

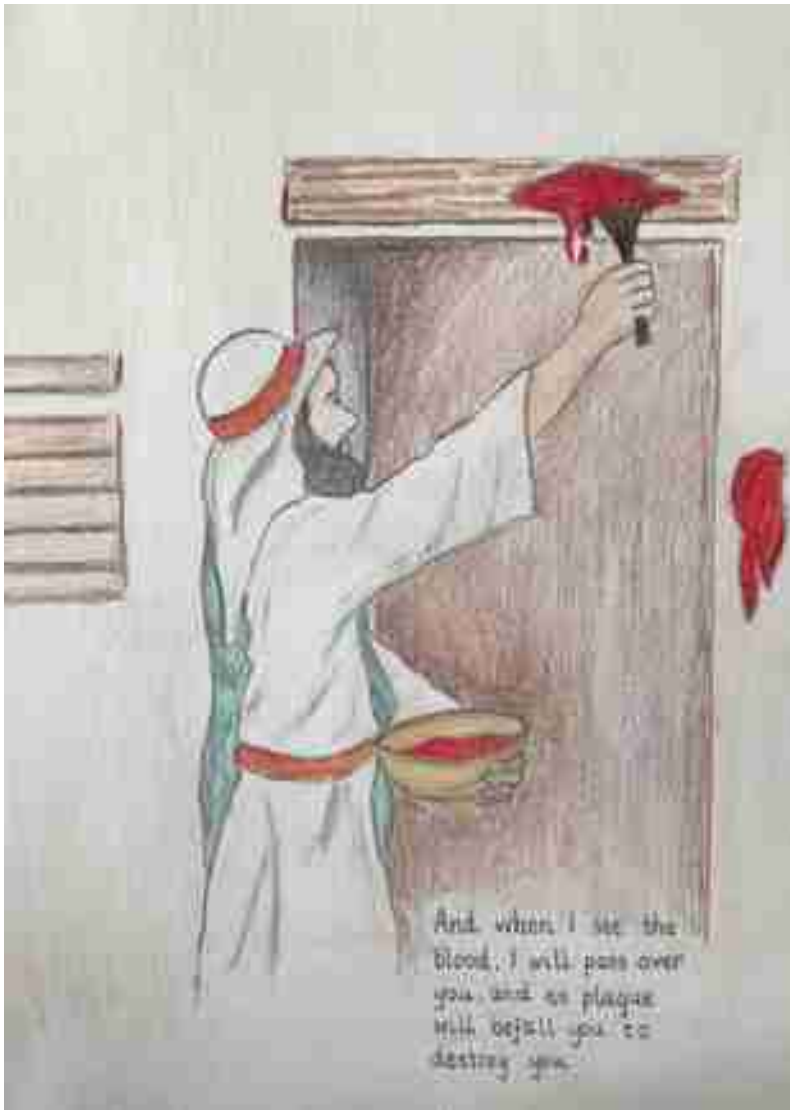
Bonkle Church of Scotland Magazine

June 2020

Scottish Charity Number SC006540

Next issue – ? 2020

Closing date for material – ?



Coronavirus

This has disrupted our lives for some months and will continue to do so for some time. News broadcasts have announced that churches can re-open. This can be misleading, please read Graham's article carefully. As far as the organisations are concerned, it is unlikely that the halls will be available July and August as surveys, assessment, permissions and deep cleaning and sanitation will be required between EACH meeting as well and as social distancing.

The government and the Church of Scotland are keeping the situation under constant review and we will keep you informed of any changes.

It is unlikely that we will be able to publish or distribute this magazine. It will be on the www.bonkle.org.uk website and I hope that people that get it will consider printing it out and handing it to other members near them that are not on the internet. I will print some and put them in with the CD/DVD that I make up for Bonkle members. If more are required please let me know but you will have to pick them up from me

Ian

From the manse...

These undoubtedly are strange days, the likes of which none of us had witnessed before. Although the numbers who have lost their lives to COVID-19 (some known personally to us) are horrendous, we are grateful that because of the sacrifices we have all made during these last weeks that those numbers have not been very much worse. Perhaps, however, easing out of lockdown is even more difficult. The fact that we are doing so may cause us to forget that the disease is still with us, though, mercifully the transmission rate and numbers of new cases continues to fall. As a result we need to continue to be vigilant, in case we see a

resurgence in infection, and we lose the ground we have gained.

With this in mind, we begin to think about what worship and the use of our buildings may look like in the short, medium and longer term. To enable society as a whole to do this the Scottish Government has produced a roadmap to guide us through the 4 phases. As we progress through stage 2 there are implications for churches. In this phase churches may open for personal prayer, should they wish to do so (but not worship services). I will outline my thinking as to why this may be impractical for us. To reopen our buildings just now; not only will we require to implement the 2m distance rule, but also our buildings will require to be deep cleaned and disinfected prior to and after each time the building is used. I am not sure that our cleaning teams would be able to (or indeed expected to) comply with the additional workload this would bring (bearing in mind that some members will be in higher risk groups themselves). There is also a theological point to be made, whilst I fully appreciate the importance of sacred spaces, and the loss that we feel not being able to use them for worship, we need to re-

member that we do not have to be in a church building to pray. If people would wish to be around the church for contemplation and prayer, we are blessed to have lovely gardens with benches I would encourage you to use, as I have whilst out on my (daily!) walk.

