

The Kirk Quair

February-March 2021

Supplement



Behold your God

St Andrew's
In the Grange
Church of Scotland

From the Minister's Desk



Psalm 40:1 “I waited patiently for the LORD; he turned to me and heard my cry.

On St David's Day, we started the process of beginning to pack and to prepare for our departure from Guernsey. In truth, the process began some time ago as Grace, with her expert eye and experience of such things, has been busy cleaning and sorting in readiness for what will be our 19th house move in nearly 40 years of marriage. For us moving is normal but it feels different this time. We are leaving behind many fond memories, experiences and people we have come to love. We have been well served and greatly encouraged by the Session Clerks and Elders. We could not have hoped for a warmer welcome and a more supportive congregation. We have enjoyed the journey but it has been far shorter than we could have ever imagined or wished. St Andrew's in the Grange will always have a special place in our hearts and in our life story. So, we are packing up with a heavy heart, to move to a place of our own choosing; to take up a job which we never expected; nor were particularly seeking. Perhaps this is to be the new normal?

For the past year, not least of all the past couple of months, we have been living in a time that feels anything but normal. Our usual routine has been disrupted and travel on and off the island has been difficult, if not impossible, for all of us. We have been cut off from family and friends. New lives have come into this world and old lives have come to an end and we have remained in isolation. Separation from those we love has been hard and we have had to adopt new norms, by more frequent washing of hands, wearing masks and staying two metres apart. We have queued to get into the supermarket and been shut out of the Church. We have eagerly awaited vaccination while routine hospital appointments and visits have been put on hold. We have taken for granted the freedoms we have enjoyed; the beauty of the garden; the sights of the sea; the bird song and the rustle of wind through the trees.

Perhaps this is to be the new normal?

John Stott in his book *Favourite Psalms* writes: “Every Christian believer is fortified in present trials by the memory of past blessings. Because we have experienced God’s faithfulness in former days, we are encouraged to trust Him still.... Psalm 40 begins with a graphic description of deliverance and ends with an urgent plea for continued mercy.” In his helplessness, man waits patiently for the Lord who hears his cry, stoops down and draws him out of the mud, then sets his feet firmly back on solid ground. In the end, left to his own devices he is poor and needy but the Lord, who has been his deliverer, cares for him still and will deliver him again.

Perhaps now he has discovered or perhaps rediscovered a new normal. His faith, hope and trust in God has been restored. He has seen for himself that God truly is the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. None of us know what tomorrow might bring and where God will call us next. But we can all draw strength and be sure and certain that there is nothing in life or in death than can ever separate us from the knowledge or the love of God.

Thank you for calling us to Guernsey, St Andrew’s in the Grange and for allowing us to share part of the journey with you. We hope and pray for more normal times ahead.

With all good wishes and every blessing

David and Grace

Lessons of Lockdown

This past year may have altered your perspective on life. Some of the following statements may be worth thinking about....

- o Life is precarious
- o A nurse is worth more than a professional footballer
- o Spare time isn’t a waste of time
- o A smile is precious
- o Being alone isn’t the same as loneliness
- o Hard work doesn’t guarantee employment
- o Silence opens us to creative ideas

StAG News

During the first “lockdown” last year, production of an interim supplement to our regular bi-monthly magazines seems to have been appreciated and was a good way of keeping in touch. As we are only emerging slowly from our second lockdown, it seems appropriate that we should revert to that pattern.

Some activities such as the Lent Study Group and Guernsey Welfare Services Lunch at the Cotils have been cancelled but some meetings are still taking place and decisions reached, albeit digitally.

We are all becoming dab hands at Zoom or Teams as we strive to meet the challenges ahead of us and so there is, at least, some StAG news to report.



News from Presbytery

The Presbytery of England met by Zoom on 9th February and one of the first items on the agenda was the election of the Moderator for 2020/21. Someone we all know quite well has been elected i.e our former Ses-

sion Clerk, the Organist’s wife, Hilary. Congratulations or, maybe, commiserations because as well as moderating meetings of Presbytery, she will have to take the services before them and, should any of the current vacancies be filled, their induction services. She will be ably supported in her new role by another familiar figure, the Presbytery Clerk, Rev Alistair Cumming.

