

The Net

The Magazine of Priestfield Parish Church, Edinburgh
Living in the Way of Jesus



Priestfield Parish Church is a Registered Scottish Charity No. SC014499

Web: <http://priestfield.org.uk>

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Dear friends,

What has been the hardest part of this crisis for you?

There might be many answers to that, from missing important family gatherings, to losing income, to enduring endless hours of day-time TV, to finally running out of excuses to tidy the hall cupboard!

Joking aside, most people, I think, would make their No 1 hardest thing the isolation from friends and family. For many, the ability to connect online made life a little easier. But a conversation through a screen is no substitute for sitting together having a coffee and a blether, or walking in the fresh air, enjoying the world about us.

So much of our life together in Priestfield is about these connections. Coffee after the service, or soup on a Thursday, or any of the other gatherings we shared pre-Covid 19 were about gathering together and enjoying each other's company.

The church has an old fashioned word for it -"fellowship".

It's at the heart of our faith, and deeply embedded in our human-ness. When Jesus was asked about the most important commandment, he made it clear that loving God and your neighbour were two halves of a whole.

We are social beings and made for relationship with each other and with God.

I think this time of enforced separateness has highlighted that very clearly. Even those of us who are most at ease in our own company can relate to the need for togetherness...sometimes!

As things begin to open up again, and we can cautiously resume our connections to others, it's important that the church is a part of that.

It's also important that everyone is safe and comfortable as we return to worship.

We have been used to a relaxed and free environment in the lounge and as I stand at the front to lead worship, its great to see people sitting together and worshipping together as the Church family.

At the moment, we are not yet at a point where we can return to this carefree existence! Elsewhere in this newsletter there are more details about what returning to worship would mean for us, and I want to stress how important it is that each person considers carefully their own safety in deciding when to re-join us in the building.

However, not being in the building doesn't prevent you from being very much part of the Priestfield family! Through the visits from our Pastoral Team, and regular prayer, you are valued and cherished as part of our fellowship.

You are held before God our loving father, who welcomes us all, and in whom there is no separation!

"There is nothing in all creation that will ever be able to separate us from the love of God, which is ours through Christ Jesus our Lord." (Romans 8v39b GNB)

Till we meet again,

Your friend,



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A Message from the Treasurers

Many thanks to all of you who have continued to make your weekly or monthly offerings to the church during the pandemic. Even with the building closed, we have continuing financial commitments of around £7000 per month. Offerings inevitably are down without collections on Sundays and we have no income now from others who normally use the building. We would be very grateful therefore to members and friends for any donations, or further donations, you are able to make to the church at this time. Please contact us, Fiona Ferguson or Andrew Steven, if we can help.

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Sunday Worship: The Way Ahead

We last joined together for Sunday worship in church on 15 March; a very long time ago now. Then, on Government instruction we closed our doors.

A very able and committed team helped us to move our Sunday services, as well as Messy Church and prayer times, on-line. We've been worshipping that way ever since, and what a joy it has been.

In June the Government relaxed lockdown a little and we were able to re-open the church for private prayer. From 1 July we have been open every Wednesday afternoon from 4:00 till 6:30pm. Opening for prayer has been good preparation for the next step.

Further relaxation of controls by the Government now means that churches can re-open for worship. But there are very strict conditions!

In brief, these controls are likely to mean that;

- At Priestfield there can be no more than around 30 attending a service and we'll need to sit on seats set 2.0m apart,
- We may need to book a seat in advance and we'll need to register when we arrive for worship,
- Of course, we'll need to wash our hands with sanitiser when we arrive and when we leave and we'll need to wear a mask when we are in the building,
- We won't be able to sing or join in responses although we will be able to have music.

The Kirk Session met on Thursday evening (23 July) and discussed reopening for worship. Many expressed a real desire to reopen, both for our own wellbeing as well as to provide a contact and witness to the local community. There was though a real concern to keep everyone safe and there were questions about the nature of worship in these circumstances.

The Session decided to move forward to the next stage and instructed that all the necessary work be carried out and consents gained to allow reopening, but to stop short of reopening itself. This work includes physical work within the building as well as the completion of a new Risk Assessment and a Building Audit. These will be used as essential parts of an application to Edinburgh Presbytery to reopen for worship. The team will be working hard at these over the next two weeks.

The Kirk Session will meet again on Thursday 6 August to consider the final step; whether to reopen in this way or to continue as we are until a more 'normal' situation pertains. We'll communicate the outcome of the meeting but, if a decision is taken to reopen for worship, our first Sunday back in the building won't be any earlier than 30 August. Look out for updates!

As with all our activities, our own safety and wellbeing and the safety of other people is the responsibility of every one of us, not just of the Kirk Session. As part of its advice to help us make our individual decisions, the Church of Scotland has provided the guide overleaf. You may find it helpful.

A Guide or Assessment ‘Tool’ for health risks

The assessment ‘tool’ below helps you to see how different risk factors may combine to give serious health complications should you catch the COVID-19 virus. It does not include the factors that may make you clinically extremely vulnerable, where you should be following the guidance for those who are ‘shielding.’

Circle the score next to each one that applies to you and add up your score.

Risk Factor	Score	
Age	50-59	1
	60-69	2
	70-79	4
	80 and over	6
Sex at birth	Male	1
Ethnicity	Caucasian	0
	Black African Descent	2
	Indian Asian Descent	1
	Filipino Descent	1
	Other (including mixed race)	1
Diabetes & Obesity	Type 1 & 2	1
	Diabetes Type 1 & 2 with presence of microvascular complications or HbA1c \geq 64mmol/mol	2
	Body Mass Indicator greater than or equal to 35kg/m ² Online BMI calculator: http://www.nhs.uk/live-well/healthy-weight/bmi-calculator	1
Cardiovascular disease	Angina, previous heart attack, stroke or cardiac intervention	1
	Heart Failure	2
Pulmonary (lung) disease	Asthma	1
	Non-asthma chronic pulmonary disease	2
	Either of the above requiring oral corticosteroids in the last year	1
Malignant neoplasm (cancer)	Active malignancy	3
	Malignancy in remission	1
Rheumatological conditions	Malignancy in remission	2
Immunosuppressant therapies	Any indication	2
Total Score		

A score of under 3 indicates a lower risk, but you should still be following the guidance for staying safe.

A score of 3-5 suggests a greater risk and you should consider ways of reducing your risk by taking additional precautions or avoiding some activities.

A score of 6 or more suggests a high risk and indicates that you should continue to work or participate in church life from your home.

The scoring is based on an article from the British Medical Association website.

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