

WALK TOGETHER

Summer 2020

Magazine of
St. Columba's Episcopal Church, Bathgate
&
St. Peter's Episcopal Church Linlithgow



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Dear Friends,

In early March I wrote these words in my last Life Together letter to you : *'Lent is an opportunity to strive to take each day, every day, one day at a time. It is expressed in the many small changes we make to our lives, in the many small sacrifices we choose to accept as we draw closer to Jesus on his way to the Cross'*. Little did any of us realise just how these words would speak to us in new ways this Lent, Easter and beyond as we lived lives that were hugely curtailed after covid-19 came hurtling down the tracks, throwing the day to day of our lives up in the air and challenging us into new ways of living.

These past 3+ months have been quite surreal haven't they and each one of us, and within our families too, have had to make huge adjustments and life as we knew it probably won't ever be the same again. The human and financial 'cost' has been huge and will be ongoing but we have also seen so much goodness shared in so many ways; not least by those whom we sadly took for granted before – those who made sure that we were fed and looked after. The people on the front line. I personally don't remember waving to so many delivery drivers in the past! Maybe we just won't take so many things for granted in the future.

Our two churches were forced into being church in a new way and very quickly too; there was no time to plan, we just had to grasp the nettle and get on with it. Thankfully our curate Peter is always up for a challenge and soon got to grips with Zoom which became a life line for services and meetings, with Judy and John Barker producing our music week by week and liaising with Pete Lewis for the right format for uploading. Judy Goldfinch and Jim Adamson have worked together to ensure that church notices, Pew Sheets and Zoom Codes were circulated both electronically and by paper for those who don't do electronic.

Phone calls have been another life line, hearing friends and families voices very reassuring in these times of huge uncertainty. Texts enable us to keep in touch and WhatsApp allows for photo and video sharing via the church groups that were set up in those early days by Jackie and Sian.

Hugely encouraging posts, Margot's limericks and a few poems journeyed with us over these past very uncertain weeks. Such prayerful love and care for one another ensured we kept in touch and were there to share the ups and downs as covid-19 affected the lives of people we know connected with us. As well as those suffering from other conditions...it was a roller coaster ride for so many people. Elsewhere in this magazine are montages that were posted on our two WhatsApp Group chats.....they speak of some of the story of the two group's journey through lockdown life.

Sadly people from our church family and those connected with us have died during this time and this has been especially hard for loved ones, not being able to visit in homes and hospitals in the 'normal' way and making grieving and saying goodbye very challenging.

Looking ahead, Government guidelines and guidelines from the Province are keeping us right with regards to the re-opening of our churches. I am really pleased to advise that St Columba's will be opening for private prayer each Wednesday morning from 10AM – 12 noon from Wednesday 1st July. St Peter's is working through the process and more information regarding their opening for Private Prayer will be advised in the Church Notices. And in the coming weeks as restrictions are further lifted there will be further information regarding the resumption of some forms of worship for both churches as and when we are able to do so.

School summer holidays will be underway when you are reading this so whatever you and your families are doing this summer I hope that it all goes well...it will certainly be a summer we won't forget. And of course Robbie and Yasmine, from St Peter's, have left behind school life in a very unsatisfactory way I would say but are all set for new adventures, and there is the transition from primary to secondary for Alana, Gillian, Ginny and Rebecca, from St Peter's and Ayla from St Columba's who is moving from nursery to primary and Janet Moss has announced that she is retiring - lots of new adventures to be had.

With love, Christine

From our Service Registers

7th May: Esma Harkness in West Lothian Crematorium. Esma is the mother of Sheila Lyons from St Columba's, a lovely lady with a wonderful smile who used to come to many of St Columba's gatherings when she was able with her husband Robert.

28th May: Gordon Christopher MacLeod Currie in Falkirk Crematorium. Gordon is the much loved husband of Helen and such amazing man who brightened up very gathering. A gifted teacher and Church of Scotland minister who was so loved by St Peter's church family and the Linlithgow community and beyond. His legacy will live on...

16th June: Jenny Callaghan in Bathgate Cemetery. Jenny's parents had a connection with St Columba's – her parents were married in there in 1937.

22nd June: Daphne (Doreen) Lambert in Falkirk Crematorium. Doreen was a longstanding member of St Peter's much loved and remembered for her amazing baking and hospitality. She celebrated her 93rd birthday in April by which time she was struggling with life but determined to maintain her independence and not move from the home she and her late husband Ron had shared.

23rd June: Michael Duff in Boghead Cemetery in Bathgate. Michael is the brother in law of Andrew Mains from St Columba's and he too has a connection with the church having been married there.



