

The Country Link



Kelso
Country
Churches

~~~~~ July/August, 2020

Dear friends,

Usually when it comes to writing a pastoral letter it's quite easy to find a subject. It's usually easy to find something positive and hopeful to say. But most of us aren't feeling hopeful just now. We're too busy trying to recover from 14 weeks in lockdown. Too busy trying to process what's been happening and trying to see if we can make sense of what the world is going to be like now.

We just know it's going to be different but we'd like it to be the way it was before.

But what we know is Jesus. 'Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever.' **Hebrews 13.8**

Our church worship may be different but Jesus is the same.

How we are seated in church may be different but Jesus is the same.



The world is different from what it was but Jesus is the same.

He is still our loving brother. He is still the one who died for us. He is still the Messiah who will one day come and take us home to be with our loving heavenly Father.

Yours, *Stephen*

'Do not be worried and upset," Jesus told them. "Believe in God and believe also in me. There are many rooms in my Father's house, and I am going to prepare a place for you. I would not tell you this if it were not so. And after I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to myself, so that you will be where I am.' **John 14.1-3**



## **New ways of worshipping on a Sunday morning**

Sadly when we return to being able to use our church buildings, worship will not be able to be conducted in the way that it was before.

Singing will not take place as the advice is that it has an aerosol effect and virus particles are spread further. So we would really be looking to create a space for prayer, meditation and thought. Silence would be important, as well as the chance to sit and listen to music or songs being played in the powerpoint (at Stichill).

We will need to wait for clear advice as to what is allowed and what is not. We do know that it's going to be different and not a return to the worship style or experience that you have been used to or were possibly hoping for.

With social distancing rules Makerstoun could realistically only have 10 people, so it would only be people from Makerstoun or who have strong connections with that parish who would attend there. Stichill has a lot more space so 30 or so is probably possible depending on what rules are put in place for spacing.

Hand sanitizers would need to be used as people arrived and left and also possibly one way systems established - so, come in the front door but leave by the back way - through the vestry in Stichill and kitchen at Makerstoun. Gathering together for tea and coffee will not be possible anytime soon.

The details will need worked out when we have clear advice about re-opening but we do need to prepare ourselves for things being different.

Stephen Manners  
Minister

James Smith  
Session Clerk



We have not been able to meet together in worship or over tea and coffee for many weeks now. You may have heard about a kind of virtual meeting called Zoom that many people have been using so that they can see and chat with friends, family or work colleagues.

We held a number of these meetings in May on a Wednesday and they will begin again in

August, at least until we are holding meetings again in church.

They will take place at 7pm on Wednesday evenings and they would last 40 minutes or so. They would take the previous Sunday's service as a theme for discussion and we would also spend a little time praying together. (If there is demand they could also happen at 3pm each Wednesday)

Please email me if you are interested and I'll then explain how things work in more detail and add you to the email list that goes out each week to let people know about the theme for the meeting and any Preparation that needs to be done before it.

If there is interest we could set up a virtual coffee time on a Sunday at 11.30am - so after you've gone through the service we could meet to chat. Probably would be split into smaller groups for that known as break-out rooms - all depends on the numbers coming along.

Thanks, *Stephen*

### **Offerings and Donations**

In the May edition of the magazine, various ways of donating to Kelso Country Churches were outlined for this time when we are unable to give our offerings at a worship service. It is now also possible to donate online via our website – just go to [kelsocountrychurches.org.uk](http://kelsocountrychurches.org.uk) And click on the tab at the top of the page which says "Donate to KCC" This leads you to a page where you will find further details.

Also, if you are putting aside your offerings by using Freewill Offering envelopes and you decide to use one envelope for offerings covering more than one week, I would be grateful if you could state on the envelope the approximate period which this covers. Very many thanks to all of you for your support of the congregation at this time, whether that is through prayer, practical support, or giving – it is very much appreciated.

*Liz Orr*



## Prayer - Lord God, hear our voices

Living God, you are our Creator and our Maker  
and the very breath of life is given as your gift.

