



Side view looking towards the Vestry.



"The Lord is my Shepherd I shall not want"

Psalm 23.

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PROSPECT

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**Watch us on YouTube each
Sunday at 11.00 am**

Follow us on Facebook

www.steppsparishchurch.org

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

**To submit an item for Prospect
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Sunday Services

Morning Worship at 11am

(Services will be reduced and limited in numbers until further notice)

May 17th saw us move down to Level 2. Congregations are now legally required to publicly display their buildings' maximum capacity with physical distancing (PDBC) taken into account at the entrance of their buildings where the public can see it. Unfortunately our maximum capacity safe limit has been set within the sanctuary to 36 people to be covid-compliant with our risk assessment maintaining the 2m physical distancing rule. Covid-19 new variants continue to be a concern and as such congregations are advised to continue to practice good social distancing and wear face coverings indoors. We are all strongly encouraged to do what we can to reduce transmissibility of the virus by avoiding crowded spaces.



An additional 12 seats are available as an overspill area to watch the weekly service from our large hall.

Please continue to follow the website for information about our Services. We look forward to welcoming you all back with us again. For those who are unable to return with us at this time we will continue to stream our weekly Sunday services on our Stepps Parish Church YouTube channel

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCI7mTSz5OI-vW_qMKKjcXAw

Charity No: SC014212

Session Clerk Letter

Dear Friends,



When Gordon asked me to note down some of thoughts on my experience of being a first-time commissioner at this year General Assembly I was encouraged to share in print for you all. How do I convey to you all the immense feeling of responsibility and uncertainty of what to expect? I knew of course what was planned on the Order of Proceedings so there was an air of trepidation, but also a feeling of importance in being a part of something that I can only hope has afforded me an opportunity perhaps, in some way, to be heard via the powers of an Assembly Hub - to be a part of some of the decision making that will inevitably affect us all.

This year like last year of course was another virtual General Assembly, with social distancing and covid regulations preventing commissioners from all over Scotland, England and internationally from coming together on the Mound. Not being able to travel to Edinburgh and experience the grandeur, pomp, and ceremony of the opening day and to hear first-hand the business items being debated in the Assembly halls was a great sadness. I can only imagine how uplifting the singing and the sharing of Communion would have been had we been allowed to come together in person.

Not being able to share in the fellowship and friendship alongside other commissioners was a real loss. A WhatsApp group chat set up by our Interim Moderator - Rev Grant Barclay from Glasgow Presbytery - was one way however of feeling part of a smaller group. Being able to share in our own little virtual debate and discussions was helpful, and brought a sense of togetherness with some of our fellow Glasgow commissioners - albeit waking up to 80 messages was not without its own stresses.

A gathering of over 750 commissioners via Zoom for my maiden Assembly is not what I would have hoped for, but it afforded me the opportunity of participating in what felt like an especially important year. I could be part of it without the need to leave home and rush for a train or indeed have the thought of that journey again after some long afternoon sessions which ran into early or mid-evening sessions. One benefit of being able to take part in the comfort of my own home was having ready access to plentiful cups of tea and biscuits that helped to sustain me. Technical issues on the Monday meant a 45-minute delay at the start of proceedings whilst the technical team tried frantically to correct the echo distortion and loss of sound from the halls during the livestream. Anyone who has been involved in all the intricacies of delivering a livestream worship service or hosted a **Zoom** meeting will sympathise just how difficult that is to stay calm and carry on, and certainly made Gordon and me feel a little easier knowing that - even with all the expertise IT support surrounding the General Assembly - sometimes things are just outwith your control.

Having the benefit of previously serving as Presbytery Elder afforded me the insight as to how the order of proceedings would work, and how the deliverance of reports would be handled, so I was somewhat prepared for what to expect. However, not having a hard copy of the Blue book or individual reports was tricky, instead having to swap from screen to screen or screen to iPad to have reports opened. Following them online was at times challenging.

It is difficult in the space of a few minutes to sum up some of the highlights of the week. Hearing not only the Retiring Moderator's inspiring closing speech and the opening & closing addresses by the Lord High Commissioner, His Royal Highness Prince William were some of my personal highlights. There were moments of great humility, impassioned speeches, good news stories and some pockets of humour:-

Who knew that the 3 ages of Man were: Boy, Man and you're looking very well Reverend!

