

Weekly Newsletter No 11 – Sunday 31 May 2020

It's Pentecost



We started this 'lock-down' on the fourth Sunday of Lent and here we are at Pentecost (you work out how many weeks!). There has been a magnificent effort and sacrifice by almost everyone in the country showing their love and concern for their neighbours by sticking to the rules, at some cost to themselves, and helping to contain this virus. We have still some way to go but at last we are moving in the right direction. What is amazing though is the response of many people to the churches being closed. People are joining in on-line worship services and services broadcast on Television. People are responding to other forms of worship and service eg the magnificent response to the 'Messy Church - Click and Collect'. A total of 60 Messy Church bags were ordered, collected and delivered. That's 60 people of all ages, (I calculate from 1 year old to over 70 years old). People are joining in on-line prayer groups, reading their Bibles. People are supporting others who may be struggling, perhaps on their own, perhaps with children being home schooled, perhaps with the separation from family. If that's not the Spirit moving among us, I don't know what is.



Pentecost Worship

On Sunday 31 May 2020, the Moderator, Rt Rev Martin Fair, is to host a special service of Worship to celebrate Pentecost. The service starts at 10.00am and can be viewed on the Church of Scotland web site and Facebook pages. The Moderator is encouraging congregations and people of faith across Scotland, and beyond, to join together in worship as a whole church. Dr Fair says,



"Pentecost Sunday is an opportunity to rejoice in the birth of the church and to celebrate our togetherness as a church family. It was the coming of the Spirit upon those first disciples that brought the church to life, with power and passion - and the same Spirit unites us still.

Even though we cannot be together in person, we can be together in spirit. We can share in the same worship, pray together using the same words, be inspired together by the same Bible verses and affirm our unity as the body of Christ here on earth.

Ordinarily, the worship of the Church is offered locally, rightly so. But it seems to me that in these present circumstances there is merit in giving over one Sunday to come together."

Full details of the service can be found on the Church of Scotland web site.

As they say, "see you there!" (Ye ken fit a' mean).

Pentecost Parade



And while we are speaking about Pentecost, let's not forget our Pentecost Parade. We need all sorts of photos – people wearing red, red fires, red flowers, red anything just to give a view of our celebration of the festival. It'll take a couple of weeks to get it done (unless anyone else wants to do it). So, let's have the photographs and we can repeat the fun of the Easter Parade.

From Seoras: 'Mental health and lockdown'



When I broke down last year my head was in a bad place. The scary thing is that without help from others, and intervention by God's Spirit - I know that it would have stayed there.

Each of us I'm sure has found the lockdown challenging in different ways. Loss of work, loss of loved ones, separation from friends/family, financial insecurity, worry about the future, sudden change in life rhythm ... a whole host of problems and issues. It is not surprising that many countries have seen a deterioration in mental health in the last few months.

I don't have any expert advice, but I do have my experience of recovery. I would therefore encourage ANYONE who is struggling with the health of their mind to do two things: speak to someone, and speak to God.

Only when I went looking for help, and opened up to my wife, my doctor, my employer, my church, did I get the support I needed to get better. Please speak to someone if you are struggling. It is so hard to recover alone, if not impossible.

Speak to the Lord. He is always there, even if in hardship He seems distant. When I was on sick leave there were times when I really struggled to read my Bible, to worship or to pray. Sometimes I could only say in my heart, "God, help me." Please speak to God about what you are dealing with, His love and care for you knows no bounds.

As the wonderful passage of Philippians 4:6-7 says "Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."

God bless,
Seòras

Sorry to be a nuisance but....

Last week I asked you to consider an additional donation to our church funds to help alleviate a serious shortfall in our finances. Firstly, a big 'THANK YOU' to all who responded and have so generously given. There is still time however, for others to donate. Just send or hand in a cheque to Betty Brown or any Elder or you can donate by bank transfer (give me a shout for the Church's bank details). Please remember to mark your cheque or reference the bank transfer with 'Pentecost Gifting' or similar, to allow us to calculate the total raised.

Birthdays – Anniversaries – Special Days

Sometimes I have envied those who have birthdays etc in summer. It means they can celebrate outdoors. So enjoy being able to celebrate with mini-garden parties complete with cucumber sandwiches - with the crusts



cut off of course, ice cream, cakes, ice lollies, fizzy drinks all while slathered in sun cream and not forgetting hats. For the big people there is always beer-can burgers, potato bombs (recipes on request), cremated sausages, salad, accompanied by cool white wine, prosecco or beer. For those of us with birthdays in November, December, January etc, we can but dream. 



So, for all enjoying celebrating this week, from your church

family and friends;

Have a great time.

Community Larder Programme



The Community Larder Program, managed by Moray Food Plus, have started Community Larders in Fochabers and Mosstodloch. The larders are there to help anyone struggling or in need of extra support.

Anyone is welcome to come along and take what they need.

All sorts of necessities are available including fruit, vegetables and even fresh herbs.

People are welcome to donate items at these times too. You can come and collect items for a neighbour? It's a good reason to lift the phone and check that everything is going ok.

This is an open-door policy with a one-way system to keep everyone safe.

In Fochabers, the Larder is open from **11.00am till 12.30pm each Monday and Friday** at the **Scout Hut in Christie Place, Fochabers** and in Mosstodloch from **11.00am till**

12.30am each Wednesday and Friday at the **Scout Hall, Birnie Place, Mosstodloch**.

If you know of anyone who may benefit from this service, or even yourself, please encourage them to come along

Meanwhile, over 300 hot meals have gone out weekly from Lhanbryde. The meals are prepared by Moray Food Plus staff and Moray Council catering staff based at Lhanbryde Community Challenge. The food is delivered by volunteers and Council staff who have opted to take on other duties. There are many moving stories shared on doorsteps, with individuals valuing the social contact and the banter. So again, if you would benefit from the delivery of a hot meal or know of someone who would benefit, just call Karen Delaney from Moray Council on 07800 670692 or phone me on 01343 820671 and we can arrange things.

Please use these resources – they are there for you.

Lock-down eased

We have seen an easing of the lock-down in the last few days which is welcome. Please make no mistake, you have been part of the whole national effort by simply playing your part. You have stayed home, kept your distance and as a result the virus seems to be on the run – a magnificent effort. Last week I said you could have a celebratory ice cream – well, this week have two! (But watch out – ice cream can make clothes shrink!)

Enjoy the nice weather.



We are moving into a more relaxed part of the lock-down but we must still be careful. This is a dreadful disease which for some, well for many, has proved fatal. So, lets all pray that God will guide us and his Spirit will give us the strength to stay strong.

Please keep on phoning, texting, WhatsApping, Zooming or whatever'ing' to stay in touch. If you haven't been in touch with someone for a few days, give them a call – the sound of a human voice can be so welcome.



With every blessing

John