

St Andrew's Parish Church

(Church of Scotland),

Inverurie

THE

MAY 2020

S A L T I



E

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(To hear our services or to download them—go to "Listen Again" on our website)

Website: http://standrewsinverurie.co.uk

Scottish Charity Number: SC008791
St Andrew's is an open and inclusive Church

The Rev. Carl Irvine, may be contacted for pastoral care by contacting him on 01467 628740



Our Minister's Letter

Dear Friends,

As I write this, Easter is slowly fading into the past, but Pentecost is some way into the future. Our Sunday Gospel readings have concentrated on how the disciples reacted during the early days of the resurrection. They were fearful, hiding behind locked doors, terrified that they may suffer the same fate as Jesus. Yet, even though the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them, meeting

them in their fear and reassuring them that all was going exactly to God's plan. More, He showed His love for them. He didn't reprimand them for abandoning Him. He didn't say to Peter, 'I told you so.' He even offered His wounds for Thomas to explore because that's what Thomas said would make him believe. In short, He demonstrated not only His bodily resurrection but also His unconditional love.

Today, we too find ourselves hiding behind closed doors, fearful of an unseen threat. But we can be certain that Jesus is there for us in our need. He is at our side, reassuring us that God is in control, loving us, not holding our sins against us, and offering Himself to us in a time when we may find believing difficult.

As the days of lockdown draw on, with no clear end in sight, it can become all too easy to feel isolated but, thanks to technology, we do not need to. We can connect with family and friends through a simple telephone call or, even better, through facetime, skype, zoom and a host of other video facilities, which can be both one to one, or involve groups of people in different locations. Indeed, the Irvines have had some great family chats and quizzes, with the four of us in Inverurie, Lewis in Aberdeen and Caitlin in Glasgow.

Even worshipping together as a congregation is possible, through audio recordings on the St. Andrew's website and video recordings on the Facebook page. I sincerely hope that these recordings are providing you with some spiritual comfort at this time.

Of course, we are allowed outside for exercise, as long as we don't get too close to others. Suzanne and I tend to take ours walking Chip after our evening meal. As we walk, we see signs of new and returning life wherever we look: blossom on trees, flowers, especially daffodils, providing a wonderful splash of colour, and green shoots appearing through the soil of a brown field alongside the railway line. As this is our first springtime in the manse, it's also exciting to see the garden come to life and be pleasantly surprised by plants, we didn't know were there, appearing from the ground. In all of this, I am reminded by the words of Martin Luther, "Our Lord has written the promise of the resurrection, not in books alone, but in every leaf in springtime."

The promise of the resurrection is a promise to us that we will not stay in darkness. A time will come when, like seeds putting forth shoots in springtime, we leave the confinement of lockdown. When that time comes, it is up to us to be like the flowers that bring colour after the drab winter, bringing hope and love to a land that has long been in want. In the mean-time, remember the seed is in the ground for a short time but the plant is in the open air for much longer, fulfilling its purpose as God intended.

Heavenly Father,

As a seed develops and matures in the ground, preparing for the time when it will break into the light and grow into the plant it is destined to be, so we ask You to mature and develop us during lockdown. Draw us closer to You, so that we may become the people You would have us be. Develop in us the skills we need to fulfil Your purpose for us. Enable us to do Your will in the circumstances we find ourselves in.



Father, we pray Your blessing on all who are working to combat this virus, all who are working to keep us supplied with essentials and all who are working to help those who struggle to care for themselves. We pray also for those who have contracted this illness; help them, their families and medical staff in this difficult time. We especially pray for those who have been bereaved, comfort them in their grief and support them as they seek to rebuild their lives without their loved one.

Lord, this is a time of trial, but we know that You are there for us and, with Your strength, we will get through. We trust that, as You have done so many times in the past, You will use these difficult times to build something better. Let the power of the resurrection continue to do its work in this world. In Jesus' name.