We thank you for the gift of life  
and we embrace and treasure that gift.  
Living God, you are the Father of our

Lord Jesus Christ

Whose presence in the world reveals your love for us.  
in the giving of your Son,  
You reveal the depths of your love.

Living God, your Son embraced the Cross  
and the depths of human suffering.  
We thank you that you delivered him  
on the day of Resurrection.

Living God, as you spoke to the bereft and the orphaned in days past,  
speak to the bereft and the orphaned in days present.  
Speak to the uncertain and the anxious.  
Speak into the depths of our incomprehension and fear.

Living God, your promise  
is that we will not be left alone to face the world.  
We thank you that through the gift of your Spirit  
that promise is fulfilled.

Living God, be with all who sustain our common life at this time,  
Carers and nurses, cleaners and porters,  
Doctors and ambulance staff, delivery drivers and posties.  
Through their giving our common life is sustained.

Living God, as you have watched over us in the past,  
watch over us in the present.  
As once more we thank you, that through Christ  
and by your Holy Spirit, we are not alone. **Amen**

## *New Moderator of Church of Scotland*

Rt Rev Dr Martin Fair, has been appointed as the new moderator of the General Assembly. He will represent the Kirk at home and abroad for the next 12 months, and described the role as an “enormous honour”.

Dr Fair, 56, will continue to serve as the minister of St Andrew’s Parish Church in Arbroath and undertake Moderatorial duties when required until further notice. He said: “I’m not sure I’ve ever felt a greater weight of responsibility but neither have I ever felt more supported, practically and by the prayers of God’s people.”



Dr Fair succeeded Very Rev Colin Sinclair and was inaugurated in front of a small group of people including his wife, Elaine. The minister, who grew up in Thornliebank on the southside of Glasgow, said he recognised that many people were suffering due to the pandemic and every life lost speaks of struggle and tragedy.

Dr Fair, who has served St Andrew’s Parish Church since 1992 and will wear the Moderator’s ring and chain of office during official duties, said the pandemic had forced the Kirk to re-evaluate because church buildings were closed and ministers across the country were spreading the Gospel message online.

“We find ourselves in uncharted territory, having to re-imagine church,” he added, “We may not have a blueprint but this calling has always been about a willingness to venture beyond the familiar and comfortable.

“Jesus didn’t give much away when he called those four fishermen. “He called them and sent them with no terms and conditions, no detailed plan, radical or otherwise. “Through every circumstance change, God’s love remains.“And from love flows peace. The storms of life may come and go but the peace of God you will know.”

## *Changes are a-coming*    *Sophía Duncan*

A year ago, Jim Smith said in his letter for the July/August Country Link,

*'Changes are coming whether we like it or not; not just for us in KCC or even in the Church of Scotland. It's happening in the Christian faith everywhere, and to survive and flourish, we need to change. We need to look at what we are doing and then accept the changes that are needed and there is no better time than with a new minister.'*

It was just before Stephen was ordained as minister of KCC and I don't think Jim or Stephen or any of us could have imagined then just how prophetic his words would prove to be.

Due to the corona virus sweeping through the world, we have experienced what it means to be in lockdown – schools, shops, businesses, churches, air and train travel, road travel, sport, concerts and much more came to a standstill almost overnight. Millions of people have experienced in varying degrees, fear and uncertainty, unemployment, loneliness, isolation, illness and death and increasing poverty and have had to learn new ways of doing things necessary to live day to day. For so many people, life will literally never be the same again.

But I think we have become more aware of positive thinking and doing, which has enriched our lives and made the hardships more bearable and we have discovered resources and talents within us which have cheered us on to bring help and cheer to neighbours known and unknown.

Parents are home schooling their children and (mostly) finding it an enriching experience, teachers are communicating with their students through the marvels of technology as have families and friends to keep in touch virtually. Village communities, and town streets have come together to deliver shopping, prescriptions, phone calls to those living alone or caring for a family member.

Virtual pub and charity quizzes are popular and street sing-a-longs have got people singing and playing music together...some who didn't know each other until lockdown.

