in government that such an outcome is not in keeping with the liberal traditions which are at the core of our national identity. Whilst our governance through a system of church courts is inevitably hierarchical our mindset and character as a church are firmly focused on individual liberty. For this reason, also, the guidance which we have issued is not prescriptive, and it is risible to present it as a “decree” and assert that “vicious” reprisals lie in wait for those who do not adhere to it.

The fact that the Scottish Government’s evidence-led route map through and out of the crisis only allows places of worship to re-open to extended groups when we reach Phase 3 is a clear indicator of the clinically assessed risks to the health of those attending church services.

There have been a number of documented cases throughout the world of coronavirus outbreaks associated with church services and it is beyond doubt that unmanaged church attendance can

constitute a threat to the lives of those attending, and people in their wider contact circles. We have a concern for the holistic health of our parishioners, body and soul, and we stand by the guidance which we have issued as a proportionate, practical and compassionate toolkit which respects expert medical advice and enables our buildings across the country to re-open when it is safe to do so.

In the days that followed the lockdown announcement, we have seen creativity across our congregations on a level that has not been replicated in living memory. Congregations have come together, in absence, to support each other and those around them. Many congregations have opened their buildings to those in need and have provided lifeline services such as food banks or childcare facilities for key workers. Along with creativity has come a real sense of loss as, for the first time in generations, church doors were ordered to be closed on government authority. But the church is its people, not its buildings, and we are confident that relationships that have been forged, or deepened, over the past months will

serve to allow us to continue to serve our communities in the months and years ahead, regardless of how our public worship may require to be configured. Ms Goring is welcome to join us.

Yours sincerely,

Rev Dr George Whyte, Principal Clerk.

Raymond Young, chair of the General Trustees.

Rev Dr John Chalmers, Convener of the Assembly Trustees.

David Kendall, Chief Officer.

Celebrations: Mrs. Dilys Williamson

We wish Dilys a very happy belated 80th Birthday from all her church family and friends. We hope we can see you soon for a proper chance to wish you well.

Congregational Roll

It is with great sadness that we have to intimate the deaths of three of our members in the last few weeks.

Deaths:

Mrs Isabel Nicol: Cumbernauld Road. Died 26th May 2020

Mrs Moira Burns: Loch Road. Died 29th May 2020

Mrs Margaret Quinn: Millersneuk Crescent. Died 18th June 2020

We remember all of those they hold dear in our thoughts and prayers.

Virtual Prize-giving



Thank you to all who contributed to our virtual Prize-giving service on Sunday the 21st June. We miss seeing all our talented young people but look forward to seeing some of you all back in Church we hope very soon.

Have a great summer everyone.

Marvyn, Lorraine, Anne, Yvonne & Esther

A Meditation taken from “There was a Garden” by Jenny Hawke for all who are facing or who have experienced loss during these times

ONE GLORIOUS DAY

One day,
one glorious day,
all
and all
and all will be well.

That which was lost
restored
That which was broken
made new

Love
that holds the cosmos
in its hand
will wipe away every tear

Love
that called Lazarus
to life
From the cold, cold tomb,
will lead us
to life
eternal

Beauty of Eden,
ours once more.
Heaven
with Earth restored

The gate has been flung wide.
The King of Glory stands
to beckon us in.

Offerings and Giving's

Thank you to those who have sent in cheques for the attention of the finance Team. These have been greatly appreciated.

For those of you who want to continue to give your offerings or have yet to do so there are various ways in which you can do this.

For church members who usually give by Weekly Freewill Offering and all other members (or anyone joining us for services).

We now have the option of using a simple Text **DONATE** system to allow weekly offerings.

Alternatively, The Church of Scotland have also set up an online Donation page via their website. There you can support the wider church or our own congregation.

Direct Banking and Standing Order

For those who wish to give their weekly offerings directly from their bank account to the church then the easiest way to make an offering is via digital banking or internet banking where you can set up a standing order or Direct Debit without a mandate form. Payments can be made directly to

Stepps Parish Church Acc. No. 00257263. Sort Code: 83-27-30 and simply add your name as the Reference.