The Demission of David, our minister, was agreed at the meeting and Alistair was appointed as the Interim Moderator.

Six ministers and six elders were approved as Commissioners to this year’s General Assembly which will be held by Zoom. Ethel will be our representative.

Our News

Not a great deal to report but, in preparation for our quest for a new minister, a small group are busy revising our “Parish Profile” and the Worship Team are hard at work preparing services for the early weeks of the vacancy.

Weekly services have been resumed on YouTube and we are also circulating a weekly Order of Service sheet.

Diary Dates

Stated Annual Meeting

In view of the current restrictions, it has been decided that the Stated Annual Meeting should be postponed until further notice.

The Lent Appeal



Like last year, the Lent Appeal will be extended and there will be more information in due course. In the meantime, keep saving!

World Day of Prayer International 2021 was a virtual service on Friday 5th March 2021.

Formerly Women's World Day of Prayer, The World Day of Prayer, is a global ecumenical movement led by Christian women who welcome you to join in prayer and action for peace and justice. It is run under the motto "Informed Prayer and Prayerful Action," and is celebrated annually in over 170 countries on the first Friday in March.

Guernsey churches have been involved with The World Day of Prayer for many years holding services in various churches across the island. The 2021 service is to be led by the Christian women of the Republic of Vanuatu, an archipelago of 80 islands in the South Pacific eleven hundred miles east of Australia.

The theme from Vanuatu is to "Build on a Strong Foundation". The verses of the Bible reference conclude the Sermon on the Mount in the Gospel of Matthew. When we build on the rock which is Christ, we know that we are on a strong foundation that will stand the tests of time and remain secure.

In normal times an order of service prepared by the Vanuatu Christian women would be held in churches worldwide. However, this year due to the COVID pandemic people cannot gather to worship and so the service has been recorded and can be shared globally online.

The service can be found on-line by Googling: -
VANUATU 2021-World Day of Prayer International.

There you will find a video called 'Let's talk with WDP Vanuatu' at the end of which is a link to the YouTube video of the actual service.

You will enjoy the other information on the website.

BEYOND OUR SHORES



Here in the British Isles, we may struggle to hold services because of coronavirus, but at least no one in the government is threatening to arrest and imprison us for just being Christians! And yet that is the harsh reality for hundreds of millions of Christians around the world today.

A Christian persecution watchdog has warned that more Christians around the world are suffering because of their faith, and the kind of persecution they're experiencing has intensified. Open Doors has found that more than 340 million Christians suffer high levels of persecution and discrimination for their faith, amounting to one in eight worldwide. Now the charity has released its 2021 World Watch List (WWL) which highlights the top 50 countries that are most hostile toward Christians. The top ten are:

1. North Korea

Being discovered as a Christian is a death sentence in North Korea. If you aren't killed instantly, you will be taken to a labour camp as a political criminal.

2. Afghanistan

ISIS and the Taliban continue to have a strong, violent presence in Afghanistan, with the Taliban controlling large regions.

3. Somalia

Islam is considered a crucial part of Somali identity, and if any Somali is suspected of having converted to Christianity, they are in great danger. Members of their family, clan or community will harass, intimidate or even kill them. Women may be raped and forcibly married.

4. Libya

There is no freedom of speech, no freedom of religion and very limited possibility of public church life in Libya. Although there are around 34,500 Christians in the country, only a tiny number (approximately 150) are Libyan – the majority are expatriates and migrant workers.

5. Pakistan

Pakistan's notorious blasphemy laws are used to target Christians, and Islamic extremist groups vehemently "defend" these laws, including attacking or killing those believed to have contravened them.

6. Eritrea

Government security forces monitor phone calls, scrutinise activity and conduct countless raids which target Christians, seize Christian materials and damage house churches. Christians can be arrested and imprisoned without trial.

7. Yemen

Christians in Yemen usually keep their faith secret, because if they are discovered then they could face the death penalty. Leaving Islam is forbidden, and all Yemenis are considered Muslims by the state.

8. Iran

The Iranian government sees the conversion of Muslims to Christianity as an attempt by Western countries to undermine the Islamic rule of Iran. Christians from a Muslim background are persecuted the most, primarily by the government, but also by their families and communities.

