

The Informer



The Newsletter of Clincarthill Parish Church of Scotland

Issue 67: March 2021

Letter from the Manse

Church Website Address www.clincarthill.org.uk

⁶'I the Lord do not change. So you, the descendants of Jacob, are not destroyed. ⁷Ever since the time of your ancestors you have turned away from my decrees and have not kept them. Return to me, and I will return to you,' says the Lord Almighty. (Malachi 3 NIVUK)

Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and for ever. (Hebrews 13:8 NIVUK)

As I write this letter to you, I must acknowledge a real mixture of feelings.

Firstly, it has been announced that Church buildings will open sooner than expected, and in time for us to celebrate Easter. That is wonderful news! Presently, we still need to go over the practicalities of this, and more information will follow. We will work and communicate as quickly as possible, having "been here before".

Unfortunately, the joy at some sign of normality is tempered by the reality that the Church **will not** be returning to "business as usual".

We have all been hard hit by the past year. The Church of Scotland is no different. Issues that have been left unaddressed in our denomination for decades have, thanks to the pandemic, been sped to a point of critical failure. It has been made abundantly clear that we should expect severe reductions in the number of full-time ministry posts, that congregations will be required to share ministry resources like never before, and that further Presbytery planning is necessary to account for this.

God has been good to us: unlike some fragile congregations, we are stable enough to continue our local work for the LORD. I must, however, impress upon you: this stability, and any sense that "we've already experienced adjustment through union" are no protection. Change and upheaval are coming.

This is all we know for now. As further information becomes available, I will ensure that you are kept informed. I say this to hopefully stop the rumour mill from going into overdrive: **all we know is that severe change is coming**. We do not know what shape it will take, but you will be updated at each point along the journey.

This is a major blow, especially after the year we've all had. I want to encourage you not to be despondent, and I hope that the verses at the top of this letter can do just that. Our world and our Church may be changing, but God has not changed. He is still the same, good, loving God of pre-Covid-19. Jesus Christ is the same too: He is still our Saviour and Lord, and in Him we still have complete assurance of salvation.

We've been through some tough times, and I am afraid that there will be tough times ahead. All we can do is trust in the LORD (for He is faithful) and do our best to glorify Him in all that we do. If that is our motive and our focus... I don't think we can go far wrong.

Your companion on the journey,

Stuart

The usual reminder that you can still connect with our services of worship online, in the following way:

On Zoom

If you have a computer, laptop or smartphone, you can either use the Zoom app, or visit www.zoom.us.

Alternatively, on a normal telephone, you can dial 0131 460 1196.

(Remember - if you have a phone package which grants you a free-hour, you may need to hang up and dial back in to avoid being charged for the call).

Either way, when asked, please input the following information:

Meeting ID: 960 694 6264

Passcode: 012230

On YouTube

Simply visit www.youtube.com and search for Clincarthill Church.

You will be directed to our YouTube channel. The live stream will become available at around 10:55am.

HOLY WEEK

Despite the restrictions, the Worship and Christian Growth team are hoping to encourage us all to journey through Holy Week together. We would invite you to take part in a daily meditation, using the themes, Scripture readings and symbols below.

Day	Date	Theme	Scripture	Symbol
Palm Sunday	28 th March	Jesus' Arrival	<i>Service of Worship</i>	Palm Cross
Holy Monday	29 th March	Overtorning Tables	Matthew 21: 12-17	Coins
Holy Tuesday	30 th March	Jesus' teaching	Mark 12: 1-12	Bible
Holy Wednesday	31 st March	Jesus anointed	Mark 14: 1-11	Jar
Maundy Thursday	1 st April	Last Supper/ Arrest	Luke 22: 14-23: 53	Wine Glass
Good Friday	2 nd April	Trial/Crucifixion	Mark 15: 1-15, 33-40	Crown of Thorns (could be a drawing)
Holy Saturday	3 rd April	Jesus in the Tomb	Luke 23: 50-56	Pebble
Easter Sunday	4 th April	Resurrection	<i>Service for Worship</i>	Flowers/Easter Egg

When you've finished the meditation, leave the symbols together, building up a display as the week goes on. Stuart would be delighted to include pictures of these displays as part of the Easter Sunday service (even if they are not quite finished!). If you could email a picture to him by Saturday 3rd April at the latest, that would be great!

As with previous years, we will share in a daily reflection together - these will be available through the Church website and Facebook page. We are also planning Tenebrae Service on Good Friday - this will involve Scripture readings at set hours, leading us through the story of Jesus' death. This will most likely take place online. For those not online, however, we hope to have the Church building open on Good Friday for a time of quiet prayer and reflection.

Lastly, there will be some displays outside our Church building for Holy Week, which has been planned by our Youth Team. Please do visit the building, and use this to help your reflections.

