



Dear friends

August 2021

I hope this letter finds you safe and well. We have been enjoying a dry summer here in Renfrewshire and some of the temperatures in July have been uncomfortably hot.

I hope you have managed to find some time for rest and relaxation. As I write this on the last day of July, I know that I am about to enjoy two weeks of annual leave. A chance to relax, unwind and recharge the batteries.

It has been great over the early part of the summer to be able to share in worship with Dougie Adam, formerly Youth worker with the West Renfrewshire Youth Trust and currently a student for the full-time ministry of Word and Sacrament within the Church of Scotland. Dougie was with us for a six-week summer placement. In worship, we have been following the life of the early believers, the early church as recorded in the book of the Acts of the Apostles, and it has been good to have Dougie's insights on mission.

There is no doubt that the pandemic and its effect upon our world, our nation and our lives will be felt for years to come. Many aspects of life have changed and as we move forward it is good to know that restrictions are easing. The guidance around social distancing is changing and very soon we will be able to sing in Church as part of worship, all be it still in the meantime wearing our facemasks. It's hoped that later in the summer we will be able to use the hall again for some of our activities. There will be guidelines as to how to do this in as safe a way as possible, but things are moving in a hopeful direction.

As I said in our last letter, even though most of us are doubly vaccinated, we are all different and for some, after almost 18 months of not gathering with large groups of people, it can still feel strange or even daunting. We continue to respect one another's views and needs and at the same time, I believe we as a church need to rediscover what mission looks like in our post-pandemic 21st century.

How can we reach out in creative and imaginative ways to our community, our nation and our world?

Your minister and friend

Stephen

As a congregation, we extend our sympathy to any in our congregation and parish who have experienced bereavement recently. In particular, we remember the families and friends of the late Gordon Keir, Jimmy McCarten, Ruby Craig, Ann McMillan, Ann Burns, George King and George Gardner.

Sunday Worship

Our regular Sunday worship continues at 11 a.m. with increasing numbers attending - the service on 27th June celebrating the Sacrament of Communion saw 74 members take part. Our revised procedures, where everyone shared the elements at the same time, added a real sense of togetherness.

Recent announcements by the Scottish Government have eased Covid19 restrictions in many ways but have a more limited effect with regard to worship.

1) Social-distancing rules have been removed but we are conscious that many folk may not yet feel comfortable with this. Accordingly, we shall continue to seat attendees at designated locations in the church, at least 1 metre apart. This will increase our capacity to 120.

2) We are now permitted to sing, but masks must still be worn at all times. We shall resume congregational use of hymn books **from Sunday, 22nd August.**

3) We still require to obtain contact details from all attendees to assist with the Test and Protect scheme, should the need arise. For this reason, and to minimise delays in the vestibule before the start of worship, booking of places is strongly recommended.

You can book a place by emailing bookings.kpc@gmail.com or by texting or phoning 0787 620 1096 between Monday and Thursday of the week preceding the service. You must provide your name and a contact number.

Our regular Sunday Reflections continue and can be found via the church website <https://kilbarchankirk.org> also on our Facebook page and on YouTube.

You can also access the Reflections by telephone on 01505 805893

Live streaming of services

Since March 2020, the pandemic has placed great pressure on us all, including our church. We have made use of computer technology to create the weekly "Reflections" online, which has allowed many of us to keep in touch with our church.

The Trustees have been looking at ways to improve this method of outreach and a sub-committee was set up to look at how we might make our services available "live" online. The sub-committee received quotes from four companies who have expertise in providing camera technology in churches, which, when linked to broadband, would allow us to broadcast church services live online. The system installation will, of necessity, involve alterations to a few of the downstairs pews and those affected will be consulted accordingly.

A preferred provider has been approved by the Trustees and, should approval be received from Presbytery and the General Trustees in Edinburgh, we will take steps to have the system installed. We have also accepted a quote from Virgin Media who installed broadband cabling into the church last month (July).

POP UP STALL

Hello everyone, we are having another pop-up stall on Saturday 21 August, from 10am till 12 noon, and hope to have even more stalls this year. We already have George Grant's cards, Susan's aprons and cross stitch towels, Eilidh with aloe Vera products, and jams and marmalades. If anyone has garden produce, home baking, hand crafts or anything else to contribute please let me know. This will be an outdoor event with tables socially distanced from the church gate down towards the church.

Please contact Margaret Gibb on 702482 for more details or to take a stall.

Thanks, from the Foodbank.

"I would like to thank Kilbarchan Parish Church Members for your continuing support of Renfrewshire Foodbank. Your help means we are able to provide an emergency food parcel to anyone in our community who otherwise would go without. We also provide assistance with electricity and gas. In addition, we are funding an income adviser at the Foodbank to provide dedicated specialist money and debt advice to our visitors. This has proven to be invaluable in helping people out of food poverty. Items we are currently short of are jam, long life juice and tinned potatoes for our parcels and small packets of laundry detergent, bleach and washing up liquid."