Candles and flowers for our loved ones lost during the pandemic.

Corinne

The Priory Church in South Queensferry as you may have seen in one of the recent Church Notices the Priory Church have been hard at work over the past couple of years on their Garden Room project. At St Peter's we still remember that journey don't we, the planning, the raising the funds, the anxiousness over whether the monies would be pledged in time to ensure that other funding promises didn't run out of time. It was a bit of a roller-coaster at times! But thanks to Lesley Stanley and her team we got there and now have super facilities for our own use and for sharing with our community. The Priory Church have a very similar vision but unfortunately covid-19 and the restriction that imposed put paid to their final burst of fundraising, leaving them a shortfall of £18,000 from a target of £180,000. They are looking to find ways to bridge this gap and help keep their project on schedule for a start later this summer.

At St Peter's vestry meeting last week there was agreement to support The Priory Church and thus help another little reach out in mission to its community, but how? Four years ago St Peter's were so well supported by the churches in Linlithgow through special collections and fundraising but making arrangements for a collection and fundraising are not so easy in this current time. We could give the Priory Church a donation from church funds, perhaps £1,000 – our bank balances could more than support this. And members of our congregation could donate, if they wished, money back into our bank account. And we could have a collection when we get back to church to top our account up. This is just one thought, Vestry are open to any ideas, so please do share them with Catherine our Vestry Secretary. I have been in touch with The Priory Church advising them of our prayerful support and hopefully a donation at some point. Rev Christine



Reflection on a Pansy
from Claire Starr
(Claire was due to accompany us to Iona in September, sadly a trip that we will not be taking this year)

This pansy is just outside the sanctuary at the Coach House, it has pushed its way up between two paving stones yet, despite it not growing much above the stones, it blooms its beautiful little face and is a delight to its Creator who I am sure, is all the more proud of it for pushing through to the sunshine despite all the hardness and obstacles in its way.

In the sanctuary I was reminded of all the people in this world for whom life is a struggle, dangerous and frightening, as well as fragile and I thought of the pansy outside and reflected on how each one who has and is struggling, is a delight to the Creator whose heart, I imagine, bursts with pride at every life broken through into the daylight and just shining forth in the world. How precious are those for whom life is not easy and straightforward. But also, how life so easily changes and circumstances become completely different in the blinking of an eye. The tables turned and we need to decide how to respond to whatever is now. Do we respond in fear and fight everything or freeze, unable to react or respond, or do we take each moment at a time, receive the love we are offered and allow it to flow back out into the world and, in doing so, allow the beauty that is unique to each and every creature shine forth, like the beautiful pansy shining its little face to the world?

Peter Woodfield Sermon 26th May 2020

Last year a friend and neighbour, Denis, seemed in reasonable health when he went to his GP with a cough.

Yet he emerged with a death sentence hanging over him. His children barely had time to get home to say their final goodbyes before he died days later. It was a shock they are only just beginning to recover from.

The situation of the family left behind parallels quite closely that of the disciples. One day Jesus was riding into Jerusalem in triumph on a donkey, five days later he was dead hanging from a cross, the hopes of his disciples and followers seemingly shot to pieces

And it's the same today with COVID-19. One day seemingly healthy, the next gone, with the situation made worse by the fact that those you love the most and who love you the most are banned from your bedside.

The same questions and thoughts go round and round in the survivors' minds. What could I/should I have done differently? Did they know I loved them? Where's the sense in all this, even where is God in all this?

In today's particular context, our Gospel reading about the Road to Emmaus, so familiar as one of the key post-resurrection stories, seems oddly incongruous doesn't it?

Because one of the things that is really hard to envisage right now is walking any distance with someone who is not in the same household, even if it's one of the things we can really look forward to at some point in the future.

Of course we know how this particular story ends, with the two disciples suddenly realising that the stranger who has explained the reality behind the flow of the Scriptures, ie the Old Testament, and then broken bread with them, is Jesus himself, that He has indeed risen from the dead, that the mad imaginings of the women who had gone to the tomb weren't mad imaginings at all.

And yes we are Easter people, and as a result people of hope, but we need to acknowledge that at times like this hope can be in pretty short supply

But because we know how this story pans out, and we feel we should be people of hope, we can be too eager to rush to the end, the bit that says Yes Jesus Christ is risen today, he is risen indeed Alleluia, and skip over the journey itself.

Today, while our physical journeys are of course severely limited, our spiritual and emotional journeys are not and so assume greater significance.

So I think it is appropriate today, at a time when life is so different to anything we have ever experienced and is so challenging, to focus on perhaps one of the saddest phrases in the entire Bible.

