

SCOTTISH CHURCHES DISABILITY GROUP NEWSLETTER

May 2020



Message from SCDG Chairman

To all my friends in the Scottish Churches Disability Group.

I hardly need to tell you we are living in very strange and difficult times. I hope you are managing and at least keeping yourselves safe and well. I am still recovering from a fractured femur and unfortunately this is not healing as I and my surgeon would like. I am still more or less confined to the house, but getting out to the back garden for some of God's good fresh air.

Clearly, our meetings are very much on hold, but as soon as things get back to something called "normal", we will arrange some kind of get together and be able to share news, chat and perhaps even lunch.

Like many of you, I have missed so much the opportunity of regular Sunday worship with the Kildrum church family, but, like you, I have found the radio and television worship helpful. I am sure many of you will go on line one way or another.

Sadly, since lockdown my congregation has lost four members. (Only one to Corona). Norman had underlying health issues and was a quiet, unassuming man. He and the other three were much loved members of the family. Our locum Minister and I plan to hold a service of celebration of the lives of members who have died. We hope the families will come back to this and it will give the members of the congregation who could not attend the funerals their opportunity to say their cheerios.

As we embark on a journey the like of which we have never travelled before, I am reminded of the two disciples who walked to Emmaus and met with Jesus in a very special way. What I think is important is that Jesus chooses the time when he reveals himself in the blessing and breaking the bread.

I continue to be heartened by stories of care and kindness shown by so many to vulnerable folk. Our health service staff, the folk in our supermarkets who travel to and from work, along with the lorry drivers who drive many miles and over longer hours than they are supposed to, simply to make sure food gets to the right places and on time.

When Corona is finally over, we shall all experience changes, some of which we will be able to embrace, while others will be difficult to accept. I wonder how Jesus' closest friends coped with the many changes following his resurrection.

In closing, let me assure all of you that you are very much remembered in my prayers, as I am sure I am in yours. In the meantime, please keep yourselves safe and well until we meet again. Blessings to you all.

David Nicholson DCS – Chairman

With a song in our hearts

The Corona virus crisis has been described as the most widespread, serious health affliction since the influenza pandemic which swept across the world in 1918-19. People were already drained after the hardship and tragedy of the First World War. At a time when health care facilities were less advanced and accessible than they are now, how did people cope – not only with treatment of the illness, but with low morale and the feeling that there was no end in sight to their misery?

As we look back in history, we can gain courage by thinking about times in the past when Britain was faced with a crisis and people rose to meet the challenge.

The First World War was a grim time. In an effort to keep up morale, Sir Harry Lauder took his piano to the Western Front to entertain the troops. He also set up the Harry Lauder Million Pound Fund to raise money for seriously wounded Scottish servicemen.



Soon tragedy arrived at his own door, when his only son, Captain John Lauder of the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders, was killed in combat in December 1916. Harry wrote the song, "Keep Right on to the End of the Road", in memory of his son. Many people in similar circumstances found courage to persevere on hearing these words.

**Keep right on to the end of the road,
Keep right on to the end,
Though the way be long, let your heart be strong,
Keep right on round the bend.**

**Though you're tired and weary still journey on,
Till you come to your happy abode,
Where all the love you've been dreaming of
Will be there at the end of the road.**

Britain was at war again in the 1940s and families were separated in anxious times. Another singer inspired the nation to stay strong in the face of danger and to look to a future beyond the war – Vera Lynn, “the Forces’ Sweetheart”. She reminded them with a song that the day would surely come when loved ones would be reunited.

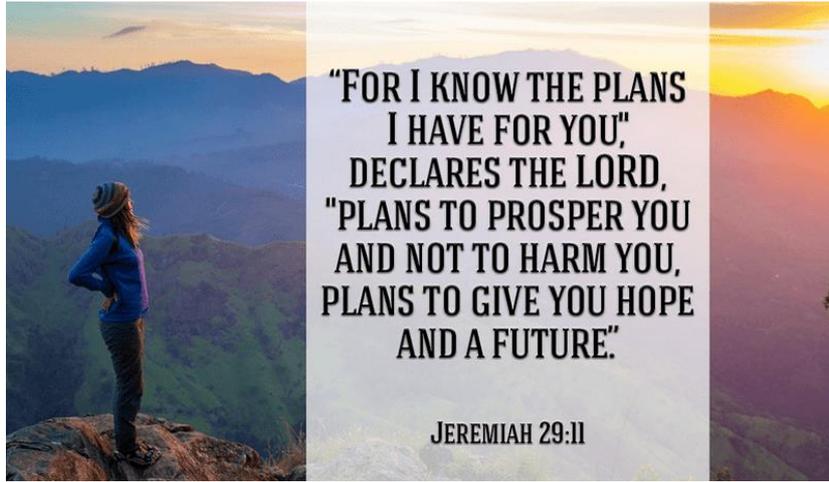


**We'll meet again,
Don't know where,
Don't know when,
But I know we'll meet again some sunny day.
Keep smiling through,
Just like you always do,
'Till the blue skies drive the dark clouds far away.**

