

In these difficult times

An Update from St Bryce Kirk

4th April 2020

From the Minister :-

There was BC and then there will be AC;

Before Corona and After Corona.

We just can't get our heads around what has happened. If and when we do go out, so much looks the same and we get that seasonal pickup that comes with the arrival of Spring. The fabulous onslaught from a warming sun, the daffodils, the blossoms, the birdsong, all seems well in the natural world. You can sit in a garden and feel the peace and well-being. ... until the thought hits again.

The streets are eerily quiet, the news unrelentingly worrying, the anxiety levels cranking up ever higher.

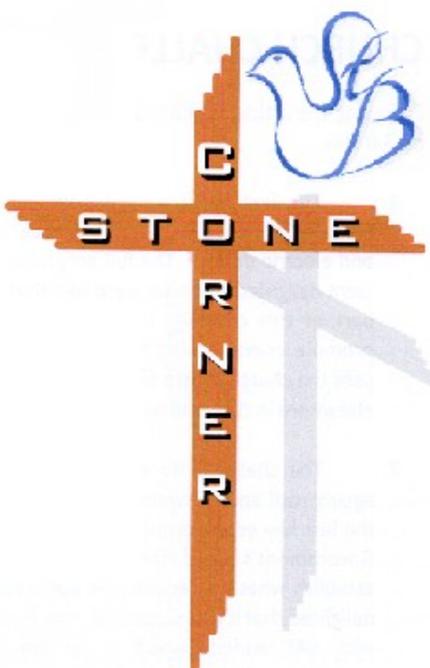
And suddenly, it seems Easter is upon us.

Palm Sunday,

Holy Week,

Easter Sunday morning.

It is hard to know how to celebrate that message in the midst of this, with thousands dying every day around the world, committed hospital and medical staff overwhelmed and exhausted, millions worried about jobs and money, and a general sense of foreboding, concern for ourselves and our friends and family.



Everything will be fine; we will suffer but it will all come good again. Jesus suffered and died and he rose again. Just have faith and we will come through this suffering too. Those last three sentences are about as real as a fairy godmother.

However, in my understanding, Christian faith is about looking to Jesus, to his God filled, God revealing life and teaching, to enable all human lives to be more fulfilled, more spiritual and more resilient and that is never more important than when in a crisis. To quote one of my recent Sunday Youtube Messages,

"In a spiritual sense, we are all in this boat together but Jesus is in the boat beside us, not a distant figure."

We should be open in our appeal to him, to God and to our need to feel connected to one another. We look for assurance and security, peace in the middle of the storm. We need some familiar things around us when so much has changed, continues to change and is under threat, with no way of knowing where it will all end. What will life be like AC?

So let's sing or at least remember the hymns, the songs and the readings of Palm Sunday, the procession, the Holy Week services, Communion on Thursday, the story of the cross on Good Friday, the joy of Easter Sunday celebrating new life, a god-storm of love unleashed upon the world, washing away a soiled humanity of selfishness. This whole story was born in the experience of suffering and anxiety. Rehearse it, proclaim it, affirm it.

We may soon be AC but we are still and always will be - AD!
We all hope and pray for this soon to be under control and brought to an end; for the safety and wellbeing of all most affected, and brought close to our own hearts and minds in the lives of those we love.

Ken

From the columns of Fife Free Press 2 April 2020

**Fife
Free
Press**



The doors of our church buildings may be locked, but our church is not closed – for the church is not the building, it's the people. Although you may miss coming to our building once a week, or many times a week, we hope you have still been in touch with your church family and friends by phone or social media – safer ways in the current situation.

However, if you've missed hearing messages of Christian hope and encouragement, the Church of Scotland has been streaming a short video message from the Moderator Rev Colin Sinclair and his wife, Ruth, on Facebook every forenoon, Monday to Friday.

<https://www.facebook.com/pg/ModeratoroftheChurchofScotland/videos/>



Also, our own Town Centre Church ministers have, in turn, also been streaming a short message on the weekday mornings.

<https://www.facebook.com/KirkTogether/>

For those with no computer or internet access, BBC 1 has, for the past two Sundays, televised a Sunday Worship in the morning. The first one was from St David's Cathedral in Wales, and then last week from Bangor Cathedral in N.Ireland (might be Scotland this Sunday coming?!) The ministers there have been reading and preaching to empty churches, of course, but their messages have been relevant for our present situation and times and there are clips of singing from around the country.

