



Stevenston Ardeer
Church of Scotland

Stevenston Livingstone
Church of Scotland



Easter 2021

Faith & Fellowship

*"For this is what the Lord says:
Stand at the crossroads and look;
ask for the ancient paths,
ask where the good way is, and walk in it,
and you will find rest for your souls."*

Jeremiah 6:16 NIV

Dear friends,

I'm sure that none of us really believed that we would still be living with restrictions to deal with the pandemic a whole year after they first began. But during this time, we thought about how we can reach as many people as possible.

The Sunday service is recorded and available through the Livingstone Church website and YouTube, with posts advertising the service going on both Ardeer and Livingstone Facebook pages. Recently, we've begun using Zoom to worship together on a Sunday morning with the Zoom meeting opening at 10.20am and the service starting at 10.30. We started a Wednesday morning meeting, Coffee and Company, at 10.30am on Zoom which is a time of worship, prayer and having a chat in the breakout rooms. We held a Macmillan Cancer Coffee morning during a Coffee and Company in September in which we readmitted an elder and ordained an elder into the Livingstone Kirk Session. The audio tracks for the Sunday service and for the reflection in Coffee and Company are available on the telephone line 01294 444370.

On Communion Sundays we've shared the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper on Zoom in the evening and in June admitted a new member to the Livingstone congregation. Christmas Services were also on Zoom as well as being recorded and available through YouTube.

Even though, we're beginning to see some lifting of the restrictions, we need to carry on being careful and services will continue online and will be made available on the telephone and being shared by DVD and CD. Restrictions on numbers and social distancing will be with us even when we can use a church building for worship.

We've been living through all these conditions and restrictions and we've still been able to worship God, albeit differently. And that's the point. We stand at the crossroads and we look: we look for God, we look for the ancient paths, the good way and walk that way. Doing that we will find rest for our souls – we will find God. It's important that we focus on our one true God, seek him and follow Him – He will guide us and direct us through His Spirit.

Our Easter services will be available online and it strikes me that Jesus brought us new life through His resurrection and that we can find new life in Him by following Him out of this Coronavirus Pandemic. It's been difficult, we've had to live in the uncertainty, but we have a constant in Jesus Christ who calls us in love to the Father.

With every blessing

Dave

EASTER SERVICES 2021

Palm Sunday 28th March

Pre-recorded and on Zoom at 10.30

Monday 29th March:

Easter Meet & Eat 5.30pm

Tuesday 30th March:

Easter Meet & Eat 5.30pm

Wednesday 31st March:

Easter Meet & Eat 5.30pm

Thursday 1st April:

Easter Meet & Eat 5.30pm
Maundy Thursday Communion 7.30pm

Friday 2nd April:

Tea & Hot Cross Buns 10.30am
Easter Meet & Eat 5.30pm

Sunday 4th April:

Pre-recorded and on Zoom 10.30am

Zoom details for all these times:

Meeting ID: 870 5932 1075

Passcode: 387970

Easter Meet & Eat

We're doing something a little different for us this year. We want to include all ages in a short time together at 5.30pm Mon-Fri on Zoom. Bring your tea or not, but there's time for some activities, reflection, prayer and worship

CHILDREN'S CHURCH

The Children's Church continues to meet on zoom on the first Sunday of the month and this is being well supported by the children. We have a good time together with an opportunity to chat with one another and play games before we move into our bible story for that day. Although it's not easy to sing on zoom we give it a good go and we always end on a prayer. Although we would much prefer to be together at church, meeting on zoom has kept us together as a family. Hopefully sometime soon, we can all meet together. It would be wrong if we didn't congratulate the children on the nativity. All of the work to

prepare for this had to be done at home. I think you'll agree they did a fantastic job and really brought Christmas into our homes.

We would like to thank you all for your support and encouragement over the past few months when we haven't been able to meet together; To the parents who have made it possible for the children to be at the meetings and for the hard work they put into coaching the children for the nativity. To members of the congregation who have sent messages of encouragement and support, as well as to those who have supported us financially helping

us to drop off a goodie bag to the children for Christmas. To the leaders of the children's church who have worked together over the past few months to ensure the children didn't miss out and to Ross for his support particularly in the IT side. And finally to the children who have been **great** and have taken part so well in all we have done.

We pray that we will all soon be able to meet together in church and have the chance to catch up with our church friends.

YOUTH GROUP

The Youth Group continues to meet on Zoom every month. The young people and the adults who run the youth group have been working well together to create a varied programme of challenges, quizzes, games and music that everyone can enjoy. We even had a quiz at our Christmas party where we had to guess a piece of music that was being played backwards!! There are opportunities too for people to stop and think about issues affecting young people and spiritual issues.

It has been really encouraging to see how many of the young people are not only coming up with ideas but are taking responsibility for organising and running them. It's real teamwork and augurs well for the future.

1ST STEVENTSTON BOYS' BRIGADE

1st Stevenston are keeping busy , at the moment we are meeting on Zoom every second Thursday, and once a month we are holding family quiz nights .

When we could meet face to face, we have met the boys at Eglinton park for a fun treasure hunt and a play at the swing park .

If you have a family member that would like to join Boys Brigade, please message use and we will send you consent form then the Zoom link .

we have three boys who have been awarded their Queens Badge this term and another boy hoping to complete this year.

