

Life at St. Paul's Milngavie



September 2020

Dear Friends,

This morning I heard on the radio that Covid-19 had accelerated changes that were going to happen anyway. I think it was patterns of work that were principally in mind. This remains to be seen but to chant the oft-heard mantra, nothing will ever be the same. And the Church will not be untouched. At present it is still unclear when Baldernock and St Paul's will be opening their doors for worship. Hopefully that will not be too far into the future. But we can abandon the idea that everything will be immediately back to normal. For my part, pre-Covid-19 I don't think I would have embraced the idea of recorded services. I'm a bit stodgy that way. But with the nature of the virus (which is still something of a mystery), the continuing possibility of infection and the implications for vulnerable groups, not to mention the health and safety provisions which will have to be in place – recorded services will continue to be part of the witness of both our congregations.

This will never replace the gathering together of God's people in one place on the Lord's Day. Apart from the obvious devotional benefits this is a powerful witness in whatever community we are set down. But in our present circumstances it would be unwise to set aside a means of communication which has been a major source of blessing. Happily we have the technology not only to put services online but also to copy services on CD for distribution.

In the meantime we wait in faith knowing that whatever our circumstances, whatever our challenges, whatever changes have to be made, Jesus is fulfilling His promise to build His Church.

With the prayer that you are all safe and in good heart,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, which appears to read 'Ferguson'. The signature is written in dark ink on a white background.

Children's Work during Lockdown

Sunday Club

The Sunday Club teachers have been keeping in touch with the children each week on zoom, right through the lockdown. They have had stories, puzzles and quizzes and have been able to talk to the children and pray with them. We have dropped things off for the children at their homes. We started out with lots of children joining us but numbers did fall towards the end, just before schools reopened, as lots of families were away on a well-deserved break. We will continue with Sunday Club on Zoom until we can meet again within the walls of St. Paul's. We hope all the children will be able to join us on zoom again.

Bible Class

Some young people from the Bible Class have been meeting up on zoom on a Sunday evening for about 8 weeks now. It's just been for an informal chat and it's been great to find out what they've been up to and how they are coping with the situation. We hope this will continue until we can all meet up in person again.

Summer Holiday Club

The plans we had for a Summer Holiday Club like last year had to be abandoned because of Covid-19. Several of the team zoomed in on a training programme for an "On-line Holiday Club" organised by Scripture Union, but agreed that it didn't meet our needs. We decided to try to keep in touch with the children we knew from Sunkids, and Nimmi and Sue agreed to organise zoom meetings with any Sunkids children who wanted to join in.

Sadly, these meetings followed three months of home schooling, and coincided with the time the children were allowed to meet with their friends outside. Very few children joined the meetings, although the ones who did, really enjoyed them. We will continue to try to keep in touch with the Sunkids children, until the time when we can meet again in the Church Hall.

Please continue to pray for the children of our Church families and the children who attend Sunkids, for whom we may be their only connection with the story of the good news about Jesus.

News from the Courts

Congregational Board

Covid-19

Lachlan McNeill, Roy Prentice and Hugh McGorm have agreed to review the regulations and steps required to allow the reopening of our buildings under Phase 3 and plan for a reopening in Phase 4. They will report to the Interim Moderator, Session Clerk and Deputy Session Clerk. The Kirk Session will be required to approve the reopening of the buildings and to be satisfied that all statutory requirements have been met.

Finance

The Treasurer Chris Scott reported that since the last date of the church being open for worship, till the end of June, we have missed 15 Sundays. Over that time we have lost out, as an estimate based on the averages of the first 11 weeks, approximately £11,700 in income from offerings by envelope and open plate and from that income a further £2,500 in tax recovery.

At the same time our expenditure has remained very much as normal with the exception of somewhat lower energy bills. The salary cost was reduced by taking advantage of the HMRC Job retention scheme grants which paid back 80% of our furloughed staff wages. This repaid us approx. £7,200.

Taking all of that into account we had a total income of £87,845 and expenditure of £105,769 which means we had a deficit of £17,924 compared to our budget expectation of a deficit of £7,325 at the end of June (for information at the end of July the deficit had reduced to £13,921 compared to the £5,197 budget figure).

Fabric

Roy Prentice advised that with the imposition of the lockdown in March all maintenance and repair work in the church had to be suspended. Following the lifting of restrictions we have been able to undertake the following:-

- A fingerguard has now been fitted to the door from the Large Hall at the kitchen end.
- A 450mm safety glass panel has been fitted in the kitchen door.
- The floor in the Large Hall has been repaired.
- Thermostatic valves have now been fitted to the hot supply in the toilets and the water temperature at the hot taps is now very comfortable for hand washing.

Manse Fabric

Christine Forsyth reported that a leak in a cold water pipe supplying the upstairs bathroom in the Manse resulted in significant water damage to the downstairs main reception room ceiling and carpet. There was also minor water damage to the downstairs hall ceiling and carpet. This has been repaired and the cost covered by our insurance policy.