9. Nigeria

More Christians are murdered for their faith in Nigeria than in any other country. Violent attacks by Boko Haram, Hausa-Fulani Muslim militant herdsmen, ISWAP (an affiliate of ISIS) and other Islamic extremist groups are common in the north and middle belt of the country, and they are becoming more common further south.

10. India

Hindu extremists believe that all Indians should be Hindus, and that the country should be rid of Christianity and Islam. They use extensive violence to achieve this goal, particularly targeting Christians from a Hindu background.

... AND CLOSER TO HOME

Our Friends and Fellowship Team are making tentative arrangements for a Farewell Buffet Lunch to be held in the Hall on Easter Day, Sunday 4th April, after David's last service before He and Grace depart to Scotland.

We really hope that this will be able to go ahead but everything depends upon the Covid 19 regulations in force at the time. Information about the lunch is being circulated as widely as possible but if you have any questions, please contact Ethel at ethelrobb@gmail.com or on 264559.



Marie Curie, the UK's leading end-of-life care charity will this year celebrate their 35th annual Great Daffodil Appeal, which is held every March across the UK. The money raised from this appeal enables the charity to continue their vital work providing care and support to people living with a terminal illness and their families.

The coronavirus continues to have a devastating effect on Marie Curie's fundraising, as activities up and down the country have had to be cancelled. However, there's still lots of ways people can get involved, with things like the Step into Spring Challenge in March where people walk 10,000 steps a day, they can host a virtual collection or buy and wear one of the charity's iconic daffodils in memory of a loved one.

This year will be even more special as the charity encourages the nation to come together to reflect, grieve and remember for a National Day of Reflection. Tuesday 23rd March 2021 will mark one year since the UK first went into a nationwide lockdown and Marie Curie is inviting the nation to unite and remember those who died and show support and solidarity for those who have been bereaved. The charity knows how important it is for people to grieve and the emotional and psychological impact of not being able to say goodbye properly and grieving in isolation can have.

Due to the pandemic, Marie Curie won't have their normal collections on the street, so donations are more important than ever. To support the Great Daffodil Appeal, you can donate at www.mariecurie.org.uk/daffodil



Pew: A medieval torture device still found in some churches.

True story

Several years ago, a notice appeared on the vestry noticeboard of a church in Hampshire, after a Holy Week performance of Stainer's 'Crucifixion'.

The choirmaster wrote "The Crucifixion – well done, everyone!"
Later that day, someone had added, 'The Resurrection – well done, God!'



To use a mixed metaphor, we're not out of the woods yet but there's light at the end of the tunnel and, with shops and schools reopening at the beginning of the week, it does seem as if things are moving in the right direction. It has been a difficult time for us all, many finding it much more so than the first lockdown. Let us hope that we will soon be back to "normal."

The Queen recently spoke for the whole country when she said that many are, "tinged with sadness. Some (are) mourning the loss of those dear to them and other missing friends and family members, distanced for safety. When all they really want ... is a simple hug or a squeeze of the hand."

We are becoming accustomed to wearing face masks in public, keeping our distance from others, cutting out social gatherings, and attending church services online, but 'no touching' seems the cruellest of punishments. Let's hope it isn't for much longer

St Valentines Day, Pancake Day and World Day of Prayer International (p5) have come and gone and, now, we are looking forward to Mothers Day on 14th March (p10) and then, Holy Week beginning with Palm Sunday on 28th March by which time we hope to be able to gather for worship in church once more. In the meantime, we are continuing to record a weekly service which can be watched on YouTube.

Despite the cancellation of so many events, the resilience of event organisers is remarkable and three very different initiatives are featured in this supplement. You can walk 10,000 steps a day for Marie Curie (p9) and then relax with a Fairtrade Easter Egg (or three!) while "taking part" in Spring Harvest. (p12)

On a personal note, Ed would like to put on record a big thank you to our IT wizard, Stephen, who has stepped down from Session now that he has moved off island. His help with the website and intricacies of recording, editing and uploading the services has been greatly appreciated and certainly made life easier for your editor.

Ed



Let's clap for mothers! 14th March.

As Mother's Day approaches, let's hear it for all the mothers who have been on the frontline of helping our country survive the Covid pandemic!

Just as we've clapped on our doorsteps for our healthcare workers and other heroes, let's applaud all that mothers have done – often balancing home and employment – during these long lockdown months.

