

St. Columba's Congregational Magazine



Spring 2021

**St Columba's Parish Church
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Due to coronavirus the Church Office is currently not staffed.
However contact can be made via the Minister's details
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Charity No. SC008735

From the Manse

On Sunday 22nd March 2020, like hundreds of churches across the country, the doors of our church building closed and instead we worshipped together online and on CD. Did any of us imagine what would happen over the next 12 months?

We are now in a very different position than we were then. We are fortunate that nearly 1.5 million doses of vaccine have been administered in Scotland. Many of us here at St Columba's have had our first jag. Politicians are now outlining their plans for a route out of lockdown. Just today, I heard that churches may be able to open their doors for Easter. All this is a cause of great relief and we thank God for it.

And yet, coronavirus has left a trail of suffering: so many people have lost loved ones; even now, some of us have family or friends unwell in hospital; thousands have ongoing symptoms of 'long Covid'. Then there is the social cost of lockdown and isolation, the health impact of missed appointments and longer waiting lists, the financial cost of unemployment and reduced income. Coronavirus has left many people hurting or fragile. You may be one of them.

How are we to respond to all this? As always, we need to look to Jesus. As we approach Easter, we see Jesus, a 'man of sorrows, and familiar with suffering' (Isaiah 53:3). And yet, this is the same Jesus who himself came 'to bind up the broken-hearted' (Isaiah 61:1). As we begin to meet together again, as a church and as a community, He is our example. It may well be that like many we have found these past months hard. We may be looking for help and support now and in the days ahead.

I do hope and pray we find that in the church family. But let us also be those who look to be that help and support to others, both in the church and in our wider community.

Your minister and friend,

Philip

The Church Family



Deaths

It is with great sadness that we record the deaths of Isabel Paisley and Betsy Ferguson. We extend our sympathy, love and prayers to their family and friends.

Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his faithful servants. Psalm 116:15.

Thank You

Edward Rogerson would like to thank the Church Family for all the flowers, cards and phone calls, he received during his recent stay in hospital. Both he and his wife Margaret took great comfort from all their good wishes and prayers. Edward is now recovering at home, slowly building his strength and is feeling much better.

Church Membership

If you would like to discuss membership here at St Columba's please do contact the Minister.

Day of Prayer

It was great to have 34 people or households signing up to take part in the Day of Prayer on Saturday 6th February. This meant that we had someone in the congregation committing to pray for a period of 15 minutes from 8 in the morning till 4:30 in the afternoon.

We're planning to have another Day of Prayer on Saturday 8th May. More details to follow!

Billy Reid

This month Julie Reid had a lovely surprise when she was nominated for a Deep Hug Bear by the DEEP NETWORK in recognition of her beloved husband Billy's membership and contribution to the network.

Billy who died in October 2020 was a greatly loved and valued member of St. Columba's church, as was shown on the day of his funeral when many of the congregation gathered on the road outside the church, to say their goodbyes to a man who always had a smile and a cheerful word for everyone.

Julie and Billy met at Dennistoun Palais just after Billy was demobbed from the Army. They were happily married for 56 years and have two daughters Linda and Gillian, six beloved grandchildren and one great grandson Aaron Deacon who will be two years old this month.

Billy joined the organisation Ceartas when he was diagnosed with dementia. Together Julie and Billy attended meetings once a month and enjoyed having lunch at Ceartas cafes.

"They were a great support to both of us," Julie told me. "They help families to cope with the illness and I am so happy they have given me this Deep Hug Bear. I can just imagine how this bear would bring a smile to Billy's face."

This cuddly little bear now has pride of place on the mantelpiece beside Billy's photograph.

Margaret Clayton

Ceartas nominated Julie for a Deep Hug Bear from the DEEP NETWORK in recognition of Billy's membership and contributions at Ceartas and the DEEP network.



Daily Prayer and Bible Readings

It is a real encouragement to our minister that increasing numbers at St Columba's are now involving themselves in regular prayer and Bible readings, as was amply proved with the success of our recent Prayer Day. In this context there are various excellent publications available to enhance the study of the scriptures in one's own home, one of which is the "The Upper Room", which has been used for some time by several members of our congregation.

These small booklets are printed in 33 different languages and contain daily contributions from men and women all over the world. A lady from South Australia included the following in her recent reflection. "Time spent studying scripture not only leads to a better understanding of who God is and God's purposes, but also builds faith, brings joy and creates hope"

She goes on to say that The Upper Room has been part of her daily devotional time throughout her life and that she has been blessed many times by meditations or Bible readings for the day which were just what needed. She is constantly amazed by God's timing and love for her, when it feels that God is speaking to her personally through the daily message.