St. Paul's Society Cards

As you may know, we have been continuing to sell St. Paul's Cards during the lockdown and because of the incredible support that we have had, we are now in a position to send a cheque for £200 to Bobath Scotland. This means that cards from September will be going to the Boys' Brigade (Church of Scotland) World Mission Fund.

The Fund seeks to develop, within Boys' Brigade Companies of the Church of Scotland, wider knowledge of the World Mission Work of the Church of Scotland and international work of the Boys' Brigade. Companies and interested parties are encouraged to provide support for ongoing and new work in areas of need.

The Fund was established in 1947, under the auspices of the Foreign Mission Committee and has, over the years, raised over £1.5 million to help work in needy areas of the world.

Do you need some cards?

As you can see on the following page, we have many new cards for many occasions. All the cards are £1 each except the pastel cards.

These cards are very popular with lady visitors and elders and they can be purchased for £2.50 for five. The cards labelled church cards are bigger cards 6x6 inches and are popular to send out due to the Bible verse on the front. To order cards just phone me on 0141 384 0274 and I will deliver them by hand to your door.

Special Supporters

Can I just thank some nameless supporters (you know who you are) who continually order cards and are very generous in their support. You have certainly helped me personally over the lock down period giving me something to do with my time and making it worthwhile for The St. Paul's Society. Thanks again .

Alex McEwan



Presbytery

Presbytery met on Tuesday 24th August by Zoom, this being the last meeting of Dumbarton Presbytery before joining with Greenock & Paisley on 1st September to become Clyde Presbytery.

Kirk Sessions were instructed that when they want to reopen all or part of the church buildings to submit a completed Checklist, Covid-19 Risk Assessment and Extract Minute confirming the desire to reopen to the Presbytery Clerk in advance of reopening. Presbytery granted powers to the Moderator, Clerk, Business Convener and Property Convener to grant permission to open church buildings, if they are content that the congregation have suitable measures in place and all paperwork has been submitted, and after conference with the Minister that there is agreement between Minister and Kirk Session.

The Presbytery of Dumbarton Thanksgiving Service is arranged, provisionally for 6th October 2020.

Since this was the last meeting of Dumbarton Presbytery, the Moderator Rev. Maggie McArthur, expressed thanks to all the Committee Conveners for their work, Ian Logan the pianist and Georgie the Presbytery Officer. She expressed grateful thanks to the Clerk the Very Rev. John C. Christie for all his invaluable work.

The Rev. Ian Johnson would be installed as the Moderator of Clyde Presbytery on Tuesday 1st September.

Covid-19 Update

A small group from the Congregational Board and Kirk Session, as mentioned last month, has been formed and an interim report on the re-opening of St Paul's has been circulated to the Kirk Session and Congregational Board.

Scotland entered Phase 3 of the Scottish Government route map for easing Covid-19 restrictions on 9 July, 2020 and the next three weekly review is due on 10 September after which the group will review the legislation and guidance. Any decision to reopen for Sunday morning worship will be made by the Kirk Session and Interim Moderator subject to compliance with the requirements of and approval by Presbytery. The date and time of Services in the Church will be advised by District Elders and Church Visitors as well as notified on the web-site.

Were we to re-open under Phase 3 only 50 persons could be present with social distancing in place and no singing. A "booking" system would be required as well as stewards recruited and trained. There would be no Sunday Club and no socialising after the service.

Recorded services will continue to be available once the Church has re-opened.

The Church Halls are likely to remain closed for quite some time.

If you are able please check the web-site for the latest information. If you have any comments or concerns please contact your District Elder, Church Visitor or myself.

Graham Mill
Session Clerk.

CROSSREACH
Care you can put your faith in

CrossReach Christmas Card and Calendar Collection 2020





Dear Friends,

As I sit in my lounge, the electric fan is slowly spinning while outside the sun beats down and cicadas make their unique loud buzzing sounds. Forecasters have warned that the summer heat will continue until mid-September, and are asking people to take care to avoid heatstroke, which has already claimed many lives this year.

Alistair and I were fortunate to exchange the city heat for that of the countryside for a few nights in early August. The Japanese Government has started a campaign to encourage domestic tourism, since no tourists can come in from other countries at the moment. So we took the opportunity to visit nearby Shizuoka Prefecture.

Japan is a country of amazing natural beauty – steep mountainsides covered in trees, waterfalls in full flow after the rainy season, long beaches and beautiful lakes. We enjoyed all of these in Shizuoka. We were impressed at the efforts which staff at hotels, restaurants and attractions had taken to keep everyone as safe as possible from the coronavirus. But even then, most places were strangely quiet as many people chose to stay at home instead.