Amen

Books of the Bible Puzzle Solution

This is a most remarkable puzzle. Someone found it in the seat pocket of a flight from Los Angeles to Honolulu keeping himself occupied for hours. One man from Illinois worked on this while fishing in his john boat. Roy Clark studied it while playing on his banjo. Elaine Victs mentioned it in her column once. One woman judges the job to be so involving that she brews a cup of tea to help calm her nerves. There will be some names that are really easy to spot ... that's a fact. Some people soon find themselves in a jam, especially since the book names are not necessarily capitalised. The truth is, from answers we get, we are forced to admit it usually takes a minister or scholar to see some of them at the worst. Something in our genes is responsible for the difficulty we have. Those able to find all of them will hear great lamentations from those who have to be shown. One revelation may help: books like Timothy and Samuel may occur without their numbers. Punctuation or spaces in the middle are normal. A chipper attitude will help you compete. Remember there are 25 books of the Bible lur**king s**omewhere in this paragraph.

- 1. Amos
- 2. Mark
- 3. Luke
- 4. John
- 5. Joel
- 6. Judges
- 7. Job
- 8. Hebrews
- 9. Esther

- 10. Acts
- 11. James
- 12. Ruth
- 13. Romans
- 14. Titus
- 15. Matthew
- 16. Genesis
- 17. Hosea
- 18. Lamentations

- 19. Revelation
- 20. Timothy
- 21. Samuel
- 22. Numbers
- 23. Malachi
- 24. Peter
- 25. Kings

Note to our Readers: Due to the Church being closed and all special and regular events being cancelled, we are delighted to accept articles from members of our congregation to fill what would be empty spaces! Saltire Editors

Fire, Flood &

Pestilence ... Doreen and I set off on New Year's Day for our annual trip to visit our family in Australia and Singapore. We usually spend Christmas with them but Richard and family had just moved into their new home early December while Derek and family had taken off skiing in Japan. We would catch them on our return. Little did we know the consequences of that skiing trip and how the world would change! More about that later. So instead of flying to Oz via Singapore we decided on the direct flight to my favourite Australian city Perth.

Perth, Western Australia (WA), is a beautiful city. I've said often if I had found it 50 years ago I would never have come back! Perth is remote but is very friendly and beautifully equipped leisure wise. When we arrived the weather was very hot 35-40 degrees.

In every town and city in Australia we've visited, there are exceptionally well tended War Memorials and RSL buildings (Retired Service Men's League), similar to the British Legion but much grander and better supported. We visited the very large War Memo-



rial on the heights of Kings Park, overlooking the harbour, beautifully laid out and maintained immaculately. (**See picture**)

What struck me was that at 6.00 o'clock every evening everyone using the facilities in all RSL buildings were invited to stand.

face West while the last post was played over the loudspeaker system., and "We will remember them" was announced. Australians are very mindful and respectful of their veterans and the fallen.

Fire

When we arrived in Sydney we were met by Richard. The smoke from the bush fires obscured the bay and you could not see the Opera House or the iconic Sydney Harbour Bridge. It had been like this for a few weeks.

Richard and family live about 18 miles north of Sydney in a lovely little town called North Narrabeen. Although much less affected by the smoke, for our first week there you could smell smoke all the time. However we still managed to have a belated Christmas dinner on the balcony in warm sunshine, turkey and the usual trimmings all cooked in the BBQ.

Australians are very friendly and, like Glaswegians, will strike up conversations anywhere with complete strangers. One such happened to Doreen and I while we were shopping in Mona Vale's Mall. We were arranging our shopping bags on a bench when this "old" bloke asked. "What's your girl's name?" I laughed and said Doreen and I had been married for 52 years upon which he announced so had he. His wife was still shopping. Before long he knew we were from Aberdeenshire, so we were told his name was Hay. His great grandfather was from Aberdeen and had come to Australia in 1834. His grandfather had been the first Mayor/Alderman of Mona Vale and had a street there named after him. He then proceeded to sing The Northern Lights of Old Aberdeen in a remarkably good voice, encouraging us to join in. No one turned a hair at this performance other than a few smiles.