Of course we are all missing giving our loved ones a proper hug but amid the anxiety, illness and bereavement which have stalked our day

to day lives, it is heartening and sometimes joyous to hear of small acts of kindness, the selfless dedication of essential workers isolating themselves from their loved ones so that they can continue working on the front line, and the celebrations in covid 19 wards as desperately ill patients defy the odds to go home.

As Stephen has told us, opening up our churches for services or even private prayer is going to be a complicated process and a friend sent me this notice which is on the door of Duncansburgh McIntosh Church, Fort William:

### Private Prayer

We could now open the church building for private prayer – but we won't.

Why not? Because if you came here to pray, we would have to

- *Make you wash or sanitise your hands at the door*
- *Instruct you to wear a mask*
- *Ask you if you have covid symptoms*
- *Tell you which seat you could sit in*
- *Warn you not to sing*
- *Make sure you left by a different door*
- *Then clean and sanitise every surface you touched*

Alternatively you could

- *Sit in an armchair at home with a cup of tea*
- *Sit in your garden watching the birds*
- *Go for a walk in the beautiful countryside*

And talk to God just as easily. You don't need special words, a special place, special objects or special people to talk to God. He loves you, and he's listening. So just do it!

This church building is still shut. The ears of heaven are not!

*Words of Wisdom*

Give your hands to serve and your hearts to love.

*Mother Teresa*



Some changes have been made on the church website. On the worship page there are now sub-pages where you can find the bible study notes and also the library of podcasts. As well as a prayer page with links to other websites to help us in our personal prayer life.

And a page has been added explaining how to financially give to the church with a donate button that enables you to donate online.

<https://www.kelsocountrychurches.org.uk>

Material is often added to the News section and each week you will find new things in the worship sections.

The Facebook page is also worth following as you will find info from local community groups and other churches. You don't need to have your own facebook page to be able to see what is there though you do if you want automatic notifications when things are added. Just click on the link to Facebook on our website and that will open up the facebook page.

If you need help finding your way round the church website or getting onto the church Facebook page, let Stephen know and he'll try to help you.

If you would like some **pastoral support** please phone your elder or the minister on 01573 470663. Stephen has been keeping in touch with as many people as he can by phone but he doesn't have everyone's phone number. If you'd like a call from him and haven't been getting one, let your elder or Stephen know your phone number.

Email addresses - Stephen has been sending out emails to let people know when the new service is up on the website and for invites to Zoom meetings. If you'd like to be added to the email list send an email to Stephen so that he has your email address.

### *Obituary*

Mrs Winnie Swanston, late of Roxburgh, died in Kelso on 6<sup>th</sup> June aged 96 years. Winnie was church officer of Roxburgh Church for many years before moving to Kelso.



**Here is Rob Jones the new Baptist pastor for the Kelso area, pictured with his wife Fiona (and his boys hidden behind).**

‘I am keen on the church going forth, and reaching people outside of conventional boundaries. As such, I am also a Workplace Chaplain, and hope to offer my personal support to small businesses in the coming weeks and months at this difficult time for us all.

When I am not pastoring my interests include all kinds of cycling, wild camping, good live music, and messing about with old computers.

Prior to becoming a pastor I was a design engineer for 15 years, so I still try and keep a few interesting projects going. My wife Fiona is a creative writing (check out her writers page on Facebook ‘Fiona M Jones’). Michael is at Heriot Watt having just completed his first year of a Maths & Physics Degree, and Benjy is entering 6th year at High school, hoping to get into vet school. We look forward to the end of lock down and meeting some of you soon!’

Rob was inducted by Zoom into Kelso Baptist Church on Saturday the 30th of May. We look forward to welcoming him and his family to Kelso and working alongside them to build God’s Kingdom.

## **Kelso Food Bank**

The demand for emergency food parcels is increasing, especially when children are not at school. At present there is a particular shortage of tinned meat, tinned potatoes, jam, tinned fruit, tinned pudding and cereals. All food donations can be left in the food bank receptacles in Sainsbury’s and the Co-op (there are notices up) or to the main food bank at Kelso North Church.

