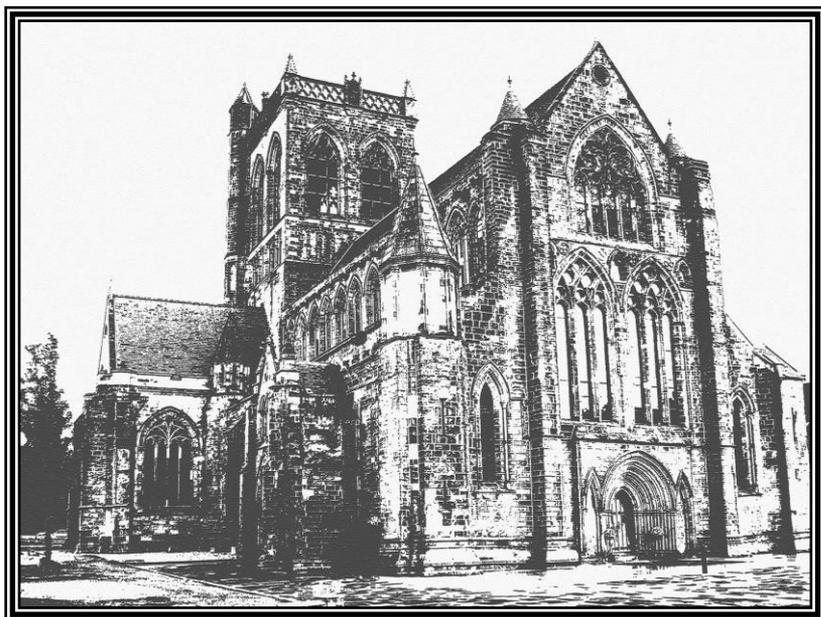


Paisley Abbey



Abbey Herald

May 2020

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My dear friends,

What perplexing and challenging times! Days that are difficult for all of us but especially so for many who are having to self-isolate totally, cut off from physical contact with family and friends. Many feel isolated and alone - and that is why this year the message of Ascension-tide is so relevant and important. Immediately before Jesus left the disciples 40 days after his resurrection and ascended into heaven, he told them, 'And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.' Our Lord is always with us, alongside us, guiding us, carrying us when need be. May that thought comfort and strengthen every one of us in these difficult times.

At the heart of the life of the Abbey, as at the heart of the life of the whole Church on earth and in heaven, is prayer. In the First Letter to the Thessalonians we find the injunction 'pray without ceasing'. And that is exactly what the Church does. Every second, every minute of every day somewhere in the world prayers are being offered to God. When we pray, we are not only drawing nearer to God, we are also entering into fellowship with all other Christians who are also praying. One of the special moments in the Abbey's worship for me is when Christingle candles are lit at our Christingle service. Each candle gives a little light but the combined effect of all the candles seems much greater than the sum total of the candles. The Abbey is bathed in the warm glow of the lighted candles. And so, it is with prayer: prayer bathes our lives and the life of the world in the light of God's never-failing, unlimited, extravagant love. At 12 noon each day, a prayer and reflection is posted on the Abbey's website, Facebook page and YouTube channel and as part of that the Lord's Prayer is said. Even if you are not able to view the post, do join in saying the Lord's Prayer at 12 noon, picture people who matter to you, picture those who sit near you in the Abbey. And remember each individual prayer, your prayer, contributes to the spreading of the light of God's love in our homes, in the community and in the world.

May God bless each one of you.

Alan

SUNDAY READINGS AND COLLECTS FOR MAY

3 May- Fourth Sunday of Easter

Readings

Acts 2. 42-47

Psalm 23

1 Peter 2. 19-25

St. John 10. 1-10

Collect

God of peace,
who brought back from the dead our Lord Jesus,
the great Shepherd of the sheep,
through the blood of an eternal covenant,
make us perfect in goodness
so that we may do your will
and create in us what is pleasing to you;
through the same Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.

10 May - Fifth Sunday of Easter

Readings

Acts 7. 55-60

Psalm 31. 1-5, 15-16

1 Peter 2. 2-10

St. John 14. 1-14

Collect

Almighty God, your Son Jesus Christ is the way,
the truth and the life.
Give us grace to love one another
and walk in the way of his commandments,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever, Amen.