She finishes by saying "What a blessing it is to build the disciplines of prayer and Bible study into each day. What an encouragement to be part of a praying community of believers from diverse countries and cultures!"

The next issue of the booklet, for which there is no charge will cover the months from May till the end of August. Anyone wishing to sample The Upper Room for the first time is invited to contact Ian or Marilyn Gibb, whose phone number is listed in the magazine directory, before Easter. It would be a pleasure to add extra names to our present list of "regulars".

Small Group Bible Studies

We have 27 people taking part in the current series of Bible Studies on the book of Jonah using material produced by the Scottish Bible Society. Most groups have found meeting by Zoom has worked best but some have met by phone and also at times by WhatsApp.

Whilst not being able to meet together physically can sometimes make it a little bit more difficult to communicate it is amazing how many of us are getting used to new ways of doing things that we might never have imagined a year ago.

As well as being a great way of getting into the Bible, these Small Groups can really help us support and encourage one another as we follow Jesus.

So next time the invitation goes out to join a Small Group Bible Study, why not give it a try?

Friendship Club and Following Jesus Group

We have been making a list of what each of us would like to thank Jesus for. As well as always being there for us we would like to say "thank you" for -

Love, smiles, home, family, friends, carers, keeping us safe and well, food, dogs, spring bulbs coming up in gardens, country walks, taking away evil thoughts, Sunday club, mobile phones and zoom, as well as things to do like jigsaws, baking, reading, television, and scooters!

As we include some of these in our prayers we think of one another which, in turn, makes us smile

For Easter we will each be making a circlet of the Easter story to hang up.

Pat Muir

FINANCE UPDATE

Following the Finance Update of 5th November 2020 the Annual Receipts and Payments Accounts report for the year ended 31st December 2020 has now been approved by the Kirk Session and Congregational Board.

Members who wish to receive a copy of the report should contact the Church Treasurer.

The budget figure of £66,000 for those members who give by Bankers Orders and for those who give by Free Will Envelopes was exceeded by £416 and the Congregational Board are grateful to all those members.

We were able to offset most of the loss of revenue due to the restrictions in the availability of the Church and Halls with the receipt of HMRS JRS Grants.

We met all of our commitments to the Church of Scotland in Edinburgh and to the Glasgow Presbytery.

Our drop in Bank Balances of £11,452 over the year was due to the cost of refurbishments of 2 toilets in the Halls premises.

**Neil Bathie
Church Treasurer**



1st Kirkintilloch Company

Anchor Boys

As I write this report it is hard to believe that we would still be unable to meet face to face. Normally at this time of year we would be reporting that the boys had been hard at work and almost finishing their badge work for the year.

This year has been somewhat difficult with many aspects of the work being impossible due to restrictions however I am pleased to say that the boys who have engaged via zoom meetings have pretty much managed to complete everything possible so with some adjustments they should receive their programme badges.

It has been quite a difficult task to keep the boys engaged over zoom, as they are probably a bit young to sit still for a prolonged period in front of a laptop. Numbers taking part have been low but we have still continued to meet regularly and those taking part have been faithful in their attendance.

We plan to continue to meet fortnightly up until Easter, which would normally be our end of session and we have some games and moving about activities planned to keep them busy and engaged.

We have managed to make pancakes in the microwave, which the boys were able to do safely without risk from hot frying pans. Not sure how authentic they were but the boys seemed to enjoy making and eating them.

We have decide not to award best boy shields this year as they were all heroes and it would be unfair to pick winners.

Hopefully we will be back face to face once the new session is due to start in September and we would welcome any new members in the primary 1 to primary 3 age group once we are back live.

Meanwhile we hope you all keep well, keep safe and obey the lockdown rules.

May God bless you all as we approach Easter.

Fraser, Margaret & David

Junior Section

Despite hoping to start the new year with news of being able to meet face to face soon, as with everything that was once again put on hold so zoom meetings are once again held once a week for the junior section. A big highlight for us was the "Juniors got talent" competition for any boys who were happy to perform, it was lovely to see how far they have come. We have had some Bible stories, quizzes and physical exercise as well. Over the next few weeks we hope to do some baking.

Lorna, David, Ross and Matthew

Company Section

Company is in good heart despite the current restrictions. We continue to meet via Zoom every Friday evening with a regular attendance of 6 or 7 boys and virtually all the staff members. We try to offer a wide range of activities to ensure that the boys can complete the work required to gain their various badges. Since January we have organised games, brainteasers, a survival test, a scavenger hunt and two baking challenges - making pizza in a mug and pancakes.

