



Balshagray Victoria Park
Church of Scotland

The Herald

Lockdown (2) Summer 2020

Welcome to another special Lockdown virtual edition of the BVP Herald.

Thanks to all who provided material for this issue, with special thanks to Campbell Joss for his suggesting it and soliciting support and articles, and to Derek Robertson for distributing it, including printing and posting to those not on e-mail.

"After Lockdown"

Dear Friends,

I send this letter to let you know how much I miss us all meeting together as a church family during this time of battling the Coronavirus. While we know and realize that 'church is not a building', but the 'people' who make up the body of Christ, there's little doubt in all our minds this is not the way any of us envision what church will be going forward. Someone once said, 'you don't know what you have until it's gone'. Of course, the church is not 'gone' in a literal sense, but not meeting together really does make me appreciate what we had. Yet, the thing that keeps me going is the realization this is not a situation that will last forever.

Little did we realize how long this process would take when we ceased our regular church gatherings in addition to group events. As you can imagine, the task of opening our church for services once again will take a lot more thought than closing things down for a while. While 'where we are going' in the weeks and months ahead is not fully known, I would ask you continue to pray for both wisdom and faith as we navigate uncharted waters.

We must praise God though for this modern age in which there are so many ways to stay connected in the faith when we need it. We praise God for the miracle of modern science and discoveries, all of which are

inspired by God to be uncovered at the right time. God can use any method, vehicle, or means which he sees fit to address our every need. The coronavirus pandemic did not catch him off guard. So please continue to pray while you're staying home from church, to take away fear from those experiencing it, in Jesus' name. The opposite of fear isn't faith—it's love, "and so we know and rely on the love God has for us. God is love" and "there is no fear in love". (1 John 4:16-18)

Yes, naturally, the enemy wants to keep people trapped in fear and panic about coronavirus, and everything else, so they cannot rest in the peace and knowledge of the love of God. Luke 4:39 says that when Peter's mother-in-law fell ill, Jesus "rebuked the fever, and it left her". Even the forces of nature and the causes of fever exist under the authority of the name of Jesus Christ. And you have been given that authority, so walk in it (Luke 10:19)

If you're staying home from church, at this time, you can still pray. While we can't pray together we can pray alone. So, pray, in his name, for the healing of those who are ill and for the protection of those who are not ill. Pray for the knowledge of those addressing the pandemic and for the inspiration of the Holy Spirit to uncover the answers to all the questions. (John 16:13)

I trust you are all doing well and staying healthy during this extended situation we find ourselves in. Like you, I'm praying that God will combat this situation so we can get back to some sense of 'normality'.

Love & Blessings to you all (also from Ann).

Stuart

Sunday Prayer by Email

During the lockdown, each Saturday Stuart is sending me a prayer which I then email (using Bcc) to people who have requested it. So far there are 34 households receiving it. On Sunday evening at 9pm we all say the prayer aloud together in our own homes, thus connecting with God and each other.

If you are not already on the list but would like to join in, please could you send your email address to me and then I'll add you in? Thanks very much.

Fiona Hay

Finance Report 2020

A Message from our Session Clerk

Hi Everyone

I trust that you are all continuing to keep safe and well. I heard someone recently reflecting on their favourite verse in scripture and I started to think of what mine might be. I think one of my favourite verses is Jeremiah 29:11 'For I know the plans I have for you, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future'. At times such as these it can be difficult to understand how God intends to prosper us. Indeed, some have been saying 'Where is God in the midst of all this?' Well, if we are prepared to look around us, perhaps it will become obvious that God has not deserted us. The government wanted people to sign up to provide help to others, the name of the project 'The Good Sam project'. In the windows of many homes throughout the UK, rainbows have appeared. On Thursday nights at 8.00pm we clapped for carers – those who are prepared to put their lives on the line for others. What do the above examples remind you of? My friends, God has not deserted us, God is alive in our communities at this time, just as He has been throughout time. I pray that we would have the faithfulness to accept this and that we would glorify His name above all others. May you, and all those close to you enjoy His peace at this time.