17 May - Sixth Sunday of Easter

Readings

Acts 17. 22-31

Psalm 66. 8-20

1 Peter 3. 13-22

St. John 14. 15-21

Collect

Merciful God,
you have prepared for those who love you
such good things as pass all understanding.
Pour into our hearts such love toward you,
that we, loving you above all things,

may obtain your promises, which exceed all that we can desire;

through Jesus Christ our Lord

who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever, Amen.

24 May - Sunday after the Ascension of the Lord

Readings Acts 1. 1-11
Psalm 47
Ephesians 1. 15-23
At. Luke 24. 44-53

Collect Almighty God,
your Son our Saviour Jesus Christ
ascended far above all heavens
that he might fill all things.
Grant that your Church on earth
may be filled with his presence
and that he may remain with us always,
to the end of the world;
through the same Jesus Christ our Lord
who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy
Spirit, one God, now and for ever, Amen.

31 May - Day of Pentecost

Readings Acts 2. 1-21
Psalm 104. 24-34, 35b
1 Corinthians 12. 3b-13
St. John 20. 19-23

Collect Almighty and ever-living God,
you fulfilled the promises of Easter
by sending your Holy Spirit
and opening the way of life eternal
to every race and nation.
Keep us in the unity of your Spirit,
that every tongue may tell of your glory;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever, Amen.

An update from the Minister on Covid-19 (Coronavirus) and its ongoing impact on the life of the Abbey

Worship

There are no services in the Abbey and the Abbey remains closed even for private prayer. However, a short prayer and reflection is posted on the Abbey website, Facebook page and YouTube channel daily, some of these are recorded in the Abbey, some at the manse and some at the home of our student assistant minister Gillean. They sometimes include organ music recorded by George at home or choral music recorded by our choir for which we own the copyright. Sharing in these prayers and reflections brings us together in worship and unites us with the whole church on earth and in heaven.

Pastoral Care

This is a difficult time for everyone with visits to people in hospital, care home or their own home impossible. Phone calls, text messages, emails are all the more important at this time as we seek to re-assure people that, although physical contact is not possible, all are still much valued and precious members of the Abbey family and of Christ's Church.

Finance

Many of you will have taken part in this year's Lent 2020 Appeal and will have Lent boxes ready for collection. Clearly, no-one can collect Lent boxes at the moment. So, if you could send in what you are donating to the Appeal that would give a tremendous boost to our finances. If paying by cheque please send the cheque direct to the Treasurer Stewart McDougall at 13 Cross Road, Paisley, PA2 9QA. It is also possible to pay money directly into the Abbey's bank account and details of how to do that were in last month's *Herald* and in the letter, I sent to members of the congregation. Again, the Treasurer or I can advise on how to do this. Please state Lent and your name as the reference so that we know how to allocate the donation. The closing of the Abbey continues to have a significant impact and to put a considerable strain on the Abbey's finances. We have no income from the gift shop or coffee shop, from lets and hires of

the premises, from visitors and guided tours, from open-plate offerings. So, any donation you can make to the Abbey at this time will be most gratefully received and will help safeguard the Abbey's ongoing worship and witness.

Retirement

As many know Carol and I planned to retire on 7 June. However, it seems increasingly unlikely that services will have resumed in the Abbey by then and the 12-week self-isolation period that some have been asked to undertake will not end until the middle of June. We would not want to leave while there is no semblance of normality in the life of the Abbey and when we would not be able to see so many people who have meant so much to us over the years before we leave. Accordingly, Carol and I have decided to postpone, for a short time, our leaving the Abbey. While we cannot at the moment give a new date, we have in mind that we will move up to Aboyne in August (or possibly September) and that we could come back later in the autumn for a 'final' service once everything is back to normal.

And a smile to end ... There have been many pictures on social media to cheer us up and I liked this one imagining the Last Supper under lockdown and having to use Zoom ...



A PRAYER

Lord in a world turned upside down
Where daily life is far from normal, we come to you,
“The One from whom our help comes.
The One who is the same,
yesterday, today and for ever

We come to you giving thanks,
that you have promised to be always with us.
In your presence we find the security
for which our hearts cry out at this time.

In this time of personal and national crisis
Help us to believe this is true.
Help us to trust in you.
Give us faith that will be an anchor,
firm and secure, in the storms we are going through.