But we had hoped.

But we had hoped.

When Jesus met Cleopas and his companion their hopes had been shattered. Their hopes for freedom from Roman rule, their hopes that Jesus really was God's long-promised Messiah had all disintegrated on the cross.

They were devastated. But it was more than just their hopes evaporating that Jesus was the Messiah. Jesus was their friend, their leader, they were close to him.

And what made it worse was the suddenness of it all. A week earlier he had ridden into Jerusalem in triumph. Now he had died a horrible death.

Not just Cleopas and his companion, but the 11 disciples and the other followers must have been asking themselves, Is this real? How can this have happened? Could we have done anything about it? And no doubt lots of other soul-searching questions too. Coping with unfulfilled hopes that have come to a sudden and shuddering halt can be very painful

And that's what it's like today with COVID-19. Here and healthy today, gone in a few days in seemingly random fashion with often no chance to say goodbye and have those last important conversations. People's worlds turned upside down in an instant, leaving the survivors with the refrain

We had hoped...we had hoped

It was the third day since the crucifixion and the disciples had heard the rumours and reports that Jesus was no longer in the tomb, but no-one had seen him.

All this they recounted to Jesus who professed ignorance of what had happened the previous week, presumably so he could get their unvarnished version of events and realise just how much his followers had understood of what he had taught them.

As we know, the answer was very little, which is why they were trudging disconsolately away from Jerusalem back to Emmaus.

PAUSE The location of Emmaus is one the few places in the Bible that is a geographic mystery.

Perhaps it wasn't a village at all but somewhere Luke, a master storyteller, invented to represent a place of healing. Indeed, did Luke deliberately leave the identity of the second disciple unknown, so that we can put ourselves in the shoes of that second disciple when our own hopes seem to have been shot to pieces ?

Frederick Buechner, the American writer and theologian, once said that we all have our Emmaus, that Emmaus is wherever we go to make ourselves forget that the world holds nothing sacred, to escape the problems and pain of the world. Emmaus could be a film or a pub; it could be buying something we don't need or mindlessly surfing the internet.

That's what these two were doing. Maybe, especially now, we need to think of the road to Emmaus as representing that chapter of our lives when we're finding it hard to deal with our hopes being dashed, when we can't make sense of what's going on.

It has been said we learn by looking back but we have to live going forwards. So we need to remember that the start of the process of the disciples being able to even get a fleeting glimpse of Jesus came when he invited them to name the very hopes that had been dashed.

It is in naming them that we start moving forwards and beyond them to a place where we realise that God has always been with us on our particular road, whether it is 7 miles, 70 miles or 700 miles. Perhaps you might want to use the silence in our intercessions to do just that and name those disappointments.

When I was younger there was a popular poem called Footsteps in the Sand. The last few lines go like this

I have noticed that during the most trying periods of my life there have only been one set of footprints in the sand. I don't understand why, when I needed you most, you have not been there for me. The Lord replied, the time when you have seen only one set of footprints is when I carried you.

It is precisely when our hopes have been destroyed and life is at its most difficult that God is closest to us, the problem is it's almost impossible for us to recognise it. I find it interesting that it was only when the disciples had engaged with body (walking to Emmaus), mind (Jesus unpacking the Scriptures) and Spirit (Jesus breaking bread) that they recognised him. Right now, for most of us only the Word is easily available, so I would suggest in conclusion that it may be really helpful right now for us to hold onto God's promises.

Let me share a couple of promise verses sent to us a few days ago and then add one of my own

The Lord himself goes before you and will be with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged. (Deut 31:8);

So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand. (Isaiah 41:10)

And finally from Isaiah 43

Do not fear, for I have
redeemed you;
I have summoned you by name; you are mine.
When you pass through the waters,
I will be with you;
and when you pass through the rivers,
they will not sweep over you.
When you walk through the fire,
you will not be burned;
the flames will not set you ablaze.
For I am the Lord your God,
the Holy One of Israel,
your Saviour
(Isaiah 43: 1b-3a)

You may well have your own favourite promise verse, but I suspect most will share a common theme. There's no need to be afraid because God has promised he is with us.

And that enables us to say with confidence not that we HAD hoped but that we HAVE hope. Amen.

Peter Woodfield



As the church was out of bounds, Corinne created an Easter Garden for St Peter's in her front rockery this year, open for viewing to passers by.

