

## Weekly Newsletter No 14 – Sunday 21 June 2020

### Father's Day

Today is 'Father's Day' when we celebrate all fathers (and of course giving them cards, bottles of perfume – sorry 'after-shave' – new garden tools -what? – and other goodies, like a new set of golf clubs - shhh). One of the responsibilities of a father is to look after their family and in the past few weeks we have all had to turn to our Heavenly Father to look after us. We emphasise this in our prayers when we say, "Give us today our daily bread". We are saying, "Dad, please look after us" and he has looked after us. So, today, let's give a prayer of thanks to our dad in heaven, he looks after us on earth and when he thinks it's time, he takes us home – Wow! 'Thanks dad'

### Phase 2 out of lockdown-----Re-opening of places of worship

Most of you (unless you live on the planet Zog) will have heard, seen or read that Nicola Sturgeon, the First Minister has advised we can now move to Phase 2 of our way out of lockdown. This does not mean that we are free of the scourge of Coronavirus COVID-19, simply that the

mean that we are free of the scourge of Coronavirus COVID-19, simply that the virus is controlled and the risk of spreading remains. In the last week there have been about 150 new cases and 28 people in Scotland have died as a result of the virus including one (1) person in Moray. So please don't think this emergency is all over – it's not!



The First Minister said that as part of Phase 2, 'places of worship can re-open for private prayer'. This does not mean that our churches will immediately open for private prayer.

On Friday 12 June 2020, in anticipation that the First Minister would announce the partial re-opening of churches, the Church of Scotland issued a guide to the re-opening of churches (Version 2 arrived last Friday!). This document contains sixteen (16) pages of advice and instruction with another fifteen (15)



pages of risk assessments and other check-lists all of which must be completed before any buildings can be opened. And once the buildings are open there must be a strict regime of supervising those who use the buildings and subsequent cleaning. Added to this, is a recommendation that 'those over the age of 70 will have to consider carefully whether they should be attending church' far less being involved with the opening of

churches or cleaning them – consider the age profile of our congregation!

Please be assured the minister and the Kirk Session are keen to see our church buildings open for use as soon as possible. However, we must proceed cautiously to ensure the safety of those who will use the buildings as well as those who will be involved in the supervision and cleaning of the buildings. We must ensure a robust and sustainable regime is in place *before* we open the buildings to the public. Failure to ensure this would be reckless, perhaps even criminal.

We are working on this and as soon as we can, we shall re-open the churches.

In the meantime, if you are willing and able to join with a team which will supervise and clean the churches please let me know by dropping me an email or giving me a phone (01343 8206710) Please note that this will be an ongoing commitment, not a 'one-off'.

However, the situation regarding the reopening of our churches changes almost daily – we'll keep you all up to date as best we can.

#### While our churches are closed

While our churches are closed, let's use this opportunity to worship in a different way. Check out the many church websites or use the Church of Scotland website and you will find some novel and innovative worship services. OK, we have to admit some are not the most exciting as ministers and others get to grips with technology. One minister in Lewis announced last Sunday that the Church AGM was to be held in the church garden on Thursday (check out the Church of Scotland Carloway Facebook pages to see what happened!). This is the same minister who toured the villages of the Parish on consecutive Sundays conducting worship from these locations. Let's just say that on a couple of occasions he had to contend with 'Lewis weather'!

Give some of these services a try – it's certainly worth it.

## "Blessing



Christian songs and worship music have always had a great impact on me. Whether old hymns or modern melodies, there is something special about hearing our faith explored and declared with music. From what we read in scripture about heavenly praise, music and worship are certainly part of God's intention.

It is with that in mind I would really encourage you have a listen to "The Blessing" at some point in the coming days. This is a wonderful song, built from passages of scripture, which

was released in an American church near the start of the lockdown and has since been adapted for other countries.

If you search for "The Celtic Blessing" on Youtube - or look on the church's Facebook page - you will be able to find one which has been made for our nation. Musicians from church families across the country recorded their parts to a song which together give melody to wonderful words in a beautifully Scottish way.

