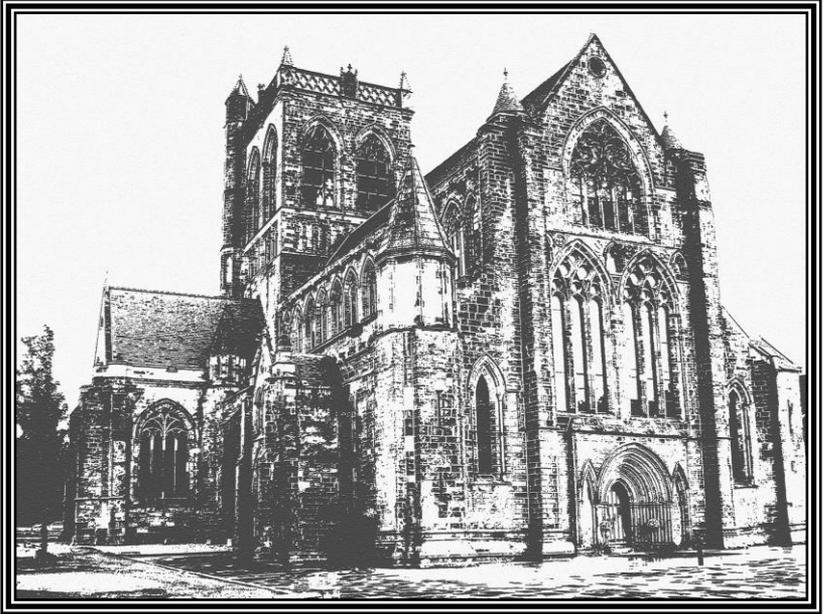


Paisley Abbey



Abbey Herald

June 2020

June 2020

My dear friends

First of all, I do hope you are safe and well - and that all who have not been well or are having to isolate are getting the help and support you need to get you through these difficult times.

Worship: at the heart of our life as a church is worship and the Abbey's worship does continue, although in a very different way from that to which we were all used. On the Abbey website, Facebook page and YouTube channel, there is posted a daily reflection and prayer. Some of these are recorded in the Abbey, some at the manse and some by our student assistant Gillean at her home. Some of our choral scholars have been providing music for inclusion in these short services and we have also been able regularly to include recorded organ music and choral music recorded in the past by our choir for which we own the copyright. As I mentioned last month, sharing in these prayers and reflections brings us together in worship and unites us with the whole church on earth and in heaven. The Abbey website address is **www.paisleyabbey.org.uk** and there are links from the 'front page' of the website to both our Facebook page and YouTube channel.

Fellowship: The Events Committee had its first ever online Zoom meeting recently and discussed ways in which we might run events online. As a 'starter' we decided to organise an online Quiz for members of the Kirk Session and if that goes well, we will try to find a way of running one for anyone who would like to take part. Cathy Craig is going to make up the online quiz. Sally is also going to produce another of her popular quizzes and we are looking at ways to distribute it as widely as possible.

Pastoral: Carol and I are trying to phone round members of the Abbey family (although it is taking a long time!) and I know district elders are also keeping in touch with people as they are able. We have discovered some wrong phone numbers or missing phone numbers in our records so putting that right will be one of

the first tasks to be undertaken when we get back to 'normal'. If anyone would like to get in touch with me on any matter, or simply for a chat, please do not hesitate to phone or email.

Retirement: as you know, 7 June was the date earmarked for our retirement but as I mentioned last month we have decided to postpone it a little in the hope that over the next couple of months lockdown will be eased and at least a path to resuming services and activities will have become clearer. We are still looking to August for a possible move to Aboyne but will keep everyone informed as the way forward for us becomes clearer.

In the meantime, we are still here for you, we will still be posting prayers and reflections on the website and social media and will offer any help we can to you.

Finance: the loss of income since lockdown began continues to be a challenge for the Abbey, as it is, of course, for so many charities, organisations, businesses and individuals. If you can, please do continue to support the Abbey financially. Details of how to pay donations directly into the Abbey's back account were given in the letter I sent to members of the congregation when all this began. Do get in touch if you would like a note of these details. Alternatively, a cheque payable to Paisley Abbey can be sent direct to the Treasurer, Stewart McDougall, at 13 Cross Road, Paisley, PA2 9QA.

