

Wilson Memorial Church

At The HEART of the Community we serve

AUGUST 2020: ISSUE 1

WHY ARE WE NOT OPENING SOONER?

Last week we shared with you the staged approach that the Session is taking towards the resumption of 'in-person' worship services. (We will provide a summary of the key points later in this Newsletter). We are aware that some folks may feel that we are being too cautious in the approach, but as we have seen recently in the news reports, the COVID-19 coronavirus has not gone away, and in some places cases are beginning to show signs of increasing. We feel that it is our duty to ensure that every member of our Church Family is kept safe, which is why we are taking a more cautious approach. It is true that some of you will have heard of other congregations beginning 'in-person' worship services sooner, but one wonders about the wisdom of proceeding with such haste, and whether such haste allows for the appropriate measures to be put in place. We, however, are confident that the measures we have taken comply fully with the Scottish Government guidelines for the *safe-opening of places of worship*.

Several issues ago we included a message from the Rev. John Fulton, Moderator of the United Free Church of Scotland. John has been very faithful in emailing messages of encouragement, and we thought this past week's message was very appropriate for the stage that we are at. Here is the message:

Time to Lament?

I appreciate the desire to get back to some kind of 'normality' which we encounter in many places including the church but I worry there is a danger we try to ignore what has happened and convince ourselves all is well. For many people in our churches and communities all is not well! Recent months have been traumatic for people as they have lost loved ones but been unable to be with them in their final hours or to grieve properly afterwards. For many it has been a stressful time, some have been isolated and afraid, others have struggled with family life when everyone is together in a confined space throughout lockdown. Anxiety continues for folk concerned about the future, about health, about employment, about their financial plight and so we could go on.

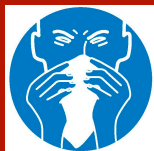
As 'church' what do we have to say to or offer those who struggle, how will our worship help them? Phrases such as "God is in control" and "All things work together for good" may be true but they are not the whole story and not always helpful when folk are struggling. People need to be able to be honest with God when the last thing they want to do is rejoice. It is not surprising that many have turned to the Psalms in recent months and we find the psalmist is much more honest with God than we often are, sometimes brutally honest about situations and feelings in ways we wouldn't dare. Many psalms are on the theme of 'lament' but we don't seem to read or sing them as much as some of the others – I wonder why?

Some psalms are individual laments such as Ps 22 – 'My God, my God why have you abandoned me?' (spoken, of course, by Jesus on the cross) while others are community laments such as Ps 60 – 'You have shaken the land and torn it open; mend its fractures for it is quaking.' Martin Luther treasured the psalms of lament and said, "What is the greatest thing in the Psalter but this earnest speaking amid the storm winds of every kind? . . . When they speak of fear and hope, they use such words that no painter could so depict for your fear or hope. And that they speak these words to God and with God, this I repeat, is the best thing of all. This gives the words double earnestness and life"

Such honesty is not about wallowing in self-pity but allowing God to meet with us in the most difficult moments of life so that we open ourselves to the healing work of his Spirit. Do we give space for that to happen when we meet together in worship? As someone put it 'Rather than a sign of a lack of faith, lamenting comes from the lips of those who believe (or long to believe) in a God who loves them and can change the situation'. Perhaps lament is an approach to God that many of us would benefit from because I suspect recent months have had more of an impact on us than we realise. I suspect there are many around us, Christians and non-Christians, who would be interested in a God we can approach with such honesty and discover his love. We need to take time - and give time – to lament.

CATCH IT

Germs spread easily. Always carry a tissue and use it to catch your cough or sneeze



BIN IT

Germs can live for several hours on tissues, so put it in the bin as soon as possible



KILL IT

Wash your hands properly for 20 seconds, and wash them often



OPENING FOR INDIVIDUAL PRAYER AND WORSHIP - AUGUST

Saturday, August 1

10:00am - 10:15am - *Private prayer, quiet reflection, and silent meditation.*
10:15am - 10:45am - *Short Service of Worship.*
10:45am - 11:00am - *Private prayer, quiet reflection, and silent meditation.*

Wednesday, August 5

10:00am - 10:15am - *Private prayer, quiet reflection, and silent meditation.*
10:15am - 10:45am - *Short Service of Worship.*
10:45am - 11:00am - *Private prayer, quiet reflection, and silent meditation.*

Saturday, August 8

10:00am - 10:15am - *Private prayer, quiet reflection, and silent meditation.*
10:15am - 10:45am - *Short Service of Worship.*
10:45am - 11:00am - *Private prayer, quiet reflection, and silent meditation.*

Wednesday, August 12

10:00am - 10:15am - *Private prayer, quiet reflection, and silent meditation.*
10:15am - 10:45am - *Short Service of Worship.*
10:45am - 11:00am - *Private prayer, quiet reflection, and silent meditation.*

Saturday, August 15

10:00am - 10:15am - *Private prayer, quiet reflection, and silent meditation.*
10:15am - 10:45am - *Short Service of Worship.*
10:45am - 11:00am - *Private prayer, quiet reflection, and silent meditation.*

Wednesday, August 19

10:00am - 10:15am - *Private prayer, quiet reflection, and silent meditation.*
10:15am - 10:45am - *Short Service of Worship.*
10:45am - 11:00am - *Private prayer, quiet reflection, and silent meditation.*

Saturday, August 22

10:00am - 10:15am - *Private prayer, quiet reflection, and silent meditation.*
10:15am - 10:45am - *Short Service of Worship.*
10:45am - 11:00am - *Private prayer, quiet reflection, and silent meditation.*

Wednesday, August 26

10:00am - 10:15am - *Private prayer, quiet reflection, and silent meditation.*
10:15am - 10:45am - *Short Service of Worship.*
10:45am - 11:00am - *Private prayer, quiet reflection, and silent meditation.*

Saturday, August 29

10:00am - 10:15am - *Private prayer, quiet reflection, and silent meditation.*
10:15am - 10:45am - *Short Service of Worship.*
10:45am - 11:00am - *Private prayer, quiet reflection, and silent meditation.*

IN-PERSON WORSHIP - SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 6

We hope to resume 'in-person' worship services on Sunday, September 6. Because of the *physical distancing* regulations, the seating capacity of the Church is limited to 20. Therefore, we plan to hold two (2) services of worship. The first will begin at 10:00am, and the second at 11:00am. Each service will be identical, and last between 30-40 minutes.

As seating is limited, you will be required to book your place, and will be allocated on a first-come-first-served basis. Details of how this will work will be published nearer the time. If you are booked to attend the 11:00am service, we ask that you do not arrive too early for the services, as we need to allow time for folks to leave after the 10:00am service, and to conduct all the necessary hygiene measures.

During this time of transition we will continue to make available video recordings of the services online (website, podcast, telephone, YouTube etc.).

MORE REASONS TO CELEBRATE

August seems to be a bumper month for Birthdays, and some of them are very 'significant' indeed. For example, one member of our Church family will be celebrating their 101st Birthday (Winnie Walker), and another their 100th Birthday (Helen Thompson). Bill Robertson will celebrate his 90th Birthday this month, and James Hosea his 80th Birthday. Please don't tell them I told you!

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