Richard's two older boys go to Knox Grammar founded by Presbyterian Scots and still run on the same principles, though it is an International School. Knox is a bit further north than Narrabeen. Bush fires were still raging there, so much so that their school was evacuated and they were bussed home early. Exciting for them as they watched hundreds of fire fighters converge, aircraft and helicopters water bombing the flames and spreading fire retardant. Fortunately the wind turned and no damage was done to the school.

Flood

We continued to do some travelling and stayed for a week in Nelson's Bay about 180 miles further north.

While we were further north the heavy rains around Sydney and other parts of NSW continued, fortunately putting out all the bush fires but causing landslides and tremendous flooding. Richard's house sits about 2 metres higher than his garage which was flooded as the Narrabeen lagoon burst its banks and, although 100 metres from his house, flooded his entire street. When we arrived back, there were piles of debris from the flood everywhere, downed trees and the fear that a shark had been spotted in the lagoon. (See picture).



Pestilence

It was with a heavy heart we left Richard, Jo and the boys knowing it would be at least a year before we saw them again in the flesh. Using FaceTime and WhatsApp is not quite the same.

We were however looking forward to seeing Derek's family, and our youngest grandson Peter, aged 4.

By this time there were restrictions emerging on flying into and out of Singapore because of Covid-19. We have previously stayed with Derek, his wife Josephine and Peter, but Derek had been seriously injured and had had three major operations on his crushed spine, the result of a skiing accident in Japan, so we stayed for 4 days in an hotel.

We did see Derek and Peter but the weather was poor and planned trips to the Singapore Flyer and Duck tours with Peter were all cancelled. At the time we thought the cancellations were weather related but were actually Singapore readying their response to the virus. On the days before we left we were tested everywhere, temperature wise, when entering our hotel, shops and malls.

We arrived home earlier than planned on 9th March. I was fine but Doreen next day succumbed to either regular flu or Covid-19. We still don't know which as the test the NHS originally planned to give her was cancelled because of the need to test front line staff. Now fully recovered we have self isolated for the required period.

Derek our younger son is now recovering well though he'll be unable to lift Peter, swim/dive or cycle for many months. All a bit frustrating for him but needs must!

Peter Donaldson

(Elder and Fabric Convener).

Priest who gave his respirator away ... Sky News recently reported on the poignant story of an Italian priest who contracted coronavirus. Friar Don Giuseppe Berardelli, 72, was the priest for the parish of Casnigo, a small village just 40 miles north east of Milan.

According to the hospital, a parishioner quickly bought him a respirator, but the priest refused to use it, instead giving it to a younger patient he did not even know.

Friar Berardelli died in hospital in Lovere, Bergamo, one of the worst-hit areas in Italy. No funeral was able to be held for Friar Berardelli. Instead people stood on their balconies at noon on 16 March and gave him a round of applause.

A Special Friendship... April 2020 saw the 75th anniversary of the liberation of Belsen Concentration Camp by the British Army of whom many were Scottish soldiers. My husband Tom and I have an unusual connection with this place of horror and tragedy.

In 1981 Tom and I were travelling to Paris for a 5 day holiday and on the train from London to Dover we were joined in our compartment by a charming young French girl who was returning home to Paris. We got talking and discovered that she shared an interest in squash so a match was duly arranged between herself and Tom for the Sunday afternoon! Tom and I travelled out to Fontainbleu on the Sunday and whilst Annick and Tom had their squash match, Annick's parents, Jean-Jacques and Francine, took me to the nearby Fontainbleu Palace. We then all met for a very typical English afternoon tea in their home. (By the way, Tom NEVER drinks tea, only coffee, but one look from me persuaded him to try the specially brewed jasmine tea!) Thus began a wonderful friendship with so many entwined relationships eg our younger son, Mark aged 11, going on an exchange to France to improve his French, followed in future years by Annick's 3 children staying with us in Oyne during several summers and attending Oyne Primary to improve their English. Here I must add a uniquely North East story. Thibaut, Annick's 10 year old son, when coming back to our house after his first day at school asked me, "Kit, what does 'gie's a bosie' mean?" Obviously he was also learning Doric!!

