

Have you got email ? ...

Facebook ? ...

Whatsapp ? ...

June 2020

Or any other media platform if that is the right phrase? If you are reading this from print on a piece of white paper, then you probably don't have any of the above. Indeed you probably have no idea what I am talking about. You will have heard of these things but it really is another language to you. Others of you will be reading this on your computer, phone iPad or whatever and you will wonder "*Why the fuss?*". Well many people do not have all that modern stuff and the print copy is for them, for you.

Indeed you will not know about or have followed a lot that has been put out on the media to help keep people feeling a part of St Bryce Kirk and that is a real concern to me and to others in the church.

"Like speaking another language" was a theme I used on Sunday the week after Pentecost. Thinking again about the Acts 2 passage, where there is a great list of surrounding nations which on that festival day, are all represented in Jerusalem in the form of faithful Jewish pilgrims gathered for one of the great high points of the Jewish year. You can easily feel left out, rejected even when amongst people who are speaking a language you don't understand. We use the phrase to describe someone whose values, attitudes, beliefs, ways of behaving are just radically different from our own, "He just doesn't speak my language" even though factually and phonically, he does.

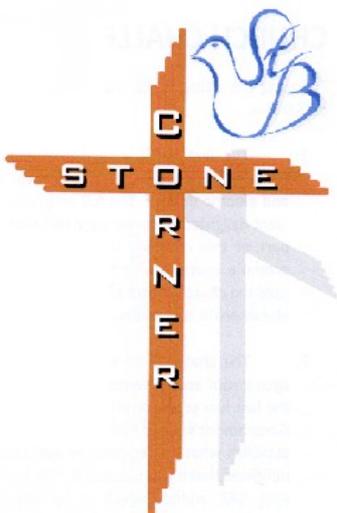
A gulf has opened up and it is really important to be aware of that and it is made more significant by the fact that it is very largely an age thing. Most of the people who don't do computers and email and smart phones are older but not all and some "older" people have it all that stuff and use it comfortably, as long as it doesn't go wrong. The gulf is right through church membership so...

So we have two tribes, who hear different things, know different things, use different words and who if we are not careful turn in on themselves and away from the other tribe with a measure of disdain, resignation or frustration. Maybe in some dystopian future world this could be the foundation myth for two hostile nations who came to be in conflict. Unless, perhaps amongst each tribe, prophetic voices emerge to talk to the most entrenched calling for understanding, for an openness to the other ways of doing things, for a sharing of knowledge and wisdom, for a laying down of value judgements about the customs and ways of the "other" tribe.

This Pentecost story has never been more relevant. The parable above is really about race, about religion, about wealth, about gender, about sexuality, about anything that divides societies and causes people to coalesce around those like themselves, in fear and defensiveness against the "other tribes" that do not "speak their language" If there is an experience that opens hearts and minds and helps us to understand each other and live in harmony then it is right there described in Acts, the Spirit of God touching human hearts.

We still need to address this congregation thing though.

What will you be doing to help?



The Young Church would like to share the positives they have

Getting to see more of my Mum and Dad because they are working from home.

Getting to play lots of games and spend time with my family,

Being with Mummy, Daddy and Gregor more. And playing in my paddling pool.

Lots of days in the sun and playing with our new mud kitchen.

Building amazing lego models and playing tennis in the sun

Don't get bullied at school.

Getting along with my sister a lot better.

The community coming together to help each other.

Getting more jammie days.

Positive impact on the environment.

Going in the garden more.

Getting to spend more time with my family and going outside for walks.

I enjoy when we have an Indian meal delivered and zoom call our friends while they have a takeaway.

I have been building lego models and enjoying the tree swing in the woods.

I learned to ride my bike without stabilisers and enjoy cycling round the local pond to see the baby ducks.

The change of pace.

There is less pollution

I like not going to school.

Spending more time with my family and going for walks by the sea

How much do you value your church? Money Does Matter!

Like so many other organisations in this Covid-19 lockdown, the Church is facing enormous financial challenges, not just the local church, St Bryce Kirk, but also the national church. Many congregations are struggling to pay their on-going costs and large amongst those costs, the payment is to Edinburgh for Ministry. Local congregations all contribute to the national fund that then pays out to all ministers. According to income some pay more than it costs and some pay less. We pay more, around £60,000 a year thereby helping other churches who do not have enough to pay for a minister. At the moment that presents us with a big challenge and our regular payments were suspended for a few months for the first time ever, because of fears that our bank account would be emptied. They have resumed- for now.