But let me be serious for a moment: It would not be a **GA2021** without first recognising the toll that Covid-19 has taken on its minsters, church personnel, congregations and on the life of our Church over the past year of the pandemic. When worship moved online, buildings were closed and many faced isolation and loneliness.

Let me not hide from you all the overarching theme of this year's Assembly in the words of the Very Rev Dr. John Chalmers, Convener of the General Trustees, who stated that everything about this year's General Assembly was about urgency - The need for radical mission planning ; How we will resource the church nationally and locally; We face a retirement cliff with over 35% of minsters due to retire in the next 5 years or less; We will need to learn to be leaner – nimbler; To re-imagine the way, we “do” church; For inspirational leadership; To maintain and support the increased demand for ministry training whilst continuing to offer training to those following a call into ministry that is fit for purpose.

The Church of Scotland has too many buildings, numerous buildings that are under-utilised, buildings that are too large or are simply in the wrong place. Presbyteries will merge and ministry numbers reduced. There is no easy answer to this problem. An example of this leaner infrastructure has seen the Island of Shetland, now under the remit of Aberdeen Presbytery, go from 40 buildings to just 11. The future of the Church will not be built around the congregations or buildings that we are all used to belonging to. There is a tipping point where in some cases for congregations there will be no way back. The Church will no longer be built around buildings.

An example of this can be found if you look at the breaking new ground of **Zoominar** – hosted recently by **Trinity Glasgow**.

We are looking at a radical overhaul of church life. In the next five years we may be bidding farewell to many of the things that we all recognise as church, what our idea of Church is may not fit the idea or the world of our children or what our grandchildren consider to be church. What we understand about Church, what we all recognise and love about our church, may not be fit for the future of our grandchildren.

There was a great emphasis on the need for a clear vision... to be outward looking. Presbyteries will look to churches that are actively engaging with their community whilst expressing the good news of the Gospel with a clear mission plan and a committed congregation. To inspire the people of Scotland and beyond through enthusiastic worshipping, witnessing, and serving of communities through faith and nurture.

We need to use our people and financial resources where they will make the greatest difference to the mission of the church. We were told the only way to go forward is not to go back.... There will be no return to normal but to go ahead into the future with the new reconfiguration of a Church for mission.

To Prune or to Plant.... That was perhaps the most difficult phrase to hear repeatedly being mentioned and I take no pleasure in being so blunt about the reality of what this means for us all. None of this was particularly easy to listen to and is certainly difficult to report back to you all.

So where do we go from here...? Butterflies - Chrysalis

You can only fly once you have left the safety of your cocoon. Opportunity, Tension & Challenge.

We seek God's guidance as we grasp the opportunity. We live with the tensions.

We acknowledge the challenges.

We need a mission plan that is creative and imaginative.

What is our vision for Stepps Parish Church? A well-equipped space that is fit for purpose.

We need to focus on long term sustainability. Giving to Grow. We all like the idea of certainty but we must step out in faith. This is probably the most radical Presbytery Mission Plan since 1929. We need blue sky thinking. We need to be decisive and show leadership and re-imagine the way we do things. The ability of online worship has proven that over the last year it is possible to offer an alternative way of doing church. It was acknowledged at the Assembly by the Convener of the Faith & Nurture forum that digital services have changed the way we worship. We don't know how many people will come back. We see this already in our own midst. We have lost some of our regular worshippers, our young people, our Messy Church and our Girls Brigade will soon also be suspended.

Sanctuary first- The Church of Scotland's only online worshipping congregation continues to break new ground with a growing worshipping ecumenical membership – A New App supported by Sanctus media has provided them with the ability to also worship anywhere , anytime using an App on your phone.

Likewise, the Iona Community membership is also thriving with members from all over the world. These are like-minded people who come together from all faiths and none with a common interest in Justice and peace. Their generous giving has raised Three and 3/4 Million pounds to restore the living quarters at Iona Abbey.

The Women's Guild raised over £630,000 in the space of a year for good causes.

How can we move forward if we are not prepared to change? We need to consider new ways of doing church. It was acknowledged at the Assembly that digital services were likely to remain part of our new normal and I would argue that they are already.