And, as many of you know, Tom and I go to the South of France every June/ July to stay as guests in Jean Jacques and Francine's summer abode in Valbonne, a beautiful 16th century village. So, why did I mention Belsen at the beginning of this article? Jean-Jacques and Francine are Jewish and, although Jean Jacques as a boy managed to escape being captured by the Nazis, Francine was not so fortunate. Francine, aged 9, and her mother were interned in Belsen in 1943 and, almost unbelievably, survived the appalling brutalities as well as having at one point contracted typhus. On April 15th 1945 the camp was liberated and Francine still remembers so clearly speaking to the first British soldier - a Scot - who approached her and her mother. Indeed, for many, many years until the soldier died, Francine and Jean Jacques kept in contact with their liberator.

Although now almost 87 years old Francine continues to lecture at high schools, colleges and universities both in France and the UK on the horrors of the Holocaust coupled with her



hopes for a better future for all people Each year (2020 has been the sole exception due to the coronavirus) she and Jean Jacques are invited to Belsen on April 15th to commemorate the Liberation.

This past February Tom was 80 and we held his birthday celebrations with our family and friends in London. Jean Jacques and Francine with Annick and her husband were our honoured guests. (*Photo shows Jean Jaques & Francine with our son, John.*) It was a wonderfully happy evening and everyone there was deeply aware they were in the presence

of history.

Postscript: towards the end of March Jean Jacques, aged 90, caught the coronavirus in Paris but is making the most remarkable recovery. Jean Jacques and Francine - Tom and I salute you.

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Kathleen O'Meara's poem, 'And People Stayed Home,'

written in 1869, after the famine

And people stayed home and read books and listened and rested and exercised and made art and played and learned new ways of being and stopped and listened deeper someone meditated someone prayed someone danced someone met their shadow and people began to think differently and people healed and in the absence of people who lived in ignorant ways, dangerous, meaningless and heartless, even the earth began to heal and when the danger ended and people found each other grieved for the dead people and they made new choices and dreamed of new visions and created new ways of life and healed the earth completely

just as they were healed themselves.

Whatever your philosophy,

Bill Gates makes some powerful points...stay safe.

In an open letter, entitled 'What is the <u>Corona/ Covid-19</u>
<u>Virus</u> Really Teaching us?', Bill Gates wrote:

'A SPIRITUAL PURPOSE'

"I'm a strong believer that there is a spiritual purpose behind everything that happens, whether that is what we perceive as being good or being bad.

- "As I meditate upon this, I want to share with you what I feel the Corona/Covid-19 virus is really doing to us.
- 1) It is reminding us that we are all equal, regardless of our culture, religion, occupation, financial situation or how famous we are. This disease treats us all equally, perhaps we should to. If you don't believe me, just ask Tom Hanks.
- 2) It is reminding us that we are all connected and something that affects one person has an effect on another.

It is reminding us that the false borders that we have put up have little value as this virus does not need a passport.

It is reminding us, by oppressing us for a short time, of those in this world whose whole life is spent in oppression.

3) It is reminding us of how precious our health is and how we have moved to neglect it through eating nutrient poor manufactured food and drinking water that is contaminated with chemicals upon chemicals.

If we don't look after our health, we will, of course, get sick.

4) It is reminding us of the shortness of life and of what is most important for us to do, which is to help each other, especially those who are old or sick.

Our purpose is not to buy toilet roll.