With no Sunday Services clearly those of you who give by a weekly envelope or by giving cash (Open Plate) do not have the opportunity to give and the church loses out accordingly although many will be accumulating those amounts for the day you can return. It is heartening that many are doing that but worrying that some may not. Some have already been asking what they can do and some have sent cheques to the office. Well done and thank you! A good number already give by Standing Order and that is a great benefit to congregational finances. It would help enormously if more did that.

We have the combined problem of the on-going costs of running the church centre. For many years this has been a great asset to the church and the wider community and has helped to share in and contribute to the running costs of both church and centre. Now we have no income, staff are furloughed but costs remain. Changes in furlough payments will also impact on finances as these payments are reduced over the coming months.

We have recently applied successfully for a grant to the Third Sector Resilience Fund and have been awarded £5000. Insurance alone will account for most of that for these few months. Although much less than applied for, this is a great help.

We have major deficits at present and this can only be sustained for a short time by using our reserves to cover the shortfall.

Online donations: Anyone who wishes to make a donation either to the national funds of the Church of Scotland or to an individual congregation can do so by visiting this page, <https://www.churchofscotland.org.uk/donate> and by clicking on the donate button. All donations made to an individual congregation will be returned to that congregation, thus enabling members and adherents to continue to make their regular offering or to make a special donation to enable the Church's work to continue at this difficult time.

Standing Orders: many congregations are reporting that a significant number of members and adherents are opting to make regular offerings by standing order. A reminder that a mandate form with the church bank details already on it, can be requested from the church office, phone or email or by contacting Dorothy Smith on 265808.

Gift Aid means an added 25% to your giving, £20 becoming £25. Please do that if you can. It is not a commitment for any time period and the church reclaims the tax, you do not need to do anything. We receive a sizeable amount from Gift Aid contributions- over £3000 for January to March this year.

PASTORAL CARE TEAM

We know that the Church is shut.....

We also DO know that the Church is not the building ,the Church is the people - we sing it and we've heard it so often.

But it's never been just so shut. It's never been like this and it may be really getting to you.

No worship in the Sanctuary, no Coffee after the Service when you can chat with your friends, no Guild, no Choir, no Coffee Bar through the week, no Sunday School, no Girls Aloud, no Friendship Club, no Sunday School children around and so on.

Particularly if we are not fortunate enough to have the equipment and the knowledge to participate in the live streaming, virtual Church on You Tube on a Sunday Morning then it is easy to feel very alone and completely isolated from a Church that is so important to us.

But there are things happening. We are beginning to pick ourselves up and BE a live Church in this unprecedented, horrendous situation.

This publication is going out either on line or on paper and hoping to make contact with every member.

The Telephone Team will be active, the Connectors Cards will be happening, the Management Committee is active, the Business Committee met last week and the Kirk Session has met this week - obviously virtually.

But if you're just thinking none of this actually helps or involves you and you're still feeling totally isolated ,there is information in another section of this issue about how to contact Ken if you want/need to.

Or if you would like to have contact with the Pastoral Care Team - even just for a chat that would be absolutely fine and is easy to do.
The number is 01592264456

I do hope and pray that in this unbelievably challenging time you may know God's nearness, closer than your breath and more present than your heartbeat. We are not alone. *Dorothy Murray* (Pastoral Care Team Convener)

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Fund-raising, Films and Fellowship June 2020

At the end of February, the Soup Lunch brought in £240. That day the Young Church had a Pancake Stall whose proceeds were £42. Kirsty put the two together and was able to send £282 total to Christians Against Poverty. Although no further fund-raising events have taken place to raise funds for good causes, we were able to set up a justgiving page in the church's name to collect funds for Christian Aid in May. Our page amassed £670 in donations, plus a further £132.50 in Gift Aid. So that was a great total from a small percentage of a congregation in lockdown!!

The Midweek Movie Club had only one further meeting. Seven people came along and chose to watch "Ladies in Lavender". The next film was to be "Downton Abbey" - so we wait with bated breath!!!

How we proceed with any future fellowship events is a puzzle to be solved in due course - but you can be sure the Fellowship team **WILL** be ready!!

