

September 2020

The Parishioner



The magazine of the Portland Parish Church of Scotland: Troon

Peace I leave with you; my
peace I give you. I do not
give to you as the world
gives.

Do not let your hearts be
troubled and do not be
afraid.

John 14:27

OUR MISSION STATEMENT

**With God's support we are developing Portland as a
dynamic, Spirit-led Church impacting on our town and beyond through
encouragement, nurture and
service**

Change is difficult. Change for a three-year old is difficult. Change for a six-year old is challenging, tiring and difficult. Change for their parents is difficult as well. My family, like yours, has been through tremendous changes over the last few weeks. Going from seeing only the four members of our nuclear family to being left in a new environment was hard on my youngest. Going back to school full-time is exhausting and challenging for my eldest. And, as parents, we too have found the changing times tiring.

Change for the church is also challenging, exhausting, labour intensive, tiring, and difficult. When the only thing in life that is constant is change, we can all end up tired, exhausted and overwhelmed.

That may be where you feel you are right now, and that is fine.

Over the last six months the church has been forced to change in ways that we did not think possible. While we could not meet together as a group, as a congregation, as a community, we found new ways to gather, organize, and commune. As we begin to transition out of isolation and into a gathered community once again, things will look different. Change has and will continue to happen.

Elders and the COVID re-opening team have been hard at work to make the building a suitable place to gather together again. There is a one-way system in place with stations for hand sanitising, track and trace, and to collecting your offering. Everyone must wear a mask and the service will be shorter than normal.

This style of worship and gathering may not be right for everyone and that is fine. If the things you desire most about the gathered church community are not in place, then you might not feel comfortable attending in person. That is fine. Virtual worship will continue to be produced and broadcast. Know that when you feel comfortable, the church will welcome you back, welcome you home.

The great news is this. . . while change is constant, while the effects of change can be challenging, overwhelming and tiring, God's presence in our lives remains constant. The world around us can feel like it is falling apart. The world can seem dark and lonely, but God remains with us still. In Christ Jesus, God became human to know that depths of despair and the height of joy. In Christ Jesus, God is the first one to weep when we hurt and the first to jump with elation when we celebrate. The depth and height and length of love that God has for us never changes.

So while change around us is constant, we can be certain of God's love for us, through Jesus Christ.

Thanks be to God.
Amen.

Mary Elizabeth Prentice-Hyers



Message from the Session Clerk

Dear members and friends of Portland
The easing of restrictions by the Scottish Government has allowed the Kirk Session of Portland Church to consider reopening our building for worship.

After thoughtful consideration, the Kirk Session decided to reopen the church for Sunday worship from the 6th September 2020.

We must be cautious in our approach following the best advice on offer from the Scottish Government and the Church of Scotland. We have done everything possible to make the church building as safe as possible by following the guidance from the Church of Scotland and the Scottish Government.

We will continue to provide an online worship service which can be accessed via Portland Church's website or via Facebook. You can also listen to the worship service by telephone.

We fully understand that returning to a worship service in the church building is a personal decision and we are all asked to be cautious and careful. We are all God's children and we will look after each other. Worship God in a place that you feel safe.

Pray for our Interim Moderator, Bill Duncan and our Locum Minister, Rev Mary Elizabeth Prentice-Hyers. Pray for the isolated members of our community and help those you can.

May God's peace be with You,

John Reid (Session Clerk)

WELCOME HOME

Today, some of the Elders took part in a "Test Drive" service, and I would like to thank all involved for creating such a safe, welcoming environment, and I look forward to forthcoming services. It was lovely to see people in the flesh and have a chat, albeit behind a mask.

Margaret Short



Portland Parish Church –

Reopening the church building for Sunday Worship Service

We are hoping to open Portland Parish Church for worship, in accordance with Scottish Government guidelines, from Sunday 6th September. It will be a short service lasting 20-25 minutes starting at 10.30am.

We know some people are very keen to get back to church on a Sunday and something familiar, but others are more hesitant and happier to continue worshipping virtually from home (on Facebook, YouTube, church website and telephone 01292 439791). These other forms of worship will be continuing.