Alan

SUNDAY READINGS AND COLLECTS FOR JUNE

7 June - Trinity Sunday

Readings Genesis 1. 1 - 2. 4a

Psalm 8

2 Corinthians 13. 11-13

St. Matthew 28. 16-20

Collect Almighty and Eternal God.

through your Word and Spirit you created all things.

In Jesus Christ, the Word made flesh,
you reveal your salvation in all the world.

Though your Holy Spirit,
you give us a share in your life and love.

Keep us firm in this faith
and fill us with the vision of your glory,
that we may serve and praise you all our days;
through Jesus Christ our Lord, who is alive and
reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now
and for ever. Amen.

14 June - First Sunday after Trinity

Readings Exodus 19. 2-8a

Psalm 100

Romans 5. 1-8

St. Matthew 9. 35 - 10. 8

Collect Almighty God,

without you we are not able to please you.

Mercifully grant that your Holy Spirit
may in all things direct and rule our hearts;
through Jesus Christ our Lord, who is alive and
reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now
and for ever. Amen.

21 June - Second Sunday after Trinity

Readings Jeremiah 20. 7-13
 Psalm 69. 7-10, 16-18
 Romans 6. 1b-11
 St. Matthew 10. 24-39

Collect O God our defender,
 when storms rage about us and cause us to be
 afraid,
 rescue your people from despair,
 deliver your sons and daughters from fear,
 and preserve us all from unbelief;
 through your Son Jesus Christ our Lord
 who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
 one God, now and for ever, Amen.

28 June - Third Sunday after Trinity

Readings Jeremiah 28. 5-9
 Psalm 89. 1-4, 15-18
 Romans 6. 12-23
 St. Matthew 10. 40-42

Collect Almighty God,
 you have taught us through your Son
 that love fulfils the law.
 Grant us grace to love you
 with all our heart, all our soul,
 all our mind, all our strength,
 and to love our neighbour as ourselves.
 through the same Jesus Christ our Lord
 who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
 one God, now and for ever, Amen.

RECORD LENT APPEAL TOTAL

With the coronavirus and its consequential lockdown continuing to dominate everyone's life, it is easy to forget that personal and business finances are in a perilous state. Therefore, it is gratifying and spiritually reassuring that this year's Lent Appeal raised the magnificent sum of £15,252.65.

When the Gift Aid tax is reclaimed from the Government, the total should exceed £18,000. This is a heroic effort from the congregation and has greatly exceeded any previous congregational Lent Appeal. Moreover, it has been essential in bolstering the Abbey's finances at a time when the income is down by around £10,000 each month.

Donations ranged from £10 to £4,000 and whether large or small, they represent the place that Paisley Abbey has in the heart of each member of the congregation.

While the lockdown continues you can be assured that everything has been done to minimise the costs of running the Abbey and its ministry.

Several members have asked what to do with their Lent Appeal collections or their Freewill Offering envelopes. If these donations are in cash, it is probably best to hold on to them until churches are allowed to open or elders are able to commence parish visitations.

However, if you wish to send a cheque, make it out to Paisley Abbey and mail it to:

The Treasurer, Paisley Abbey, Abbey Close, Paisley, PA1 1JG
or
Stewart McDougall, Treasurer, 13 Cross Road, Paisley, PA2 9QH

‘LOCK DOWN’

These unusually strange times we are living through are a challenge, aren't they? Not being able to meet with friends or family, shopping on line, constant fear of coming into contact with an enemy we cannot see etc.

When I was working, I had an excuse for the state of the floors, the size of the paper mountain I had accumulated, the dusty windows which made me think that outside it was still winter etc, etc.

‘Hooray’, I thought I now have time to sort these things out.....but I do love my garden!

Yes, you've guessed it! As the weather was perfect the first month of Lock Down meant that the garden won the toss for attention.

Firstly, the garden arch which blew down in November needed to be re-erected. The heavy foliage cover, which was responsible for the downfall initially, needed to be carefully pruned and dealt with. Thus, began the task of separation which was more like unravelling knitting than gardening.

The task took about three weeks to complete and is now standing having been beaten into submission using string and chewing gum. You're right of course. I have lied about the chewing gum but you get the picture.

