

# Kintore Parish Church of Scotland

SC001406 Registered Scottish Charity

30 September 2020

Dear friends,

Since last I wrote to you in July, lockdown restrictions have lifted and then tightened again in Scotland. For many of us who were just beginning to enjoy the freedom to see family and friends again, this return to restricted interaction has come as quite a blow. During this strange year I have been very encouraged to see and hear about the ways members of our congregation have kept in touch with one another, reached out to the lonely around them and taken care of neighbours and friends who have had to shield. Well done and thank you! It seems as though many systems have caught up with the pandemic so that hospital and doctors visits, shopping and filling medical prescriptions, and general communications are now much easier than they were in March, so perhaps our neighbours' physical needs won't be quite so acute this time around. Nevertheless, I believe mental, emotional and spiritual distress is likely to be more pronounced as we head into the winter months. Apart from the fear of becoming infected, which is still there, there is also the fatigue of having dealt with this situation for so long, of missing regular contact with friends and family, of being unable to travel to have a "change of scenery", not to mention the financial stresses and other worries people are dealing with and the fact that we are heading into a season of the year laden with nostalgia, significant anniversaries and the expectation of being together for Christmas and Hogmanay, etc.. I appeal to you therefore to do whatever you can for whoever you can to keep in touch, to check in by phone or email or letter with those who might otherwise be lonely or distressed.

The church continues to meet regularly on Zoom and via recorded services on our website ([www.kintorekirk.org](http://www.kintorekirk.org)), and I'm still checking in with folk on Facebook Live every Sunday morning at 9:30am. We are however also moving towards opening the church for in-person worship services. We have already received permission from Presbytery to hold funerals and weddings in the building and we will soon open for Sunday services too.

## Worship in the Church Building

Subject to any changes in Government advice, we plan to hold our first Sunday worship service in the church building on Sunday, 1 November 2020. We have taken every precaution to ensure that it will be safe for you to attend but we also know that some of you may not be ready to return to public gatherings yet. Please do not feel any pressure or obligation to attend. For some however, this will be a welcome return to worship – especially if you have been unable to participate in any of our online worship during the lockdown. If you would like to come along to one of our in-person worship services, here are a number of things you need to know:

**Time:** We will schedule the in-person worship services at 10am as they have been in the past. We encourage you not to come too early as we will only begin admitting people into the sanctuary at about 9:45am. The service is likely to last just over 30 minutes.

**Booking:** As attendance is limited and needs to be recorded for the benefit of the Scottish Government's Test and Protect Strategy, we will operate a booking system. You can book your place by phoning Jane McIntosh at 01224-791 688 on the previous Tuesday or Wednesday between 5:30pm and 7:30pm.

Jane will record your name and contact details and give you some information about what to expect when you attend.

**Preparing:** If you have experienced any Covid-19 symptoms (a new and continuous cough, a high temperature, a loss or change in your normal sense of smell or taste) in the week preceding the Sunday or on the day, please do not attend and, if possible, let Jane know that you won't be there. Please follow the advice from NHS Scotland to deal with your symptoms.

Everyone attending will be required to wear a face-covering. If you do not have one, we will have some disposable masks available at the door. If you would like to receive your very own re-usable facemask, please let Jane know and our team of handcrafters will get you one.

At church: On arrival you will be ushered to a designated seat in the church. Members of the same household will be able to sit together. We are operating a one-way system through the church and you are requested to keep a safe distance from others throughout your time in the building.

All pew cushions have been temporarily removed from the sanctuary.

Offerings will be collected on entry.

Face coverings are to be worn throughout the service. Those leading worship will be able to remove theirs while doing so from the lectern.

There will be music but no singing during the service.

The service is likely to last just over 30 minutes.

Toilet facilities will be available subject to controlled distancing down the corridor.

At the end of the service please remain seated in your pew until you are ushered to leave via our one-way system.

We are unfortunately unable to offer teas and coffees and you are kindly asked not to congregate outside after worship.

I'm sorry if this all sounds rather formal and impersonal but we must follow government regulations and your safety is our first priority. This is also only a first stab at getting it right and the details may well change as regulations change and as we find ways to improve the way we do things.

**Please note that Zoom services will continue from 1 November although they will move to 11am.** While everyone is welcome at our in-person services, we ask you to use your discretion and, given the limited seating in the church, if you are able to worship with us on Zoom you might like to continue doing so for now to allow space for others to attend in-person.

### **Planned Giving and Freewill Envelopes**

A number of folk have been asking about how they can continue to give regularly to the work of the church. Before providing details about how you can give, I want to take this opportunity to thank all of you for your ongoing financial support. As I have said before, the fact that worship services in the church have been suspended, has not diminished the amount of work we have been able to do in the community. In many ways, because of the stress that so many people are under, the church has been busier than ever during the lockdown. Your planned giving and freewill offerings are making it possible for us to continue with this vital work for God's kingdom.

There are several ways that you can continue to give regularly to the church. The most efficient way is by standing order. If you have access to the internet, you can set up a standing order with your bank via internet banking. Alternatively, you could ask your pastoral visitor or our Church Secretary, Jane McIntosh, to send you a copy of the necessary forms. Our website ([www.kintorekirk.org](http://www.kintorekirk.org)) has a handy "DONATE NOW" button on the front page. If you click on that you will be taken to a page that explains several ways for you to get your planned giving to us.

If you prefer to use the envelope system, you are welcome to drop them off at the Manse (28 Oakhill Road, Kintore) or with our Treasurer, Graham Lamb, (The Old Bakers House on the Square – directly opposite the church gate). If you are housebound you may prefer to arrange for your pastoral visitor to collect the envelopes from your home. Failing that, please contact me at the number below and I can arrange for someone from our Finance Team to collect your envelopes from you.

With much love,

Rev Neil Meyer

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