No one should feel excluded. Everyone is welcome! We do not, however, want anyone to feel under pressure to attend. The church asks you to please think carefully if you may be in the extremely vulnerable category by reason of health and/or age. If you are, then you may decide that coming to worship is too risky. To help you decide, the Church of Scotland recommends that you use the assessment tool (below).

You will be required to wear a face covering and to maintain 2 metre social distancing both outside and within the church. Physical distancing means that there will be limited capacity in the church – no more than 50.

Please arrive from 10.10am onwards.

Please do not attend if you have any symptoms of Covid or have been told to self-isolate.

As you approach the church there will be new signage reminding everyone to keep socially distanced and wear a face covering.

You will enter through the West Front Door only. There, a member of the welcome team will ask you to sanitise your hands. We will have dispensers. We encourage you to bring your own if you can.

We will record your name and phone number for Test and Protect. (Or you can use the ‘tap my data’ app on a smart phone).

You will then be invited to sit in a marked pew space, using a one-way system. It may not be the one you normally sit in. You may only sit together with other members of your own household.

There will be no singing. There will be no hymn books, bibles or cushions – you may bring your own! There will be a box for offerings on the way into the church.

There is no access to any other parts of the building. If you require to use a toilet you will need to ask a member of the welcome team.

Following the service, you will be directed to exits and again invited to use hand sanitiser.

This all sounds quite alien to us but is the only way we can open at all. Please remember that our worship continues online - YouTube, Facebook, www.troonportlandchurch.org.uk and also by phone (01292 439791). None of that will change and, for many, will be our main experience of worship for the time being.

We will continue to monitor and review guidance from the church and make changes as needed. We will keep you up to date with what is happening.

The Parishioner continues to be available on the church website.

If you have need of a pastoral visit or would like to speak to Rev Mary Elizabeth Prentice-Hyers, please email minister@troonportlandchurch.org.uk

<https://www.churchofscotland.org.uk/resources/covid-19-coronavirus-advice>

Information for the Congregation – Church of Scotland Risk Assessment Tool

The assessment ‘tool’ below helps you to see how different risk factors may combine to give serious health complications should you catch the COVID-19 virus.

It does not include the factors that may make you clinically extremely vulnerable, where you should be following the guidance for those who are ‘shielding’.

It includes the factors where there is significant statistical evidence but does not include any rarer conditions which you may have, so this only offers a starting point. You may want to discuss the results with your doctor or with those who have expectations about your involvement with church life. This should be read alongside the full text of the Church of Scotland’s “Covid-19 (Coronavirus) Reopening of Church Buildings” which includes guidance about minimising risks in the church context, and other government or local advice about staying safe.

You are very welcome to attend the Sunday Worship Service, but it is a personal choice having considered all the risk factors. Portland Church has followed all the guidelines and will make every attempt to make the church buildings as safe as possible.

We are not claiming medical expertise in sharing this way of scoring your risk but giving a way to show how serious catching the virus may be for you or the groups using your church building(s). Circle the score next to each one that applies to you and add up your score.

- A score of under 3 indicates a lower risk, but you should still be following the guidance for staying safe.
- A score of 3-5 suggests a greater risk and you should consider ways of reducing your risk by taking additional precautions or avoiding some activities.
- A score of 6 or more suggests a high risk and indicates that you should continue to work or participate in church life from your home.

Risk Factor		Score
Age	50-59	1
	60-69	2
	70-79	4
	80 and over	6
Sex at birth	Male	1
Ethnicity	Caucasian	0
	Black African Descent	2
	Indian Asian Descent	1
	Filipino Descent	1
	Other (including mixed race)	1
Diabetes & Obesity	Type 1 & 2	1
	Diabetes Type 1 & 2 with presence of microvascular complications or HbA1c \geq 64mmol/mol	2
	Body Mass Index greater than or equal to 35 kg/m ² (online BMI calculator: http://www.nhs.uk/live-well/healthy-weight/bmi-calculator)	1
Cardiovascular disease	Angina, previous heart attack, stroke, or cardiac intervention	1
	Heart Failure	2
Pulmonary (lung) disease	Asthma	1
	Non-asthma chronic pulmonary disease	2
	Either of the above requiring oral corticosteroids in the last year	1
Malignant neoplasm (cancer)	Active malignancy	3
	Malignancy in remission	1
Rheumatological conditions	Malignancy in remission	2
Immunosuppressant therapies	Any indication	2
	Total Score	5

Nothing can separate us from the love of God

But where do we find ourselves?

