



Weekly Newsletter No 22 - Sunday 16 August 2020

VJ Day

Yesterday, 15 August 2020, was the 75th anniversary of the ending of the Second World War in Asia when Japan surrendered to the Allied nations. This brought to an end the most brutal war during which millions of people were killed or died of disease. While Britain and its Empire suffered about 575,000 killed and the United States about 420,000, the Soviet Union lost an estimated 20,000,000 to 27,000,000 depending on the sources used to calculate the numbers and China 15,000,000 to 20,000,000 again depending on the sources used. The additional damage to those physically injured and mentally damaged runs to unimaginable numbers. The economic damage took about 50 years to repair. Britain finally paid off its war loans to the United States on 29 December 2006.

Since 1945 there has been war or armed conflict every year during which the innocent are always the victims; we only have to look at present day Iraq or Syria – the haunting pictures of families whose lives have been destroyed.

Let's pray today and every day that there will be peace in our world and that,
'Many peoples shall come and say, "Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; that he may teach us his ways and that we may walk in his paths." For out of Zion shall go forth instruction, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. He shall judge between the nations, and shall arbitrate for many peoples; they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.'

Isaiah, Ch2, V3-4

From Seoras

On Sunday mornings I'll upload a video reflection (not a full service yet!), on the theme "God around us, God within us". There will also be an all age-talk with Sullie and Hamish the coo' for you to enjoy! These will be available on our Facebook page. **You do not need a Facebook account to watch these.**

www.facebook.com/bellieandspeymouth



Have a watch of these on Sunday morning, and then you are welcome to come on to "Zoom" for a coffee time at 11am! This will be a chance to catch up, share faith together, and just have some quality time just like at coffee time after the Sunday service.

Many of you will have received an email inviting you to this weekly online coffee, however if you did not, please drop me an email at <sorr@churchofscotland.org.uk>

In addition you have any questions/problems with using Zoom on your computer/phone/tablet, please get in touch with me.

God bless,
Seòras



They're back – didn't you hear the noise!

After months of home schooling and then six weeks holidays, the youngsters are back in school. All went back this week for a day or so but from Monday, it's full time for everyone. On Wednesday at lunch-time a wonderful sound could be heard – children playing.



But as we cheer let's spare a thought for the extra work this involves for parents and teachers; all the extra washing as well as work on innovative school timetables.

Most will be glad to get back to school but there will be some like, ***'the whining school-boy, with his satchel, and shining morning face, creeping like snail unwillingly to school'*** (Shakespeare's *As You Like It*, 1600) – some things never change!



Take a moment this week and pray for all the young people back in school, those starting school nursery, those starting in P1, those moving to S1 as well as all the parents, all the teachers, the pupil support assistants, janitors, caretakers, school dinner people, and the group who are sometimes forgotten, the cleaners.



Community Larder/ Financial Assistance

Fochabers Community Larder has now closed, however it has combined with the Mosstodloch Larder. From this week-end it will open each Monday from 6.30pm -7.30pm at the Scout Hut in Birnie Place, Mosstodloch. A big thanks is due to all who have donated food and other items over the summer. Please however, keep donating at Mosstodloch – there are still people in need.

Support is available to help those who require financial assistance to apply to the Moray Emergency Relief Fund plus additional assistance from the Council's Money Advice Service. We know that some residents are "keeping up appearances" and are in difficulty, not sharing information with family, neighbours or friends. Please be courageous and help them talk - assistance is available.

Assistance for Community Groups.

Over the last few months, Lennox Community Council has supported various groups in our area. These include in Portgordon, the Lampie Hoose, Portgordon Coronavirus Support , Portgordon Post and in Fochabers the Mens Shed and Fochabers Food Larder. There is still funding available for individuals or groups so please contact the Treasurer for micro grant application forms.

The Treasurer, Mrs Pringle George and Councillor Angus McNair sit on the SSE Beatrice Field panel and are pleased to announce this month the following groups have received Covid19 support:

Moray Baby Bank £2639

Citizens Advice Bureau £5000

Marie Curie Moray £5000

Fochabers Institute £5000

There is still funding available and an application form is available online at SSE Beatrice Field grants



Who's had a birthday then? (or anniversary or some special day)

You may have heard of the party this week in Garmouth and wondered what was going on! Don't worry, it was George Picksley celebrating his 80th birthday – he is still playing golf twice or three times each week (it gives Rita a bit of peace). Congratulations George.



To all our friends who are celebrating this week

have a great time – have some fun

Social Distancing

Our friend Jim MacArthur didn't keep his social distancing from a wall in his garden this week! So, he ended up in A&E where a gash in his head was glued. He is fine but we don't want him losing any more stuffing! Our prayers and best wishes Jim. (The wall is OK as well)



Holidays over!

Some have been fortunate to get away for a wee break over the last couple of months. We do hope you had a great time and are now ready for whatever is in front of us. Not this year the beaches and sunshine of the Mediterranean – more local suntraps are the order this year. This is not the Loch Ness monster but your Session Clerk bathing in the languid water of the loch at Foyers, Inverness-shire – of course it was freezing cold – not even the virus could live in that!



Come on in!
The water's lovely

Coronavirus - Home Testing

Some of you may have heard of the availability of home testing for Coronavirus COVID-19. You may care to try this home testing method based on a sense of smell and taste.

- i. Pour a large dram of whisky, gin or rum.
- ii. Test it for smell – if you can smell it you are half way there.
- iii. Drink the liquid – if you can taste it then clearly your sense of taste is not impaired.
- iv. If you are not sure you could smell and/or taste the liquid, repeat the operation. It may take several attempts before you are certain.
- v. One side effect of the test could be a headache the next morning – just take your usual pain killer.



Now though, it's time to look forward. This pesky virus is still out there (maybe a bit hidden) and we only have to look as far as Aberdeen to see how quickly it can spread if we are not careful. There are some tough times ahead for some; while on holiday I met with a chap who has just been made redundant – he has three daughters all primary school age. There will be many in a similar position over the coming months especially in the travel/hospitality industry so let's not forget all whose jobs have been lost or are in a precarious position.

The Kirk Session is looking at the way forward and resuming some sense of a new normality but it's not easy (we are now on version 4 of the Guide to the Reopening of Church Buildings). There are several issues to be dealt with but with God's help we SHALL overcome (I can hear all the 'boomers' singing,  'We shall overcome some day-ay-ay-ay-ay').

So let's stay positive. Let's make the most of the freedoms we have just now, meet up with friends and family as often as we can. Enjoy the on-line worship. Remember to keep praying, especially the Sunday evening at 7.00pm – it's never wasted time.

Check your emails for details of Seoras' on-line Sunday Reflection and Zoom Coffee Time

And go with a blessing – Have a look on YouTube at 'The Kids' Blessing', simply fantastic.
John