

The Informer



The Newsletter of Clincarthill Parish Church of Scotland

Issue 69: June 2021

Letter from the Manse

Church Website Address www.clincarthill.org.uk

¹I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. ²He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes so that it will be even more fruitful. ³You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you. ⁴Remain in me, as I also remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me. (John 15 NIVUK)

I switched off my computer, breathing a sigh as the 2021 General Assembly of the Church of Scotland ended. After 5 days of "Zooms", I was exhausted. Before online meetings became commonplace, I don't think anyone really appreciated just how tiring they can be. I plodded down the stairs to help myself to the leftover food that Ruth had prepared for dinner (she and Anna had already eaten - the General Assembly session had overrun... again!). I confess to you that the first words out my mouth were, "well, that was enough to make you want to pack in ministry!"

The format of the week was difficult, to say nothing of the actual content of the decisions. There will be opportunities for you to see a much fuller report from this year's General Assembly - not least the special Life and Work supplement, which I commend as a useful summary (it will be available to those who receive Life and Work, but can also be accessed free of charge online). I do, however, need to draw your attention to one particular aspect, and reflect on it here.

Much as I expected, the General Assembly agreed to reduce the number of ministry posts from around 1000 to around 600. A 40% cut. For us in Glasgow Presbytery, we are reduced from around 130 posts to 84. We have been instructed to create a new Presbytery Plan by December 2022, with a view to implementing it by December 2027. The whole of Presbytery is being reviewed to ensure that ministry posts are allocated fairly. The General Trustees have instructed that the surplus of buildings needs urgent attention. We have a little breathing room until the new plan is agreed in 18 months, but things are going to be tough.

This is stark, and I share this with you because it is my duty to be honest with you. I need you to understand that this is going to impact our congregation and in ways I cannot at this point predict. It would be folly to think that these changes will happen around us, while we merrily sit on an unchanging island.

Hope, however, is not lost. It was very timely that the Bible reading chosen by Irene Hay for the prayer meeting immediately after the General Assembly included the verses above. From this, I would make 2 observations.

First, this could be God simply pruning the Church of Scotland, in preparation for growth. The issues in our denomination are well known, and finally we are dealing with them head-on. Perhaps this painful process will, in fact, result in the renewal of the Church of Scotland. For that, we can certainly hope (though, I do temper this with a reminder that if you prune a plant too much, you risk killing it...).

Yet, as Jesus makes clear, simply cutting back will not result in bearing fruit: that can come only by remaining in Him. He is our ultimate source of strength, peace, assurance of forgiveness and eternal life. Jesus gives life to His Church, and it is His message of Good News which we proclaim. Jesus sustains His Church, assuring that even the gates of hell will not beat us. Jesus enlivens His Church: so as we seek this renewal, we must cling all the more to Him. Without Jesus at the heart and centre of Church, it will never bear fruit; thereby coming under the pruning of the Father.

I assure you that I will do my best to ensure that, in all this, we are treated fairly and are well represented. I also hope that, however we are impacted by the changes to come, we can rally together under the banner of our Lord, Jesus Christ, and can take the view that if the proposed plans are good for His Kingdom, we support them, no matter how they might affect us.

The only way forward is to go forward for Jesus. That is why our prayers are in His name.

May God bless you,

Stuart.

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

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. (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.

From the Session Clerk

Since last month, Covid-19 restrictions have changed and for you and for the church I'll outline the latest position. From Saturday 5th June Glasgow moves to Level 2. This means in your home or in the church or a café we can meet 6 people from 3 different households. Outdoors we can meet 8 people from 8 households. Those aged under 12 do not count in the above calculations and you don't need to physically distance in your home. Travel is allowed anywhere in the UK.

Within the church we have our Physical Distance-Based Capacity Limit (PDBC) notices in place which state within the Church Sanctuary downstairs has 56 seating positions, the gallery has 22 seating positions, the large hall has 30 and the small has 12 seating positions. The figures for the large hall will probably be increased to 40. So we can have 78 people in the church for worship and do please remember to e-mail events@clincarthill.org.uk to reserve a seat. Looking further ahead to July and August, we should be moving down into level 1 or 0; at that point we will look at providing tea and coffee after worship and at other times. Hall lets will be re-starting mid-June initially with Bookbug, Weight Watchers and a Zumba class, all using our large hall.

Our church remains open for anyone to visit for private prayer or reflection every Friday afternoon between 2 & 4 pm and of course the gardens are open to anyone to come along and sit for a while every day, weather permitting!

I hope you are all keeping well and look forward to seeing you all soon. Do remember our weekly prayer meeting each Wednesday evening between 8 & 9 pm. If you would like to be prayed for or know of anyone who does, do let me know or any of the prayer team -the minister, Agnes McIntyre, Hugh McLintock, Graham & Joan, John & Isobel etc. God bless,

Roger Gann, Session Clerk, sessionclerk@clincarthill.org.uk

Christian Aid Week 2021

Clincarthill church congregation raised **£902.50** in total during the May 2021 Christian Aid week collections and from the results of the Christian Aid virtual breakfast event .

Thank you very, very much on behalf of Christian aid for this wonderful amount . This has already been sent to the charity along with the gift aid slips which should also add to the total in time.

