

# Loanhead Parish Church

## Newsletter

### May 2020

Dear friends

The last few months have been so unusual, with many people confined to home, gatherings cancelled and children not able to attend school. Alongside that those in our health service and elsewhere have been working hard to keep things going. This has put pressure on people in lots of different ways—with those who are working and looking after children stretched, whilst others are finding themselves isolated and frustrated.

The changes have also meant re-thinking the way that we organise church life, with no opportunity to gather for worship on a Sunday and no groups or activities. At this stage it looks like it will be the autumn before any of this can re-start—and that even then we will be restricted in what we can do. Like all churches, we have had to work hard very quickly to adapt what we do, taking what we can online and ensuring that we try and keep in touch by phone and email.

In all of this turmoil though, one of the passages that has spoken to me is found in Psalm 31. Written at a time in David's life when he had to flee from Jerusalem, fearful for his life and finding others conspiring against him. A time of challenge that could have driven him to question God, but instead drives him into God's arms. He writes:

*But I trust in you, O Lord.  
I will say, "you are my God.  
My times are in your hands."*

I find that a hugely encouraging thought—that our times are in God's hands. Not Boris Johnston's, Nicola Sturgeon's or anyone else's, but in God's. I pray you may know that whatever the challenges you face and as we look for creative ways to keep in touch, stir faith and renew hope in these times.

Yours in Christ

*Graham Duffin*



The banner above is on the railings at the church to highlight that church has not stopped just because we can't meet together on Sundays! Here is what's currently on offer:

**Reflections and worship**, a 15-20 minute video is available from 8 a.m. each Sunday with reflections on a passage from the bible, prayers and a worship song. These can be accessed through the church's facebook page and the website—see details above. They are also available by phoning **0131 297 6197** where you can hear the same message, readings and prayers.

**Sunday Gathering** at 10.30 a.m. is hosted on Zoom. With around 40 people taking part weekly, it provides a more informal setting to share. We spend time with the children, interview a few people then pray before sharing a worship song. It's great to see folk gather, greet one another and catch up on one another's news. At 11 a.m. we break into smaller groups to allow folk to chat and share together—a bit like having tea and coffee after our morning service!

It's also possible to phone in to share in this. Dial 0131 460 1196 Meeting ID: 951 9272 3946# Participant ID: # Password: 904377#

**"Thought for the Day"** is a short 4 minute reflection from the minister, linked in with a bible passage. It provides something midweek as an ongoing focus and encouragement. It is available on the website on a Tuesday and a Thursday—and is also available on the phone line. **0131 297 6197**.

On page 7 you'll find further details of other midweek activities and on page 6 details of what we are providing for children, young people and families. These are being developed further as we are able.



# Pentecost

## **Sunday 31st May**

At Pentecost we recall the coming of the Holy Spirit and the birth of the Church. Whilst we won't have our usual dramatic flower display in the church with the flaming reds and oranges that remind us of the fire that accompanied the coming of the Holy Spirit, we hope to mark the day in a special way.

### **A service for all Church of Scotland Congregations**

At 10 a.m. The new Moderator of the Church of Scotland, Rev Martin Fair, will be hosting a morning service for Pentecost from his church in Arbroath at 10 a.m. The service is designed to be shared by churches across Scotland—and we will shape our day round that.

We would like to encourage you to listen in or watch. Details will be available on the church website and facebook page (see opposite page.)

We will also make DVD's or CD's of the service available for those who don't have access online and it will be on our own dedicated phone number—0131 297 6197—from 6 p.m. that evening.

***If you would like a DVD or CD please let the minister know in advance. 0131 448 2459***

**Reflections from the Manse** will be shorter than usual and the Sunday Gathering will be delayed slightly to 10.40 a.m.

**Children & family activities** are being planned as well—you'll find details about those on page 6 you'll read of our plans for children and families for Pentecost.

**Flowers:** Our younger families are going to help us by taking flowers out to members, with colours that help to remind us of the power of the Holy Spirit.