TREASURER'S REPORT: ARDEER

Total "non-designated" (general) income for the year ending 31st December 2020 was £25,628 which compares with £37,892 for 2019. As a result of this reduced overall income, we were only able to contribute £5,000 towards our Ministries and Mission requirement for 2020 of £28,000. In total, the congregation now carries a deficit in Ministries and Mission contributions from 2018 to 2020 of £39,000.

Expenditure during 2020 totalled £26,644 compared to £35,760 in 2019.

Balances remaining at 31st December 2020 are as follows:

General Account: £7,469.06

Restoration (No. 4 account): £15,132.67

Designated Funds: £2,434.27

As you will be aware from the January Newsletter, the Session has made the extremely difficult decision to close the Ardeer building following the formal Union of the Ardeer and Livingstone congregations. Subject to formal agreement from the

General Trustees, on Union the custodianship of the building will pass from the Ardeer congregation to the General Trustees.

Until the Union takes place, the Ardeer congregation remains the building custodian with responsibility for heating, insurance, essential maintenance and has a continued obligation to make Ministry and Mission contributions during 2021. Your continued financial support over the forthcoming months would therefore be much appreciated. At the time of Union any money remaining will be transferred to the new united congregation.

It was suggested in the newsletter that new Free Will Offering envelopes were available. While this is the case, given that the existing Ardeer envelopes extend to the end of March 2021 the new envelopes will not be distributed until late March.

Jim Dunwoodie

PRAYER THOUGHTS SPRING 2021

What do we mean when we pray "Thy Kingdom come"? Now there's an opening to make us think. It was prompted by a series of chats recorded on video as Archbishop Justin Welby speaks to a number of Christian leaders. You can find them on the [Thykingdomcome.global](https://www.thykingdomcome.global) website. Just look under 'videos' and work your way to pages 10 and 11 where you will find the recordings. They are certainly thought provoking. We are so familiar with the Lord's prayer that it is a real challenge to pause and give yourself time to consider what is meant, what to expect and what part we are to play. The videos will certainly help to focus our thoughts and' when we consider them prayerfully, might even give us some answers or at least provoke further thought.

PRAYER THOUGHTS SPRING 2021

If we still need further guidance we can turn to chapter 13 of Matthew's gospel where Jesus gives several illustrations starting with the words "The Kingdom of Heaven is like";

"The Kingdom of Heaven is like

- *a farmer who planted good seed in his field*
- *a mustard seed planted in a field*
- *yeast used by a woman making bread*
- *a treasure that a man discovered hidden in a field*
- *a pearl merchant on the lookout for choice pearls*
- *a fishing net thrown into the water and gathers fish of every kind.*

A rich source of information as Jesus tries to teach us about God's Kingdom. For me, one of Jesus most telling comments about the Kingdom is recorded in Luke chapter 17 verses 20 and 21. Here, once again he is being cross examined by Pharisees who ask the question, "When will the Kingdom of God come?" Jesus reply is quite startling ending with the words;

"You won't be able to say 'Here it is!' or 'It's over there!' For the Kingdom of God is within you".

Imagine that, we have a part in the coming of the Kingdom. All we have to do is release it from within us and share it with others so that the coming of the Kingdom will indeed result in God's will being done.

Prayer Themes

Approach: Come before God and quietly and thoughtfully pray the Lord's prayer.

Confession: Bring before God your misdeeds and mistakes, asking forgiveness and the guidance to avoid their repetition.

Thanksgiving:

- Give thanks for the continuing use of phone calls to maintain a degree of fellowship so that no-one should feel alone.
- Give thanks for the opportunities for fellowship given by technology and the skills of those who make it happen.
- Give thanks that progress is being made on the road towards union even if hampered by the pandemic.
- Give thanks for those who have worked through the pandemic for our benefit.
- Give thanks for the work done by Sandy and Kay as session clerks.

Intercession:

- Pray for Dave as he seeks to lead us to union and overcome the issues that arise en route.
- Pray for Ken as he prepares for his role as session clerk for the united charge.
- Pray that the vaccination programme will be successful in helping to restore a degree of normality.
- Pray that the pandemic will bring more people to seek God.
- Pray that we continue to show concern for our neighbours by keeping to the guidelines regarding masks, social distancing etc.
- Pray for those who have suffered illness or bereavement.
- Pray for all those whose lives have been made harder by the pandemic.

Notes:

Remember to follow the Thy Kingdom Come website as it leads us between Jesus ascension and Pentecost.

If you are looking for prayer helps through Lent, go to the Tearfund website. Starting from February 17 there are a series of prayers, poems and reflections.

Websites: thykingdomcome.global
 tearfund.org/lent

WHO'S WHO



Telephone Service: 01294 444370

Minister

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Ardeer Parish Church

Session Clerk

Mrs Kay Tudor 01294 470008

Treasurer

Mr Jim Dunwoodie 01294 466895

Livingstone Parish Church

Session Clerk

Mr Sandy Hershaw 01294 466293

Treasurer

Mr Finlay Kerr 01294 553265

Press 1 to listen to the weekly service
Press 2 to listen to the weekly reflection
Press 3 to listen to the talking version of Faith
and Fellowship

*This is a local call and the cost of the call will
depend on the contract you have with your service
provider.*

Facebook:

Stevenston Ardeer Parish Church @stevenstonardeerchurch

Livingstone Parish Church @livingstoneparishchurch

Website: www.livingstonechurch.org.uk

Stevenston Ardeer Parish Church is a registered Scottish Charity: No. SC015397.

Stevenston Livingstone Parish Church is a registered Scottish Charity: No. SC000452.