

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>

Minister: Rev Donald Scott



Dear friends,

Does it seem like a year? Or maybe a century?

As we approach the anniversary of the first lockdown in March '20, here we are, locked down, (as I write this) and despite light at the end of the tunnel with the vaccine roll out, it still seems a long way off until life might allow us to welcome friends into our homes again, do the shopping without a mask and steamed up glasses, enjoy live music or a night out in a restaurant or pub.

Then there's services- sitting together in church, and singing our hearts out.....

I was watching a news broadcast in early February and the interviewee was a young woman, who had just started a further education course, which was online. She was asked how she was feeling.

"I feel I've been robbed," she said.

We've been robbed of so much this year. Contact with family and friends, but also some have lost these people from their lives, and not been able to say goodbye as they would have wished, or celebrate their lives together, or receive the comfort and support of fellow mourners through hugs and handshakes.

Holidays, jobs, businesses, relationships, savings, so much of what we have built and cherished have been lost or had to be re-assessed.

In the midst of so much lost, have we gained anything?

"An acquaintance with Zoom I didn't want!" I hear you say?

Yet, technology has given a lifeline to many, including allowing worship to continue despite buildings being closed.

We've also gained time and perhaps a new appreciation of the importance of relationships.

As someone wise once said, no one has looked back at the end of their life and said, "I wish I'd spent more time at the office!"

It's been a hard lesson, but maybe we've learned what is really important, what we most value and what should be treasured in our lives.

We are in the time of Lent. Traditionally, a time of reflection and assessment for Christians. As we assess what has changed for us, maybe we can bring to God what still needs to change in our lives as we await the celebration of new life in Christ.

Let's pray that we can celebrate together once again this Easter.

Every blessing,



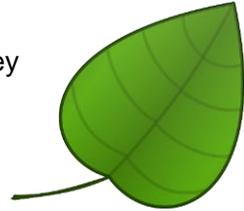
praying together

Over the last year we have continued to pray together. When the Lockdown started last March, our Prayer Sheet continued to be produced. We suggested that we could pray at home, but together, at 7pm on Thursdays. The sheet was emailed to the group who previously came to Praise and Prayer. Not everyone is able to receive emails, so some paper copies were delivered. Over time, this group grew bigger as more people wanted to be involved.

The Prayer Sheet is also posted on the Priestfield Church Facebook page. The sheet covers issues and needs relating to the world, our country, locally and Priestfield Church and not personal matters.

Normally, during Praise and Prayer Sessions we would pray for individual needs and crises as well as giving thanks, sharing answered prayers and good news. The Leaf prayers from the Prayer Tree would also be shared and prayed for.

These more personal prayers have continued to be shared on line with Leaf Prayer sheets whenever they have been needed. At times these have been very frequent.



Just recently we have also started to meet to pray on Zoom every two weeks.

If you would like to join the email list and receive the Prayer and Leaf sheets or receive the Zoom invitation, please let me know.

It is really good to be part of a praying, caring community.



FAIRTRADE FORTNIGHT
22 FEBRUARY - 7 MARCH



Fairtrade Fortnight is running from 22 February until 7 March, serving as a reminder to us all of our social responsibilities to our neighbours around the world. Although billions of pounds every year are spent by countries such as ours on foodstuffs, still all too frequently the farmer and his family receive so little that they are struggling to survive – below the poverty line and with no security.

So, whether it's coffee, tea or cocoa, chocolate or bananas, when you do your shopping, all year round, please look for fair trade labels. Shopping responsibly in this way means that more farmers, in Africa, India, Central America or wherever, will receive a fair price for their hard-won crops, and the chance to provide adequate food, housing and education for the family.

And don't forget the rice! Fiona has new stocks of white and brown rice from Malawi, plus a few jars of other fairly-traded goods from Just Trading Scotland – delicious jams made from tropical fruits in Kenya, and coconut milk from Sri Lanka – which she will be happy to deliver to you when you buy.

~ Financial Review 2020 ~

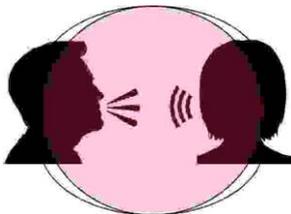
The treasurers are pleased to report that, despite Covid-19, 2020 was a good year financially. Thanks to continuing regular giving by the congregation and an extraordinarily generous response to our Gift Day in November, we were not only able to meet all our financial commitments, but we also finished the year with a surplus of a few thousand pounds. The Kirk Session has decided that, in view of this surplus, the opportunity should be taken to repay the loans given by members of the congregation in 2018 to help pay for improvements to the Manse at that time.

We ask that you please continue to review your giving prayerfully to support the work of the church throughout this time of pandemic and looking forward to when our building reopens.

As you read this, the Trustees Annual Report 2020 should hopefully have been finalised and approved by the Kirk Session. The report includes how we performed and what we achieved last year as well as all the detailed financial tables. It's a right good read and can be found in the 'filing cabinet' on the Priestfield website. If you don't have access to the internet and would like a paper copy, just contact Fiona and she'll make sure you get one.



~ Listening Service Update ~



A huge thank you, to everyone, for all your efforts, especially your prayers of support, as we start to make headway in our aim to provide a Listening Service, across our three parishes (Craigmillar Park, Priestfield, and Reid Memorial).