Thanks to all the staff for the effort and ingenuity they have put in to ensuring that we have been able to run a programme similar to what we would normally offer although on a much smaller scale.

Callum, one of the senior boys, is close to gaining level 4 in each of the three badges which would qualify him for his President's Badge but before he can be presented with the badge, he has to successfully complete a Building Your Skills course. Strathkelvin Battalion organised the course on-line and Callum and 9 other boys have already done part 1 with the second part to be held later in February. Good luck with that Callum.

Face to face meeting still seems to be somewhat off so we will be continuing with Zoom for the time being. Hopefully, we will be in a better situation by the late spring/early summer, which will give us the opportunity to hold some outdoor activities.

Allan Geekie

Christian Aid Report Spring 2021

The Kirkintilloch and Lenzie Christian Aid Group met on Zoom on Friday, 5th February to discuss ideas for the way forward for fund raising in 2021. It is unlikely that the churches will be open for normal worship by Christian Aid Week which is 10th to 16th May. They will hopefully be open again as last Autumn for limited numbers attending. There will be envelopes available on the Christian Aid website and donations can be made online.

Erskine Bridge Walk will also not take place as usual but one idea put forward is that people might like to sign up for the Kilt Walk Virtual Challenge in aid of Christian Aid and this will take place from 23rd to 25th April. The annual service is usually held at Hillhead Church but again this will not be possible so it is hoped to organize a live Zoom Service on 25th April 2021. Once this is confirmed I will ask for details of it to be put on St. Columba's Church website. As you will all be aware the last year has been a very difficult one for all charities and Christian Aid is no different. Fund raising has been online only since the Fayre at the beginning of March 2020 and the organisation are very grateful for all the donations that have been received in this way. I know that this method is difficult for some of us and if donations are handed into the Church I am able to pay them into the Royal Bank of Scotland Kirkintilloch & Lenzie Churches CA account which the treasurer then forwards onto the Christian Aid office in Edinburgh.

From March 2021 the Christian Aid office in Glasgow will finally close. The Glasgow staff will still be employed and continue to work from home with meetings online or in the Edinburgh Office when circumstances allow.

As the local churches have not been able to hold fund raising events since last March the money sent to Christian Aid throughout 2020 has been limited to the proceeds of the Fayre and money received from donations and boxes. The Treasurer forwarded £3,000.00 in August to the CA Corona Virus Appeal and £900.00 in December to the CA Christmas Appeal.

The work of Christian Aid throughout the world has continued through their local partnerships and details of where the funds raised are spent, ideas for fund raising activities and campaigns can be found on the CA website. For information about socially distanced or virtual Christian Aid events happening in and around Glasgow in the coming months please visit caid.org.uk/local.

Geraldine Fox.

Contributing to Online Services

There are a number of ways to contribute to the online and on-CD services here at St Columba's. We're very grateful to all those who record their singing on their device at home week by week. We also appreciate everyone who records the Bible reading, again on their device at home. More recently, it has been great have folks sharing their photos, often from walking in and around Kirkintilloch, to be displayed during the prayers.

If you would like to help with any of the above then please contact the Minister.

The Leprosy Mission

Money is still being sent to me and I was able to send a cheque for £350 to The Leprosy Mission in September. Leprosy Mission day was on Sunday 31st January and I took part in a virtual church service along with around 30 other people. It was interesting to see so many other people involved with The Leprosy Mission.

Margaret McCallum

The Guild

We are still upset that we have been unable to meet in the church halls but all the ladies have been in touch by regular phone calls. Before Christmas we were able to distribute plants to our elderly members, which was greatly appreciated by the recipients. Unfortunately we do not anticipate being in a position to meet again until after the summer holidays when hopefully all restrictions will be lifted and we will be able to meet as a church family again.

Margaret McCallum

Sunday Club and Bible Class

The Sunday Club and Bible Class continue to meet every Sunday morning on Zoom. Just recently the Bible Class finished a series looking at parts of films and comparing these to bible stories. It has been difficult given the wide range of taste in films but recently we watched parts of Avatar, Inside Out and Harry Potter. The Sunday Club have enjoyed learning about the ten commandments and God's love. We have done lots of crafts and shared them with those in the Sunday Club and Bible Class most weeks. We have also had fun with games and movie nights online and hopefully when the weather gets better we can do something together outdoors.

Scott Inglis

THE CRAFT GROUP

Our ladies keep cheerful despite isolation and odd aches and pains. We all miss our Monday get togethers where we sort the world out. The following is a little story we enjoyed one afternoon last year.