Both physically and emotionally we are bereft. Bereft of a church that nourishes and supports us, friends whom we greet and have coffee with, acquaintances with whom we chat, a minister who preaches, and gives pastoral care. All now virtual, although slowly emerging into the light.

The future looks a bit bleak.

Three churches all socially distancing , all losing members and money and friendship and meeting together.

Money. Finance will be a huge problem. For all the churches in Troon. We have no income from hall lets, from the plate, from weddings. For everyone. Inflation may hit - wages and salaries and pensions, plus the Stock market may fall. We hear of people redundant, of businesses they have poured their heart and soul into, going under, of large firms giving up.

Is it all bad?

No. But..... change is threatening and inevitable, but it can be for the good.

How can we make good ? Does God expect us to sit on our hands and wail softly (because we can't sing) as the ship slowly sinks.

Is this the time to grasp nettles?

I can see a lovely brand new building, filled with chairs, multi purpose so that in the week groups can meet, easy to clean, wonderful to have a service in. Socially distanced easily. Easily brought back together. Pews are not so flexible. Welcoming and vibrant. Okay, maybe a bit too ambitious . But surely, surely, we could have one church of Scotland for Troon, one place to meet. One spacious place to worship God on earth? Surely?

The next bit is...

How can we all make this happen????

Barbie Short

(A personal view)

CONGRATULATIONS

to Evelyn and Colin Philp—proud grandparents again. They are delighted to announce the safe arrival of Isabella Rose Philp, weighing 8lbs 10z to the delighted parents, Ian and Danni.

Not as straightforward as it should have been but all doing well.

“Let the children come to me”

HOUSEGROUP

We had a send off for Ann and Ken for those of us able to gather in the garden. Cakes and flowers—lovely.

Such a change, but we will continue as a group and possibly be able to meet in Phase 4—might be a bit cold by winter to be outside! We have all gained such a great deal from the discussions. I feel sure God will guide us further in the future.

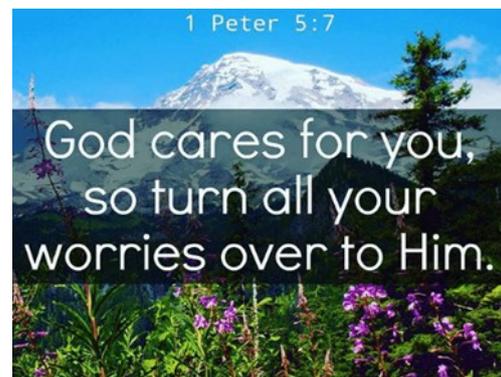
Barbie



God, grant me the serenity to
accept the things I cannot
change,

courage to change the things I
can,

And wisdom to know the
difference.



MESSAGE FROM MALAWI

It has been good to share news and photographs from our partner congregation in Limphasa, Northern Malawi, with the congregation in The Parishioner over the summer months. These have highlighted how the congregation's ReJoin Art Project has been engaged in producing 2,000 face masks which they have donated within their community along with a number of fairly basic hand-washing stations. Of note is the use that has been made of a sewing machine which was included in donations from Portland Church which were sent out by the Banana Box Trust, along with examples of hand-knitted clothing and hats for young children.

Sadly African countries have not been spared from the coronavirus pandemic and this has been a cause of particular concern in rural communities which are poorly served with health care facilities. The government in Malawi reacted to this situation by forbidding gatherings of more than ten people and this has had a particularly devastating effect on congregations such as Limphasa.

A message from Rev. Asayiwe Mwenitete on 26 July read as follows:

As earlier communicated the COVID -19 pandemic here is still going higher every time. As a Church we have stopped celebrating holy communion, no choir singing during Church services and we still maintain social distance and putting masks during church services.