**So will you please say hello
To the folks that I know.
Tell them I won't be long.
They'll be happy to know
That as you saw me go
I was singing this song.**

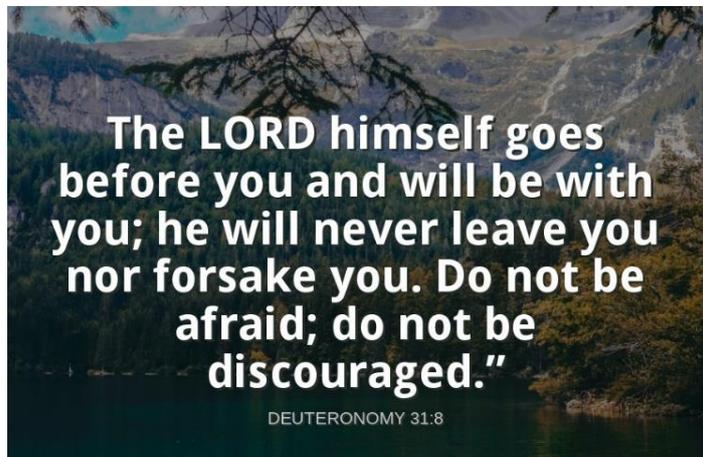
**We'll meet again,
Don't know where,
Don't know when,
But I know we'll meet again some sunny day.**

So it will be for us when we meet our families and friends after the current crisis is over. Meanwhile, we “keep smiling through” as best we can, always remembering our Lord’s faithful promises.



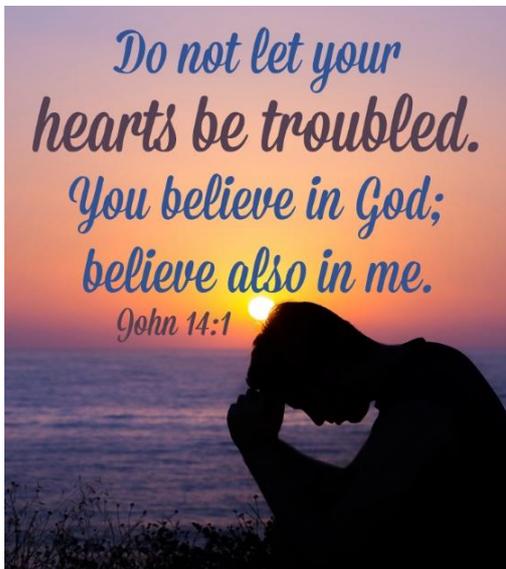
**"FOR I KNOW THE PLANS
I HAVE FOR YOU,"
DECLARES THE LORD,
"PLANS TO PROSPER YOU
AND NOT TO HARM YOU,
PLANS TO GIVE YOU HOPE
AND A FUTURE."**

JEREMIAH 29:11



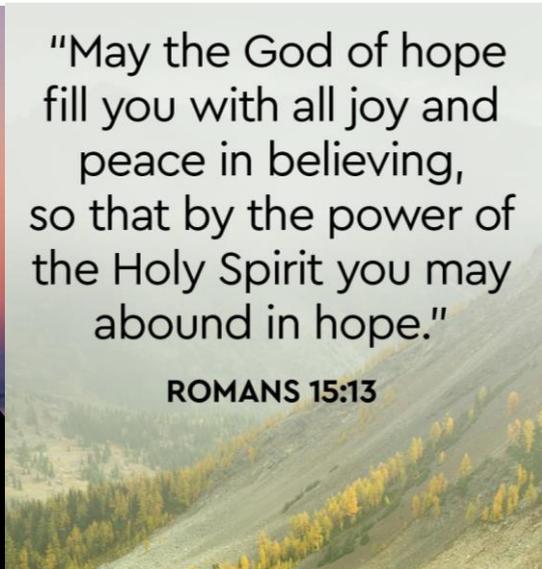
**The LORD himself goes
before you and will be with
you; he will never leave you
nor forsake you. Do not be
afraid; do not be
discouraged."**

DEUTERONOMY 31:8



*Do not let your
hearts be troubled.
You believe in God;
believe also in me.*

John 14:1



**"May the God of hope
fill you with all joy and
peace in believing,
so that by the power of
the Holy Spirit you may
abound in hope."**

ROMANS 15:13

Churches find ways to connect

Sandra McCallum, a SCDG member in Troon, reflects on how churches have responded to “lock down” and the changes which may continue into the future.

