

Cupar Old Parish Church

A church where everyone matters

August 2020

Dear Friends:

On behalf of the Kirk Session of our congregation, I'm happy to invite you to return to gathered worship. Please read through this information for details of our vision for worship during this time of transition out of lockdown.

We will have three services each week to accommodate the reduced number of people able to gather safely for worship within the current guidelines set by the Scottish Government. All services will take place in the Old Parish Centre at this time for ease of movement and cleaning. Our worship times will be

Sunday, 11:00am, commencing 23 August

Sunday, 4:00pm, commencing 23 August

Thursday, 10:30am, commencing 27 August

Please contact your district elder to indicate which service time you prefer. This is not a reservation for a seat, but it will allow us to have a better understanding of the numbers we may expect, and to invite those with a flexible schedule to attend a less-populated service, if needed. If you are able to choose one of the unusual times, it would free up the Sunday morning service for those with more rigid schedules. During these first several weeks, it would be helpful if you could stick with one service time, until we have a better sense of our attendance.

If you do not feel comfortable returning to worship at this time, please inform your district elder, or just call me directly for a pastoral visit. A portion of the worship service will be uploaded to our church website, as was done in the past, but if you don't have internet access and would like to have a worship resource, please mention it to your elder, that the worship planning team can consider how to meet that need.

It is a pleasure and a relief to be able to look toward our reunion in gathered worship. It will not be the same as our past habit, nor will it be the settled form of what we are becoming, but it is another step in our journey of faith, and an opportunity to gather with other disciples of Christ to give praise and thanks to the Eternal One who embraces us through all the phases of our lives.

Your partner in ministry,

The Reverend Jeff Martin

Email: jmartin@churchofscotland.org.uk

Telephone: 01334 656 181

What Will Worship Be Like?

Our worship services will be 30 to 40 minutes in length, and will include prayer, the proclamation of God's Word, a short message, and time for reflection. Although we are not able to join in song at this time, our services will include instrumental music, both live and recorded.

Both services on Sunday will be family-friendly. Although the creche will not be available at this time, children are definitely welcome to participate in these services. Unfortunately, we're not able to distribute the worship activity bags at this time. After families have had several weeks to enjoy being together in the hall, the Sunday Club team intend to begin a new season for our children's ministry. More information will be provided in due course.

An Invitation to Learn and Grow Together

During the coming year we will use the book **We Make the Road by Walking**, by Brian McLaren, as the basis of our worship. Each chapter ("52 plus a few") includes biblical texts, a short, thought-provoking piece by the author, and a few questions for reflection and discussion. McLaren invites the readers to

- ~ cultivate an honest, intelligent understanding of the Bible and of Christian faith in the 21st century;
- ~ engage with discussion questions designed to challenge, stimulate, and encourage; and
- ~ re-imagine what it means to live joyfully and responsibly in today's world as agents of God's justice, creativity, and peace.

The Lighthouse will have paperback copies available for purchase. They are currently open Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday, from 10:30 to 12:30.

I plan to offer a weekly study group for participants to discuss the book and the related biblical passages. We will meet in our own homes via Zoom, which you may access through the internet or in a conference call on the telephone. **If you would like to participate, please contact me**, and I'll propose some times to those who are interested. You're also welcome to use the book on your own, for your personal study and reflection.

Other Notes

At this time we will not have other physical gatherings of church activities, but I encourage you to continue to find ways to connect with your church family, perhaps through an after-service coffee date at another venue, a telephone call, a walk, or the now-commonplace interaction via screen.

Offering plates will be placed at the entrance and exit, but you're also welcome to continue using bank transfer for your regular giving.

Please let me know if you would like to join the welcome team to provide a ministry of hospitality. With three services each week, we could use some additional helpers.

Necessary Procedures for Safety and Well-Being

As with all venues in our society today, we have specific guidelines to reduce the risk of infection. Thank you for making it possible for us to gather together again by complying with these expectations.

For those on foot, a member of the welcome team will be at the gate to remind you to stick to the walkway to enter the parish centre. If you're driving, please reserve the car park for those who need to park close for their mobility. And please remember that the Bonnygate car park requires a fee except for Sunday morning.

Please wear a mask or face shield when you are inside the building for worship, and follow the markings outside and inside the building to adhere to the two-metre distancing requirement.

At the front door you'll be welcomed in and invited to sanitise your hands. Notices are posted to remind you of the basic health guidelines: please stay home if you're unwell or at risk. If you're uncertain, or would like additional guidance, please contact the minister or our clerk, Jean Martin, to receive a health survey tool that the Church of Scotland has produced. The accessible toilet in the front entrance will be available for use during our worship services.

You'll be asked to walk the length of the hallway to the east entrance to the hall. Before you enter, another member of the welcome team will ask for your contact information. **As part of the Scottish Government's contact tracing programme, we're required to obtain a name and telephone number for every family unit that is present.** This information will be kept in a secure location for three weeks, and then be shredded. In the event that someone is found to have the virus, the information will be given to the National Contact Tracing Service.

Please enter the hall with your family unit and follow the direction of the welcome team members, who will guide you to the next available seat. They will ensure that each household is seated the required two metres from the next individual or group. To allow us to comply with Scottish Government guidelines, we request that you stay in the seat you are assigned on arrival, and not move about the hall.

At the end of the service, worshippers will be dismissed by row and leave through the large doors in the southeast corner of the hall. Sanitiser will be available at the door for a final squirt before you go.

Unfortunately, it may happen that some services have more attendees show up than we are permitted to sit in the hall. In the event that we've reached our limit before you're seated, a welcome team member will invite you to return for another service. If we find this to be an on-going problem, we will come up with a solution so that no one has to go away disappointed.

After you leave, the worship space and fixtures will be thoroughly cleaned, in accordance with guidelines, in preparation for our next worship service.