Every vestry must have hand washing pails at least 3- 4 pails per vestry so that when people get inside the Church must wash their hands. Though this is a big challenge for the session to provide hand washing pails to all eleven vestries due to limited finances we are failing to make it. We have plans to buy the washing pails, sanitizers, masks and soap for the eleven vestries and some few elders within our Congregation. Keep praying for us.

Rev Asayiwe

In a subsequent message on 8 August the Presbytery Clerk wrote:

I am sorry to inform you that COVID-19 is still highly increasing in Malawi and Limphasa presbytery is not spared. Many people are in great fear to attend community gatherings including Church activities.

This has resulted into:

(a) drop out in Church services attendance

(b) low income collection in the Church due to poor giving since Church attendance is low and this has caused a big problem in our six congregations in the presbytery to meet all required programs of the Church hence all congregations in Limphasa have accumulated huge balances of money on the presbytery share and synod share. This has resulted into a great challenge for the presbytery to pay stipends and salaries to its ministers and presbytery workers respectively. Church programs are now at a stand still in Limphasa, ministers and their families experiencing tough times as we on depend on stipends after good collection and enough collection from congregations. Truly speaking things are not moving this time here.

(c) very few individual Church members and vestries are able to buy COVID-19 prevention materials like masks, hand sanitizers, hand washing plastic pails in their homes the large number of our Church members are very poor and can not manage securing such materials hence at high risks to get the disease.

Remember us in your prayers.

God be with you as you share our situation to members of the Church there in Scotland.

Rev. Asayiwe - Presbytery Clerk.

Since that was written the government in Malawi has lifted its restriction on religious gatherings from a maximum of ten people to one hundred which may slightly ease the desperate situation facing ministers and presbytery workers.

It is particularly sobering to read of the consequences of the extreme poverty of many of their church members such that they are being put at high risk of contracting COVID - 19 and do not have adequate health care facilities to support them.

What is needed is more than 'just' prayers and I would encourage all members to make a special effort to contribute in whatever way they can. Bank transfers into Portland's bank account referenced '**C-19 Malawi**' would be most welcome and these can also be automatically gift aided by those who already contribute to Portland's finances in this manner. Please make any cheques payable to '**Troon Portland Church**' or donations may be remitted by bank transfer to the church's account with Bank of Scotland at **Sort Code 80-09-88 and Account Number 00931213 and referenced 'C-19 Malawi'**. Wherever possible all donations should be GiftAided and it would be appreciated if you would notify me when donating to ensure that these are then aggregated for transfer to Malawi as soon as possible.

Bill Weir

ANOTHER WAY TO REMEMBER

The annual Christian Aid Scotland remembering walk is going ahead in September, but with a twist.

The event is a moment to make space and remember loved ones no longer with us, as well as to raise money for Christian Aid.

Last year's walk was from Logie Kirk in Stirling up to Lossburn Reservoir in the Ochil Hills. Among the participants were Iain Watkinson and his wife Joyce, who were walking in memory of their son Andrew. They raised more than £1000 for Christian Aid's work tackling poverty and social injustice in some of the world's poorest countries.

This year's walk will take place on September 12 but in a different format, mindful of the Covid -19 pandemic. Instead of all gathering in a single place, participants will be asked to walk somewhere special but local to them in the morning. Then at midday, everyone will come together for a short online gathering, where they we will light candles together and say prayers.

The event has been named 'Another Way to Remember'.

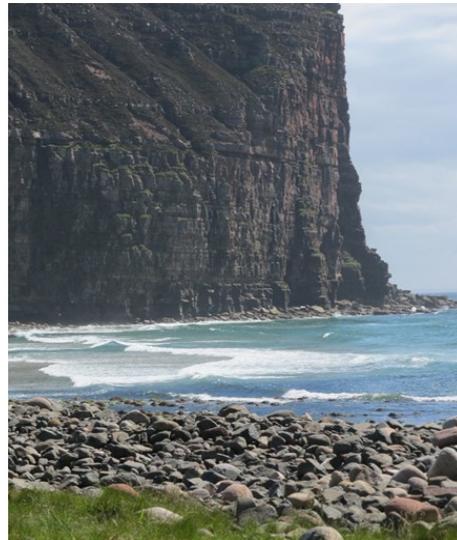
If you would like to register to take part, contact Val Brown on vbrown@christian-aid.org or 0141 2217475, and keep an eye on the Christian Aid Scotland website for the sign up page.

