

Kintore Parish Church of Scotland

SC001406 Registered Scottish Charity

24 February 2021

Dear friends,

My minister growing up used to say that the clearest statements of a congregation's faith are its financial statements. The past year has been a difficult financial year for many families, small & large businesses and churches. The Church of Scotland as a whole suffered a deficit that ran into millions of pounds. Many congregations have experienced significant drops in income. At the end of March (Sunday the 28th of March) we will hold a virtual Stated Annual Meeting of the Congregation where our Treasurer will present the financial results for 2020. At the risk of stealing his thunder, I can tell you that Kintore Parish Church will report a deficit of just under £11,000 for the year. That might sound like bad news but, given the year we've been through, it is nowhere near as bad as it could have been.

Most importantly, though, is that our income from members has only dropped by £7,700 (just over 10%) from the previous year. This is despite the facts that we had no plate offerings for a large part of the year, that many folks with planned giving envelopes found it difficult or even impossible to return them to us and that many households in the congregation were struggling financially themselves.

I therefore thank you on behalf of myself, the Kirk Session and our Finance Team for your continued financial support and faithfulness during this difficult year. To the many individuals and families who have either switched to Standing Orders or continued to give faithfully through Standing Orders; to the many others who have found ways to deliver their envelopes to us; to others who have made donations via our website or deposited straight into our bank account; Thank you. Your faithfulness has made it possible for us to continue to provide ministry to our whole parish (not only our own members) and to contribute towards ministry elsewhere in Scotland and around the world. For anyone who found it either physically impossible or financially difficult to continue giving this year, I want to assure you that you are still a deeply valued part of our church family. There are times in every family when some of us need to lean on others for support. I pray that each of you has continued to feel supported by the rest of the church family. I'm sure the time will come again when you will be able to contribute according to your means.

The faithfulness of our members has been not just financial this year. I also want to acknowledge and celebrate the phenomenal faithfulness, resilience and selfless kindness of Christian individuals and families across the parish during 2020. For several years we have spoken about "whole-life discipleship" – the idea that we are called to follow Jesus in every area of life and every moment of the day. This idea had hands and feet and a beating heart this year as people shopped for neighbours and delivered medicines to sheltering friends and family; as those who were fearful and unsettled themselves made an effort to reach out to others; as we continued to support the work of our mission partners: Christian Aid, Toilet Twinning and the Aberdeenshire North Foodbank; as folk took the trouble to learn new technologies to maintain regular church community; and as people developed creative and ingenious ideas for keeping the spirits up through virtual gatherings when physical gatherings were impossible.

Yesterday (23rd February 2021) the First Minister announced a roadmap for easing the lockdown and it looks at this stage as though we may be heading towards a slightly more open society soon after Easter. But it is likely that it will still be some time before we can resume all of our in-building activities. We will keep our website updated about when church services will start in-person and when other regular activities will start. Meanwhile we will continue to meet online for worship and fellowship on Zoom, on our Website and on Facebook Live, and to keep in touch with our members by email and letter.

As we begin to look ahead to life after lockdown, I want to reiterate something I said in my sermon this past Sunday. As hard as this lockdown has been, it has given us an opportunity to press the "reset" button on all we do as a church. We have had to find ways to do the **content** of our faith (i.e the things that really matter, like worship, fellowship, service and proclamation) without the familiar **forms** of our religion. There is a real opportunity for us to become **a new people**, both individually and collectively. I believe that God's Spirit has been at work deep within our hearts and our relationships to re-shape us. I pray this move of the Holy Spirit may truly transform us as a community and as individuals to follow Jesus with renewed energy, creativity and compassion.

With much love,

Rev Neil Meyer

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Notes on the Stated Annual Meeting

The Stated Annual Meeting of Kintore Parish Church will take place on Palm Sunday, 28th March 2021, on Zoom directly after the morning service. The link is below. You may join the Zoom link from 10:00am for worship and remain with us for the ASM or join for just the ASM part of the meeting at 10:45am.

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83896925396?pwd=VWlaUS9kRTNvWIZtVTREQmd1S2VMQT09>

Meeting ID: 838 9692 5396

Passcode: 712200

If you would like to receive a copy of the Annual Reports prior to the meeting, please contact our Church Secretary, Jane McIntosh on 01224-791688 or at kintorekirk.secretary@gmail.com and she will email you a copy.

If you haven't used Zoom before, there's guidance on our website about how to do so on your computer or Jane can ask someone to talk you through that by phone if that would help.