During this time, I had blue tit neighbours living in my rotting nesting box. They got quite used to me and within a small space of social distancing they got quite used to me. So that was the first month.

Then ZOOOOOM!
My peaceful ‘holiday’ was interrupted. That's right little



bits of time became committed to meetings. The RSNO chorus has been ZOOMing for seven weeks. We are warmed up by our wonderful coach Polly Beck and then we sing choruses from the Messiah. This is done by everyone being muted. Weird! One can only hear the accompaniment from Ed our amazing accompanist. The 'RSNO ZOOMERS', 'Whithorn Way Steering Group', 'The Whithorn Way Renfrewshire Group', 'The Whithorn Way Walking Guide committee', the 'Events Committee of Paisley Abbey' all punctuate the silence of Lockdown, lifting the spirits and engaging the mind.

The RSNO Chorus meetings concentrate on our singing health and ability.

'The Whithorn Way Renfrewshire Group' are making real progress with signage. Thanks to Gerry Murdoch and Martin Bonnar robust vinyl signs for lamp posts, road sign posts, Sustrans Cycle route sign posts etc. are being produced.



The members of the Whithorn Way Walking Guide Book Committee are engaging with authors and publishers. So, life continues towards a brighter and optimistic future when we can happily meet up with each other again.

SCOUT NOTES

Despite the fact that there have been no face-to-face meetings since our Group Indoor Camp in the middle of March, Paisley Abbey Scout Group has seldom been as busy as it has been these past weeks! We continue to deliver weekly Scouting sessions. Our leaders are committed now more than ever to ensure that young people within Paisley Abbey Scout Group gain skills for life and enjoy the friends they have made on Friday nights. All sections have been able to meet 'virtually' using Zoom. Beavers have completed their Creative Activity Badge, Cubs their Cook Badge and Scouts have hiked to Ben Nevis as part of their Expedition Challenge - all done at home. There has even been a virtual camp complete with camp fire songs. It is planned to continue these Zoom sessions over the summer and there will also be more CampatHome events.

Congratulations to Scout Section Leader Richard and his wife Kirsty on the birth of their daughter Eilidh.

Eilidh has already taken part in Zoom meetings so clearly a long scouting career awaits her!



WHY NOT HOLD A VIRTUAL COFFEE AND CAKE MORNING/AFTERNOON

As we all continue to live with the impact of COVID-19 and have to maintain social distance, is there someone you wish you could chat with over a cup of coffee and some cake?

If there is why not hold a Virtual Coffee and Cake Morning/Afternoon using the video conference tools such as WhatsApp, FaceTime, Zoom or just by phone?



It's a great way to connect with your friends and loved ones whilst helping to support the Abbey and those who are coping with mental health and other issues, made all the more difficult by COVID-19.

You could donate what you would usually spend at a Coffee Shop.

How can I get the money to the Abbey?

Your "guests" could either send the money to the Treasurer by cheque, or by bank transfer to the Abbey Bank account details of which were in the April Online Herald and elsewhere in this issue. You could send the money to the host by post and they will arrange that it reaches the Abbey.

You can get as creative as you like; share your recipes and compare versions of the same cake.

Why not give it a try?

A PRAYER WHICH FIRST APPEARED IN THE LIFE AND WORK OF JUNE 2020

Hebrews 13:8 – “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever”

God of our fathers and mothers
You have reigned with Sovereign skill
In storms and stories of years past
“It’s in the looking back” they tell us
“That we can see and say; God has always been faithful.”
We praise you for what you’ve already done, God
And we thank you for those
Who yesterday marvelled at your work
And told us all about it
Singing confidence in you into your psyche

God of our brothers and sisters
You rule today, and you care today
In a world shaken, turned upside down
You are the only unchanging One
Forgive us for the things we’ve held too tightly
Being shaken from our grasp:
Complacency, material security, self-interested freedoms
Thank you for the green shoots of life
Growing up through coronavirus cracks;
Community, delight in the local environmental rest, new
prayerfulness
Kingdom values visible anew
Kingdom borders bulging outwards

God of our children
You hold their destiny in your hands
They are not victims of fate
But inheritors of Faith
What world will you remake from the rubble?
What great new thing do you mean to bring?
May our eyes be open to what you will do in the aftermath
May our hearts and arms be opened wider to you, and one another

