

Lock Down Tower June 2020

What does the minister do at the moment?

Well, take Thursday for example:

First make up and send the daily Thought and Prayer to everyone on the e-mail list, which has been gathered over the last few weeks.

Then work on tomorrow's funeral. A neighbour's mother died aged 93 of Covid in a care home. Her children have sent their memories and added Psalm 23. Make sure I have the words for the hymns in my script as the hymn books have all been removed in the crematorium for fear of contamination.



Then phone people on the membership role. I am at last at letter W....and after several lovely chats I have reached the end. Again some people have unfortunately not given us or updated their telephone number. That is frustrating and I worry for them thinking we do not care.

Next start making the video for Sunday and attend Presbytery's Zoom meeting about Mission in Coronavirus Times.

Tomorrow I will conduct the funeral in the morning and then make the worship video and sound file for our new dedicated "Dial a Service" phone number: (0131 322 1356) Hope people will enjoy it and watch on their computer or listen on their telephone.

So you see, it was again a busy day, socially distanced on the computer and phone, but united by God's love and care.

Love and blessings to you all, your minister

Andrea

Isaiah 40:31: *"But those who wait on the Lord/ Shall renew their strength; They shall mount up with wings like eagles, They shall run and not be weary, They shall walk and not faint."*

Satan's Lantern



During this time of lockdown with Churches closed, Church organisations at a standstill, visits to hospitals, care homes and to each other not allowed modern means of communication have come into their own. Telephone calls are a lifeline and those who have computers, laptops, tablets and mobile phones owe a huge debt of gratitude to our Minister Andrea Price, her husband Neil, Stuart Montgomery our organist and pianist and the members and children who take part in Sunday worship via the internet and

now can be listened to on the telephone. It is a wonderful way of keeping the Church connection and keeping faith alive in the community and elsewhere as many people outside the membership watch the service every week from as far afield as Devon, Germany, California and maybe even beyond.

We are further sustained by Andrea's 'Thought for the Day' every day and her bible studies into the Fruits of the Spirit brought to us on Zoom (many of us have discovered that Zoom is not just an ice lolly) helped to deepen our faith. The 'virtual' coffee time (again on Zoom) on a Sunday once more keeps us connected and up to date with news.

Stuart's separate piano recitals also brings great pleasure and along with his marvellous photographs of Edinburgh keeps us grounded and re kindles the love for our city.

All of this takes me back to my young days in what was Dalry Church when Dr David McDougall was our minister (1928-1960). He was very much of the old school and suspicious of anything new, an attitude fairly typical in Church Circles at this time. He considered the television to be 'Satan's Lantern' so much so that some parishioners covered the object with a cloth if they knew he was to visit! I may add that he visited his flock often and was always a welcome visitor who sometimes showed a pawky humour but was strict about Church law and behaviour. He even reprimanded the organist for playing the theatre organ at the bingo hall - another of Satan's inventions! How I wish that he could see the difference the television, internet etc has made to people's lives in bringing news, entertainment and even religion from around the world. There are of course the darker areas to be found in modern technology, as there is in life, but in this dark period we're living in there is a light shining from St Michaels and other places of worship helping us to see a way through this pandemic thanks to the invention of things once called 'Satan's Lantern'.

Fay Anderson

2 Corinthians 4:17-18: *"For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal."*

Birthdays in Lockdown!

You might have imagined that a birthday in lockdown wouldn't have been much to write home about, that's certainly what we thought, but we couldn't have been more wrong...

We've had three so far and although they haven't been the days that we originally planned for; they have been memorable none the less.

SO, what makes for a 'Happy Lockdown Birthday'?

Well, technology is a definite requirement. It allows you to bring friends and loved ones from all over the city together to share love and good wishes. We've played games together and put our brains to the test with quizzes! We even managed to coordinate tea and cakes and the blowing out of birthday candles! We have to admit though that the traditional singing of the Happy Birthday song was a bit painful on the ears, as timing and key didn't quite come together!