- 5) It is reminding us of how materialistic our society has become and how, when in times of difficulty, we remember that it's the essentials that we need (food, water, medicine) as opposed to the luxuries that we sometimes unnecessarily give value to.
- 6) It is reminding us of how important our family and home life is and how much we have neglected this.

It is forcing us back into our houses so we can rebuild them into our home and to strengthen our family unit.

'OUR TRUE WORK'

7) It is reminding us that our true work is not our job, that is what we do, not what we were created to do.

Our true work is to look after each other, to protect each other and to be of benefit to one another.

8) It is reminding us to keep our egos in check.

It is reminding us that no matter how great we think we are or how great others think we are, a virus can bring our world to a standstill.

9) It is reminding us that the power of freewill is in our hands.

We can choose to cooperate and help each other, to share, to give, to help and to support each other or we can choose to be selfish, to hoard, to look after only our self.

Indeed, it is difficulties that bring out our true colours.

//....

10) It is reminding us that we can be patient, or we can panic.

We can either understand that this type of situation has happened many times before in history and will pass, or we can panic and see it as the end of the world and, consequently, cause ourselves more harm than good.

11) It is reminding us that this can either be an end or a new beginning.

This can be a time of reflection and understanding, where we learn from our mistakes, or it can be the start of a cycle which will continue until we finally learn the lesson we are meant to.

12) It is reminding us that this Earth is sick.

It is reminding us that we need to look

at the rate of deforestation just as urgently as we look at the speed at which toilet rolls are disappearing off of shelves. We are sick because our home is sick.

13) It is reminding us that after every difficulty, there is always ease.

Life is cyclical, and this is just a phase in this great cycle. We do not need to panic; this too shall pass.

14) Whereas many see the Corona/ Covid-19 virus as a great disaster, I prefer to see it as a *great corrector*

It is sent to remind us of the important lessons that we seem to have forgotten and it is up to us if we will learn them or not



May brings Christian Aid Week.... which is difficult this year!

Updated guidance for Christian Aid Week (10 - 16 May)

Amanda Khozi Mukwashi, the CEO of Christian Aid, has written to all of those involved in helping with Christian Aid Week this month:

"Many of you will have been planning house-to-house collections and events. Under the current circumstances, sadly, house-to-house collections and delivery-only collections should not go ahead. In particular, along with many churches, events such as Big Brekkies or Lent lunches, where food is shared, cannot go ahead.

"We are working on alternative plans that will allow people to take part in Christian Aid Week in different, creative ways – by post, by text and online that strengthen our communities during this challenging time. Christian Aid Week is our single-most important fundraiser, so we would welcome your ideas on how we can creatively show love for our neighbours at home and abroad, as a community."

As for the work of Christian Aid around the world, "Christian Aid and our partners already have experience of limiting the spread of infection during the Ebola crisis, and we will build on this experience. People in poorer countries are already living with reduced health resilience because of extreme poverty, or in overcrowded humanitarian camps. They also do not have good healthcare infrastructures. We will be working on the ground to help prepare communities to limit the impact of Covid-19. More at: https://www.christianaid.org.uk

Life in quarantine

Full marks to Jamie Oliver for his Channel 4 series, 'Keep Cooking and Carry On'. He showed us how to make tasty meals with basic ingredients and a minimum of fuss.

The pandemic prompted other encouraging responses. One mother in the 'at risk' category said her adult children thought she was immortal until now. Now they ring her every day to see how she's getting on. An elderly clergyman had offers to shop from two new neighbours whom he hardly knew. The whole nation stopped taking the National Health Service for granted and started showing gratitude. Telephone, television, the internet and email prevent many from going stir-crazy. Some even trying the cryptic crossword, though newcomers should be warned it takes years to learn its secrets! The isolation is tough for many.

Isolated families have to get used to each other's company and foibles for long periods, away from the park or beach. Couples are parted from each other by distance or illness. Those living alone are cut off from visitors and communal activities. Churchgoers missed Holy Communion at Easter for the first time. That should help us identify with millions of Christians across the world who have to pray in secret because their neighbours would persecute them if they did so publicly.