“Zoom used to be something we did with our cameras to focus in on our subject. House Party was a Downton Abbey style weekend jaunt for the upper classes. Microsoft Team perhaps meant the IT specialists in Silicon Valley. The learning curve has been steep recently on the possibilities of social media.

“Many people have gone beyond Facebook and Skype to meet the challenge of gathering together electronically for church worship, since we could not do it physically. With impressive speed people have mastered new skills that have suddenly become necessary. Families been giving one another tutorials on WhatsApp, Skype, Facetime and the like. Churches have live streamed services, put sermons on YouTube, set up chat rooms for folk who would have been staying behind for coffee, posted Sunday school activities on-line.



“Those not on the internet have been included by personal phone calls, a dedicated phone number where the church service can be heard. Letters have even been posted out - remember when that was the main method of staying in touch over distances?

“These skills will remain, when daily life once again involves meeting one another in the flesh, when we can gather as God’s people in church congregations. It is time to start planning how they can help achieve our constant aim of making sure church services meet the needs of everyone in the church and those who cannot attend.”



Alex Baird tells us how Dalziel St Andrew’s Church in Motherwell is responding.

“The Church is wherever God’s People are Praising”

“Wouldn’t it be great to be able to go to church again? Of course it would, but in the meantime we still have our God to worship and serve with many and varied opportunities to do so. The lock-down has resulted in many innovative ways of

keeping in touch and using our God given technology to help us to do so. Lots of churches are ensuring that contact is made with all members by a weekly telephone rota. Befriending schemes are adapting to provide essential services such as uplift and delivery of shopping or medical prescriptions.



Dalziel St Andrew's Parish Church

There will be many variations in congregations across the country. The following are a selection of the developing initiatives which we are using now at Dalziel St Andrew's Parish Church, Motherwell.

There are Facebook or Zoom sessions for Bible study, Prayer time and Bible story time.

"We are even trying a virtual "Coffee Morning" with all invited to bake something, then place a photograph of it on Facebook. At 11.00 on the Friday join in the Zoom "Coffee Morning" with a group chat about the recipes. One of the first events after lock down will be an actual Coffee Morning with the same items baked. This time open to all. Great fun with lots of new ideas.



"Sunday morning worship is recorded in advance and pieced together with the sermon from Rev. Alistair May. A Bible reading from someone's house is added to the service, a hymn or song from another house, an introduction and sung opening hymn from the Director of Music's house and a closing hymn. All are pieced together and shown "live" on the internet at 11.00 a.m. on Sunday morning, with a recording placed on You Tube to allow catch-up for everyone later.

"Many who cannot join online now share in the service by dialling a dedicated telephone number and listening. Over 30 DVD recordings of the service are produced and distributed to those who wish to receive one. Sunday evening Reflection time from the minister is available on our Facebook site.

"As we provide worship opportunities for the deaf community, there is an option to join in worship by following our British Sign Language Interpreter and, if preferred, reading the words spoken and sung as typed onto the screen by our Electronic Notetaker. Both Interpreter and Notetaker work from a distance.

"A great joy is the involvement of our children in a virtual Sunday School. Some children have been recorded, with each saying a separate line of the Lord's Prayer, which is linked into the Sunday morning worship.

“These are a few examples of how things have developed. There will be many more across the land. It would be great to hear about them.

“If you cannot share in worship at your own church, or one of those who live stream their services as shown by the list on the Church of Scotland website, you are welcome to join us at Dalziel St Andrew’s. <http://www.dalzielstandrews.org.uk/>
For further details of how to share in worship contact Alex Baird at a.baird00912@btinternet.com; tel. 07903051970 or 01698 262015.

“Hopefully it will not be too long until we are allowed to use our church buildings again, but we shall have to exercise safe distancing at the same time - another challenge. With God’s guidance and support, we will face up to that one too.”

Disability groups find ways to connect

With no face to face gatherings for a while, organisations for people with disabilities are finding other ways keep in touch with their members. Here are two examples.

Disability and Jesus

“**Disability and Jesus** began with a few folk bemoaning the lack of good Christian literature on disability. Much that is written on disability theology and inclusion comes from an observational view point, not by those who live with disability, engaging with the daily life that disability can bring. The secular world of disability rights has a slogan “nothing about us without us”. We believe in that statement passionately.

“We pondered how best to give Disability and Jesus a base from which to operate – a website came first, Facebook came next and then Twitter. And we waited to see where God would lead us... We discovered our home was on Twitter – @DisabilityJ – where we currently have a community of over 15,000 Followers.