And where would we be without online shopping and all the wonderful delivery drivers who are working so hard to bring our purchases swiftly to our doorsteps. Also, the Royal Mail who have delivered the cards. Who knew that tulips could start off their day in the south of England and arrive looking so beautiful that same afternoon!

But what makes a lockdown birthday work? Well that has to be down to love and laughter. To know that even though we are apart, there is always an invisible bond that ties us all together.

We can't wait until this lockdown is lifted and we can all celebrate together in one place, but until then we'll carry on making the most of our virtual birthday celebrations.

Stay safe everyone

Love and best wishes from The Bremners

Shear Delight!

During lockdown I am so grateful that in our house we are all well and doing our best to keep upbeat. I would really love a haircut but I do have so many reasons to be cheerful. I am not on my own but have two other wonderful people to interact with though they too could do with a hair trim but shhh don't tell them I said so.



We live in a beautiful city and only about a ten minute walk from the Pentland Hills where there are lots of sheep and lambs at the moment – I bet they get a shearing when they necessary!



The garden has never looked so neat and tidy with all the plants and hedges trimmed and CUT!

I am still managing to support my favourite charities through knitting and sewing but it's getting harder to see as my hair keeps getting in the way. It takes me back to me childhood when my mum would ask if I wanted plaits or ponytails?

We've just been watching Billy Connelly on the TV and I couldn't help noticing how neat and tidy his hair is just now!!

I'm beginning to wonder if my friends and family will recognise me when the lockdown finally starts to ease. Perhaps I could make my fortune with a new version of Guess Who where everyone has long hair!!!

Oh did I mention that I would really LOVE A HAIRCUT!!!!!!

Babs Webster

Nature in the City

"It's Friday again!" was always the marker at the end of a working week. We've started saying it again with some surprise in our voice. My wife observed that the days are long but the weeks seem short. Everyone talks about strange times, and the times, they obviously are changing, and stranging -if I'm allowed to coin a new word.

I retired 15 years ago but, like many jubilados (the lovely Spanish word for retirees), I soon found activities that I really wanted to do and enjoyed, often involving other people. A side effect was that I was busy doing 'work' that 'kept me off the streets' as we used to joke. Now for the last nine weeks I've kept off the streets voluntarily (and as requested) with more time than I was used to and time has changed in quantity and quality.

Time to consider how fortunate I am to have a garden; it's at its best ever this year, mainly thanks to the folk over the wall who had their massive trees chopped last year. Our garden is now flooded with light and the plants have flourished. It's a managed wilderness with many self-seeders and returning visitors. I have had time to learn their names, using an app or asking Facebook friends. So I thank the internet for that and the advice on plant care. There's also been time and weather almost to sit and watch the grass and everything else, just grow, almost like a time-lapse film. Nature is fascinating us: a female blackbird is becoming used to us and loves the breadcrumbs every day; an acrobatic field-mouse jumps from the ivy to the mahonia to make its way to the bird feeder, feeds a while and returns the way it came. I recognise the call of the beautiful bullfinch - "deek" it sounds like. The robin thinks it owns the garden, the magpies scare off everything temporarily, the various tits flit in



and out. A herring gull seems to have a nest in the chimneys in the tenement opposite.

Time to read, time to watch film and tv which can take my mind to other times and places, to other concerns, displacing the underlying worry, fear, anger, loss.

Time to be grateful for communications: telephone, email, internet keeping connected to our friends, our church, our family, our world.

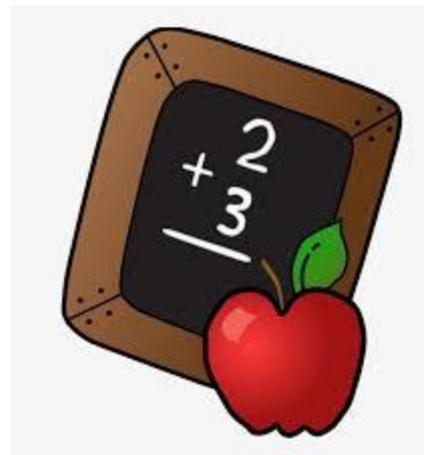
Time to dream. Someone is collecting pandemic dreams. I won't bore you with too much detail but in one I was in St Michael's Old Session Room doing the count after the service (as we used to do). The books were very healthy, one with a total of £48,000 (precisely!). More interesting was that the chap I was working with was Dwight D Eisenhower, US President!