BBC1 has also broadcast 'Reflections from the Quay' from Glasgow just after this on the two Sundays – an inter-denominational message particularly from and for Scotland – again with clips from Songs of Praise. These programmes have not appeared on the listings given in the TV magazines, but they are for tomorrow!! So tune in at 11 a.m.

And locally, depending on where you live, you might take a walk down Nicol Street to the colourful rainbow cross with its “Pray Here” message and postbox which are in the grounds of Linktown Church.



Tomorrow will be Palm Sunday when Ken will be live streaming his Message at 11 a.m. - hopefully with some input from Young Church members. So be ready with your Hosannas!! You can find him on YouTube under the heading St Bryce Kirk.

 **YouTube** **St Bryce Kirk**

An audio version will be posted later on the website

<https://www.stbrycekirk.org/services/sermons/>

Although the Centre and Cafe are both closed, please do phone the office on 640016, if you need to speak to the minister or to ask for any help, and leave a message.

Alternatively you can send an email to office@stbrycekirk.org.

In both these instances, the messages will be accessed during the week at some point and you will receive a reply.

With God’s help, the people of Israel, and later the young Christian church, weathered many a storm, and with His help we will get through this one too – together!



A Reflection:

I cannot begin to imagine how you are feeling today. The Coronavirus pandemic affects us all and each day feels strange for all of us and different from what is the norm.

Some people choose to ignore the whole situation and others pretend that they are coping with what is going on. The fact is we can rise above it; we can live through it; but we cannot ignore it and we should not let it overwhelm us.

Matthew tells us that Jesus promised that he would never leave us or forsake us. (Matt 28:20). These are enabling words, worthy of reflection and worth sharing.

We may not know what the future holds but we know who holds the future and that makes all the difference.

When he was a small boy, Robert Louis Stevenson, was a regular visitor to Leven. The family had their own pew in what was then the Forman Church. The famous 19th century Scottish novelist had bronchial problems and the sea air no doubt helped.

R. L. Stevenson was born and brought up in Edinburgh. One evening the young Stevenson was sitting gazing out of the window of the family home. He was watching the 'comings and goings' as the evening shadows faded and dusk gave way to the darkness.

Fascinated by the lamplighter, coming down the street lighting the gas street lamps as he journeyed on the young R. L. Stevenson got very excited. "Look," he shouted to his nanny, "there is a man coming down the street punching holes in the darkness!"

Here is an insightful image for the darkness of this pandemic we find ourselves in.

John reminds us that Jesus said, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."

So we pray, Lord help us to punch holes in the darkness. Enable us to be agents of help and healing.

Stay safe. Stay well.



A Prayer in Difficult Times

Lord of all the earth,

You hold the universe in Your hands, You place the stars in the sky and lay the deep foundations of each planet. You have created all things large and small with intricate beauty and life and have full authority and care for all.

Father we give thanks for Your Church throughout the world and ask that it might share in your healing and bring peace.

We hold before you all politicians and political leaders who are deeply concerned with the immediate crises in your world.

We remember before You all prophets, pastors and carers of the ill and seek Your blessing on all involved in the work of the World Health Organisation and everyone in our local communities who strives to relieve the needs and suffering of others.

Lord of time and eternity we ask that You will direct the work of all who seek to unravel the mysteries of life, scientists and psychologists and we give thanks for our health service and for all who attend to our well being.

We pray for our own community and ask that we may appreciate all who work to care for our neighbours in need as instruments of peace, bringing comfort to all who feel lonely or frightened at this time.

Lord as we put our trust in You we pray for those who are suffering, those whose world has fallen apart through illness or the loss of a loved one.

Loving Father as Palm Sunday approaches we remember that You died that we might live. You descended into the depths to raise us to the heights. We rejoice in the fellowship of all your saints and commend the world and ourselves to Your unfailing love in the name of the Kings of Kings, Lord of Lords, our healer and redeemer Jesus Christ.

Amen

Jacqueline Thomson

April 2020

CrossReach Information Sheet

The gift of time

Every 4 years we're gifted an extra 1,440 minutes. This year, you are invited to gift some of your extra time to CrossReach. To explore the ways you can get involved: www.crossreach.org.uk/news/gift-of-time

You can also contact the Supporter Development team on 0131 454 4341



Update on CrossReach events 2020

In light of the fast moving developments in relation to the spread of COVID-19 (Coronavirus), all CrossReach events have been cancelled or postponed.