The "Path of Renewal" is a visionary approach to Worship adopting 3 characteristics

To be vibrant, attractive worshipping communities

Who are forming people in faith

Who are connected with their wider communities".

We need A team approach to Ministry

Much of our discussions focused on the wording or suggested amended wording of certain aspects of the reports.

Do we instruct or invite?

Do we urge or encourage?

Do we declare or implore ... well, can I use all these words to you all?

The retiring Moderator in his closing address said the sooner we sort out the structure the sooner we get on with the plan.

Let me share with you some final words I found to be particularly inspiring - read out to us from the convener of the Faith Nurture forum.

"For there is always light

If only we are brave enough to see it, if only we are brave enough to be it"

Amanda Gorman

God Bless!

Lorraine

A former Deputy First Minister has officially taken up the role of Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland.

Rt Hon Lord Wallace of Tankerness QC (Jim Wallace) said he is “humbled and honoured” to have become the Kirk’s ambassador at home and abroad. The 66-year-old life peer from Orkney is the second elder in modern times to take up the 12-month role and will speak out on issues important to the Church and its mission to follow and proclaim the example of Jesus Christ.

Lord Wallace was inducted into the role at the Assembly Hall in Edinburgh in front of his wife of 38 years, Rosie, their daughter Helen and his brother Neil who were accompanied by their spouses.

Prince William, who was representing his grandmother, Her Majesty the Queen, as Lord High Commissioner, and First Minister of Scotland Nicola Sturgeon MSP were also present.

Humbled and honoured

Outgoing Moderator, Very Rev Dr Martin Fair, supervised the passing of the cross and chain and ring of office to his successor whose other daughter, Clare, watched online along with hundreds of other people.

Lord Wallace, a member of St Magnus Cathedral in Kirkwall, said: “I thank you most warmly and sincerely for the honour of electing me as Moderator of this General Assembly.

“I stand before you, today, feeling both humbled and honoured and, I should add, with feelings of excitement and trepidation.



Rt Hon Lord Wallace of Tankerness QC

“Upon my nomination as Moderator-Designate, I received many messages of goodwill and many assurances of prayerful support.

“One of my predecessors described her experience as Moderator like ‘being carried along on a carpet of prayer’.

“Today, I ask for your prayers that during this Assembly and in the coming year, I may fulfil these responsibilities with love, grace and wisdom.

“And that if, or more likely when, I get it wrong, your prayers will be ones of forgiveness.”

Lord Wallace, a former leader of the Scottish Liberal Democrats, wore a robe that belonged to Very Rev Dr David Steel who was Moderator in 1974-1975.

It was lent to him by the late minister’s son Lord David Steel of Aikwood, a Liberal Democrat peer and former Presiding Officer of the Scottish Parliament.

General Assembly News 2021

The Very Rev Dr John Chalmers issued the warning as the Assembly passed a budget with a deficit of £11m, and approved a new scheme to replace the system of Mission and Ministries allocations.

Dr Chalmers said that progress had been made, including reducing the costs of central administration by 30 per cent, but that it would be for nothing unless the work of reforming presbyteries and 'radical reshaping of local church' is completed.

"We are in this together as a Church," he said. "There is no 'us and them'. All of us are members of local congregations which will experience both the pain and exhilaration of the changes that are ahead of us."

The Assembly agreed to the establishment of a new Pioneer Mission Fund to support local church growth, with a particular emphasis on church planting and the establishment of new worshipping communities. Proposed by the Rev Christopher Rowe, this is intended to partly fill the gap created by the suspension of the Growth Fund following the pandemic. While Mr Rowe suggested the fund would be supported by 'individuals, businesses and outside bodies', Dr Chalmers announced that the Church was likely to be able to use some money from unrestricted legacies as 'seed' funding.

The Assembly Trustees' proposal for a **National Giving Day** during harvest season this year was supported, although some commissioners were concerned that it might clash with local harvest appeals, or that it might not coincide with harvest

locally. Dr Chalmers said that it had never been the intention to fix a specific date: "Whatever Sunday or week congregations choose to do this, let it be up to them."