Time to be awed by our health service. Time to become aware of who the key workers really are and how little they are valued in material terms. Time to hope for change in that regard.

Derek

Educating Allan in Lockdown !

After the schools closed due to Covid-19, our 9 year old granddaughter Charlotte had 'to stay at home 'with her two working parents. Our son asked if my wife, Betty and I could each do a daily SKYPE session with her. So, I asked Charlotte if there was anything she would like to do with me and her instant reply was "The Victorians". Why? Well Charlotte is a great reader and her favourite author is Jacqueline Wilson. One of the characters in some of her books is Hetty Feather who lived in Victorian times and so Charlotte had read about Workhouses, Foundling Hospitals and conditions for children in these times. So, she already knew more than me about these things. Allan needed to learn fast before the first session the next day!



It took a few hours to prepare. Wikipedia was invaluable. I learned that during Queen Victoria's reign (1837 - 1901) the Victorian engineers invented so many things that profoundly affected everyones' lives and still do so today, for example the telephone, typewriter, bicycle, moving film, bridges, London Underground, canals, light bulbs, electricity, steam engines to power trains, ships and machines to name but a few. For me, it has been a fascinating learning curve and together with Charlotte preparing as well for the next day's session it has been so much fun. Allan has been truly educated.

We learned about great changes that occurred. At the start of Victoria's reign the commonest form of transport was by horse, by the end people could travel much faster and further by steam trains. The motor car had been built, ships were now

being built of iron and powered by steam and were much, much faster. Canals were dug between cities and used to transport goods.

We were both excited to learn about Florence Nightingale who as a nurse learned from her experiences in the Crimean War (The Lady with the Lamp) in Field Hospitals that bad drainage, contaminated water, overcrowding and bad ventilation were killing more men than were being killed by the enemy. On her return to London she became the founder of modern nursing and did more to raise 'life expectancy' than anyone else in Victorian times. A real heroine.

I have just learned so much thanks to my granddaughter who as soon as we finished the Victorians has taken me onto learning about the Tudors including Mary Queen of Scots, William the Conqueror, William Wallace, Robert the Bruce, the Georgians and Queen Charlotte (of course) and the journey is still continuing ---- but if you want to hear about all of this, I'll need to write a book!

Romans 15:13: *"Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit."*

The Way Ahead

What does the future hold?

Sometimes when we listen to the news it feels that we take one step forward and two steps back but hopefully in the next few weeks we should enter Phase 2 when we will be able to open the Church for private prayer with limited number of attendees and subject to physical distancing and hygiene safeguards. We have already started to make plans for this to take place at varying times throughout the week.

As Phase 3 is introduced the Church should be allowed to open for extended groups again subject to physical distancing and hygiene safeguards. We are taking guidance from the Church of Scotland who have a group meeting virtually who will advise of the best course of action.

At St Michael's we are proposing to update the sound system and Presbytery have said as part of this update we should consider incorporating equipment which would allow live streaming of services on the Internet so all in all the future is bright.

If you have an urgent pastoral matter, contact the Minister on 0131 443 4355, e-mail: APrice@churchofscotland.org.uk



Follow the service via Facebook or if you know someone who has no computer facilities but a telephone with a good local tariff you could encourage them to listen to our service on

Dial a Service Telephone Number: 0131 3221356

St Michael's Parish Church of Scotland, 1 Slateford Road, Edinburgh EH11 1NX

Tel: 0131 478 9675 office@stmichaels-kirk.co.uk

Scottish Charity No: 009038

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