

SCOTTISH CHURCHES DISABILITY GROUP NEWSLETTER

April 2020



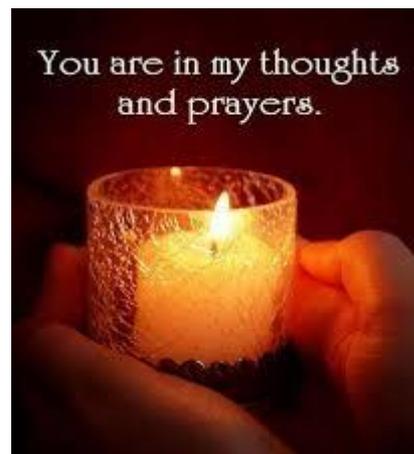
April is turning out to be different from what we imagined it would be. Normally, we would be preparing for Holy Week and Easter services, but this year churches are closed and we are confined to our homes. A new expression has entered our vocabulary – “lock down”!

But wait a minute! Easter has not been cancelled! Jesus is alive and signs of His mercy are all around us, even during the corona virus emergency. In this newsletter you will see that churches refuse to be quenched. Find out how they are discovering new ways to communicate with their members and the wider community. In the long run there could be great gains for churches as they increase their efforts to keep in touch with people who are housebound and discover uses for new technology.

Praying together

As an act of faith, many Christians are lighting a candle at 7 p.m. each day and putting it at their window as a symbol of hope.

This has become a time for prayer around the nation for relief from the corona virus, healing for those who are suffering and intercession for the brave NHS an emergency services staff and the many other people who are going beyond the call of duty to keep the country safe during this crisis.



Take heart from knowing that many more prayers than usual are ascending to Heaven. God always hears our prayers and He will answer them in His own perfect way.

Thoughts from our Vice-Chairman

Paul Goode tells how his family has overcome the temporary closure of their church and found an unexpected bonus.

“Last Sunday at 10.15 am, the same time as our normal church Sunday service, we sat around the piano, my wife, my son Matthew and myself and we conducted a short service. Two hymns, a reading from the lectionary for the day, a period of prayer and a reflection.

“We then had the idea that we could put it on Facebook Live and reach family and friends too. After the service we heard from my 87 year old Aunt, who loved the contact and the message. Some isolated friends sang along to the hymns and someone from New Zealand tuned in! 87 people viewed it. So we have decided that every Sunday at 10.15 a.m. we will be live on my Facebook and do the same.

“We are so excited and it’s great for me to start doing weekly services.”



News from around Scotland

Barbara Walker reports from Lenzie

We had a 10 minutes video sent by email, with our rector giving a sermon/talk from our lovely chapel at the church, which was so reassuring. The church is setting up Zoom, so we hope to share a Maundy service. We hope also to interact socially at times by having a cuppa at home and seeing our fellow members' familiar faces in their homes.

“The provincial website of the Scottish Episcopal Church has a link to a service each Sunday from a different Episcopal church, where the priest does a Communion service from an empty church. This can be viewed at <http://www.scotland.anglican.org/broadcast-sunday-worship/>.

“For those without internet, BBC 1 are doing a service from a church somewhere in the UK at 11.45 a.m. on a Sunday morning. There was a service from St David's Cathedral last Sunday with the priest in an empty Cathedral and hymns recorded from old Songs of Praise recorded there.

“I would like to share the prayer from the Church Mission Society newsletter. It was chosen a few months ago, but it is so appropriate.

“Christ, who appeared to your disciples when the doors were shut, appear unto all of those in the world today who live their lives behind closed doors.”

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**Alex Baird reports from Motherwell**  
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Revelation 21: 3 “Look! God’s dwelling place is now among the people.”

Lock-down; self-isolation; churches having to close their doors. A time of great challenge indeed, with all agreeing that there is no substitute for joining in worship in a sanctuary. Nevertheless, the church is about people, not about places. Jesus used hillsides and open spaces as his platform. The current crisis, therefore, provides a great opportunity to find new ways to worship and to keep in touch.

Lots of telephone calls are being made, particularly to those on their own. Befriend Motherwell, a local charity founded by Dalziel St Andrew’s Church 9 years ago, is helping to deliver shopping and medicines where needed. We have a weekly letter going to all who are on email, bringing them up-to-date. Elders deliver a paper copy to anyone not using email.

Sunday Worship

We have live streamed our services for 6 years, with a dedicated stream online for the deaf. This incorporates BSL Signing and Electronic Notetaking so that the deaf community can share in God’s Word.

Now we record a service with our Minister, Rev Alistair May, including Bible reading prayers and a sermon each week. Thanks to his gifted daughters (Rebecca and Hannah), we have been able to incorporate hymn singing. We can draw on 6 years of recorded services to copy in a hymn sung by the congregation previously. We are keen to maintain our service to the deaf. As we cannot ask our weekly sessional assistants, who provide the BSL and Electronic Notetaking service, to come to the church building, we have gone to them! Now, thanks to modern communication, we can still add the BSL and captions with all words spoken available to be read. We plan to have members of the congregation reading the lessons at home, recorded on their I-phones and spliced into the overall service.