Thank you once again for your kindness
Elizabeth Alexander, Renfrewshire Foodbank'

ECO CHURCH – Blister Pack collecting and recycling

As you know we are collecting 'blister packs' for recycling. Could you please bring them in paper bags, rather than plastic. The paper bags we all get from the Pharmacy would be ideal. There will be a cardboard box in the vestibule to collect them, or alternatively you can leave them in the porch of Myra and George Grant's house, 5 Steeple Square. Many thanks for your help.

From the Finance Team

During the past 17 months or so, when the Church has been closed for long periods, members have been reviewing how they regularly give to the Church.

Some have opted to give by way of Standing Order, which enables a regular amount to be paid directly into the Church's Bank Account. Donating in this way is very helpful from the Church's point of view, as it provides a regular source of income and assists the Church to budget for future expenditure.

Any member who currently does not donate by Standing Order but is interested in giving in this way, can be provided with a Standing Order Form

Weekly Offering Envelopes are provided by the Church to those members who prefer to give in this way. The Envelopes for 2022 are about to be ordered.

Any member who normally donates using Envelopes and decides that they no longer wish Envelopes in future or anyone who would like a standing order form should contact Marjory Love on 01505 or by emailing her at marjory.love@btinternet.com .

Marjory will also be pleased to deal with any queries which members may have regarding giving to the Church.

Thanks are extended to all members for their continuing financial support, particularly in these difficult times.

The Guild

Although we are still unsure as to when we as a Guild can meet up, the Committee met up earlier this month to look at the overall situation.

First of all, there have been several changes to the Committee in that Christine Dale resigned as Convener at the end of last year and Joan MacKinnon and Aileen Craig have retired due to health problems. Fortunately, Rosemary Clark has agreed to take on role of Convener and Frances Combes has agreed to come back on to the Committee.

As a committee we were none too sure as to how many members were likely to return to the Guild, so we have made contact with our membership. From the reports back, people are looking forward to the Guild reopening when we get the go ahead. One of the major problems facing us in 2019/20 was the setting out and clearing up for our meetings. We decided to write to the Session and ask for help and I am glad to say that we have had a positive response in that the Session has taken our request on board and will come up with a solution.

The Committee meet up again on 10th August and let us hope that by then we have a better idea of when we can join in fellowship again.

In the meantime, enjoy this gorgeous summer. Jan Howitt

From Dougie Adam

I'm penning this midway through my sixth week of my placement in Kilbarchan, and although it feels like I have just started my placement, my time with you is now almost at an end. I'll be with you for two more Sundays at the start of August while Stephen is on annual leave.

The time has flown by and there have been many highlights: Admin Al's video editing skills as Stephen and I attempted to play keepy-uppy with a football on camera, hearing someone sing 'live' in church for the first time in over a year, celebrating communion in church for the first time in almost a year and a half, trying to find crowds of willing participants to record vox-pops on the streets of Kilbarchan. The list goes on.

I've really enjoyed being part of Sunday worship and recording bits and pieces for the Online Reflection and getting to meet a few of you before and after the services. I've learned a lot from Stephen and from folks at the church gate.

It has been really good on a personal level to be thinking about our theme of mission from the book of Acts over these summer months, just before I begin my probationary period in September and as I hope to complete my training and being called to my first charge in the next few years.

Although it is tempting to see Acts as a romanticized view of the early church, I've certainly been aware that almost every time something great happens there is criticism from within the church to deal with or persecution and threats from outside as well.

I've been struck by how many of the missionary encounters in Acts happen outside or on journeys and it has got me thinking that the church in Scotland often invites people to come inside a building to a church service or special event. I sometimes wonder if I would have the courage and imagination to spend a good portion of my time as a minister meeting people on the streets, outside in the community? I've also been inspired once again by the way the early church was fearless in speaking about Jesus and also living out Jesus' teaching to love their enemies and share their money and food with the poor.

Recently, as I have been reflecting on the scale of the task facing the church in Scotland as it seeks to engage in mission in meaningful ways with the people in our communities, I have found myself returning to the lyrics of an Ian White song which was sung at my graduation from International Christian College in Glasgow more than 20 years ago:

*Though I feel afraid of territory unknown
I know that I can say that I do not stand alone
For Jesus you have promised your presence in my heart
I cannot see the ending, but it's here that I must start.*

*And all I know is you have called me
and that I will follow is all I can say
I will go where you will send me
and your fire lights my way.*

*What lies across the waves may cause my heart to fear
will I survive the day must I leave what's known and dear?
A ship that's in the harbour is still and safe from harm,
but it was not built to be there it was made for wind and storm.*