

Newsletter: Prestongrange Church

September 2020

Dear friends,

We are delighted to write to you of our plans to re-open the church building (and the hall) in line with government and Church of Scotland advice. **The Kirk Session has agreed to reopen our church for Sunday worship at 11.00am on 20th September 2020 and each Sunday thereafter.** We would hope to continue our online worship at the same time (or if this proves to be difficult or unsatisfactory, to have a separate online worship service at 10 am.).

Our session clerk and her team have worked hard in drawing up risk assessments to minimise the risk of contracting Covid-19 in our buildings. Jane is also co-ordinating a willing group of cleaners and helpers to assist in the cleaning and sanitising of our church and hall and putting welcome procedures and safety measures in place. These safeguards will make worshipping as safe as possible during this pandemic.

As with any activity, the risk of infection is real and present. Worship as a church will not be as it was in March when we last gathered face-to-face.

Worship in the church will be different in the following ways:

Cleaning and disinfecting

The church will be cleaned and disinfected before every service.

Entering and Exiting

As we enter and exit, please maintain a physical distance of 2 m from others and use the hand sanitiser available.

There will be a one-way route in the church - enter at the usual east door and exit at the west door.

- **Doors open** at 10.40 before the service.

Face Coverings

We require you wear a face covering (unless you are exempt from wearing one on medical grounds) throughout the time you are in the church building. We will have a supply if you need one. The minister is allowed to be unmasked during the leading of worship.

Seat allocation

We have a max. of 36 places available and the seats will need to be filled in a strict order so that everyone can be seated safely. A seat will be allocated to you on your arrival which will result in you being asked to sit in a seat that will be different from where you would normally choose to sit.

- We can only seat people together if they are a household group.
- The balconies are off limits.

Booking System

Only those who are booked will be permitted to enter the church for worship (2 seats will be retained for visitors).

-TO BOOK for Sunday 20th Sept. (& subsequent Sundays):

Telephone: 01875 811929 (Yvonne).

Text: 07597184194

Priority group – see below. Text or phone on **Wednesday between 7-8p.m.**

All others text or phone on **Wednesdays between 8-9p.m.**

If booking numbers exceed seats, reallocation to the following week's service will be offered. (**Priority** will be given to those who haven't managed to connect to our worship on Zoom).

Recording Contact Details

We must keep a record of a name and phone number from each household for the NHS Scotland Test and Protect strategy.

Please give these details to Yvonne when you book your seat. These will be held by us for 21 days and then destroyed. By giving us your contact details you're agreeing to let us do that.

Taking the Offering

Offerings may be placed on the plates at the entrance doors.

We would encourage members to seriously consider the advantage of giving offerings by a direct deposit or bank transfer to the church account. This will save the handling of cash. The minister or treasurer can supply details.

No Singing

We will have music but will not be singing together. No hymnbooks or bibles will be available but do bring your own bible to church.

Ventilation

Ventilation of the building will continue to be maintained throughout the service- so dress accordingly!

Safety of others

If you are unwell or should be isolating due to any possible Covid-19 symptoms or because of contact with a positive Covid-19 case or you live with someone with symptoms, please stay at home and do not come to the church putting others at risk.

Although our worship will feel decidedly different, let us pray that our meeting with our risen, glorified Saviour and our time in the word of God and in prayer will be a joy and blessing to us all.

Yours in the wonderful fellowship of the Lord and his people,

Kenneth Donald (Phone:813643)

“Some trust in chariots and some in horses, but we trust in the name of the Lord our God. They are brought to their knees and fall, but we rise up and stand firm.”

(Psalm 20 :7 & 8).

We can either trust in what we have to see us through or we can trust in the Lord himself to see us through. It's easy to go through life trusting in our own resources; believing that we have what it takes to live out our lives. Sometimes, however, we may be made acutely aware of our own limitations, knowing that what we once trusted in can so easily fail us.

Through this period of pandemic, we have become aware of our own sense of powerlessness and vulnerability in the face of what threatens us. God has his own way of speaking to us and for our culture and society that has turned its back on God, could it be that God is seeking to arrest our attention and to turn us back to himself?

As Christians, our faith is not primarily in our politicians and leaders or even our NHS—although we are greatly indebted to all who have served us over this period. Primarily, our faith is in the God of heaven who is sovereign over all and who is mighty to bless, help and restore. As we rise up in faith and look to God and His word, He promises to guide and sustain us and to give us a deep sense of assurance and certainty in our hearts. We are not a defeated people but a privileged people who enjoy victory over sin and death and hell through our Lord Jesus.

As we trust in the Lord in our changing circumstances, we will be enabled to stand firm in faith by the Lord who calls us and keeps us. His power that is at work within us is stronger than any other. His peace is more enduring than any other and his purpose is more glorious than anything that this world can give.

What a great time to be a Christian, that we might display to the world a different way to live – not in fear of the unknown but in faith in the One who has made himself known and who calls us into a dynamic and joyful relationship with Himself.

“Love so amazing, so divine, demands my soul, my life, my all.” (When I survey.” Isaac Watts).

Deaths: Mary McEwan

Margaret Kempton

We are thankful to God for Mary and Margaret and remember their families in prayer.

Transferences: Ian Wallace.

We are very grateful for Ian's service as elder and former session clerk over many years.

Givings

Our thanks to those who have changed to direct giving by bank transfer or standing order. This is much appreciated as it saves money being counted and banked. It is also a help to know what regular monthly income we can count on. Phone our treasurer, Margaret: 899041 for details if you would like to support the work of the church in this way.

If you are giving by our envelope system, we can make arrangements to uplift envelopes (unless you are able to bring them to church on 20th Sept onwards). Our treasurer, clerk to the board (Fiona) and our minister are happy to receive or collect envelopes/givings during this period. No one else has authority to collect donations from you in this way. Offerings may also be posted through the manse letterbox.

Our givings (excluding Gift Aid): Jan– mid Aug. 2020 compared to 2019:

2020: £25,882

2019: £27,403

Online giving

<https://www.churchofscotland.org.uk/donate>: Online donations can be made to the church by choosing “Prestongrange Church”

ZOOM: Sundays 11am: Worship Together.

We will seek to use Zoom from the church building on Sundays so that those who would prefer to use Zoom for a while longer, can join us from home. We will experiment using a dongle connection but we may need to consider an internet connection for the church. We may also look at using an YouTube channel to record the weekly bible teaching so that a wider audience may be able to connect with us.

NO INTERNET?- No problem! Phone us and we will send you Zoom's local number (and access code for each meeting) for you to connect with us by phone to listen in.

Prayer:

As a church, we are meeting for prayer on Tuesdays at 7.30– 8.15.pm

& Saturdays: 8.30– 9.10am. Contact us for Zoom details.

Our Thanks to Ewen Glen, our shared, part-time Family and Youth worker who has served us well over the years. If you would like to be part of a farewell gift to Ewen, we invite you to post an envelope through the manse door in an envelope marked “Ewen” or place the same in the offering plate on Sunday 20th/ 27th. We pray for Ewen, Heather, Samuel and Jacob as Ewen embarks on his teacher training course.