Lord we pray for all directly affected by the
Coronavirus Covid 19.
For those who have been infected;
Those who have been hospitalised;
Those who have lost loved ones.

We pray also for all who are caring for
And supporting those with the virus.
Medical staff, health workers, carers.
The emergency services.
families and friends.
Give them strength, compassion
And love in these difficult times.

Lord, you knew abandonment and isolation.
In the Garden of Gethsemane
You were abandoned by your disciples.
They slept while you prayed.
In your anguish they could not keep watch with you.
On the cross you Felt abandoned and isolated.

We pray for all who feel abandoned and isolated
Because of the emergency we are going through.
Help us, in the difficult days, to be good neighbours
To reach out in love in our communities and beyond.

Lord, you said
” by this everyone will know that you are my disciples,
if you have love for one another”,
We give thanks for all who by their acts of love
and selfless service are standing by their neighbours
especially in these challenging days
Amen



Hopefully we will get out to see the trees before too long

This prayer appeared in the Life and Work magazine of May
2020

SCOUT NOTES

On Thursday 23 April, St. George's Day - the patron saint of Scouting, UK Scouts took part in a 'Hike to the Moon' as their contribution to the Big Night In hosted by the BBC and organised by Children in Need and Comic Relief. Young people, leaders, parents and carers were asked to hike for a mile at home, maybe round their living room, or round their garden, and the target was for a total of 240,000 miles to be covered - the distance from the earth to the moon. Those taking part were asked to get sponsorship or make a donation. At the time of writing this article just two days after the event UK scouts had raised an amazing £269,665. The Abbey Scouts enthusiastically took part. The photo shows Alan as Group Scout Leader with Carol and Sean preparing to walk round the manse garden.



MESSAGE FROM THE PASTORAL COMMITTEE SENIOR MEMBERS SUMMER OUTING

It will come as no surprise to anyone – but, sadly, the Summer Outing to Dobbies has had to be cancelled this year. We on the Committee are truly sorry about this as we know that the guests who attend really do enjoy the outing – for the chat, the food and, for many, the opportunity to fill a shopping trolley.

The cancellation is particularly sad as this would have been the last time that Alan and Carol would have been with us before their move to Aboyne. Perhaps we will be able to persuade them to join us when, at some later date, we can all meet again to enjoy the scones, the sandwiches, the strawberry tarts and, most importantly, the camaraderie at our next outing. Until then the Pastoral Committee hopes that everyone is managing to fill their days and, most importantly is keeping fit and well and we on the Committee send our very best wishes to the entire “Abbey Family” and trust that it will not be too long until - literally – normal services can be resumed.

S G C



CROSSREACH

The following is some helpful advice about Covid19 from CrossReach

Many people are already self-isolating and most of us are feeling overwhelmed and anxious about the sudden and significant changes that are happening in our own country and across the world. There are a number of online spaces filled with tips and advice on being as healthy as we can during this unprecedented time.

Mind have produced information to help people cope with the worry and anxiety about coronavirus.

Visit mind.org.uk for further information

The Mental Health Foundation have developed some key tips to help people look after their mental health during this unprecedented time:

Avoid speculation and focus on reputable news sources

Try to stay connected. We encourage you to reach out by phone and online to those around you so we can all support each other.

Manage how you follow the outbreak in the media.

Try to avoid surrounding yourself with 24/7 updates

For more details, visit mentalhealth.org.uk.

Looking after your mental health while you have to stay at home
The government is telling us to stay at home and only go outside for food, health reasons or essential work, to stay two metres (six feet) away from other people and wash our hands as soon as we get home.

This will mean that more of us will be spending a lot of time at

home and many of our regular social activities will no longer be available to us.

It will help to try and see it as a different period of time in your life, and not necessarily a bad one, even if you didn't choose it.

It will mean a different rhythm of life, a chance to be in touch with others in different ways than usual.

Be in touch with other people regularly on social media, e-mail or on the phone, as they are still good ways of being close to the people who matter to you.

Create a new daily routine that prioritises looking after yourself.

You could try reading more or watching movies, having an exercise routine, trying new relaxation techniques, or finding new knowledge on the internet.

Try and rest and view this as a new if unusual experience, that might have its benefits.

Make sure your wider health needs are being looked after such as having enough prescription medicines available to you.

Keep safe