So while we will miss out on the display that Shelagh puts together for the church, we hope and pray that they will stand as strong symbols of hope in these times, which is so important and as a reminder of the presence of the Holy Spirit with us, fulfilling the promise of Jesus to send us a Helper.

## **Finances**

Our activities stopping has impacted on three areas of income

- ◆ Weekly offerings have stopped— around £500 a week
- ◆ Hall rental which bring in £6,500 a year
- ◆ Fund Raising events last year brought in £5,000

To balance this we will be able to make some savings

- ◆ Our gas and electricity will reduce significantly from last year's £4,500
- ◆ Non urgent repairs we planned will be left just now, saving £3,000
- ◆ We have furloughed the cleaner and travel expenses will be reduced, saving £1,500

These don't balance out—although we know that a number of people are continuing to use their Weekly Freewill Offering envelopes, which means that the drop in the weekly offering total will not be as severe as shown.

We have reserves to cover us in the short term, but realise that draining these completely would leave us in a precarious position. We are therefore looking to members and others to support us if they can—recognising that this will not be possible for some.

### **How can you help?**

#### Standing Order

Currently, our main income is from members and others giving in this way. If you are able to, please consider setting up a monthly standing order. The bank details are:

Bank of Scotland, 801742, Loanhead Parish Church 00451198

#### Freewill Offering Envelopes:

Many people use these for their Sunday offering and we hope that if you use these regularly that you will continue to do so. See details opposite about collection of these.

#### A one off gift

You can send a cheque made payable to Loanhead Parish Church to the treasurer, Anne Allard, 34 Dalum Grove, Loanhead. EH20 9LX. Or use the bank details above if you have access to online payments.

#### Gift Aid

Please contact us to get a Gift Aid form if you are a tax payer as we can reclaim tax on what you give, at no cost to you.

### ***Christian Aid***

The work of Christian Aid is as important as ever, with Covid-19 having a massive impact on those who stay in developing countries. Christian Aid week has just passed, but if you would like to support the work of Christian Aid, visit the church facebook page and click on Fund Raisers, send a cheque to Mary Millan, 33 Polton Vale, Loanhead EH20 9DF made payable to "Christian Aid Loanhead" - or see below.

### **Community Outreach**

We are partnering with the community council and others to provide a local point of contact to match up those looking for support with volunteers. So far the number of volunteers has kept pace with the need, with a second appeal a few weeks ago. If you need support or would like to volunteer please email [loanheadcommunity@gmail.com](mailto:loanheadcommunity@gmail.com) or phone 07541048869. You may well get Catriona, Audrey or Margaret Hurst on the end of the phone!

We are beginning to look at provision for families needing support over the summer. Last year we supported 18 families with a weekly delivery of all they needed for lunches. This year we are trying to find out what the needs will be. If it is for meals, we may look to provide cooked meals supplied by a local business instead of the food packs. This has still to be finalised and discussed.





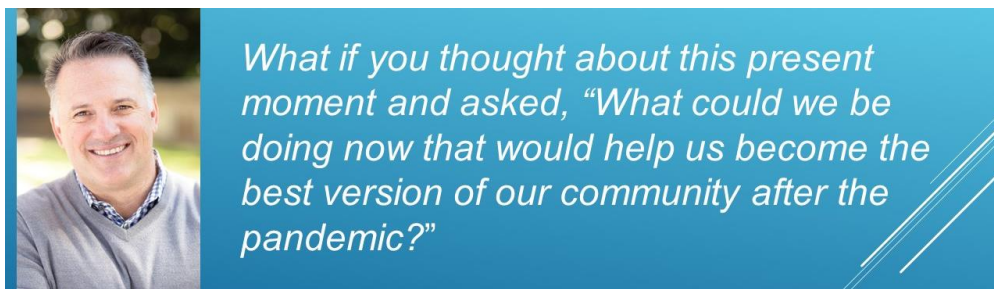
**Kids Sunday Club at home** is a weekly video produced by Douglas Hamilton, who was a student with us last Summer. It provides some worship songs, a story and activities for children to share in. It is currently being used by a number of our families and by families in churches across East and Mid-Lothian.