Derek

The Guild

One of the Guild Projects that we have been supporting financially and through prayer is The Sailors' Society. Some people have also been knitting hats, scarves etc. to donate to the sailors in our ports. Since the wool shops have not yet been able to re-open, the supply of doubleknit wool has dried up as knitting has progressed. If anyone has balls of dark or brightly-coloured wool (not pastel) that they are not using or needing, I would be very happy to arrange to collect them – socially distancing of course!

*Christine Hay
Guild Secretary*

A number of members of the congregation have switched to paying directly to the church bank and I am very grateful to everyone who has made this arrangement. During May our income matched our expenditure mainly due to the increased direct payments and the rental from the manse. Our expenses have fallen, as might be expected in this period of non- activity.

I have recently received an update from the Church of Scotland treasurer. The following information forms part of this report:

ONLINE DONATIONS: It is now possible to use this method to donate to BVP at <https://cos.churchofscotland.org.uk/donate/> and click on the donate button they will redirect the funds to us.

FWO: Some members will not find it possible to give directly and you may be keeping weekly donations aside for a future date. The good news is that provided this total can be shown to be comprised of regular payments it will qualify for Gift Aid under the HMRC small donations scheme.

SUNDAY COLLECTIONS: It is clear that in the future when services are possible again, the handling of cash will be kept to a minimum and special precautions will be required. The days of handing round the collection plates are over, at least for the foreseeable future.

Campbell Joss, Treasurer

Church Roll

There have been no changes to the roll.

*Andy Coghill
Rollkeeper*

Prayer Points

Answer these two questions

'May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him.'

Romans 15:13 NIV

First, how is your relationship with God right now? Do you doubt His promises, His call on your life, your ability to hear from Him, His pleasure in you, or whether you can do enough to keep Him happy? If so, this Scripture is custom-designed for you: 'May the God of hope fill you with...joy and peace as you trust in him.' Notice, when you stop trusting God and start trusting in your own efforts, you lose your joy and peace. Have you lost yours today? If you want them back, you must get out of doubt and back into faith! Second, how is your relationship with yourself right now? One Christian author writes: 'For years the only relationship I had with myself was one of doubt. I doubted my decisions, my appearance, whether I was saying or doing the right thing...whether I was in any way pleasing God, or anybody else. I knew I wasn't pleased with myself, so how could God or anybody else be pleased with me? Those years of misery are behind me, because now I know God's grace covers me like a blanket. I know it's through Jesus alone that I'm made righteous and acceptable to God. What a joy! I was so bound by legalistic religion that I'll always have to be on guard against it. But now I know how to recognise its symptoms.' Paul writes, 'Stand fast then, and do not...submit again to a yoke of slavery [which you have once put off]' (Galatians 5:1 AMPC). Stop doubting your salvation, or yourself, or God!

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I have the May - July "Word for Today" (for adults) and "Word 4U Today" (for teenagers) magazines available, as they couldn't be distributed at Church. Since I don't know who usually takes them, if you'd like a copy delivered to you please contact me and I'll be happy to pass it on!

*Christine Hay
Prayer Secretary*

Glasgow Presbytery and Other Church Matters

I would normally write about the 'Persecuted Church', but whilst that remains an extremely important issue, I thought for a change and in my capacity as the Presbytery Elder for BVP, I would provide you with some information about what is happening in Glasgow Presbytery and the wider church.

Our buildings are not open for worship, but church life and the work of Presbytery continues, albeit in a format that is not familiar to many of us. Ministers and elders have remained active in supporting members of their respective congregations, using a variety of methods such as worship services on line, You Tube, Zoom, FaceBook, Direct Dialling, Streaming on Web Sites and even by hosting a 'virtual coffee morning'.

It has been a particularly difficult time for Glasgow Presbytery since the start of the year, due to the illness of Rev George Cowie, the Presbytery Clerk. However, I am pleased to report that George has completed a course of radiotherapy, is making progress, and is now waiting to hear from his consultant. As an interim measure, the Rev Hilary McDougall, the Congregational Facilitator was appointed in January as Depute Clerk on a part time basis.