Research shows that mums have carried out most of the home schooling and household tasks – with many also holding down important frontline roles in the NHS and other essential services.

Women spent more than twice as much time as men on their children's home schooling and development during the lockdown, according to a study by University College London. It measured how parents responded while schools and nurseries were closed to most families.

The survey, reported by the Guardian newspaper, found that women across several age groups took the major share of childcare and home schooling. Those with primary school-aged children “were considerably more likely” to have given up working than fathers with children of the same age.

The pressure on families was further increased as many grandparents and other carers were unable to help. Family and friendship networks were put under strain with contacts restricted to online Zoom or Face-time calls that are often difficult with younger children.

Launching a Children's Society report into children's welfare during the lockdown, chief executive Mark Russell said: “We are living in unprecedented times. Months of national lockdown, only small numbers of children in school, and many families experiencing real crisis. Coronavirus has impacted every area of our lives and The Children's Society has been deeply concerned about the impact of this crisis on children, especially the most disadvantaged.”

He added: “Our survey found a higher proportion of young people experiencing low well-being than we are used to seeing. Whilst we know that most children's well-being will ‘bounce-back’, there will be some who do not.”

Mothers are at the frontline of helping our children cope with – and then recover from – the effects of the Covid pandemic and the extended lockdowns.

Many working mothers lost their jobs because of the pandemic, and families will be hard-pressed to make up for the income lost. Food bank provider, the Trussell Trust has warned churches to prepare for a ‘tidal wave’ of poverty and to be ready to help their local communities.

This Mother’s Day, daffodils and chocolate may seem very thin reward for the major contribution of mums across our nation.

In normal times, they have a challenging and demanding job to do. Through the pandemic, they have risen to the challenges and sought to ensure children thrive despite the lockdowns.

As we celebrate Mother’s Day, let’s recognise the amazing efforts made by mothers in the home with their children.

Let’s also celebrate the vital roles many also play – as do those without children – in healthcare, in education, in the States and civil service, in keeping vital supplies flowing – and in our pulpits and across our churches.

With Mothers in mind

Switched on

A housewife was helping her aged mother get up the stairs on their brand-new stair lift when the minister telephoned her. He was horrified to hear her say: “I’m so sorry, but I’ll have to ring you back. I can’t talk right now because I’ve finally got Mother in the electric chair and I’m eager to press the switch and see if it works!”

Bishop

A little girl told her mother, “We went to a confirmation service at the cathedral and I saw the bishop. Now I know what a crook looks like!”

Paradise lost?

A young mother stood in her kitchen and watched her baby screaming, her sons fighting, her daughter crying, the washing machine leaking, and the dog being sick. She sighed and said to her friend: “I sometimes wish I’d loved and lost.”



Spring Harvest 2021 goes online

Christian festival Spring Harvest has axed its 2021 in-person events, saying it is "no longer viable or responsible" to host the gatherings at their flagship Butlins locations.

Spring Harvest continues to plan for events in 2022. But in the meantime, Spring Harvest Home 2021, the online event which has already been months in the planning, is set to be "bolder and better than ever before". Spring Harvest will now start online on Easter Sunday evening.



Fairtrade Fortnight:
22nd February – 7th March



This edition of the Quair should be available just as Fairtrade Fortnight is coming to an end but, with a month yet until Easter, our readers may like to support FairTrade and delight their children, grand children or even themselves with a gift of a chocolate egg from The Meaningful Chocolate Company which has launched its 2021 Fairtrade Real Easter Egg range.. All Real Easter Eggs come with an Easter story in the box. The stories range from simple guides to a 24-page activity book version with a prize competition worth £200. They provide an opportunity to share the joy of Easter with friends and family.

The 2021 Original Real Easter Egg includes a new 24-page Easter story activity book. It features a rainbow design to remind us of the importance of working together, in amazing and inspiring ways, for the common good. It costs £4.50 and is delivered in multiples of six or as singles.

David Marshall, from Meaningful Chocolate, said: "Even with the current uncertainties we believe that it is more important than ever that churches, schools and individuals find ways to share the Easter story in 2021. Our aim is to provide some of these resources and continue to support Fairtrade. The Real Easter Egg is a proven way to do this. You can order direct from www.realeasteregg.co.uk "