The Prime Minister of Japan, Shinzo Abe, has just announced he is resigning because of ill health. He is Japan's longest serving Prime Minister. There is no obvious successor, so we pray for God's hand to be on that process. There have been concerns over the years about Shinto nationalism, and the relationship with Korea and China in particular, so this is a key appointment.

In the meantime I have started to write a series of devotions for the church on the book of Ruth. This story took place in the time of the judges, when "Everyone did what was right in his own eyes" (Judges 21:25). It was a dark time, but the story of Ruth is a reminder that God is always working His purposes out, even though we may not see it at times.

May that be an encouragement to all of us in these days.

With love and prayers,

Lorna, Daniel, Matthew, Calum and Alistair

World Mission News



Pray for our brothers and sisters in Lebanon

Please pray for the people of Lebanon following the huge explosion in Beirut. We particularly think of our friends in the National Evangelical Synod of Syria and Lebanon (NESSL), The Near East School of Theology (NEST), The Joint Christian Committee (JCC) and the Middle East Council of Churches (MECC) as they seek to minister to all in the midst of this crisis. Please feel free to use this prayer written by the Convener of the Faith Impact Forum, Very Rev Dr Susan Brown.

A Prayer for Lebanon

When news comes in that makes your heart sink and evokes a feeling of despair...

When news comes in that makes your heart go out to the too many, injured and bereaved,

When you think of emergency services and hospitals, over-stretched, and people more generally, traumatised and shocked.

As an entire nation worries about loved ones and asks why? How? Lord God, we ask you to step in to the midst of the chaos, to hold and help and comfort.

We ask you to calm and console and to encourage the nations of the world to hold out hands to enable healing and hope.

In your name, Lord Jesus.

Amen

Faith leaders call for action to tackle online hate speech

Very Rev Dr Susan Brown, convener of the Faith Impact Forum of the Church of Scotland, has joined nine other leaders of faith groups in calling for new legislation to be introduced by the UK Government to deal with social media companies who continue to fall short when tackling racist, antisemitic, Islamophobic and anti-Hindu hate online. The letter calls on the UK Government to bring forward the Online Harms legislation as a matter of urgency.

<https://www.churchofscotland.org.uk/news-and-events>

LIFE and WORK– September Edition

Cash After Coronavirus

With many facing financial stress either during or following the lockdown, Jackie Macadam finds out how the church can help.

Honouring Frankie

Author Michaela Foster-Marsh tells of life growing up with her adopted brother, and how she founded a charity in his memory.

Rewilding the Church

Steve Aisthorpe reflects on a timely and challenging metaphor.

A Crucial Connection

In this month's youth column, choral scholar Jack Harris looks at the relationship between music and faith.

Augustinian Reflections

In the continuing series celebrating 50 years of the Church of Scotland SRT, the Very Rev Dr Angus Morrison considers the thoughts and writing of Augustine on faith and science.

Flexibility and Creativity

The Moderator says the Church will have to hold on to the spirit of the last few months as it faces the challenge of reform.

'Keep Silence and Listen'

Ruth Harvey considers the importance of listening, demonstrated by the early Christians in Acts 15.

To subscribe to LIFE and WORK, visit: <https://www.lifeandwork.org/>



CRYPTIC SCOTLAND (Answers on the next page)

1. In this Glasgow area, everyone votes Conservative? (8)
2. Stupid Chips from South Scotland? (8)
3. The only village in West Stirlingshire where to murder someone is lucrative? (8)
4. Rupert's house in East Dunbartonshire? (8)
5. Where in East Scotland everyone's best one is at this time of day? (11)
6. Aged Hill in West Dunbartonshire? (3,10)
7. The only place in West Dunbartonshire one can have a river and deposit money simultaneously? (9)
8. West End golf score, that's correct? (7)
9. Forward Transit near Rab C Nesbitt? (5)
10. Chateau where man has lost his dog, especially if he talks slang in Dumfries and Galloway? (6,7)
11. Take a stumble at church in the Forth Valley? (7)
12. Young sheep on the brae in North Glasgow? (8)
13. Where in Lanarkshire one gets fired, its half way between Glasgow and Edinburgh? (6)
14. Home in East End of Glasgow for weekend after lent? (11)
15. A couple are healthy in Lanarkshire? (8)

Answers to the Cryptic Scotland Quiz

1. Toryglen
2. Dumfries
3. Killearn
4. Bearsden
5. Morningside
6. Old Kilpatrick
7. Clydebank
8. Partick
9. Govan
10. Castle Douglas
11. Falkirk
12. Lambhill
13. Shotts
14. Easterhouse
15. Bothwell
16. Bellshill
17. Drymen
18. Duntocher
19. Bishopbriggs
20. Milngavie

Copy Date

The copy date for the October issue is Wednesday 23rd September via email.

Please send any articles to st.paulslifemagazine@gmail.com