Alone-ness, rather than loneliness, can be productive. Albert Einstein valued time alone, when he could "go for long walks on the beach so that I can listen to what is going on inside my head." Isaac Newton's greatest discoveries began when he escaped the effects of the bubonic plague by returning home to the family farm in Lincolnshire. He had time to observe what was going on around him and, yes, that did include watching the famous apple fall.

When the bubonic plague was at its peak, the Reformer Martin Luther wrote:

"I shall ask God mercifully to protect us. Then I shall fumigate, help purify the air, administer medicine and take it. I shall avoid places and persons where my presence is not needed in order not to become contaminated and thus perchance inflict and pollute others and so cause their death as a result of my negligence. If God should wish to take me, He will surely find me and I have done what He has expected of me, and so I am not responsible for either my own death or the death of others."

Congregational Roll

ST ANDREW'S PARISH CHURCH CHANGES IN ROLL 1st - 27th April 2020

Recently Deceased

Service conducted by

Mr David Kitchin, St Boswells

4/4/2020

Melrose Crematorium

Mr N (Tam) Rorie, 92 North Street

4/4/2020

Rev. C Irvine

31st May - Pentecost in Jerusalem

On that long ago first morning of Pentecost, Jerusalem was crowded with thousands of visitors, for it was one of the most popular feast-days in the Jewish calendar – the Feast of Firstfruits, looking forward to the wheat harvest.



In one small room of that great city, a small group of people who had followed Jesus were praying. There was nothing else for them to do: Jesus had died, He had risen, and He had ascended, promising to send them 'a Comforter'. They were left alone, to wait at Jerusalem. And so, they waited – on Him, and for Him. They were not disappointed, for that morning the Holy Spirit fell upon that small room, and transformed those believers into the Church, Christ's body here on earth. Pentecost was not the first time that the Holy Spirit came to the world – throughout the Old Testament there are stories telling of how God had guided people and given them strength. But now His Spirit would use a new instrument: not just isolated prophets, but the Church, His body on earth.

Acts opens with the preaching of the gospel in Jerusalem, the centre of the Jewish nation. Within 30 years the Gospel had spread throughout the northern Mediterranean: Syria, Turkey, Greece, Malta... to the very heart of the Roman Empire: Rome. The Church was on the move – God was on the move! He was calling people from every nation to repent, turn to Jesus for forgiveness of their sins, and to follow Him.



The Boys' Brigade send all their best wishes to the congregation during this worrying crisis. As you are aware we have now ceased all meetings and planned activities which has been disappointing however - **GREAT NEWS.** The Boys' Brigade have developed a

home task and challenge programmes for all three groups. We have set up three WhatsApp groups to mirror the Anchor boys, Junior Section and Company Section and Seniors.

These challenges and tasks have included making a lego model of the Last Supper, a paper boat to depict Noah's Ark, helping with the dishwasher, planting sunflower seeds, Acts of Kindness, and rainbow making, den building etc. The boys are asked to complete at least three of the six weekly challenges and we have had a great response from the boys. Every week we issue the packs and we log the activity and it goes towards their badge and attendance register. That's all we have to share for this month and we are looking forward to keeping the boys interested through this period.

Take Care. The BB Team

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JUNE 2020 SALTIRE ... Will be online on 1st June. Please email material for the June Saltire to The Church Office by 20th May 2020.

St Andrew's Safeguardimg Statement

(Relating to the Protection of Children and Young People in the Church.

Adopted by the General Assembly, May 1997.)

The Church of Scotland has a deep concern for the wholeness and well-being of each individual. I seeks to safeguard the welfare of all people, regardless of age, who come into contact with the church and its organisations. It is the responsibility of each individual within the fellowship of the church to prevent the physical, sexual or emotional abuse of children and young people and the vulnerable. St Andrew's Parish Church has a Zero Tolerance Policy to any form of abuse.