Corinne

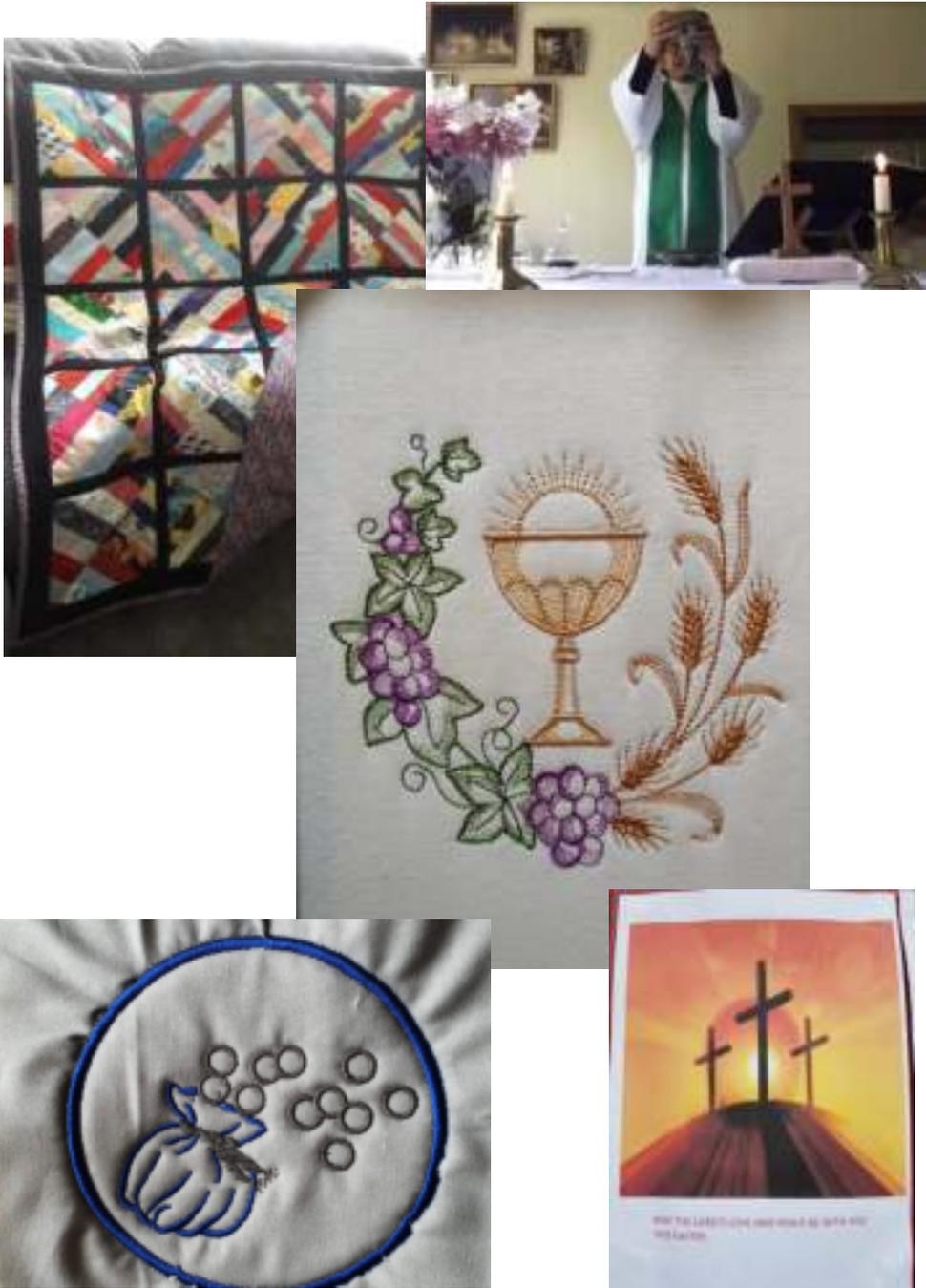


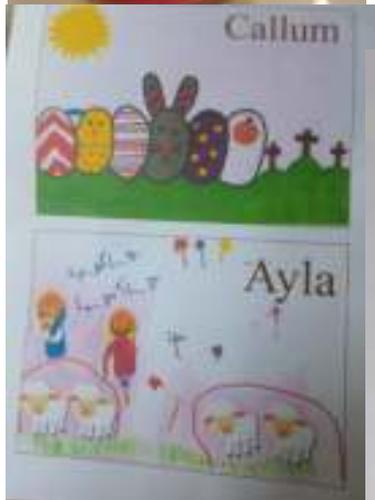
How to wish Happy Birthday to your friends during lockdown - here is Paul G, safely behind his window, when Andrew and Corinne went round with a card.