The last meeting of Presbytery was on 10th March and there are no plans to hold 'normal gatherings' until the current restrictions are lifted. However, some Presbytery committees have held virtual meetings enabling essential Presbytery business to be discussed. I am part of the 'Ecumenical Relations and Interfaith Matters Committee' and we had a meeting in May using Zoom and it really does work perfectly well for a small group discussion.

On 31st March, the Rev Alastair Duncan was inducted to the charge of St George's Tron and on 11th June, the Rev James Gemmell was inducted to the charge of Carnwadric Parish Church. Both these inductions were conducted as 'virtual services', which is something entirely new and a first for the Church of Scotland. On 25th June, the Rev Peter Nimmo will be inducted to the charge of Cambuslang and this will also be a 'virtual service'.

The Moderator of Glasgow Presbytery, Rev Dan Carmichael has almost completed his year as Moderator, and arrangements are in hand for the 'virtual installation' on 16th June of the Rev William Wilson, Minister of Burnside Blairbeth Parish Church, as the new Moderator.

This year's General Assembly due to be held on 16-22 May, was also a victim of the current crisis and had to be cancelled. However, a special service was convened in Edinburgh on 16th May to formally install the Rev Dr Martin Fair as the new Moderator of the Church of Scotland, succeeding the Rt Rev Colin Sinclair. A 'Commission of Assembly' has been established to discuss urgent matters relating to the ongoing work of the Church and to implement any decisions agreed upon.

Twinning with congregations abroad is an important aspect of the work of the Church and Glasgow Presbytery is linked with the Diocese of Hyderabad (Pakistan). The Rev Graham Thain (Convener of the World Mission Committee) led a small team on a visit to Hyderabad and the Glasgow Presbytery web-site has a report.

There are so many meetings, events, conferences, and conventions that have been cancelled or rescheduled due to the Covid-19 pandemic, such as the Billy Graham Outreach event and the Keswick Convention. However I am pleased to tell you that an online five-day event called 'Virtually Keswick Convention' will run from Monday 27th to Friday 31st July. Just Google 'Keswick Convention 2020' for more information.

Finally, if you just want to listen to a variety of Christian music, short sermons and readings you can tune in to Radio Alba, an ecumenical, internet-based radio station, sponsored by Glasgow Churches Together at <https://radioalba.org> Happy listening.

It may be some time yet before we can all gather together as a congregation in BVP, but until then I pray the Lord will richly bless you and keep you safe and well during these very difficult times.

Robert Belmore

We close this Herald with the blessing!

The UK Blessing

During this period of lockdown being able to contact or communicate with one another via the internet or on social media has become so important. Folk who enjoy singing whether that it is in their kitchen or in a choir have been able to come together, forwarding recordings to be blended with other voices to form a virtual choir. Artists from the cast of 'Les Miserables' or pop and rock groups have made virtual recordings and Gareth Malome has hosted his Great British Home Chorus which has now morphed into a three-part BBC programme to be shown shortly.

However, all these recordings have been eclipsed by the recording which has become a YouTube sensation and which is currently trending on twitter. On Sunday 3rd May 'The UK Blessing' was released. The words from Numbers 6: 24-26 will be familiar - the Aaronic Blessing. Sixty-five churches throughout the UK came together 'virtually' to record this and many of these churches have also been involved in delivering meals to the isolated and vulnerable, phone calls, pharmacy delivery drops and hot meals to frontline NHS hospital staff. The message is our buildings may be closed but the church is very much alive. At the time of writing this recording has been listened to 3.2 million times.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PUtll3mNj5U>

There are now multiple recordings world-wide and you may well have heard it if you have followed some of the televised Sunday services. A lovely version was recorded for the Church of Scotland Pentecost Service on Sunday 31st May led by the new Moderator of the Church of Scotland the Rt Rev Martin Fair. It is sung by his wife Elaine and if you missed it you can find it on YouTube at

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ji3C1SnXtqw>