We have been blessed by your generosity which Christian Aid will use for this years campaign, which is tackling our climate crisis and the results of this across the world. see the detail on the web site .

www.christianaid.org.uk/appeals/key-appeals/christian-aid-week

Please continue to remember the work of the charity in prayers, especially in the months ahead with the pandemic and climate summit events.

Thank you,
Elaine Harvey
Christian Aid week co-coordinator



The Guild Update

Greetings everyone , I hope you are all keeping well. I am including this item regarding our Guild and I hope that we will be able to meet again soon. As you know we had to abandon our programme for last session due to the Covid pandemic and subsequent restrictions. The committee and I were hopeful that things would have eased off by May this year, but that was not to be and the Church of Scotland has also to abide by the rules regarding people within the building, and outside in the grounds. I had hoped that if restrictions eased off enough, we could have met up for coffee afternoons and / or evenings and been able to catch up and have a blether. However, at level 2, this will still be difficult, so it looks as if it will be July and August before restriction rules will allow that to happen, provided the situation continues to improve. Our best option if is we are in level 0 when 10 people from 4 households can meet inside BUT 15 from 15 households outside. So, we keep praying that it won't be long till we can meet and as soon as is possible we will be in contact with you all. Keep safe. Sheila Morrow ---- Guild Convener.

Garden Cafe

It is good news indeed to hear people are beginning to move around more freely and enjoy the freedoms we once took for granted. Gods church never stands still and Gods people are called to serve and care for our neighbours. One response we are making is to have a garden cafe every Monday from 10am till 1pm. This will start on 21st June.

Thanks to people who have expressed support for the idea to help us reconnect with each other and our neighbours. We will operate on a safe socially distanced way and we have spacious gardens to accommodate this. If you can help in other way with the event let me know. Help with baking and any financial donations will help us make the event a success. Please pray for the volunteers as they seek to make visitors welcome and feel safe.

As the church starts to welcome back groups old and new we will have many opportunities to welcome new people who may use the building. Let's be open to their needs and offer a place where all are welcome and loved. Book bugs are very keen to return in a safe way as soon as it is permitted. Prior to lockdown we had 30 to 40 children and parents coming so we look forward to being able to welcome them in the future.

Over the Summer months we will be doing a community survey and will be keen to hear people's views regarding the strengths of the community and church and what we should be doing differently. It will be important to get the views of the local community and church.

Stephen Kennedy, Mission and Community Outreach Team.

Prayer Diary June

"In the day of my trouble I will call to You, for You will answer me" Psalm 86 v 7

This month in your prayers please remember:

- # The Lodging House Mission as it prepares to re-open to clients
- # June McLeod, the new day care manager recently appointed by the LHM
- # Peace and stability in Northern Ireland
- # The elderly in our congregation

Covid-19

- # Science and medical professionals as they attempt to understand, control and defeat the newly emerging Covid mutations
- # Those countries that continue to struggle to combat Covid

World

- # Lasting peace and long-term solutions for those countries that continue to experience conflict and war

The Persecuted Church

Pray for the 265 million Christians persecuted throughout the world

- # God breaks the spirit of fear that attempts to bind Christians and rob them of joy
- # God will alleviate the physical, emotional and mental suffering being endured
- # The children may be at peace and free from the nightmares that plague them
- # That despite persecution the church will grow in numbers and depth of relationship with God
- # God's blessings on the agencies that work to support the persecuted church including, Release International, Open Doors, Barnabas Trust and World Watch Organisation.

Notes/personal prayer topics/answers to prayers

Next Issue will be at the end of August

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



Telephone Prayer Circle
632 4206



Clincarthill Parish Church - Bible Reflection 9

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 is the season of celebrations in God's Church, so with that in mind our reflection this month is on the Trinity-Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The two passages help us to hear what Jesus says and then bringing the focus onto the way the Trinity works in our lives. The prayer brings all this together, enabling us to understand it all a little bit better. Then use the following questions to help with your conversation with God. The questions are just a guide over 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* imagine the Trinity? Father or Son or Holy Spirit or all three?
- Who do *you* pray to? How would it feel to pray to another person of the Trinity?

Bible Readings: John 16: 12-15

'I have much more to say to you, more than you can now bear. But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all the truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come. He will glorify me because it is from me that he will receive what he will make known to you. All that belongs to the Father is mine. That is why I said the Spirit will receive from me what he will make known to you.'

1 Corinthians 12: 4-6

There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit distributes them. There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. There are different kinds of working, but in all of them and in everyone it is the same God at work.

Prayer:

God the Father, mighty and mysterious, greater than I can ever comprehend — for sustaining the universe, creating life and shaping the course of history, I praise you.

God the Son, for taking on flesh, experiencing what it means to be human even to the point of suffering and death, I thank you.

God the Holy Spirit, For working in human lives, teaching, equipping, renewing and empowering, I acclaim you.

Awesome and wonderful God, three in one yet one in three, help me always to see you in all your glory rather than in the single dimension I all too easily reduce you to.

Amen



Rublev's Trinity Icon

God, the Father on the left, Jesus in the centre, the Holy Spirit on the right