## *We are Survivors*

*(For those born early 40's or before)*

We were born before television, before penicillin, polio shots, frozen foods, Xerox, contact lenses, videos and the pill. We were before radar, credit cards, split atoms, laser beams and ball point pens, before dishwashers, tumble driers, electric blankets, air conditioners, drip-dry clothes....and before man walked on the moon.

We got married first then lived together (how quaint can you be?) We thought 'fast food' was what you ate in Lent, a 'big mac' was an oversized raincoat and 'crumpet' we had for tea. We existed before house husbands, computer dating, and 'sheltered accommodation' was where you waited for a bus.



We were before day care centres, group homes and disposable nappies. We never heard of young men wearing earrings. For us 'time-sharing' meant togetherness, a 'chip' was a piece of wood or fried potato, 'hardware' meant nuts and bolts and 'software' wasn't a word.

Before 1940 'Made in Japan' meant junk, the term 'making out' referred to how you did in your exams, 'stud' was something that fastened a collar to a shirt and 'going all the way' meant staying on a bus to the terminus.

In our day cigarette smoking was 'fashionable', 'grass' was mown, 'coke' was kept in the coalhouse, a 'joint' was a piece of meat you ate on Sundays and 'pot' was something you cooked in. 'Rock Music' was a fond mother's lullaby, 'eldorado' was an ice cream, a 'gay' person was the life and soul of the party, while 'aids' just meant beauty treatment or help for someone in trouble.

We who were born before 1940 must be a hardy bunch when you think of the way in which the world has changed and the adjustments we have had to make. No wonder there is a generation gap today.... BUT....

*By the Grace of God...we have survived*

Website: [www.kelsocountrychurches.org.uk](http://www.kelsocountrychurches.org.uk)

Church of Scotland charity no. SC000958

## Some light Relief

A minister waited in line to have his car filled with fuel just before a long holiday weekend. The attendant worked quickly, but there were many cars ahead of him. Finally, the attendant motioned him toward a vacant pump.

"Reverend," said the young man, "I'm so sorry about the delay. It seems as if everyone waits until the last minute to get ready for a long trip."

The minister chuckled, "I know what you mean. It's the same in my business."

People want the front of the bus, the back of the church, and the centre of attention.

A father was approached by his small son who told him proudly, "I know what the Bible means!"

His father smiled and replied, "What do you mean, you 'know' what the Bible means?"

The son replied, "I do know!"

"Okay," said his father. "What does the Bible mean?"

"That's easy, Daddy..." the young boy replied excitedly, "It stands for **'Basic Information Before Leaving Earth.'**"

## *Prayers for the Week*

Monday *Blessed are the poor in spirit for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*  
We need you God for all things. Help us this week to trust you utterly.  
We pray for those who lack the basic necessities that we take for granted.  
May we always remember to do what we can to support organisations and individuals who meet these needs through food banks and charities.

Tuesday: *Blessed are they who mourn for they will be comforted...*  
Dear Lord, when so many are mourning and miss the touch of a human hand, the hug of a loved one, be their comforter and enfold them in your love.

Wednesday: *Blessed are the meek for they will inherit the land....*  
Help us to be patient as we wait for times when we can be together again as a church family, and to respect the guidelines laid down by our leaders to keep us safe during this pandemic.

Thursday : *blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness for they will be satisfied...* Father God, in a world where so many see and experience injustice, help us to be people who speak up for the voiceless and speak out against injustice.

Friday: *blessed are the merciful for they will be shown mercy...*  
Mercy can mean forgiveness, kindness, compassion. Rather than keeping track of mistakes, help us to see your grace among us. The more we give, the more we receive.

Saturday: *Blessed are the clean of heart for they will see God...*  
Help us to see you Dear Lord, with nothing clouding our vision.

Sunday: *Blessed are the peacemakers for they will be called the children of God...*

.What risks do we take to make peace? Jesus asks us all to be peacemakers. As disciples of our day and age, may we live our faith in worship, prayer and action. Dear Lord, we pray for this troubled world and ask that Your will be done, Amen.