What a great God we have to bring us all this technology, plus knowledge of how to use it! The Church of Scotland lists on its web-site some of the growing number of congregations who now live stream their services. Check them out at <https://www.churchofscotland.org.uk/worship/services-online> and join in worship next Sunday morning.

Social Media

In addition to online ministry there are lots of ways that Social Media can be used to help in sustaining a weekly ministry.



Thanks to Facebook a closed church group has been formed (over 100 members have joined) offering daily devotions of verses and prayers plus a hymn for the day, chosen by one of the group, and attached to the post in Facebook from the wonderful You Tube library.



A daily Children's Hymn has been added, plus a contemporary Hymn focussed on Youth and Young Adults, drawn from suggestions from Group members. A daily quiz adds a bit of fun. On Sundays the prayers and service are supplemented with posts of The Lord's Prayer sung by artistes such as Andrea Bocelli, Charlotte Church and Susan Boyle.



Use of Zoom video conferencing lets our minister connect visually each week with members for Bible study and prayer.

Invitation

If you can access the internet, please join either live worship (with a congregation on the Church of Scotland website list) or access You Tube to share a recorded service.

Should you be deaf, or know of anyone who is, log on to either Claremont Parish Church website (BSL) at

<https://www.claremontparishchurch.co.uk/sundays/live-stream>

or Dalziel St Andrew's Parish Church (BSL and Electronic Notetaking) at

<http://www.dalzielstandrews.org.uk/watch-live/>

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Alex Baird.
a.baird00912@btinternet.com Tel. 01698 262915 or 07903 051970

Acts of kindness all over the nation

Modern technology is indeed a great asset in bridging distances, but not everyone uses it. It is important, therefore, to remember that the simplest gestures are so greatly appreciated when times are tough. Here are some little acts which brightened the day for those who benefited.

- “At the time when we would usually be at church, a member of our congregation left a bunch of daffodils at my door. ‘Say it with flowers’ – that meant a lot to me.”
- “Two younger neighbours with whom I have only ever exchanged brief greetings came to my door to ask if they could bring anything for me. Who would have thought that a crisis would have resulted in building relationships?”
- “Never did I think that the often unused abundance of rhubarb in my garden would be received as a welcome gift by a housebound lady in my street. You would have thought that I had given her ‘a pearl of great price!’”

Let us hope that out of this challenging time there may emerge a more caring, compassionate community. As Christians, let us lead the way into that new era.

Resources



Psychology Tools Limited has produced a helpful guide for people who are suffering increased levels of worry and anxiety during the corona virus crisis. You can find this publication, which is available in several languages, at <https://www.psychologytools.com/articles/free-guide-to-living-with-worry-and-anxiety-amidst-global-uncertainty/>.

Church of Scotland Learning Disabilities newsletter

If you wish to receive the Church of Scotland’s Learning Disabilities electronic newsletter, you can subscribe to it free of charge at <https://www.churchofscotland.org.uk/news-and-events/newsletters>.



Have you explored the resources on SCDG’s website? You can find many helpful articles in the Hints and Tips section at <http://scdg.org.uk/hints-and-tips/>

Standing on the promises of God

As we strive to navigate uncharted waters, we have as our guide many amazing promises which God has given to His people throughout the centuries. They are just as trustworthy for us to-day as they have been for His children in the past. Take comfort from the following timeless encouragement from the Bible.

Don't be anxious about anything,
but **IN EVERY SITUATION**
by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving,
PRESENT YOUR REQUESTS TO GOD.
And the *Peace of God,*
which transcends all understanding, will
GUARD YOUR HEARTS & MINDS
in *Christ Jesus.*

PHILIPPIANS 4:6-7

For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.

- Jeremiah 29:11 -

God is
our refuge
and strength,
A very
present **help**
in trouble.

Psalms 46:1 (NKJV)
www.echolight.com

I will lead the blind
in a way that they do not know,
in paths that they have not known
I will guide them.

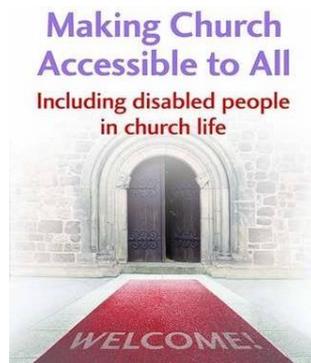
I will turn the darkness before them into light,
the rough places into level ground.
These are the things I do,
and I do not forsake them.

Isaiah 42:16

How to contact SCDG

If you want to bring something to the Committee's attention, please contact the Secretary, Scott Gillies, at secretary@scdg.org.uk .
Tel.0131-669-3301 or 07584-139587.

If you want to advertise events or invite people to join you for a chat, please send your news to the Newsletter Editor, Barbara Graham: newslettereditor@scdg.org.uk or 42, Annanhill Avenue, Kilmarnock, KA1 2LQ. Tel. 01563-522108



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