MAYONNAISE JAR AND THE COFFEE

A professor stood before his philosophy class with some items in front of him. When the class began, he picked up a large and empty mayonnaise jar and proceeded to fill it with golf balls. He then asked the class if the jar was full. They agreed it was. The professor then picked up a box of pebbles and poured them into the jar and shook it. The pebbles rolled into the open spaces between the golf balls. He asked the students if the jar was full and they agreed it was.

The professor next picked up a box of sand and poured this into the jar. Of course the sand filled up everything else. He asked once more if the jar was full. The students responded with a unanimous yes. The professor then produced two cups of coffee from under the table and poured the entire contents into the jar, effectively filling the empty space between the sand.

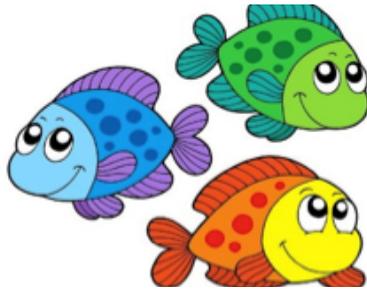
The students laughed.

“Now” said the professor, as the laughter subsided “I want you to recognise that this jar represents your life. The golf balls are the important things - your family, your health, your friends and your favourite passions - things that if everything else was lost and only they remained, your life would still be full. The pebbles are the other things that matter, like your job, your house and your car. The sand is everything else - the small things.

If you put the sand into the jar first” he continued, there is no room for the pebbles or the golf balls. The same goes for life. If you spend all your time and energy on the small things, you will never have room for the things that are important to you. Pay attention to the things that are critical to your happiness. Play with your kids. Take time to go to the doctor. Take your partner out to dinner. There will always be time to clean the house and mow the lawn. Take care of the golf balls first - things that really matter. Set your priorities. The rest is just sand.”

One of the students raised her hand and enquired what the coffee represented. The professor smiled. “I’m glad you asked. It just goes to show you that no matter how full your life may seem, there’s always room for coffee with a friend.”

Margaret Rogerson



Little Fishes Toddler Group

We have so missed meeting face to face over the past months and look forward to when it is safe to meet up again. Instead, we have been keeping in touch with the families with the Facebook page. We posted a gingerbread man nativity at Christmas and a lovely version of 'Away in a Manger' with Sarah playing and singing and Vicky signing.

We delivered Christmas gift bags with some chocolate, a nativity story book and a fantastic, knitted camel or donkey. We are so grateful to those who knitted and delivered the bags – we got some lovely photos of delighted children! We also heard that a number of families brought their wee ones to see the Christmas tree outside the church and others messaged me to say how much they had liked the lights. For Pancake Day Alice did a fabulous demonstration video making pancakes which we put on Facebook- Mary Berry had better watch out! We plan to have some videos with singing and stories on Friday mornings over the coming weeks.

Please do continue to pray for our families. If you know anyone who would like to come to join us at Little Fishes when we restart please do ask them to contact Gill or Janet or give them the details of the facebook page and we can keep in touch with them about arrangements to start back.

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

Gill Wright

Easter Services 2021

The death and resurrection of Jesus Christ is at the centre of the Christian faith. With this in mind, the four Church of Scotland churches in Kirkintilloch are conducting joint services from Monday to Friday of Holy Week (the week leading up to Easter Sunday). These Holy Week services will be available online and on CD only.

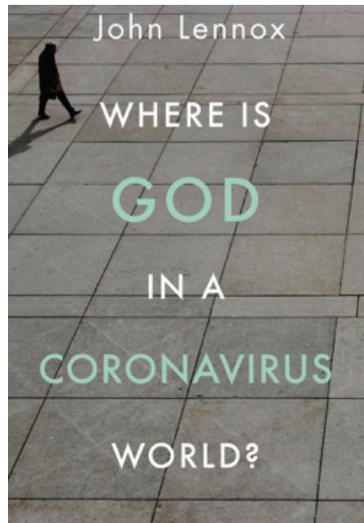
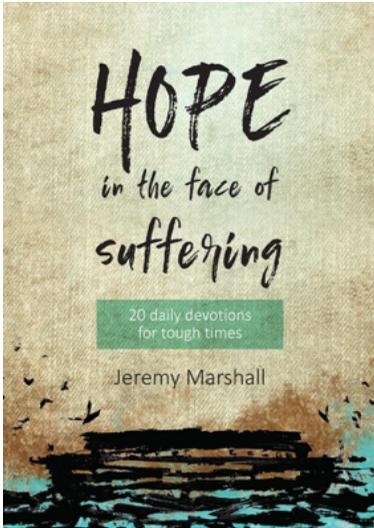
We are aiming to make the services available via the Church Website from 7:00pm each day of Holy Week (Mon 29th March to Fri 2nd April) with the recording venues rotating around the churches. Please note that to view some of the services you may need to click on a link on the St Columba's Website that will take you to the website or Facebook page of another of the Kirkintilloch churches.