In a time of separation and uncertainty, it is so encouraging to hear a song which speaks truth and life over our futures. Whatever difficulties lie ahead, the blessing of God will be in our hearts. It is also just great to see churches stand together in unity about the One who is for us.

God bless,

Seòras"

#### **Home-schooling**

Boy in his bedroom calls his mum on his mobile phone today so he won't manage to get to school.



to say the school bus didn't come

#### Fit aboot the Burthdays an the widdin anniversaries?

What smashing weather to have a birthday and from next week you can have more people in the garden to celebrate – but not all at once please – remember your social distancing. For those who are celebrating wedding anniversaries (and we are getting into what used to be the wedding season) why not pop that cork, dress up – yes guys, that means you too! – and have a wee party in the garden, the big parties can come later. From your church family and beyond,





## **Treasure Hunt**

The Messy Church team are organising a Treasure Hunt for next Saturday, 27 June 2020. Teams of up to eight people will set off from the church at 10-minute intervals and follow the treasure trail. Once the teams have been round the course and cracked the clues there is an incredible prize at the end –



# you can't miss this one!

The first team will set off from the front of the church at 2.00pm on Saturday so get your entry in and we will allocate you a time.

If you want to enter, just drop me an email at <a href="mailto:jmcconnachie78@gmail.com">jmcconnachie78@gmail.com</a> and once the team have finished the organising we will let you know your start time.

Full details on church website and Facebook pages

REMEMBER - Big people can take part also.

## **Community Larders**

Please remember the Community Larders at

Fochabers Scout Hut: Monday and Friday 11.00-1230

Mosstodloch Scout Hut: Wednesday and Friday 11.00-1230

These larders are there to help those who may be struggling to make ends meet. Apart from food and some cleaning materials there are things for kids, puzzles, drawing, games etc.

This is an opportunity for those who can afford it to donate all sorts of stuff. With the school holidays approaching (only a couple of weeks away) donations of outdoor toys may be useful.

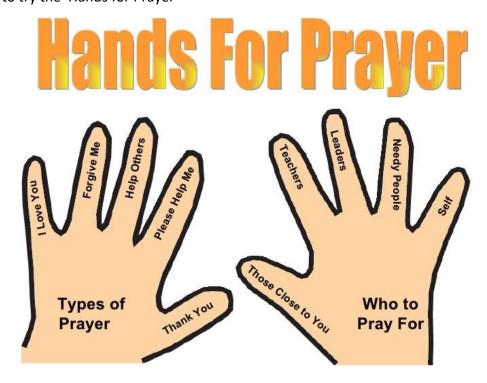
#### **Moving forward**

Think where we were and how we felt three months ago when the lockdown started. We are now looking at a much more positive picture. OK Phase 2 of the lifting of lockdown wasn't as great as some wanted but Phase 3 looks much more promising. However, to make this happen we must be patient and stick to the guidance – it has worked so far.

This has been achieved at great cost, physically, mentally and for many, financially. We have to give thanks for those who kept to the rules despite great difficulty, even the youngsters who have worked diligently, with the help of parents but are now fed-up and needing some sort of break. So:

- Pray for the youngsters who have missed their school and being able to mix with pals.
- Pray for the teachers who, working from home, have tried to keep the kids going.
- Pray for the parents who have tried to keep their children working.
- Pray that they can go back to school in August
- Pray they enjoy their summer holidays.

You may like to try the 'Hands for Prayer'



As we move into Week 14 of the lockdown, let's be positive. Let's be especially kind this week – do something outrageous for a friend or better still, with a friend, especially one who has been on their own – buy them a two flavoured ice cream -

with a 'flake' stuck in it!

Have swim in the sea

It's freezing!

Let's laugh, joke, have some fun.

And to finish, as mentioned by Rev Seòras, if you can, have a look on Youtube at 'The Blessing' (currently over 3 million 'hits') and 'The Celtic Blessing' by Celtic Worship and Friends (that one's on the church Facebook page as well). Enjoy a simply fabulous blessing –



sing along with them.

Be patient this week, be kind and keep in touch. John