This is a very different Holy Week than normal, but our hope is that these things will help you to connect with the most important part of our faith: the death and resurrection of our Lord, Jesus Christ.

May God bless your Holy Week journey,

Joan K., and Stuart L.

Puppet Team News

Hello everyone! Despite being unable to perform "live" in our own Church or elsewhere these days, we continue to be active. We are currently preparing to film a sketch and a worship song for Easter Sunday. We also offered our services to the Youth Team to organise a Holy Week Resurrection Egg Hunt pack for our younger children which they will be able to do at home with some help from Mums and Dads. The current situation means that only puppeteers from one household can work together, so we are looking forward to the day when the whole team can come together again and put into practice all the ideas we have been gathering during lockdown.

Graham Shankland



Telephone Prayer Circle

0141 632 4206



Next Issue

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

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From the Session Clerk

As I write, the Covid-19 restrictions are still in place, BUT it looks like we may be able to open for worship on Easter Sunday with the following caveats - government allows us to do so, and to a maximum of 50 persons; and the Church of Scotland allows us to do so and that any administrative paperwork does not prevent us opening. So let's hope and pray that this does indeed happen. Business meetings however is a different matter and meetings with groups of people are still impossible while the "number of households" restriction remains in place. So yes I can meet someone at the church to discuss issues, but the emphasis is clearly "one" as a meeting with 2 or more breaches the 2 household rule. This continues to cause problems for team and session meetings, which frankly are not the same at all using Zoom. We can only hope this restriction will be relaxed soon. The gardens are open if anyone wishes to sit outside when weather permits. Finally, the church Sunday services and church Wednesday Prayer meetings continue on Zoom/YouTube. Do remember that you don't need a computer or smart phone to join us on Zoom. If you wish, you can join the prayer meeting by phone on 0131 460 1196. Once you have dialled, just input the meeting ID number 929 3628 9453 and then the Passcode number 012230 when asked to do so. You can then listen in speak if you wish to. Those using Zoom can use the meeting ID's above any week, until further notice. Either way, You will be very welcome.

Roger Gann

Session Clerk.

Prayer Diary March

"I lift up my eyes to the hills, where does my help come from?"

My help comes from the LORD, the Maker of heaven and earth." Psalm 121

In your prayers this month please remember:

Local and national:

- # Children and young people as they prepare to re-enter full time education
- # The safe re-opening of all businesses
- # Support for the large number of households facing significant council tax arrears

Covid-19

- # Europe as it tackles a significant spike in Covid-19 cases
- # A swift and effective implementation of the Covid-19 vaccination programme in Europe
- # Vaccines to be made available to all countries regardless of economic status

World

- # A resolution to the political unrest in Myanmar
- # Conservation efforts to protect the Amazon rainforest, two thirds of which has been degraded or destroyed

The country of Yemen

- # Pray for Oxfam as it provides basic necessities, clean water, medicines and shelters for vulnerable Yemeni communities caught up in the conflict between the Saudi coalition and Houthi rebels.

Notes/personal prayer topics/answers to prayers

Clincarthill Parish Church

Bible Reflection 7

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. 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.

This passage from John's Gospel lends itself to the imagination—to put yourself in Mary's place, to be aware of *you* feel being in this situation. Then use the following questions to help with your conversation with God. You don't need to use all the questions at once they can be gone through over in the following days and weeks.

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 or something familiar to you.

- How do *you* feel as you find the empty tomb?
- Where was God in that moment?
- When Jesus calls *you* by name, what is *your* response?

John 20: 1-18 *The Empty Tomb* (from *The Message*)

Early in the morning on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene came to the tomb and saw that the stone was moved away from the entrance. She ran at once to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one Jesus loved, gasping for breath. "They took the Master from the tomb. We don't know where they've put him."

But Mary stood outside the tomb weeping. As she wept, she knelt to look into the tomb and saw two angels sitting there, dressed in white, one at the head, the other at the foot of where Jesus' body had been laid. They said to her, "Woman, why do you weep?"

"They took my Master," she said, "and I don't know where they put him." After she said this, she turned away and saw Jesus standing there. But she didn't recognize him. Jesus spoke to her, "Woman, why do you weep? Who are you looking for?"

She, thinking that he was the gardener, said, "Sir, if you took him, tell me where you put him so I can care for him."

Jesus said, "Mary."

Turning to face him, she said in Hebrew, "*Rabboni!*" meaning "Teacher!"



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Prayer: God of resurrection, ever renewing, ever reviving, we adore You for Your life-giving presence. Son of Man, newly risen, sorrow made joy, we adore You for Your sacrificial living and dying. Holy Spirit, breeze among us this Easter, we adore You for breathing new life into us. Amen.