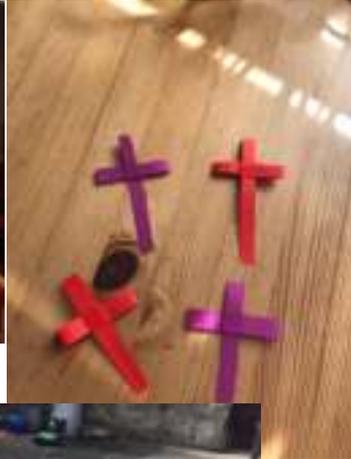
Church in Lockdown

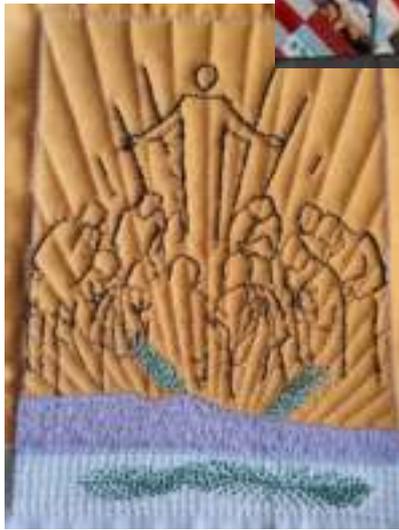
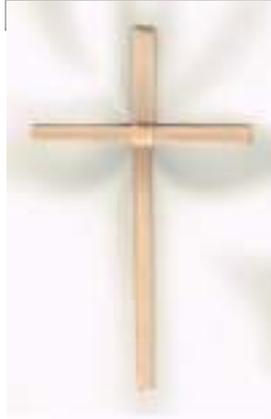


Lockdown Pictures











LOCKDOWN LOCATIONS



Just before ‘lockdown’, I bought myself an electric bike - and it has proved to be my salvation. Even during the “one outing a day” rule, I was able to travel further afield than I could ever have done on foot- or even by normal pedal bike.

I hate heading off on any expedition without a purpose! I know – that’s my problem! but I do like to have a plan in mind when I set off. My first jaunt was to Blackness Castle, which, of course, was locked up. However, a fascinating plaque by the east wall revealed something I did not know before - that several planes lie beneath the waters of the Forth – from World War One Sopwiths to Second World War spitfires – all shot down while trying to protect the Forth Bridge from enemy attack.

I had visited Blackness many times - and indeed conducted guided tours of it so now, I decided to visit some places of interest in the near locality that I have never been to before. The first of these was Almond Castle - strangely situated in the midst of the barren wilderness that used to be Stein’s Brickworks, near Whitecross.



The once grand manor-house, home to a variety of 16th and 17th century Scottish noblemen and their families, made a sorry show, its walls crumbling and populated only by jackdaws. But it was fascinating and the visit will form the basis of later historical articles, and a Probus illustrated talk I am delivering in July.

There was slightly more to see at Midhope Castle - although I couldn't get that close as the entrance was barred by a padlocked gate.



In recent years, the Hopetoun Estate has started charging (exorbitantly) for access. The reason is that the building features in the TV show “Outlander” as Lallybroch – the home of Jamie Fraser - and hundreds of visitors, mostly Americans, have arrived to see the castle. While in the area, I popped in to one of my favourite kirkyards at Abercorn and admired anew the fascinating carved gravestones. It brought back memories of when I was televised there, along with some pupils, for the children’s TV show “Why Don't You?”

Another day took me to Muiravonside where I met Paul and Judy Goldfinch (and an ornithological friend of mine admiring a sparrow-hawk). I told Paul that I was there as part of my research into the now demolished Muiravonside House and he was kind enough to lend me some books on the subject – yet another historical project on the way! There’s not much to see today of the once grand residence- latterly home to the Stirling family who employed a staff of ten.



Muiravonside in the 1950s



and its foundations today.

As I write, we are still under strict covid 19 legislation so I'm unable to venture much further afield but I still plan to visit other interesting locations in the vicinity. Why don't you? Just get on your bike!

Bruce Jamieson

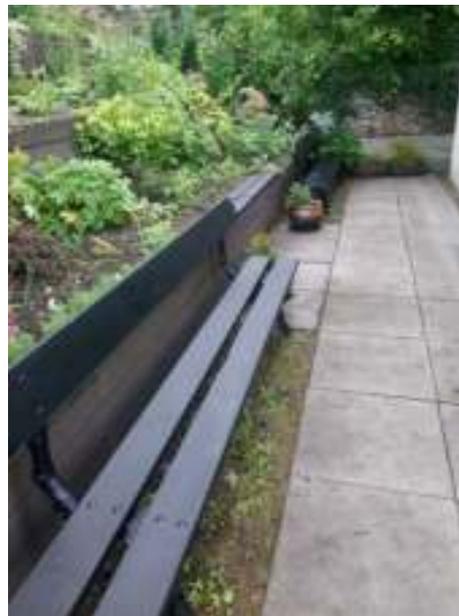
St Peter's Church Garden REFURBISHING THE BENCHES

During May and early June, I visited St Peter's garden on a few occasions – and I apologise and seek forgiveness if I have inadvertently breached any Episcopalian diktat. I didn't go near the church itself and in the access staircase and back rig I was very careful to sanitise everything I touched – being especially conscious that we share garden access with a young family from next door.