“An exciting development came in the Ordinary Office. Using uncluttered liturgy and video, the Ordinary Office creates space and time for people to pray at various points in the day – Morning, Midday, Evening, Night and Nocturne (for insomniacs!), with additional prayers in times of crises (e.g. Corona virus). An ‘Amen’ button to click after each prayer lets people see that others are also praying.

For information about Disability and Jesus, see their website - <http://disabilityandjesus.org.uk/> or contact them at info@disabilityandjesus.org.uk or phone at 07703 – 347107.



Through the Roof

Through the Roof is a national organisation, of which Edinburgh and Lothians Roofbreakers Networks is a member. Tim Wood, the Chief Executive Officer, sends the following message.

“These are challenging, uncertain times for everyone, especially those who are disabled and vulnerable. Through the Roof’s mission is as important now as it has ever been. The people that Through the Roof is serving are more adversely affected by having to isolate as they are cut off from family, friends and church.

“At this time we all need to look to “God (who) is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble.” (**Psalm 46:1**) That is why we are exploring new methods, activities and tools to achieve our vital mission in new ways. One example is our [Roofbreaker Facebook group](#) to share ideas, and connect and encourage one another as we reach out to disabled people who are most affected by this coronavirus. [Sign-up to join our 270 Roofbreakers to be a part of this.](#)

“Things may look a bit different in the coming weeks (and months?), so keep in touch with us via our [website](#), [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#) and [YouTube](#).

“Some of our activities have to be postponed. We are still committed to going ahead with these, but we are delaying them and finding new dates with partners, host venues, leaders and team-members. Our office continues to function, so please contact us, although please be patient if you don’t hear from us immediately as most staff are working remotely.

“Please pray that God will multiply our efforts to continue to **Enable Faith, Bring Freedom and Encourage Friendship**. Stay safe, keep looking to Jesus, and let us know if there is anything we can do to serve you or disabled people well at this time. Thanks and Blessings in Jesus’ name.”



Acts of kindness all over the nation

Technology has aided communication, but not everyone uses Smart Phones, I-pads and laptops. It is important to find other ways of keeping up people’s spirits when they are isolated at home and unable to meet family and friends. The following stories from around Scotland tell how churches and community groups are finding more traditional ways of brightening long days for people who might otherwise feel lonely and forgotten.

- “A wife and husband who recently joined our church have to self-isolate due to health issues. They asked our minister if they could help in any way. They have been phoning vulnerable members of our church whom we cannot visit at present. Not only has this been welcomed by those who receive their calls, but these new members in a short time have come to know many people in the congregation whom they might never have met in ‘normal’ times.”
- “As we cannot visit people as usual, our church’s Pastoral Care Group has started a newsletter which we post through letterboxes. This has generated lots of ‘thank you’ phone calls as these self-isolating members appreciate our continuing contact.”
- “A local parish priest is determined to keep in touch with people whom he cannot visit. I met him when he was marching round his parish, delivering cards to all his older parishioners who cannot see his online Mass services.”
- “A lady in my street is a party planner, with no work at present. To our surprise, a large arch of rainbow coloured balloons appeared at her gate to brighten up our street. This was followed by a series of balloon characters to amuse children. When she ran out of balloons, she tied colourful rosettes with streamers from every lamp post in the street. A lovely gesture!”



“And God said, ‘This is the sign of the covenant I am making between me and you and every living creature with you, a covenant for all generations to come. I have set my rainbow in the clouds, and it will be the sign of the covenant between me and the earth. ... Whenever the rainbow appears in the clouds, I will see it and remember the everlasting covenant between God and all living creatures of every kind on the earth.’” (Genesis 9:12-13 and 16)

Who would like to hear from you this week?
Find a friendly, creative way to put a smile
on someone’s face this week.



Looking ahead



We won't always be in lock down. Organisers are planning for the time when we can all gather and enjoy one another's company. Here is news of one group's plans.

Prospects Across Scotland

Prospects Annual Celebration will be at Kinross on **Saturday 24th October**.

Christmas cards 2020 It's hard to think about Christmas just now, but Prospects Across Scotland plans to produce its own Christmas Card – and you can help, as Ivy Blair explains:

“Could you design our card? It needs to be on A4 size paper. Make it as colourful as you like. We need designs by the end of May please, so that we can choose which one to use and get them printed.”

Please send by email:
ivy.blair@prospectsacrossscotland.org.uk

or by post to Ivy Blair, 17 Overton Road,
Grangemouth FK3 0LA.



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 share news, please send it to the Newsletter Editor, Barbara Graham:
newslettereditor@scdg.org.uk or **42, Annanhill Avenue, Kilmarnock, KA1 2LQ.**
Tel. 01563-522108

Making Church Accessible to All

**Including disabled people
in church life**



**Scottish Churches Disability Group
A registered Scottish charity, No. SCO39567**