The Trustees' deliverance that Presbyteries should be encouraged to use their discretionary funds to help struggling churches meet their mission and ministry contributions was resisted by some Commissioners, who argued that the central church should not be seeking to influence decisions on that money, and that it could mean money being taken away from other projects. However, Dr Chalmers said: "If you don't have some urgent and imaginative ongoing project that needs to be supported, remember that your national church and congregations across the church needs to be supported as well." The section passed by 304 votes to 142.

There was also some disquiet expressed over the proposal to delay a decision on the future of the Church's administrative offices in Edinburgh for another two years, although Dr Chalmers committed that no more than £100,000 would be spent on maintaining the George Street buildings before the end of 2022. He said that nothing pained him more than the lack of progress on this issue.

Earlier, the General Assembly agreed to three presbytery mergers, merging Edinburgh with West Lothian, Hamilton with Lanark, and bringing together six presbyteries in south west Scotland. It rejected an Overture from the Presbytery of Lewis which would have put a year's pause on the process of Presbytery reform.

The Legal Questions Committee is to bring legislation to a future General Assembly to

allow all or part of the Assembly to be carried out online even when meeting in person is permitted. This was amended from the Business Committee's proposal that Legal Questions 'explore the feasibility' of such legislation.

Due to Covid-19, this year's General Assembly is taking place as a 'blended' event, with the Moderator, conveners and officials in the hall in Edinburgh while Commissioners join by video link.

During the opening ceremonies, the newly-appointed Moderator of the General Assembly, Baron Wallace of Tankerness, said: 'I stand before you humbled and honoured and with feelings of excitement and trepidation' as he took up the role. He added: "I am conscious of the trust you have placed in me as an elder of the Kirk to hold this office. I pray that I will be worthy of your trust.

"As we meet in General Assembly I believe we should have confidence in God's loving power and inspiration of the Holy Spirit to look forward in faith"

The outgoing Moderator, the Very Rev Dr Martin Fair, spoke powerfully about there being 'work for [the church] to do' while there were still issues such as poverty, sectarianism, refugees, mental health problems, nuclear weapons and violence in the Holy Land, but warned that 'there will be hardly any church left to do all of that' if it doesn't make the necessary reforms and reverse its decline in numbers.

In her letter to the Assembly, the Queen praised the Church's engagement with other denominations and faiths, and with government. "These bonds have been forged in a time of emergency but will

stand the country in good stead" as it recovers from Covid-19, she said.



And her grandson, Prince William, Earl of Strathearn, serving as Lord High Commissioner, said that Scotland held a very special place in his heart. He said it was the source of happy memories including family holidays, training as a pilot in Inverness, studying and meeting his wife Catherine in St Andrews; but also his saddest, as he was staying at Balmoral in 1997 when he was informed that his mother had died. "Still in shock, I found sanctuary at the service in Crathie Kirk that morning, and in the dark days of grief that followed I found comfort and solace in the Scottish outdoors. As a result, the connection I feel to Scotland will always run deep."

He said that he was grateful for the opportunity to 'really listen, with humility and compassion, to many people in Scotland', and praised the Church for embracing change during the pandemic: "I imagine some of us will have been reminded afresh that the true power of the Church, and perhaps its future, lies not simply in the Kirk buildings we all love, but in the values of peace, healing and 'love for thy neighbour' that are very much alive in our parishes and communities."

Dear Supporters,

We trust over the coming months we will have some brighter months and with them new opportunities to connect.

We are delighted to announce over the past few weeks we have been recruiting for a new day centre Manager and June McLeod has newly been appointed to start this month. We ask for prayers for June and for all of the team at LHM as we begin this new chapter together.

We have been delighted that Angela, our support worker, has been able to resume her one-to-one appointments with clients whilst we are continuing to offer our Chaplaincy phone line for wellbeing, prayer, and bereavement conversations.

We give thanks to the small team of volunteers and staff who continue to offer support to those most in need through emergency food parcels, toiletries and second chance clothing. The team have also been busy giving the main hall a freshen up and a lick of paint for the season ahead.

If any congregation would like advice, support or emergency assistance for someone in their parish please do get in touch with the team at Lodging House Mission. Enquiries@lhm-glasgow.org.uk

We ask for prayers as we go forward for:

- all our clients, in limbo, currently housed in temporary accommodation awaiting their forever home.
- our partner agencies as services resume and staff return to the front lines
- congregations and businesses whose ongoing support makes possible the many services we provide
- the new manager, June, the staff team, volunteers and Board as we begin a new chapter at LHM.