There is much going on behind the scenes to enable our buildings to be safely re-opened. Recognising the valuable impact that faith has to so many people, especially during these difficult times, regular meetings are taking place between representatives of various faith groups and the Scottish Government, to try to ensure that the safe re-opening of buildings can take place as soon as possible. At 121 George Street, the Church has a designated committee to examine this issue. They have now released a (large) set of instructions to allow us to prepare to safely resume worship in church when we are permitted to do so. As you read the document a phrase that is repeated often in the guidelines is that **not all buildings will be able to open at the same time**, it may, for example not be till phase 4 that we are ready to open. If, for example, any local church, decides they are ready open up, that does not

mean that we will be ready to open (and vice versa), and we need you to understand that, it is only when we can safely do so that our buildings will open. Your safety and well-being are at the core of our decision making process. **Please note that even when we are allowed to use our buildings for worship, that we will continue to provide an on-line presence, together with the other ways we have adopted to allow you to engage with worship week by week.** I know from the feedback I have received that many who cannot physically be in church appreciate the ability to worship with us on-line

I appreciate that there will probably come a time in the autumn when organisations will wish to restart, but please be aware that any decision about hall usage will be dependent upon the government guidelines, Presbytery approval (in the form of properly completed risk assessments), the Kirk Session approval, and last but not least - the minister's approval. **Then, and only then** can permission be granted to use our buildings to meet together, whether or not organisations themselves feel that they wish to recommence. Should we decide to allow groups to meet, it is crucial to note

that the hygiene requirements and distancing requirements will still be in place for the foreseeable future.

On a separate, but equally important note, some of you may have read, or heard about an article published in the Glasgow Herald which suggested that the church was abandoning some of our members. This simply is not true. One of my colleagues has produced a response which I quote (suitably amended) *Some of you may have seen an alarming piece in today's Herald entitled "Kirk's cruel plan to banish elderly from services is a disgrace". I simply want to reassure you that this extremely misleading column utterly misrepresents the facts, and the care that the Church has for its older members.*

Ministers are only too aware of the distress that closing Church buildings has been, particularly to older members. We are keen to see everyone – of every age – having the option of returning to Church, just as soon as it is safe to do so.

What is happening right now is that an expert group in our Edinburgh Head Office ("121") are working extremely hard to provide guidance for

churches as they think about reopening, and they are consulting us ministers regularly. The guidance is certainly long and complicated, but that's not because it's trying to confuse anyone (as the Herald's piece alleges) but because every church building is different – and because the Scottish Government's advice is changing week by week. It is the Scottish Government who have placed certain people in the "shielding" category, and also recommended that those over 70 need to take particular care. All that 121's advice says is that congregations need to keep this in view, and to recognise that some people may choose not to return to church immediately when the building re-opens. No one is being banished. It will be about individuals making choices for themselves. What we are being encouraged to do is to ensure that there are still other options for those who choose not to return. The advice says we should ensure that vulnerable people are able to "participate in church life in a way that meets their own individual needs and preferences while safeguarding their own health". For us, that will mean that our services will continue to be available online, on DVD, and telephone, even after we are able to re-

start physical meetings, so that everyone (young and old) can choose what they believe is best for them.

It may reassure people to know that the decisions will be taken by your local elders (many of whom are over 70 themselves) and not by any “hierarchy” as the Herald wrongly claims. The document that headquarters have produced is simply welcome guidance for your minister and Kirk Session as they seek to find the best way forward for our congregation. We do not want anyone to make decisions which may put their health at risk.

If you have any concerns, feel free to get in touch, I know this is a lot to take in, please continue to pray for the office bearers and myself (as we pray for you) as we seek to navigate this difficult process. I long for the day when I will be able to look you in the eye and not stare at a camera as I lead you in worship, together, in our sanctuary.

Yours, in His name

Graham

Church clubs

As the halls are closed, the various clubs have not met with one exception. The Computer club has met “on line” using the internet and Skype.

Can I suggest that, as people reading this, have internet access, they consider setting up groups by means of one of the online chat sites. The club used Skype but there are others – Zoom, Google hangouts and Duo, Whatsapp, Apple Facetime and a few more.

I also use it to talk/see various friends.

The Bonkle website (www.bonkle.org.uk) has links at the bottom of the front page to the Sunday service and Graham’s Facebook. There is also a link to the Church of Scotland “Giving” service where you can donate to the Church of Scotland OR Bonkle church.

There is also a phone number which will allow you to hear the Sunday service. This, and the direct link to the video of the service, are updated about noon on Sundays.

The service can also be obtained on DVD or CD. Please let people know about this service. If they do not have either a DVD or CD player, they can get it on their phone – again the link is on the website (01698 602250). They should, however,

check there phone contract as if it is PAYG, it could be expensive. The service lasts about $\frac{3}{4}$ hour.

