

Peterculter Parish Church

Newsletter

Dear Friends,

When we last worshipped together on Sunday 15th March, few of us thought that at that point we would not be meeting again for a long time. The Coronavirus outbreak has turned our world upside down and has affected all aspects of our everyday lives.

While I have been in touch with some members whose email addresses I have, I thought it important to be able to write to all of you at this time.

You may be aware that the local churches have been putting together online worship every Sunday and this can be found on YouTube by searching for the Aberdeen West Churches page. It has been great to work collaboratively with colleagues on this and while it is certainly not the same as coming together for worship, it is still a way of ensuring that worship goes on. On Sunday May 24th, we will be having a virtual Communion service. The Rev Kenneth Petrie will conduct Communion alone, but this part of the service will be live and you can have your own bread and wine ready to participate at the same time. In addition, there is also a Thursday Podcast each week on the church website. If you would like an audio CD of the Sunday Services sent to you, please phone or email me.

While it is not possible to visit members, I am occasionally phoning round some of you and you should feel free to give me a call if you feel like a chat. (01224 735041). Elders are also seeking to keep in touch with members in their district by phone.

The lockdown is having a major affect on our finances, like so many other organisations. We rely on you giving to the work of the church Sunday by Sunday through your offerings, our Thursday and Saturday coffees bring in a substantial amount of money and we also receive income from hall lets, all of which are of course cancelled. We will make savings from having furloughed our staff and from running costs such as electricity. However, even with these savings, our Treasurer has calculated that we will be at least around £10,000 down by the end of June and we do not have large reserves to fall back on. Can I please encourage you to continue to fill up your Freewill Offering envelopes? If you can make it part of your daily exercise, feel free to pop them through the office door. A better solution is to give by Standing Order, which some of you already do. Please



contact the Treasurer, William Anderson if you wish a Standing Order mandate (01224 732505). You can also download a mandate form on the church website. If you have Internet Banking, then the payee is Peterculter Parish Church, Sort Code: **83-49-40** and Account No. **00628445**. There is also a Donate button on the church web site. Cheques can be sent to the Church Office at 2 Craigton Crescent, Peterculter, Aberdeen, AB14 0SB. Your continuing support at this difficult time is much appreciated.

The big question of course is when we will be able to return to worship and congregational activities. The simple answer is that nobody can say. It is likely that there will be a phased approach, with social distancing, no teas and coffees and possibly, as some have suggested, initially no singing.

Amidst all of this, our prayers must be with those who have been so deeply affected by this crisis: those who are critically ill, the thousands who have been bereaved, people have lost their jobs and are worried about incomes and young people who cannot attend school and sit exams.

Throughout everything, we seek to hold on to a faith which says that amidst times of darkness and sorrow, Christ is with us. We will come through this and I very much look forward to the day when we are back together again.

I do hope that you are keeping well and that you stay safe during this very challenging time for our world.

Yours sincerely,

John Ferguson

Goodbye to Fiona...

I cannot believe that it has been 7 months since I first came to Peterculter church and met you all. I have had a wonderful time getting to know so many of you and have been made to feel so very welcome. None of us could have predicted back in September that my time with you would have finished in this way and I am sorry not to have had the opportunity to say goodbye to you all in person, although as soon as we are back to being able to socialise again, I hope to return to visit you. I am particularly disappointed that our Youth Alpha group, which was doing so well, has had to be suspended and I hope that they will be able to get together again once lockdown is lifted. It was such a pleasure getting to know all the youngsters.

In the meantime, we are on an adventure as a congregation and as a national church as we find a new way of doing church and a new way of seeking out Christian community. It can be difficult to feel the same level of connectedness when we are meeting through our computer screens but we can all know that Christ is with us whether we are gathered in one large congregation in church or whether we are gathered together through the wonders of modern technology. Christ said in Matthew 18:20; "for where two or three gather in His name, then I am with them." He does not stipulate meeting together in a physical way, so when we take the time to worship in an online service or listen to a podcast then we can know that God's holy spirit moves amongst us whether we are together in time and space or not.

I pray that the wonderful services which are being produced by the West Aberdeen Cluster Group will continue to inspire and sustain you through these difficult times. As you will know by now, I am particularly fond of lively worship music – both old hymns and new songs and find that the lyrics bring comfort to me and help me to experience God's presence in all circumstances. So whether you are seeking Amazing Grace or need 10,000 reasons to Trust and Obey, I hope that in the arms of the Lord my Shepherd you can Be Still for the Presence of the Lord so that in Every Circumstance of Life, you can be certain that you and those whom you love can be enfolded in the Loving Arms of Jesus and that my Lighthouse is continuing to shine bright through your lives and is visible to all with whom you come into contact with.

Finally, I would like to extend my thanks to John for giving me the freedom to make mistakes, for being a supportive and encouraging supervisor and for providing pastoral care and support and an environment in which I could grow in faith and experience.

Thank you to you all and may you know God's blessing as individuals and as a congregation now and into the future.

Fiona

A very big thank you to Fiona for the excellent contribution she has made to the life of our congregation. I have really enjoyed worshipping with her and greatly appreciated her contributions to worship. I would especially like to thank her for beginning the Youth Alpha course which was going so well until the Lockdown. I do hope that once we are back together, this can be resumed.

I would like to wish Fiona every blessing as she continues her training for the Ministry. We do plan to invite her back to church when worship resumes.

John Ferguson.

✦ *Please remember that you can drop off donations for Instant Neighbour at the church car park every Monday between 11am and 12noon. The response to date has been fantastic so thank you to all who have contributed.*

✦ *If you need help with shopping, collecting prescriptions etc, please phone me and I will put you in touch with the Culter Resilience team.*

CHURCH DIRECTORY

Funerals:

- ✦ March 3rd - Christina Fraser, Crown Crescent
- ✦ March 6th - Easton Mitchell, St Ronan's Crescent
- ✦ March 6th - Albert Moir, Malcolm Road
- ✦ April 10th - Angus Mackay, Beaconhill Road, Milltimber
- ✦ April 30th - Bert Gammack, Kingswells Care Home

THANK YOU

Margaret, Kirsty and Angus Mackay want to say a huge thank you to Rev Dr John Ferguson and the Culter Church family and friends for the many cards, letters and telephone calls at the loss of Angus so suddenly in late March. The prayers, warmth and support at such a difficult time has given us strength.

Stay safe until we are allowed to meet up once more.