

Dear Members and Friends of Holburn West Church

Sunday 30<sup>th</sup> August was an exciting time for us: the re-opening of the sanctuary for a Sunday morning gathering for worship. A great deal of preparation had gone into the day from a very dedicated team of people. On behalf of the congregation, I would like to express my thanks to the team: our Buildings Convener Sandy Gallacher and his team for ensuring that the building was safe and ready to use once again; Iain McKenzie (our caretaker) for his regular inspections of the building, his re-arranging of the chairs for hygiene and social distancing purposes. Thanks to Isabel Milne and our Church Secretary Rhoda Mowatt for arranging the Big Clean by the cleaning services and for the ordering of additional sanitization provisions. Thanks to Sheila Smith for preparing the door duty teams to be ready to guide the congregation under the present Covid-19 guidelines and protocols. Thanks to Verna Ward and Yvonne Bain for their invaluable assistance with preparing the audio-visuals for the worship and the recording of the services. A very big thanks to our co-Session Clerk Martin Greig for studying and carefully following the considerable detail in the Church of Scotland guidelines regarding re-opening and overseeing that each part of the team did what was required.

So, following this considerable work, I extend an invitation to you to join in the worship in the sanctuary on a Sunday morning. Like so many other things at this time, gathering for Sunday morning worship is a different experience from what we have previously been used to. There is no singing out of the hymns yet. People cannot move around the sanctuary and chat to one another, as they could previously. On a positive note, we gather together in a space and time set apart for the worship of God. Although, socially distanced from one another, we still experience a sense of gathering with God's people in the one place. There is more space in the worship for reflection, prayer and listening. Surely, these are all good things to practise and develop.

At the moment, you do not need to book a seat to attend worship on a Sunday morning. Of course, if we were to fill up our more limited seating capacity, we would need to turn people away. It is helpful for the door duty Elders to have an idea of how many people are planning to attend so that the chairs in the sanctuary are prepared in advance. It is especially helpful, to contact the church office or Session Clerks to let them know if there is more than one coming from your household, so that appropriate seating arrangements can be made.

**Door Duty Teams:** At present, we have two teams trained in Covid-19 protocols, who are serving on alternative Sundays. It would be good to have some additional volunteers to assist in this valuable service, so that the responsibility is shared out. If you are willing to assist in this way, could you contact the church office and let us know please?

Our **Harvest Thanksgiving Service** will be on Sunday 4<sup>th</sup> October. Due to Covid-19 restrictions, there will not be the floral displays in the sanctuary, which we usually enjoy. There will not be the distribution of flowers either. With the relative starkness of the sanctuary, this will be a good Harvest Sunday for us to reflect on the people far and near who are struggling to find sufficient basic necessities to be sustained on. We will also give thanks for many who have worked hard in providing and selling food for us throughout this strange time. Therefore, we are encouraging you to make donations to Instant Neighbour and Christian Aid at this time.

Instant Neighbour

[www.instantneighbour.co.uk](http://www.instantneighbour.co.uk)

Christian Aid

[www.christianaid.org.uk](http://www.christianaid.org.uk)

Thanks to the group from the Holburn West congregation who did the Christian Aid Walk the Line at the start of this month and raised a considerable sum from sponsors.

The opportunities to join together in worship online will continue: The Holburn West Church Sunday Morning Worship service will be recorded and made available on YouTube via the Holburn West Church website and Facebook page; the Aberdeen City-Centre and West End Churches cluster group joint service on YouTube; the Holburn west Church Jubilee Worship for All, live on a Sunday evening and then made available as a recording.

Wherever we worship God: at home or in the sanctuary, may these words from the hymn 201 "Worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness" be an assistance to us.

"Low at his feet lay thy burden of carefulness;  
high on his heart he will bear it for thee,  
comfort thy sorrows, and answer thy prayerfulness,  
guiding thy steps as may best for thee be."  
(verse 2)

God bless you  
from  
Rev Duncan C. Eddie