**Online Groups:** We furloughed Alan Duffin our Youth & Children's worker thinking that we would shelve youth and children's work until the summer when things returned to normal. It is now clear that we aren't going to be returning to "normal" any time soon and Alan is coming back to look at how develop our youth and children's work online.

**Activities for families:** With the additional pressure that families are facing, this it isn't an easy time to find activities that work well.

Activities outside seem to work best though and for Pentecost we have a "Search and Find" activity, which will take the children and families round Loanhead to find clues taped to lamp-posts! We have also purchased some kites for families to help us celebrate the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost and the wind that filled the room that day as they met. So look out for some kites flying overhead and if you see the children, ask them about this.

**Growing Young:** 22 churches across Scotland, including our own, had signed up to be part of a Growing Young cohort facilitated by Fuller Youth Institute. A recent virtual conference was held at which churches agreed that we should still go ahead with the Autumn launch, even though it meant virtual conferences rather than face to face. We were struck by a quote from Tod Bolsinger (below) that reminded us that what we do and shape just now is important for what we carry into the future



# MidWEEK

## **Prayer walk**

On the last Tuesday of the month Audrey McLaren leads a virtual prayer walk—thinking of walking round Loanhead, stopping at various places to pray for those who stay or work there. For example, the school - praying for children, teachers and parents.

## **Midweek reflections & Discussion**

Fortnightly on the first and third Wednesday of each month there is an opportunity to share with others in midweek reflections and discussions. These are structured like a Fellowship Group meeting, with some input from a video and then discussion in groups.

## **Christian Mindfulness and Meditation**

Material is available and updated each week on the website.

## **Enjoying God Course**

On Monday evenings, Amy Pickering is leading a video and discussion based course called Enjoying God. You are not too late to join this!

## **Friday Café**

On Friday at 2.30 p.m. Margaret Hurst hosts our virtual café—an opportunity to drop in for an informal chat. Just turn up and see who is there.

*Details of how to join these events, all hosted on Zoom, are on the website and our facebook page. See page 2 for details.*



With each new day there is always Hope

Hope to enjoy the glories of a new dawn

Hope that each morning will fill us with appreciation of its beauty

Hope that the afternoon will bring pleasure to our senses

Hope that the evening will be peaceful to soothe us

Hope that at the close we are blessed with the knowledge of another dawn following

Patricia Higgins, May 2020

## **Looking Beyond Covid-19**

It looks like social distancing will be with us for some time, which will mean that we will need to look carefully at what we start and how we set it up.

The first thing we will be allowed to do is open the church for private prayer and we will facilitate this with prayer stations set up in the church and people entering through the hall where they can access hand washing facilities.

Similarly we will have to look at the format for our Sunday morning services when we come to that, so that people can attend safely and without fear. It might mean holding more than one Sunday morning service but it is important for everyone that we adapt what we do appropriately. Initially (perhaps even longer term) we will maintain much of what we have online and phone so that there are different ways for people to connect.

Beyond that, we have already begun to think that our big Christingle service might have to be split down into 5 smaller Christingle services, creating something smaller and more intimate. Other events and services will need adapted too. Similarly, groups will need to consider how they can meet in ways that allow people to share and participate safely.

It will all be different at least for a period and it is really important that we find ways to share, worship and encourage one another as we move forward.

## **Forest Church**

Just before Covid-19 struck we had started to explore the possibility of using Forest Church as a way to engage families and others. A church event including worship in the open air! We may be able to start Forest church events before we have services inside and if you would like to be involved in thinking through how we might do this, please speak to Catriona Anderson.

## **Keeping in Touch**

We want to keep in touch with people as much as possible through this period. We will be sending some updates by email—please let us know if you would like these.

If you don't have email (or even if you do) please feel free to give us a phone and we will try and keep in touch with you.

Graham Duffin 448 2459

Mary Millan 440 1624

Margaret Hurst 440 1005