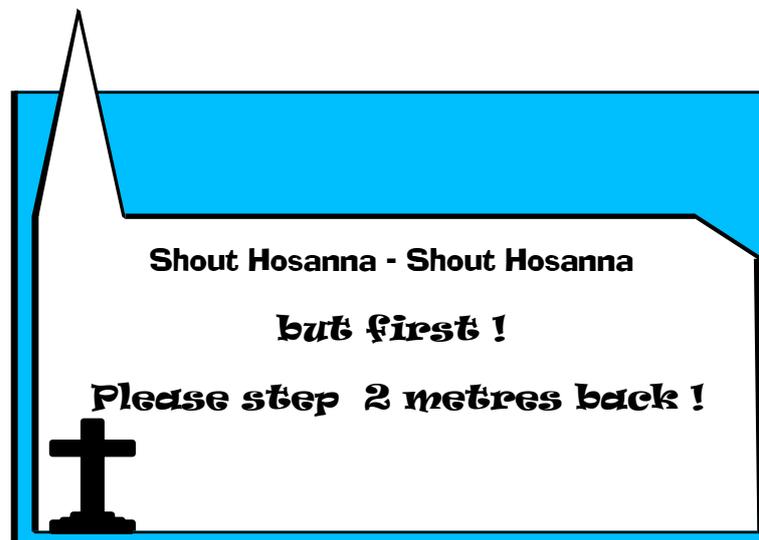
Beryl Luke (Convener)

Ken's Retirement

This would have been the time when my retirement was being marked in some way. My last Kirk Session would have just happened and come July, I would have had the rug over my knees on a park bench, but..... As you will all know I postponed the fateful day due to Corona Virus, lock-down etc. With so much uncertainty this was not a good time to go, re-organisation in the town churches, a congregation to be won back whenever Sunday gathering may be possible again, centre business all now uncertain for volunteers, staff and user groups, who are about life and church, increased pastoral concerns etc. My thinking eight weeks ago was, "Give it an extra three or four months, things will have settled down by then" was clearly wrong. Who knows? Having said "end of October, early November" I now confirm that it will be Sunday 15th November (This year by the way) - "Final answer?" - "Final answer!"

It is possible that full unrestricted Sunday Worship will still not be allowed by then in which case I will have already taken my last Service as minister of St Bryce Kirk, on the 15th March actually. In that case, no event will be possible to mark the 41 years that will by then have elapsed. It will be a disappointment, I think, for everybody but health and safety are the paramount concerns. Many people have suffered significant and life-changing loss and have on-going anxieties because of all this, so relative to that I am sure we can all cope if we have to. Of course I hope though that these last remarks prove to be redundant.

Ken



GARDEN

Since lock-down the church and centre has of course been closed. However the weeds have been doing a Dominic Cummings, not keeping to lock-down. They have been living life as usual and despite the efforts of Gregor our gardener, there are parts that need a talking to. Even the newly re-surfaced car park has got weeds poking through. They need a good dressing down- of weed-killer.

If in

your own garden, you have pulled every weed and pruned every bush and mown every blade of grass (or not!), you might be pleased to have another project, one to take you away from home and do some good for church and community.

If the church grounds are allowed to become overgrown and neglected that gives a dreadful message to our community about the church and congregation. Nothing is organised, how could we? Just take spin round, bring your tools, a bag for the rubbish and attack a bit that looks defiant. You will be rewarded in Heaven!

Thank you. Ken

A Reflection for Troubled Times

I recently came across a wonderful quotation it was from Corrie Ten Boom :

'Worry does not empty tomorrow of its sorrow; it empties today of its strength.'

In these past months I guess most of us have had times when we have endured a time of worry, even although we know worry is futile. When our loved ones are in any kind of danger or our welfare is threatened, we would be less than human not to worry about it.

In this time of lock-down, I have been encouraged by stories of individuals who in their unique ways have made a positive difference in the lives of others in the face of this adversity. A neighbour has used her skill to create beautiful facemasks and sold them to raise £1500 pounds for a children's cancer charity. Several local Church groups have been providing knitted hearts to patients who are critically ill, with family members then given matching versions. These thoughtful and kind acts happening in all our communities say much about how people are responding to demonstrate care and concern. The Church in the midst of this is continuing to proclaim it's message of love and support to whoever requires it.

Sometimes however we may still worry about the people in our Church and our World. Yet as Mark records in the parable of the mustard seed, in these anxious times as God encouraged his first disciples to be patient, God speaks to us today. The Kingdom of God is still growing around us and we can prepare for its growth in us and in others, by keeping the faith and sharing faith in whatever way we feel called to do.

As it is written in 1 Peter 5:7

When challenging times come 'cast all your anxiety on God because he cares for you'.

Holding you all in my thoughts and prayers,

Jacqueline Thomson - Moderator of Kirkcaldy Presbytery