

The Informer



The Newsletter of Cliccarthill Parish Church of Scotland

Issue 63: November 2020

Letter from the Manse

Church Website Address www.cliccarthill.org.uk

³⁴'A new command I give you: love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. ³⁵By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.' (John 13 NIVUK)

There's not much more I can really add to Jesus' words here. The command, and reason for the command are self-evident. We are to love one another. Why? Because by that love shall others look at us and recognise that we are followers of Jesus.

The challenge is that, so often, we don't love in the way Jesus commands. Sometimes, we are very good at trying to figure out the exceptions to this command. "Jesus calls me to love others... but surely He didn't mean the people with whom I disagree? Or the people who annoy me? Or the people who think, act or look differently to me?". Well... yes, Jesus meant all those people too. He didn't say it would be easy to love everyone: indeed, loving others is often costly or challenging. But, despite the cost and challenge, He still calls us to love all people.

Other times, we substitute love for something else. "People will know we are disciples of Jesus by my politics, or my views on particular subjects. They will know I follow Jesus because I believe certain specific things and will defend those things at every opportunity". Now don't get me wrong: our belief in Jesus should inform our politics and our views. Our belief in Jesus should define the things we believe, and we should stand up for those beliefs. But that is not how we are to be known. We are to be known by our love for others. That is the factor which, more than anything else, should identify us as followers of Jesus.

Throughout the past months of lockdown, as I've had the time and space to reflect, I have grown increasingly convinced that, in order to grow God's Church in our part of the world (our parish, community, area, whatever description you use), we have to pursue and model this love. We need to be known by our love: love for Jesus, but also love for others. We are to seek opportunities to demonstrate and show that love for others.

The love we are to show is the same love God has shown us: a radical, sacrificial love which puts the needs of others first, and is willing to go to extreme lengths to bring healing and reconciliation. This, inevitably, means that showing this love will cost us. While that may, at times, feel uncomfortable, I fear that the alternative is to withhold this kind of love... which not only means we are unlikely to see any Kingdom growth, it also means we are obstinately disobeying this direct command of Jesus.

I had hoped to use the above as our verse of the year for 2021, to keep things "neat and tidy". I still might! But God has convinced me of the urgency of this: that I was not to put off sharing these reflections until the new year, but to share them now. It is vitally important that we start pursuing this love now: asking in meetings, "and how is this showing the radical love of God to our parish?"; prayerfully seeking opportunities to show and share that love; discerning how we can be obedient to the call of Jesus and love others as he has loved us.

At times, this will be hard, but let us be obedient to the call of Christ. Let us love one another as Christ has loved us.

Stuart

PS – I hope you are all keeping well. I just wanted to remind you that you can now join us for worship, either in person (by booking ahead), on the internet, or (importantly for those without internet) **using your telephone!** Just before 11am each Sunday, simply dial **0131 460 1196** and when prompted, put in the following information:

Meeting ID: **960 694 6264**

Passcode: **012230**

You will then be able to listen to the service as it happens! If you have a telephone deal which gives you 1hour free, just remember to hang up and dial back in (assuming the service hasn't already finished) before the hour is done – that way you will avoid being charged.

Sunday Worship

It's good that we can come together in worship on Sundays in the church, all be it with the current restrictions. Our services are now live streamed using Zoom and are available on YouTube too. Zoom is also used for our weekly Prayer Meeting and it's great to be able to come together in that way. Our booking system for Sunday worship is working well and again thanks to Eleanor for doing this for us.

As I write, it seems to me that we will not get back to any normal Sunday worship, or have the ability to meet as teams or Kirk Session in person for some time yet. I don't expect restrictions to ease much before Easter, but who knows? Regarding our worship for the rest of this year, it will continue as we currently have it, with our numbers limited to 45 people and with 2 metre social distancing and all the related hygiene standards in force. So Advent and Christmas services will be held under these constraints unless government guidance changes.

We always hold a Retiring Offering on the Sunday before Christmas and on Christmas Eve for the Lodging House Mission, Glasgow City Mission and Preshal Trust. Given the circumstances this year the Kirk Session has agreed that at all 4 Sunday services in Advent (29th November to 18th December) we will accept cash offerings from all worshipers who wish to donate to these organisations. Winter is always a busy time for both missions and this year will be very challenging for them; so please give your support if you can. Please see Sheila Morrow's item about how to give non-cash donations to these organisations.

Three of our church families have experienced bereavements recently and I ask you to keep them in your prayers at this time. Heather Philip was due to marry in December her partner Lee, but sadly he took ill a few weeks ago with Covid-19 and did not recover. His funeral was held on Tuesday 3rd November. Please pray for Heather and her daughter Maisie along with Linda, Duncan, Ellen and Claire.