For more information, please visit www.crossreach.org.uk/events



The Kiltwalk Aberdeen and Glasgow: Postponed

Whilst the Kiltwalk has been postponed, Sir Tom Hunter has offered to increase monies raised by any individual participating by 50% and to give this to their chosen charity. If you are registered for this event, please continue to fundraise.

To register, please visit: www.thekiltwalk.co.uk/events

Push up for CrossReach #YouAreNotAlone



Social isolation and loneliness is a daily reality for many groups of vulnerable people which impacts their mental health and wellbeing. These people need support now more than ever and that's why CrossReach is inviting everyone to take part in the 'Push up for CrossReach' fundraiser.

For more information, please visit: www.crossreach.org.uk/pushupforcrossreach

Claymore's story - CrossReach Care and Education

Maintaining supportive relationships is of great importance to the work done by CrossReach's Care and Education Services and the organisation is proud to have supported Claymore during his care journey (from age 9 into adulthood).

Claymore's story includes his momentous contribution to the Who Cares? Scotland 2013 award winning campaign to extend the age of support given to looked after young people from 16 to 21. The campaign resulted in a change to legislation of support in Scotland being extended to age 25.

Claymore recently spent a day at the Six Nations rugby match at Murrayfield Stadium with staff members who supported him during his time at CrossReach. The day involved a meet and greet with Stuart Hogg, Kyle Steyn and Gregor Townsend, a tour of the grounds and the gifting of the match ball. Rugby has held a significant place in Claymore's life and it was an honor for CrossReach to be a part of Claymore's experience, both on and off the pitch.



Looking to share ideas on local social care and outreach projects? The Social Care Forum is your one-stop-shop for social care resources. Visit: www.socialcareforum.scot/

In Your Shoes at Whinnieknowe

Up until recently, Mondays at CrossReach's Whinnieknowe have been full of songs, stories and movement as residents and their families take part in the 'In Your Shoes' intergenerational project with Eden Court Theatre in Inverness.

Ruby Worth, Dance Practitioner, shares about the experience on the theatre's blog: bit.ly/38XHMYp



Umbrella Project

CrossReach is delighted that the Irvine Old Parish Church in North Ayrshire, is hosting its new project, Umbrella. Meeting twice a week, Umbrella is a place for people with a mental health problem to come and feel safe to socialise and to talk about the challenges they are experiencing. The project launched on 3 March 2020 with lots of conversations about how it aims to help improve the mental wellbeing of people in North Ayrshire. With 1 in 3 adults in Scotland experiencing depression or anxiety at some point in their life, initiatives to promote mental health and wellbeing underpin much of CrossReach's work.

To enquire, please contact: umbrella.project@crossreach.org.uk



Prayer Points

For all school pupils and their families; may their lives be deeply enriched and may they know God's peace at this time of uncertainty.

Thank God for the gift of technology that allows people to virtually connect with loved ones when they cannot see each other in person.

For a copy of the CrossReach Prayer Diary, visit: www.crossreach.org.uk/resources/prayer-diary



Get creative!

If you live close by to a CrossReach service, why not get creative with your children and draw a picture to send to a care or residential home? It could put a smile on many faces!

Find a service closest to you at:

www.crossreach.org.uk/our-locations



Mental health during self-isolation

There are a number of online spaces filled with tips and advice on maintaining good mental health during self isolation.

Further details: www.crossreach.org.uk/find-service/children-families/counselling

Easter cards 2020

With the current Coronavirus (Covid-19) restrictions in place, Crossreach staff are working from home so are unable to fulfill any orders. Therefore, the CrossReach webshop and telephone order line are temporarily closed until further notice.

CrossReach prayer widget for church website

CrossReach can email you a link to its Prayer Diary widget with easy to follow instructions on how to upload it. Every week, it will update automatically with a new set of prayers. For more information please contact: bdd@crossreach.org.uk

We hope you can make use of these features and opportunities in your congregations. To contact the CrossReach Supporter Development Team please call: 0131 454 4374



The Church of Scotland
Social Care Council

Operating as CrossReach, Scottish Charity No: SC011353

www.crossreach.org.uk



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