Alternatively, you can request a mandate form from us. If you are a UK taxpayer, we can also reclaim gift aid which will enable us to claim the tax back on your offering. Please email sessionclerkspc2020@gmail.com for details on how to get a mandate and gift aid form.

Text Message

To make an offering via text message:

- To donate **£1**, text **STEPPSPC** to **70201**
- To donate **£3**, text **STEPPSPC** to **70331**
- To donate **£5**, text **STEPPSPC** to **70971**
- To donate **£10**, text **STEPPSPC** to **70191**

Texts carry a charge of 22p per donation and are charged with your standard rate message and you'll be opting in to hear more about our work and fundraising via telephone and SMS.

If you donate this way then you will receive a further text asking if you want to allow gift aid, and there will be a link to a form to complete.

Cheque

If anyone wishes to give their offering or donate by cheque, please send a cheque *made payable to* Stepps Parish Church and address to Finance Team. 17 Whitehill Avenue, Stepps. Glasgow G33 6DX.

A View From The Pew

The past three months of Lockdown have been very trying for those confined to their homes with unprecedented isolation from family and friends – and this has been particularly upsetting for those who live alone. The prospect of not seeing loved ones for weeks or months would have been unimaginable at the start of this year, but perhaps we can get a sense of perspective on our situation if we think of those previous generations whose families emigrated in search of a better life to America and Canada in the 18th and 19th centuries – some because of poverty, and some as a result of the Highland Clearances

Can anyone today even begin to imagine the heart-breaking sorrow of saying goodbye to sons,

daughters and grandchildren, with little or no prospect of ever seeing them again? Or even knowing if they were prospering - or indeed, if they arrived there safely? There were no phones, and the only way of communicating was by letter, which could take months to arrive, if ever. The expectation when their loved ones left would be that they would never see them again, and if their grandchildren did return, they would have grown into unrecognisable adults, not the sweet little boys and girls that were remembered.

Although being confined to the house for three months has been trying, those of us who have been untouched by the virus but feel deflated and weary after such a long spell of isolation must be grateful. Modern communications have allowed us to see, hear and speak to those we love – and possibly we have been in contact more often than usual. Pity those who did not have these benefits, and whose separation from loved ones never ended.

We have many positives, and perhaps we should respect this unique period of isolation for the unexpected benefits it has brought. Which of us

has not appreciated an unexpected phone call from a friend; a gallery of family photographs which might not otherwise have been taken; a text from a grownup granddaughter to ask if we need anything; and the delightful prospect of – probably many months down the line – our church reopening for the familiar worship we knew, and the joy of meeting again all our dear friends to exchange news at Fellowship after the service.

The Potting Shed

It is said that we are never closer to God than when in a garden, so this is a little corner of Prospect to which we hope the gardeners in the congregation will contribute to exchange hints, surplus plants, and ideas for our new church garden.

Hint No 1

Before putting potting compost into hanging baskets, halve a disposable nappy crossway and

Stepps CDT are planning a new emergency food assistance service – and we need your help! Essential food supplies will be offered on a drop-in basis at Stepps

Parish Church Hall from 1.00 pm till 2.30 pm every Wednesday, starting on the 1st July. This is a self-

referral service, open to all who are under financial strain. Those wanting to access the service are

asked to bring their own bag with them to fill with groceries. Social distancing and hand hygiene

measures will be in place.

Existing funding will ensure food assistance up to the 30th October 2020. We have a willing group of

volunteers to maintain and possibly extend our services, but more help would be appreciated. If you

would like to help your community or would like to know more about the food assistance service

and other assistance available, please contact steppscdt@gmail.com

Stepps CDT is a newly formed organisation for the benefit of residents of Stepps, Cardowan and Millerston. It promotes citizenship, improvement of our environment and activities available locally.

