

## August 2020 Holburn West Church Newsletter

Dear Members and Friends of Holburn West Church

Here we are in August 2020, following a period of six months, which has been the strangest time we have experienced collectively and inter-generationally for decades in our society. There has been an easing of lockdown and with that, a wider range of activities we could participate in: travelling further distances, meeting up with friends and family outdoors and indoors, visiting a greater variety of shops, eating out at restaurants, cafes, perhaps a drink at a pub. The Scottish football Premier league matches began this week. There has been Formula One Motor racing, cricket; the snooker championship etc. At present these events are to be enjoyed via television and online. The supporters do not physically attend the sports events currently. So, these are steps forward. We hope and pray that more businesses and different services will be able to function again in a more "normal" way. But of course, we know that there are checks and balances, rightly so, to reign in the spread of the Covid-19 virus. Just in these past few days, Aberdeen has featured on the national news, after it emerged that there had been a cluster of people who tested positively with the virus, who had also attended the Hawthorn bar. Then we saw photos of people in disturbingly close proximity, attending the Soul bar on Union Street. These events have raised concerns that people have started to become too lax in observing the necessary protocols which are there to prevent the spread of the virus. Nicola Sturgeon, the First Minister of Scotland, was almost reduced to tears when she observed photos, reflecting this dangerous and casual approach of significant numbers of people.

I went for my first shopping trip, down Union Street, since the lockdown, last Saturday. It was good to see people moving around the city-centre; to observe life in streets which had been eerily quiet and deserted for several months. But it was also strange. One could sense that these were still very much tentative steps being made towards a degree of "normality." Something was very striking. Many of our Church of Scotland buildings are still closed, while members, behind the scenes, work hard, at getting everything in place, to re-open the church buildings and alongside this, also offer online worship, and provide support for valuable charities such as Instant Neighbour and Christian Aid. Therefore, the busiest church-building in the City of Aberdeen, appeared to be the former Langstane Kirk, now known as the Soul bar.

This may be a time more than ever, for the Church to be the salt of the earth. We may not have the big physical gatherings recently witnessed in Aberdeen pubs (with the inherent dangers that brings) but we have this opportunity to redevelop as a Church and connect with a much wider cross section of the community. It can be as simple and challenging as how we relate to others; how we exercise compassion and consideration to the friend and the stranger. Our move towards online worship is creating opportunities of connection with the wider community, that we did not use previously. Let me draw your attention to a Week of Prayer for Church and Country, to be held Monday 17<sup>th</sup> to Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup> August, which we are invited to, from the Moderator of the General Assembly Rt Rev Dr Martin Fair. Further details on the Church of Scotland web site and in later emails and updates on the Holburn West web site and Facebook page. Jesus Christ, the Lord of yesterday, today, and tomorrow will lead and provide for the Church and the wider community at every stage of life's journey. We need to be prayerful and faithful in our Lord; and act in response to his call.

God bless

from Rev Duncan C. Eddie, Minister at Holburn West Church