With some having overcome a few wee technical hiccups getting logged in, the first batch of eight volunteers have now begun their on-line Listening Skills Training. The feedback, so far, has been that it is both challenging and enjoyable. I'm sure the skills learned will be useful to everyone involved. Indeed, my own family has told me that, since I started the training, I am talking less, and listening more...although I suspect they may possibly have been telling me this with fair-sized doses of irony and sarcasm!!! All joking apart though, I do believe we all have it in us to be better listeners.

We hope to have this first stage of training completed by mid-March. All of us can think of a hundred and one reasons why not to do something, and

put it off till tomorrow which, of course, never comes but, if the level of enthusiasm of the volunteers in this batch is anything to go by, then I am confident we can start offering this much-needed service as soon as it is practical.

Nearer the time of launching the service, we shall be explaining where and how to access it, at what times, etc, etc. The best way of spreading this news will always be by word of mouth. So, when it comes around, please tell everyone, and not only those in our immediate Church families, who you think might benefit from using this service.

If you think that you yourself might be interested in becoming a volunteer listener or want to ask anything at all about our plans for the Service, please get in touch with me and I will be delighted to have a wee chat.

Lastly, please keep this Listening Service Initiative, and especially all the volunteers, in your prayers

God Bless

Michael

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In succession to the pastoral care safety net introduced during lock-down, a longer term scheme, called Priestfield Link Up (PLU) has been developed to maintain and establish contact with members and all those associated with Priestfield.

PLU commenced in January 2021, and 22 volunteers who had agreed to be link people were given their list of people to contact along with information of how it is anticipated the new scheme will operate.

The role of the link people is to keep everyone in touch with the church family and bring news of congregational life in Priestfield, providing support

as necessary. In time, it is hoped they will be able to form their own individual relationships with those on their list. At any time, they can contact one of the small core group (Diane, Donald, Fiona, June and myself) for advice and support, pass on requests for prayer to Diane or for urgent pastoral support to Donald as minister.

The Link Up group will meet at about six monthly intervals so that all the link people can discuss ideas and exchange experiences and news. For the foreseeable future, this will be by telephone, however we hope that, as restrictions are eased, more methods of contact will become available.

Norman Henderson
Co-ordinator



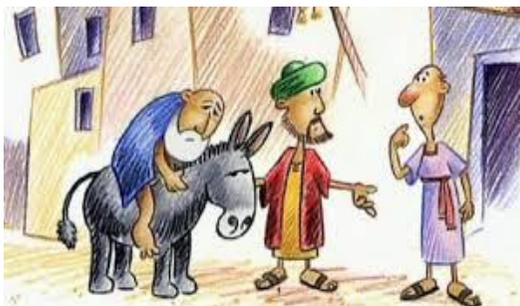
Messy Church has been carrying on, online, in a variety of forms since last March.

In 2020 we tried different things, firstly posting a sort of full Messy Church on Facebook with the story, activities, a song, prayer and a meal, all virtually, of course!

Later in the year we put the same elements separately on Facebook.

In 2020 we discovered what happened on the Emmaus Road, at Pentecost, and also what happened on another road, to Philip and an Ethiopian Treasurer. After the summer, we looked at David and Goliath, and what the Bible tells us about Light and as well as having a Christingle event.

This year, for the Good Samaritan we have posted the story, a song with our own pictures, and a presentation of what it is all about, but we also have available an actual bag of real activities!





We are exploring what we can do to share the good news and also what works best for families. Thank you to everyone who makes this happen and to everyone who watches.



Presbytery Planning for 2022 to 2032

Edinburgh Presbytery's Strategy Planning Group has the difficult task of preparing a plan for what the church in Edinburgh should look like in the years ahead.

The Strategy Group decided to involve congregations from the start in developing the plan. To put this into practice, it divided Presbytery's congregations into 'clusters', eighteen of them. Priestfield is in a cluster (the South City Cluster) with Craigmillar Park, Marchmont St Giles, Mayfield Salisbury, Morningside United, Reid Memorial and St Catherine's Argyle.

Since November, Priestfield's three representatives have joined with representatives from the other congregations for meetings on ZOOM. The challenge is "how can we bring the message of the Gospels effectively to the generation in which we live, and what shape the church should take in order to do this."

- How do we best rise to the challenge of mission in our area of Edinburgh? Mission is after all one of the principal reasons for us being here!
- How do we adapt to work with the reality of there being fewer Ministers?

- How do we work towards having 'well equipped buildings in the right places' as set out by the General Trustees?

You can see that this is no small task and the outcomes will have great significance for all of us.

Do continue to pray for the Cluster, and for Priestfield's representatives and for the Kirk Session, that we may be guided by the Holy Spirit, rather than our own backgrounds and personal preferences.



Years ago, swifts were a common sight in our local area. Many nested in the church towers before we had netting fitted. The netting was to keep the pigeons out as they were damaging the stonework.

Now there are fewer and fewer swifts, so we are going to join a city-wide project, the Edinburgh Swift City Project, the aim of which is to see and hear the swifts return.

We'll be building a few swift nesting boxes out of scrap wood and then we'll attach them to the walls of the church hall, above the rear garden. Hopefully, if the swifts can find nesting sites again, they will be seen swooping around the church corner!

Here's a website which explains things in more detail...

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-edinburgh-east-fife-56009892>