If you feel you need additional help at this difficult time please speak to Lorraine Robertson, Kate Houston, Ailsa Macdonald or Jim Hope.

Church preparations for opening

In response to the Scottish Government move to Phase 2 of the COVID response, Church of Scotland have issued risk assessment guidance. We are currently preparing our plans for when we can re-open in line with this guidance. It is likely that only a limited area of the church halls will be open initially. In the sanctuary there will be allocated pews to use and others will be roped off.

We would urge those that fall within the extremely high risk groups not to attend the buildings at least until after 31st July 2020 and for those in the high risk category (over 70 or usually get a flu jag) to consider carefully before attending. Those showing possible signs of COVID19 infection should not attend either.

We are putting in provision for hand sanitiser at the entrance and exit of buildings and would ask attendees to use when entering the buildings. We ask also to follow the guidance on wearing face coverings and respect social distancing. Interestingly, it is recognised that singing can spread respiratory droplets further and so this will not be allowed at present during worship.

Numbers allowed within the buildings at anyone time will be smaller than normal, but we will try to accommodate attendees as best we can.

Please keep a look out for further updates.

Ailsa Macdonald

Health and Safety coordinator

Hobbyists

To all the hobbyists among us. You will know how engrossed we can become, and how we can lose ourselves in a pastime, and often just let the time run away. Ring any bells for anyone? This poem has been pinned up in my craft room, and it makes me smile.

The Stamping Wife

She learned to stamp on Monday
Her embossing was quite fine.
She forgot to make us dinner, so...
We went out to dine.
She inked up lots of backgrounds,
She says they are a must.
They really are quite lovely,
But...she forgot to dust!
On Wednesday it was birthday cards,
She said that chalking's fun,
Shading, blending, colouring,
But....the laundry wasn't done.
Her card club was on Thursday,
Using green and blue and red,
I guess, she really was engrossed,
She never made the bed.
It was shaker cards on Friday,

A technique she just adores.
But.. she never seemed to notice,
The crumbs on all the floors.
Yeah! I found a maid on Saturday.
My week is now complete,
My darling wife can stamp away,
And the house will still be neat.
Well.....it's already Sunday,
And my forehead's feeling damp,
I've raved and ranted...I CANNOT BELIEVE
The maid has learned to stamp!
Author Unknown

PS A wall plaque from a friend reads
The time you ENJOY wasting, is not wasted time.
Margaret Crawford

LHM Update

It is difficult at present to forecast when the Lodging House Mission might return to any semblance of normality by re-opening its Day Centre in East Campbell Street in order to support and feed our service users. However, this is not to say that LHM is doing nothing. Far from it. The

Mission has sought new ways to fulfil its charitable purpose which is to relief poverty amongst the homeless and needy in Glasgow. It has been working with other frontline charity partners by making up food parcels and toiletry parcels from its diminishing store for distribution to those in need. A member of our congregation generously donated a large supply of beautifully home-sewn face masks which will be distributed to those in need (Thank you - you know who you are!)

LHM's Chaplain, Claire, has established a telephone chaplaincy service to support those who require pastoral support during these difficult times.

Please remember the work of LHM in your prayers as it seeks to adjust and respond to the needs of its clients.



190th GLASGOW COMPANY,
THE BOYS' BRIGADE

With the lockdown continuing, we have commenced weekly activity sessions for the Boys using Zoom. This has been a major change for us and has entailed some adaptation, but it has allowed us to offer regular contact and fellowship so has been well worth it.

The Boys can also access activities to do at home using the organisation's **BBatHome** resources, which are open to everyone, BB member or not. If you would like to have a look, they can easily be found via Google search.

We also have a stock of materials compiled for online activity which I would be happy to share with anyone who gets in touch.

Our ongoing activities are shown on the Company's Facebook page, **190th Glasgow Boys Brigade Company**, please log in and have a look.

Thanks to all our Boys, Staff and parents who have kept things going during these very difficult times. We all look forward to the future when we can resume normal meetings.

Colin Goodall

Acting Captain

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