My main reason for visiting was to water the plants on the various terraces. I was very aware that many of them had been donated in memory of a loved one and, during the hot, dry spell of weather we had in May, I was anxious to keep them alive – and they are indeed flourishing, including David O's lovely white flowered plant in memory of Dorothy, Ann's acer planted for her mother and Margo's rose in tribute to husband Johnny.

While there I noticed that all three garden benches were in a fairly bad state. The two lower ones had been liberally splattered with bird poo – the acid in which had eaten into the paintwork. A thorough clean and a coat of paint sufficed to restore them.



However, the upper bench, original, 19th century railway platform seating, was very eroded. Rain had got into much of the 130 year old woodwork and much of it was crumbling.



The church bench at Linlithgow Railway Station in the 1950s.

With our treasurer's permission, I purchased wood hardener, wood filler and black paint and set to work. I scraped back decades of paint - a top coat of black which the garden work party had applied, an undercoat of brown which is how I remember first seeing the benches in the 1970s. Beneath that was the distinctive "Buckingham green" colour used by the London North Eastern Railway and finally the original light brown of the North British Railway.



Once back to mostly bare wood, I applied the wood hardener to the worst areas of spongy timber and then filled holes, cracks and missing areas with filler. Finally I applied two coats of black paint.



St Peter's railway bench

**once graced by
Bishop John**



I worked alone but had the occasional 'distanced' chat with Lloyd - the American granddad of the two small girls from next door. He has worked miracles in his daughter and son-in-law's garden, creating, for example, a huge stone staircase using massive boulders dug out the garden. He was busily employed on creating a wood store as his family's flat has a wood-burning stove. I was delighted to be able to offer him the opportunity to use any of the felled sycamore wood still lying on the top (children's) level of our garden. Anyone else who can use it is very welcome to collect what they wish – do bring a chain saw!

Bruce Jamieson

Iona Memories.

It was to be a return to an Island where the stresses of daily life are left behind as the little ferry crabs its way over the blue stretch of the Iona Sound and the St Columba's and St Peter's "pilgrims" juggled their way down the wide gang plank to be met by the smiling faces of Bishop's House staff. There they wait to take our luggage and those with wearier legs up the short incline, past the little grey- stoned cottages lining the well-trodden road, past the heady fragrance of new cut grass and the sweet scent of the hedges filled with pink headed fuscia bushes and onwards to the warm welcome awaiting us at the house.

The first time I travelled to Iona was some years ago with Rev Christine leading the pilgrimage to celebrate St Columba's Centenary. . I had the great joy of travelling in my car in the company of my dear Helen and our beloved Gordon, who was delighted to be returning to the island where he had spent so many energetic and rewarding summers in his younger days as a member of the Iona Community. As we wandered up the slip way Gordon's feet took him steadily towards the Abbey and Bishop's House, stopping to chat to every islander who appeared at their doorsteps, as if to welcome him back. The sun shone upon us nearly every day we were there, shining in our bedroom windows to awaken us to the new dawn or slipping gently over the rolling fields behind us as we gathered for evening prayers before the fun and games began in the sitting room each evening.

We talked, we laughed, we walked, we sang, we worshipped each day, together as one, embracing each other and the beautiful island we were staying on for such a short but joyful time. Gordon's memories of his time on Iona of course were plentiful, his admiration of George MacLeod and the work he began on Iona burned brightly for him and he was delighted to share these with us all as well as the islanders.

It was a sad parting that Friday morning when we left Iona, but we each hoped that it would not be too long until we returned. This we did, another memory to be added to so many others of that place "where the veil between heaven and earth is at its thinnest" and later this summer was to be our final return with our Rector and with old friends, so looking forward to being together again. However, this was not to be as Covid 19 marched its devastating way across the world leaving lives shattered along with simpler dreams of islands, golden beaches and blue skies above a huge expanse of green, swaying machir grass.