We are aiming to produce CDs of all the Holy Week services to post or deliver to everyone who currently receives CDs of the Sunday morning services here at St Columba's.

On Easter Sunday (Sun 4th April), we will have an All Age Service here at St Columba's at 10:30am. This will be available online and on CD. At the time of writing, we are uncertain whether regulations will allow us to also hold a physical service in the church building at 10:30am on Easter Sunday morning. We will confirm this nearer the time.

At 6pm on Easter Sunday evening, a number of churches in the Greater Glasgow area and beyond are holding a United Live Stream Service via YouTube. This will also be broadcast on Revival FM. More details of how to access that United Service will be available on the church website nearer the time.

Book Recommendations



We are recommending two short books (both less than 70 pages) for folks to consider reading during or after Lent 2021. And the good news is that you can get them for free!

The first is 'Hope in the face of suffering' by Jeremy Marshall. Almost all of us have found the last months hard in some way or another. This book is a series of 20 daily devotions pointing us to the hope there is in Jesus even as we go through dark or difficult days.

The second book, 'Where is God in a Coronavirus World?' by Prof. John Lennox, is on a somewhat similar theme but may be of particular interest to those who want to go a bit deeper. Whilst focussing on the current pandemic, it also addresses with compassion the wider issue of how it is that a loving God allows suffering.

Please contact Janet Brown, our Church Secretary or the Minister if you would like either or both of these books for free and we will arrange to post or deliver to you in accordance with whatever guidance is in place at the time.

Philip

Book review.



I was probably a teenager before I appreciated a programme on our radio, which my parents never missed, but gradually I became a fan of Alistair Cooke's 'Letter from America'. His topics were so wide ranging and he knew so many famous people and America sounded so exciting.

One of my favourite books goes by the same name and covers a random selection of his letters from 1946 till 2004 - most of the years we remember. Every chapter of course is the same length as it had to fit perfectly into the thirteen and a half minutes allotted broadcasting time. Always spoken in those mellow unhurried tones. His writing style of twists and turns means you never know from the opening remarks, the point of the essay.

He travelled extensively in America and was as interested in the locals in every State as he was with the rich and famous. He was a talented jazz pianist who could jam with Duke Ellington, and a keen golfer who spent time on the greens with the big names of the day. He met most of the big political names and was yards away when Robert Kennedy was killed. There are chapters on the Fall in Vermont, his summers out on Long Island, hurricanes experienced, time spent with Bing, Astaire, Chaplin etc. but probably the best chapters are on the unfamiliar. A real Cornucopia and it is interesting to see today how his views have stood the test of time.

These chapters are the perfect length before sleep calls.

Margaret Rogerson

Spring is Here

Easter was the feast of the early church around which all the other feasts grew like stars around the sun.

For all of us this year, after a dark difficult winter of lockdown and loneliness, the green shoots of Springtime and hope are here. It's symbolised I think by a blade of green grass triumphantly piercing through the cold, hard earth.

There's a simplicity about this season which I love. No matter what age we are, we can enjoy listening to the birds in the early morning singing in the garden. We can marvel at some fragile snowdrops growing on a stony path.

Slowly our world, which has endured the suffering, sorrow and fear of coping with a pandemic, has a glimmer of hope on the horizon.

All of us have missed being able to attend our church organisations and enjoy the friendship and companionship of our church family - things we once took so very much for granted.

Spring though is a season of hope and new beginnings. We can look forward to pottering in the garden, having a blether with our neighbours, tidying out cupboards and taking things we don't need to charity shops.

Just as the snow melts under the Spring sun, our imaginary worries and anxieties can melt away as we look around and realise how blessed we are to enjoy this season and our time together.

Coming out of lockdown, let us be positive and prepared to reach out to others and to value our homes, our families, and our church in a new way.

The first Easter and the message of hope changed our world forever in a fundamental fashion.

As we pick up the pieces of our normal lives again, it is time to move forward with joy in our hearts that Springtime is here and how blessed we are to be able to enjoy it together.

Margaret Clayton

SERVICES

Sunday Morning Service: 10.30am

**Kirkintilloch: St Columba's Parish Church
"To know Him and make Him known"**