May God bless you as you have blessed the least of these brothers and sisters of Christ. (Matthew 25:40)

Deacon Claire Herbert

Chaplain LHM

As we go to print we pray for the restoration to good health of the LHM Chaplain Claire Herbert. May God be with her and family at this time.



Recruiting for 2021-2022 Session

190th GLASGOW COMPANY, THE BOYS' BRIGADE

All Sections of the Company have continued meeting outdoors weekly. The weather has been a little hit-and-miss, but we've managed to keep going.

Our two Seniors working on their Queen's Badge, Benjamin Griffiths and Ross McLaughlin, gave a presentation to the congregation last week about the Qhubeka charity, which raises money to buy bicycles, to provide an affordable means of transport to people in countries without infrastructure. The Boys plan to undertake sponsored cycling to raise some funds to support this cause.

Colin Goodall

Captain

captain190thglasgow@hotmail.com

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Gordon and his walking companion Sam


2021

THE BOYS' BRIGADE
> the adventure begins here

THE BOYS' BRIGADE IN THE EAST END OF GLASGOW
ARE RECRUITING !



If you are age 5 to 17 and live in
or around **Stepps** area ?

There is a place for you !

Find out more by searching online for
190th Glasgow Boys' Brigade

or email: captain190thglasgow@hotmail.com

Based at
Stepps Parish Church
17 Whitehill Avenue
G33 6BL



<https://m.facebook.com/190thGlasgowBoysBrigade/>

Many thanks to everyone who sponsored Gordon and Sam on their 300,000 step challenge recently for Christian Aid during the month of May.

Gordon raised £525 through his Facebook page with a further £330 + gift aid to be added from the Christian Aid envelopes for our Christian Aid Partners. Well done to you both. A well deserved rest I think is in order.

A recent report released by Tearfund stated:

"9 out of 10 young people are concerned about the climate crisis. 1 out of 10 think the church is doing enough about it. 8 out of 10 think Christians should respond to the climate crisis."

If you would like to read more about the report from Tearfund called Burning Down the House click here.

<https://wearetearfund.org/burning-down-the-house/>

We at the end of 2021 have the perfect opportunity to take responsibility to do something about the climate crisis. Do you have young people within your congregation who are interested in Climate Justice? Are they wondering how they can have an impact at COP26 that is being hosted in Glasgow at the end of the year? Do you want to be a part of the church that is doing something about it.



If the answer is yes to these questions then I am hosting an ecumenical open evening on 9th June at 7pm on Zoom. We are hoping to have as many young people as possible attending this meeting to discuss how they

can get involved. I will be able to share with them some opportunities that are available and there will also be time to discuss what else they would like to explore in the area of climate justice.



If you would like your youth group, Sunday club etc. to use this open evening to launch a bigger topic of 'Caring for God's Creation' then please get in touch and we can discuss all the possibilities!

If you would like to attend alongside your young people just let me know. Contact Karen for Zoom details at youth@presbyteryofglasgow.org.uk

Blessings,

Karen wallace.



A Leap of Faith

The Flying Rodleights are trapeze artists who perform in the German circus Simoneit-Barum. When the circus came to Freiburg two years ago, my friends Franz and Reny invited me and my father to see the show. I will never forget how enraptured I became when I first saw the Rodleights move through the air, flying and catching as elegant dancers. The next day,

I returned to the circus to see them again and introduced myself to them as one of their great fans. They invited me to attend their practice sessions, gave me free tickets, asked me to dinner, and suggested I travel with them for a week in the near future. I did, and we became good friends.

"One day, I was sitting with Rodleigh, the leader of the troupe, in his caravan, talking about flying. He said, 'As a flyer, I must have complete trust in my catcher. The public might think that I am the great star of the trapeze, but the real star is Joe, my catcher. He has to be there for me with split-second precision and grab me out of the air as I come to him in the long jump.' 'How does it work?' I asked. 'The secret,' Rodleigh said, 'is that the flyer does nothing and the catcher does everything. When I fly to Joe, I have simply to stretch out my arms and hands and wait for him to catch me and pull me safely over the apron behind the catchbar.'