There will be no morning and evening services in the beautiful little Bishop's House Chapel, no dreaming out of bedroom windows gazing across the rippling tide of the Sound, no organised chaos of the meals in the dining room, no walks across the cow-filled fields keeping a wary eye open for the huge bulls who loved to lie at the foot of the pathway to the Abbey. There would be no creaking of the Corncrakes hiding in the long grass or dancing across the House lawn, no sailing across the swell of the grey seas to Staffa, no singing along to Richard and his guitar before bed time with windows open to allow the salt-laden air into our rooms and our dreams.

That first time returning from Iona, crossing the dark interior of Mull to catch the ferry to Oban then homeward again, we were held up by a horrendous accident just up the hill from the ferry port itself. The delay was to be at least 4 hours long, but with the help of mobile phones, and in my case, a husband at home with an atlas, we were given another route, unknown to myself and to Helen but not to Gordon. We took a twisting and rising route out of Oban where huge evergreens stood silently watching us as we certainly "travelled in hope" that this alien country side we found ourselves in would indeed bring us to a place we knew and eventually to home. Gordon though was never in any doubt, he delighted in letting us know that we were on the road to Inverurie and sang enthusiastically to us all the way until we emerged from our wanderings over that long and winding road to suddenly spill into the little white-washed town of Lochgilphead where turning right would indeed take us onwards to Inverurie.

So, we have to say goodbye to our Island dreams, as we have had to say goodbye to Gordon. We shall eventually return to Iona of that I am certain, hopefully before our Rector leaves us for adventures new, but my memory of my first visit to that green and beautiful place will be forever entwined with that of a very gracious and gentle man, whose love of life and his experiences working with the Iona Community, were shared happily with all he met, stranger or friend alike.

Jane

St Columbus Sunday School

These strange and unprecedented times have been a challenge for our young people to navigate, as their routines (along with all of ours) stopped overnight. No more school, nursery, after school clubs and activities or even birthday parties and catching up with friends for a play. Not to mention having to put up with mum and dad for a teacher! However the young people at St Columba have not let this challenge stop them finding new ways to connect with each other and keep each other's spirits up. Taking the lead from the adults, we turned to Zoom for our method of keeping in touch, and turned it into a brilliant way to play games, share ideas and worship.

There has been no stopping us! To start us off, Rev Christine led us in a lovely Good Friday session, where we shared what we had been doing since lockdown began, which included a lot of Easter craft, Lucy's Easter Garden and a beautifully written prayer from Hannah. We caught up again to celebrate Ayla's 5th birthday - it was great to see all her presents and hear how she had been celebrating, despite having to miss her planned party. We have been meeting 'virtually' fairly regularly since then to hear one another's news and play games. So far we have had a quiz, a game of hangman and a scavenger hunt to name a few! Not to mention all of us being a bit jealous of Ayla's paddling pool, one particularly warm Saturday! Each weekend we circulate some Sunday Club craft ideas and games that we might have been doing if we had been all together in church that we can do ourselves and perhaps share next time we meet. This helps to keep us connected to the liturgy.

This weekend we are all meeting for our annual family picnic which we would traditionally hold on the last Sunday before the summer holidays, following a family service. We are hoping to be joined by other members of our St Columba family to hear how they are all getting on, and if we are lucky (and have a strong Wi Fi signal!) enjoy an outdoors picnic in our gardens over Zoom.

Who knows when we can all meet again in our church, but until that welcome day we will continue to keep finding new ways to make our virtual connections work for us!

Rachel Bell

Dear Lord,

During these difficult circumstances, we pray that you will give our country's government leaders strength to guide us through this horrific world crisis which we are currently facing. We pray also for all the frontline, key workers who are working tremendously hard to help and care for everyone during this horrible time, please keep them and their families safe.

We also would like to pray for all those families who have sadly lost loved ones to this horrendous virus and for all those individuals suffering from it, we pray they will make a quick and healthy recovery. We send out prayers and thoughts to everyone across the world who has been affected in any way by this pandemic. To all businesses, schools and universities. Please help our local councils cope with the sheer volume of pressure upon them to continue with regular community services they bring to us.

At this time, we pray for all religious leaders as unfortunate due to this virus all church buildings and places of worship, have been closed for our wellbeing and safety. However, we are extremely grateful for technology, our church leaders have thankfully been able to set up virtual groups and services for those people who would be normally attending these. This has allowed our church family to stay together and through technology we have been able to learn more about each other and share our experiences. Although there may be some people, who do not have access to this technical knowledge, so we hope to connect with them by telephone to support them too.

This time is a time for reflection on our lives and the paths we follow. Hopefully we can all unite in love, peace and fellowship and be thankful for everything that god has made and given us.

We pray this will be all over soon. Please keep us safe in all we do and protect us Forever and ever,

Amen.