Many of the former Mount Florida church folk will remember Sadie Jones who was an elder in Mount Florida and a most valued and loved member of session. She passed away on Sunday 1st November. Please keep Susan McKenzie and her children Callum and Rhona in your prayers at this time. Sadie was a wonderful person to know and she touched many lives in many ways and was a loving mother and grandmother.

A few weeks ago Jim Cooke passed away. Again former Mount Florida folk will have fond memories of Jim. Do please keep Mary and the children Laura, Kathryn and Christina in your prayers at this time.

I hope and pray that you and your families all keep safe and well at this difficult time, and pray for the day we can meet up again without restriction. To God be the glory. Amen

Roger Gann, Session Clerk.

Thank You

I would like to thank all the congregation for their cards and good wishes when I recently moved into my new flat in Clarkston – it is so nice to be remembered! Thanks also for all the cards received by the whole family on the birth of Baby Ellie. She is indeed a blessing to us.

Bette Morton

Thank You

To all friends in the Church who sent me lovely flowers, good wishes and any lovely cards. My heartfelt thanks.

Keep Well, God Bless, Netta Sharpe

Next Issue

Email any items for inclusion in the next Newsletter to sessionclerk@clincarthill.org.uk

Registered Scottish Charity SC010138

CHRISTMAS GIFTS - DECEMBER 2020

As a congregation we normally support three Glasgow charities at Christmas, that is, the Lodging House Mission, Glasgow City Mission and the Preshal Trust.

In this extraordinary and challenging times these charities are working hard to care for those who come to them for help and Session wishes to continue to support them as always. When contacted, the charities have asked for the following items this year:-

Lodging House Mission ---- Hats; scarves and gloves

Preshal Trust ----- Childrens'/ Teens toys and gifts

Glasgow City Mission ---- Monetary donations which will be converted to vouchers for clothing stores or food stores ie Asda/ Tesco.

The congregation are asked to respond as they always do so well, and all donations can be collected in the following ways:

At the Church A box for donations will be available in the vestibule of the church which can be left on **Sunday, at 11am worship** OR on **Fridays between 2pm and 4pm**, when the church is open for Prayer and Contemplation. Monetary donations can be left in a marked envelope in the collection plate.

Uplift from Home Contact the church office on 0141 632 4206 and leave a message. I will then arrange to uplift from your home.

The time span for this is from Sunday, November 22nd till Sunday, December 13th or December 20th for monetary donations.

Sheila Morrow

BETHANY CARING CHRISTMAS TREE EVENT

We look forward to being a base for the above event in the church gardens on Saturday 12th December from 10am to 12 noon. If you would like to order a real Christmas tree, you can contact Bethany by either emailing info@bethanychristiantrust.com or by telephoning [0131-561-8930](tel:0131-561-8930) with all proceeds going to Bethany's work with vulnerable people across Scotland.



WINDOW WANDERLAND EVENT

As part of the Battlefield Window Wanderland event we lit up the church and encouraged people to come and light a candle in the garden. This was a reminder to us that Jesus is the light of the world.

Thanks to all those who helped make it happen. It was great to have so many 'socially distanced' chats with those who passed by and was a reminder that our church should shine in the community.

Stephen Kennedy
Mission and Community Outreach



Telephone Prayer Circle
0141 632 4206



Bible Reflection 3

This is an opportunity for us to engage, in a prayerful way, with a passage from the Bible. It might be helpful to have a notebook handy so you can write down what comes to you during this reflection.

We begin with a prayer inviting God to be present with us through His Holy Spirit, asking for what He wants us to hear and pay attention to.

The suggested method is to read the passage a couple of times and be aware if there is a word or phrase which grabs your attention. Allow that word / phrase to 'sit' in our minds for a few moments, then use the following questions to help listen to God, you don't need to use all the questions at once they can be gone through over the next few days:

- What image does the word 'shelter' bring to mind for you?
- How confident are you in God's protection right now? If the answer is no, why is that?
- In verses 14-16 God speaks, He reminds you of His faithfulness, His love and saving Grace – do these verses change your relationship with Him?

When you are ready note down what God has been saying through this passage. Finish your reflection time with a prayer—perhaps the Lord's Prayer or the one below.

Psalm 91: 1 – 4, 14 - 16

He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High
Will rest in the shadow of the Almighty.
I will say of the Lord, "He is my refuge and fortress,
My God, in whom I trust.

Surely he will save you from the fowler's snare
And from the deadly pestilence.
He will cover you with his feathers,
And under his wings you will find refuge;
His faithfulness will be your shield and rampart.

"Because he/she loves me," says the Lord,
"I will rescue them, for they acknowledge my name.
They will call upon me, and I will answer them;
I will be with them in trouble,
I will deliver them and honour them.
With long life will I satisfy them
And show them my salvation."

Prayer:

Faithful God, I believe,
Help my unbelief.
Amen