Other contributors have give other suggestions on how to occupy your, or the children's time.

Ian

Computer club.

As we have no income at present we have cancelled the phone/broadband contract. We do not expect to be back in the church hall soon but will inform you when conditions change. Distancing would be impossible in the small room that we use so when we restart we would have to take this into consideration. Unfortunately the halls do not have an abundance of power sockets. Meanwhile the Monday Skype meeting will continue at 10.30am. We may also meet at 1.30pm should there be a demand for this.

Live Well Foodbank

The foodbank is still open, and people have been incredibly generous in donating food, money and vouchers to it. We have put social distancing measures in place, in order to protect both volun-

teers and people using the service. Unfortunately this means we are unable to have people in the church (they come to the table at the rear door) and so the Listening Lounge is suspended at present. Although we do see similar numbers as we saw before the lockdown, the demand has not increased as we expected, mainly due to several other emergency help services opening in the area for the duration of the lockdown. NCT and Made4UinML2 for example are also providing support and food to those in need, which is taking some of the pressure off our own foodbank. Referrals are still obtained via the Scottish Welfare Fund on 0300 555 0405 (crisis grant option) as this allows their situation to be assessed and appropriate advice and help given, so that the underlying reasons for their crisis are identified and addressed. Our volunteers have been attending faithfully each week; tasks like collecting, sorting, distributing and delivering food to those who cannot attend in person. Their help is essential and they deserve all our thanks and appreciation. We have a Facebook page (search for 'Live Well

Foodbank’) and also have a Twitter page named Live Well Foodbank (search for @LiveBonkle). Please check them for regular updates on what we do.

Increasing your screen time!

It has been common in recent years to hear people worrying about young (and not so young) people spending way too much time on their phones, laptops etc. Given that we are having to find new ways to communicate, it’s maybe a good idea to take a leaf out of their book! Most of the churches in the area are putting their services on Facebook every Sunday, either livestreaming or pre-recorded; the viewing numbers have been very good, often much larger than the numbers who physically attend each Sunday. Some churches are posting daily devotions and messages, and some people have been sending inspirational songs, bible verses etc via WhatsApp. We have posted some short films on the Live Well foodbank Facebook page too. Please check out what *your* church is posting, and get watching! The church has an

amazing story to share; a story of love, grace, forgiveness and hope, and we have the means to share it very easily. Also, we *all* have a story ourselves, and people *do* want to hear it!

Here are some links which give ideas about how to tell that, and your, story:

<https://hope1513.com/evangelism/preparing-to-share-his-story-in-your-story/>

<https://storybearer.com/>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xxkLi-F59QR0&feature=youtu.be>

These two links give tips on how to present it:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UyLeB6Vt-FVE>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=np1-yc-s6AQA&t=17s>

And here is a short animation explaining the gospel story from CAP Australia that you can share with other people:

<https://capuk.org/connect/more/video/418353618>

Why not have a go at it? It doesn't need any fancy equipment, just a phone with a camera. Looking

forward to seeing some familiar faces on social media feeds soon!!

Here's a link to YouYube for some child friendly bible stories from the Beginner's Bible:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCiM9mWNxTWpKY-V9Eb9TfkA>



Cover drawing

Many thanks to Stephanie for the drawing. Unfortunately the method the Moses used is unlikely to work with COVID19. We, however, put our trust in the blood on the cross.

Please pray for our doctors and scientists working towards a cure and prevention of this dreadful disease.

The accounts for Bonkle Parish Church as at 18th June 2020.

General Fund

Balance brought forward from 31/12/19	£ 21946.37
Income	£ <u>12904.41</u>
	£ 34850.78

Expenditure	£ 18071.40
Balance in General Fund	£ 16779.38
Unrestricted Funds	£ 8166.95
Total Bank Balance	£ <u>24946.33</u>

Balances held in Church of Scotland

Investors Trust	Smith Bequest	£ 308.32
	Fabric	£ 10999.46
	Special Purposes	£ 1064.44

As you can see our Expenditure now exceeds our Income by £5166.99.

Our outgoings monthly continue Ministry and Mission alone is £2200. Insurance, Gas, Electricity

Minister's Expenses, Staff Salaries, Fabric, Stationery and Sundry Items.

Our Gift Day this year was cancelled but last year that brought in £2240.

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I hope you are all well and staying safe. Our weekly services continue if slightly different than the normal, a big thank to Graham and all those who help. When we can meet again as a congregation the finances will recover. In the meantime let me know if you have any Freewill envelopes or Gift Day envelopes you would like me to collect and deposit the funds into the Bank Account.

God loves a cheerful giver because the gift comes from a heart that has been made glad.

Yours in Christ

Lauren

If you have internet banking, please consider transferring money via one of the available methods. If not, and you have the internet, at the foot of the Bonkle website (www.bonkle.org.uk – the people reading this magazine are already on it) follow the “Donate to church funds” link to the

Church of Scotland website and use your bank card details to donate to Bonkle Church.

If you use envelopes, please consider handing them in to Lauren OR to your elder or post a cheque to Lauren.