Into the Abyss 2

In the last issue I wrote about how I felt as if I was going into the Abyss, little did I know that we were all just about to head there. Who could have predicted the enormity of Lockdown at the beginning of March. The news from China was horrifying and terrifying but surely this could not actually happen here. At that time I was happily in a caravan in Pease Bay and although feeling slightly threatened it was no more than that. Then it happened but surely we would be over and done in a few weeks. Not so and I am surely not alone in thinking that it would be unbearable. I could not fathom not going out for more than one day at that time. Never in a million years did I envisage being stuck in for the length of time we have been.

When I watch the news and see the empty streets etc around the world it is all so surreal. Here in Linlithgow and stuck in the house it is easy to forget what is actually out there. I have now become conditioned to being housebound. I cannot drive or walk too far with my knee therefore my world is quite small. My family have seen to it that I have shopping and phone calls and we have so enjoyed garden distancing chats all which have become normal. All the voluntary organisations that I am involved in have had no meetings apart from some Zooms and now as Lockdown is easing I find I am quite afraid of once more venturing out into the big wide world. I walked up the hill from my estate with Lucy one evening and felt as though I had climbed out of a pit. My house is safe, a haven where once I felt imprisoned if unable to go out I now find I am actually afraid to return to what was normal life before. Oh I know you read my moments and my Limericks and they seem to come from this daft carefree person but believe me they mask a lot insecurity. I hope it is not too long before we can return to a life more normal. Hopefully returning to Church and socials and coffees and chats and hugs. I also hope that we will have learned some lessons and that the world which has shared a pandemic may also share better relationships. That the caring may extend and life may be better for all of us in God's world.

Margot.

LOOKING OUT.

Looking out from Lockdown
I see a cup of coffee
sitting in my favourite cafe
pudding sticky toffee
having a fish supper
eaten on my knee
chicken wrap out of Mcdonalds
Queensferry by the sea
a caravan in Pease Bay
sitting on the rocks
a paddle in the sea
without my shoes and socks
Lucy running on the sand
chasing waves and sticks
on the train to meetings
going to the flicks
but the best of all my wishes
is to have the family round
and washing up the dishes
when a real good meal we've downed.

That's all folks, Margot

The sweet scented choisya, planted in St Peter's garden in memory of David O's dear wife Dorothy, flowered just in time for her anniversary! - Corinne



Joining in with the national effort: Corinne and her rainbow.

Corinne



Our one remaining hen Matilda is spending lockdown with the Hammond family's last remaining hen, and they have become the best of friends! Corinne

**To be sung along to:
'Always Look on the Bright Side of Life'**

Well we're stuck here in this virus
And we hope it will go by us -
But you just can't tell the way this thing will run
We can only do our best -
As it puts us to the test,
And put a brave face on until it's done!So
Always walk on the clear side of the road Da da di da di da di da
Always wave a smile at folk o'er the road Da da di da di da di da

They say we'll soon be able, to get out but wear a label,
with your name and number if you're in the shop,
So stock up on the booze, but remember if you choose.....
to drink a lot you'll find it hard to stopSo...
Always moderate the stuff that you stuff Da da di da di da di da
Try to wake up feeling healthy not rough Da da di da di da di da

You don't want to end up fatter, so stay slim, but if the latter
remember you can walk 10 times a day!
By doing stuff that's fitter, you'll forget you were a 'sitter'
at the TV watching box sets - me! No way! !?.....O h.....
Always walk on the clear side of the road Da da di da di da di da
Always wave a smile at folk o'er the road Da da di da di da di da
Repeat
Always walk on the clear side of the road Da da di da di da di da
Always wave a smile at folk o'er the road Da da di da di da di da ...Di
Da!

The End

Judy Barker

Regular Weekly Services & Events

St Columba's, Bathgate

**Sunday 11.15 a.m Sung Eucharist
(Second Sunday of Month is a Family Service)
Last Sunday of Month 6.30 p.m Choral Evensong
Monday 9.00 a.m Morning Prayer
Second Monday of Month 7.15 p.m Film Night
Wednesday 10.30 a.m Said Eucharist
(followed by coffee and natter)
First Wed. of Month 12 noon Community Lunch
Thursday 11 a.m 4C's - Cuppa, Chat, Company & Crafts**

St Peter's, Linlithgow

**Sunday 9.30 a.m Sung Eucharist
First Sunday of Month 6 p.m Choral Evensong
Tuesday 10.30 a.m Said Eucharist
Thursday 9 a.m Morning Prayer
9.30am Sunday Youth Group Meets Monthly at Fenwicks**

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