Anthony Kramers' splendid photo of Rackwick Bay on Hoy in the Orkney islands sits well alongside a Blessing from the Iona Community which reminds us that evidence of God's wonderful creation is all around us, inspiring us to give Him endless praise.

Bless all who worship you
Bless all who worship you, O God,
From praise at dawn to sunset song;
From your goodness, you enrich us.
O, by your love, inspire us;
O, by your Spirit, guide us.

By your power, you protect us,
In your mercy, you receive us
Now and always.

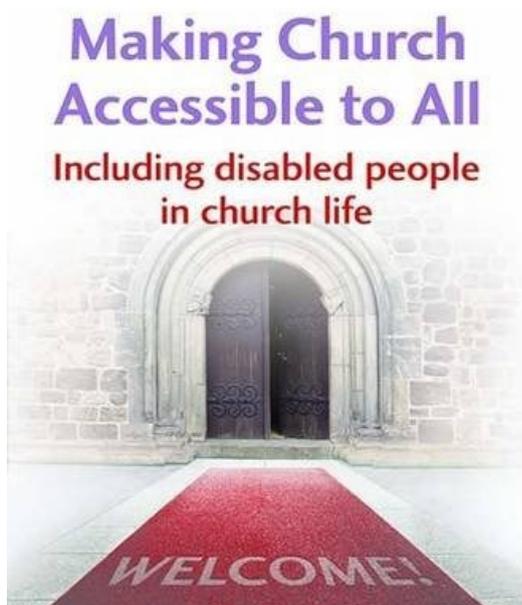
Tune: 'All creatures of our God & king'
Geistliche Kirchengesange, 1623
arr. R Vaughan Williams



An Extract from the Scottish Churches Disability Group Summer newsletter

All of the newsletters can be found at the group's website, which has been updated and is well worth a visit at <http://scdg.org.uk/>.

All the 2020 newsletters have been posted there. The information section at <http://scdg.org.uk/hints-and-tips/> has a wealth of advice on how churches can be more accessible and welcoming for people with disabilities.



Thanks to Sandra McCallum

I still can't believe people's survival instincts told them to grab toilet paper.



I'm going to stay up on New Year's Eve this year. Not to see the New Year in, but to make sure this one leaves.

If I had only known in March it would be my last time in a restaurant I would have ordered dessert.

At the store there was a Big X by the register for me to stand on I've seen too many Road Runner cartoons to fall for that one.

Until further notice, the days of the week are called, thisday, thatday, otherday, someday, yesterday, today and nextday.

When does Season 2 of 2020 start? I do not like Season 1.

Keep it mind, even during a pandemic, no matter how much chocolate you eat, your ear-rings will still fit.

The buttons on my jeans have started social distancing from each other.

I never thought the comment "I wouldn't touch him/her with a 6 foot pole" would become a national policy, but here we are.

The stupidest thing I've ever purchased was a 2020 planner.



**DEADLINE FOR THE OCTOBER
ISSUE OF THE PARISHIONER—**

SUNDAY, 27TH SEPTEMBER

**FOR POSTING ON WEBSITE ON
SUNDAY, 4TH OCTOBER**

**PLEASE THINK OF
CONTRIBUTING TO YOUR
MAGAZINE—
parishioner45@gmail.com**

Christmas Card and Calendar Collection 2020

Visit shop.crossreach.org.uk to order



Dial-in to our services

If you know someone without internet access who might enjoy our service then they could dial in at any time on 01292 43 97 91* and listen in to our latest service
*normal local call charges apply



Visit the Troon Portland web page for our Weekly Sunday Service—Choir anthem, prayer, bible reading, sermon and hymn singing—JOIN US.

Locum Minister: Rev. M. E. Prentice-Hyers

Interim Moderator: Bill Duncan

Session Clerk: John Reid

Treasurer: Catriona McKellar

Church Officer: Ruaridh McKellar

Church Office:

Organist/Music Convener: Dorothy Howden

Hall's Convener: Catriona McKellar

The Parishioner: Margaret Short

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