May our imaginations be filled with Spirit-sparked creativity
To become the Church, you mean us to be tomorrow
To become the Church, you call us to be today
To become the Church, you've been planning to build since
yesterday

Into this world, both ravaged and ripe
Come, Lord Jesus Christ
The same yesterday, today and forever

Amen

PARISH REGISTER

Funeral

Kenneth Mackenzie (Newton Mearns)
Hugh Marshall



“WE ARE DEEPLY CONNECTED”

The Very Rev Dr. John Chalmers considers the long -term impact of the Coronavirus Covid19 on churches

Self-Isolation and social distancing have become part of everyday life. They have made us look at one another differently and who knows how long it will take before hand shaking and hugging return to everyday life.

For some the experience is a bitter one. It is one thing to be isolated in safety – it is quite another thing to be isolated within in an abusive relationship or, if during this extraordinary time, you have wondered where your next meal is coming from or you are contemplating a future of dire economic prospects. As with so many other crises most of us manage to get through, but for the poorest and the most vulnerable the consequences can be catastrophic. Covid 19, directly and indirectly, has brought grief and sadness to so many homes and families. And it has brought with it a timely reminder to those who may be looking for the presence of Christ that he is still to be found in the face of the hungry, the thirsty, the stranger, the sick and the prisoner (Matt 25: 31-40).

As well, however, as becoming part of our new norm, self-isolation and social distancing continue to be such counter-intuitive concepts for women and men who have evolved to enjoy one another’s company and share one another’s space. Here again there is something for us to learn from our enforced lockdown – that it is when we are deprived of those things which are so basic to our life together that we come to appreciate what really matters. Company. Community, the closeness of family and friends, the touch of caring hands; these are some things that money can’t buy and technology can’t fix.

The gnawing hunger that we have to be with friends and family is too deep to be completely fixed by WhatsApp or FaceTime. We may have greatly benefitted from the digital technology which

has allowed us to keep in touch and keep abreast of business (and it is to be hoped that we will not return to old ways of burning fuel and travelling miles every time we want to hold a meeting) but we have become acutely aware of our need for face-to-face contact and we have been humbled to recognise the great value of some of the ordinary things that we have taken for granted. The deeper issue behind this is the realization that none of us is as self sufficient as we may have thought. What we have learned is that we are deeply connected and some of us believe that the foundation of that connection goes beyond our simple common humanity. In fact, we trace that connection to the source and final purpose of life itself in God.

It seems to me that this lockdown although painful for so many, has also accentuated that sense of connection. Whether applauding the staff of the NHS from our doorsteps to our churches making sure that worship and fellowship continue online – we have been brought together as we have faced this adversity. It has also brought out the best in our creativity ; for long enough we have bemoaned the ability of our congregations to adapt to changes in lifestyle and culture, but in these few weeks there is evidence that churches have reached far more people than they would ever have done by traditional means. I'm sure that there are some things about this new normal that we will not want to lose when this lockdown is over.

At the time of writing this article Captain (now Colonel) Tom Moore's extraordinary fundraising efforts have just topped £32m. This extraordinary man has been a conduit through which we have been able to express our gratitude and connection to the frontline workers of the NHS, but, the success of his campaign is down to his infectious hope and positivity which have made him easy to connect with. We are in this together. Stay safe.

This article by the Very Rev. Dr. John Chalmers appeared in the June 2020 issue of Life and Work

FOODBANK

It is not possible to have our usual monthly collection at the moment but the main centre in Renfrew is open and also the distribution centre at the Central Baptist Church if anyone wants to drop off food when out shopping.

Details below:

Renfrew

Westway
Porterfield Road
Renfrew
PA4 8DJ

Mon/Weds/Friday 9-12

Paisley

Central Baptist Church
4 Lady Lane
Paisley

Mon 2-4
Weds/Friday 1.30-4.30

Phone 017563 814083 and someone will meet you in the car park

TALK IT OVER GROUP

The Group cannot meet on a Tuesday morning due to the current situation but, if any new mother is feeling anxious or isolated and would like to talk to someone, our Peer Support Leader Joanne is available for texts or phone calls

Joanne 07969 351318