" 'You do nothing!' I said, surprised. 'Nothing,' Rodleigh repeated. 'The worst thing the flyer can do is to try to catch the catcher. I am not supposed to catch Joe. It's Joe's task to catch me. If I grabbed Joe's wrists, I might break them, or he might break mine, and that would be the end for both of us. A flyer must fly, and a catcher must catch, and the flyer must trust, with outstretched arms, that his catcher will be there for him.'

"When Rodleigh said this with so much conviction, the words of Jesus flashed through my mind: 'Father into your hands I commend my Spirit.' Dying is trusting in the catcher. To care for the dying is to say, 'Don't be afraid. Remember that you are the beloved child of God. He will be there when you make your long jump. Don't try to grab him; he will grab you. Just stretch out your arms and hands and trust, trust, trust.'

"The Flying Rodleights" by Henri Nowen



Image Courtesy of BBC News

A Prayer for India

The skies which cover Scotland
Are the same skies which crown India.
Under the one sun
We are one in God's Son.
The pain of loss and grief
that sees tears flowing through that
land,
we pray will be met by the love and
compassion
of fellow human beings worldwide.
Creator God,
All are your people.
Help us to share your love
through grace-filled generosity
And through heartfelt prayers
Directed to you, whose tears mingle
with those of your people.
Help us, we pray,
To hold out our hands
And to open our hearts
And to do so in the name of Jesus
Christ
And for his sake.

Amen

In the nineteenth century, as Scottish engineers, farmers, soldiers and doctors spread out across the world, taking their skills and Christian faith with them, many churches were built by them and attended also by the Indian population who had been drawn to Christianity, both Protestant and Roman Catholic.

One of these is St Andrew's Church in Chennai, India. This beautiful Georgian building was modelled on the architecture of St Martin in the Fields church in London, and it was consecrated in 1821. Touchingly, the Indians refer to it as The Kirk, and it is used every week for services. It seems strange that a Scottish Presbyterian church - built by Scottish people living there for their own use, but also for the Scottish regiments of the British Army based in India - should be based on the design for a London church. However, it seems that the building was originally designed and construction started for the Dutch Reformed Church, but due to it having financial difficulties the unfinished property was acquired by the Scottish Presbyterians and the building completed and named by them.

There are recordings of the local churches' massed choir of 250 singers singing traditional Scottish Presbyterian psalms and hymns.

Sadly, India is in the grip of the Covid pandemic – their plight being due in no small measure to the inept government, which has failed to provide the leadership and aid the country so desperately needs. They are deeply grateful to other countries around the world, including the United Kingdom, for assistance given, and this is reflected in a poem on page 16, which expresses the feelings of despair but of gratitude to the strangers who have come to their aid.



Doing any online shopping. Then we are now able to receive donations from the AmazonSmile programme which will donate 0.5% of the net purchase price of eligible purchases to us as a registered charity.

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Thank you for your support from everyone at Stepps Parish Church.



This year we look forward to having our Prizegiving service in the Church which will be held on Sunday the 20th of June 2021 before the end of the School term. This will be an all age family service and we hope our young people and families will be able to join us in person. Sunday club will then break for the Summer and resume again on Sunday the 22nd of August. We hope to see you all there and welcome you all back after the Summer.

Best Wishes,

Esther, Anne and Linda.

For the land of my birth India.

And night has come upon my land,
the carrion birds encircling
and prayers ascend on pyres lit,
the shadows fast descending

And leaders know not how to lead,
they gape, they watch in silence
while each new day brings grief afresh,
no help, no rest, no guidance

And those who come with sturdier boats,
will row perhaps to safety,
but most, will flay, in desperate need,
expendable humanity

What will remain, when the storm has passed,
when many so loved are lost,
what will be changed, within our hearts
what will this time exhaust

May then we not allow ourselves
to be led by those inept,
for want of air while many died,
unmoved, while many wept

May we never again be fooled,
by words, by power, by greed,
put not our faith in men of stone
who use us for their need

And know that when the night was dark,
who came to hold our hand,
it was the stranger, the ones unknown,
who share this wounded land

It was the one you did not trust,
the ones who were the other,
and when the leaders all had fled,
in him you found a brother

So let no powers again succeed,
to divide us at their will,
let love remain in our battered hearts,
the hope they could not kill.

Nandini Sen Mehra poet and author