

# Cupar Old Parish Church

*A place where everyone matters*

14 September 2021

Dear Friends:

I'm happy to share the news that our eleven o'clock worship service **returned to our church sanctuary on Sunday 26 September.**

For those of you who have been worshipping in person, you will find that our procedures are essentially the same, albeit removed now to our new, old, location.

For those who have not been able to worship with us throughout the pandemic, you are heartily welcome to return, if you are comfortable doing so. You'll find that the worship services are not too different from how things were before March 2020, but there are still some key procedures that we now follow in order to gather safely and legally:

~ Masks are to be worn by all, except those medically exempt, under the age of twelve, or leading worship.

~ When you enter the building, you'll be asked for your contact details. If there's a queue, please spread yourselves out in the entryway and follow the direction of the Welcome Team members.

~ Sanitiser is available at each entrance for you to use as you enter and exit the sanctuary.

~ Distanced seating is no longer required, and worshippers are free to sit at a distance from others that is mutually comfortable. Please be attentive to the preferences of others. The eastern section will be marked out for distanced seating for those who are more comfortable with clear boundaries. We will not use the balcony at this time.

~ We are able to sing whilst wearing masks. The hymn texts are projected on the screens; hymnals have been removed from the pews for hygienic reasons.

~ Good ventilation is important, but we will try to balance that need with people's comfort, especially as the temperature drops. Please dress warmly.

~ When you leave the sanctuary, please exit using the closest interior and exterior doors, and avoid forming bottlenecks in the aisles and at the doors. If necessary, we'll devise a method for dismissing people row on row.

~ We will have an offering plate at the door to receive financial gifts. If you have not done so already, you may wish to speak with David Stevenson about setting up a direct deposit. You may also donate to the church via the Church of Scotland website, though a small service fee is deducted from your gift before we receive it.

~ We'll start after-service fellowship time when we have the details worked out to do so safely.

~ For those who choose to continue to worship via our online service, I'm sorry to say that the church building does not have wifi, so we will record the service and it will be available at our YouTube channel later in the day. You'll still be able to enjoy the service in your own home at a time of your choosing, but it will no longer be possible to join the service as it's going on.

As we take this next step, I request your patience and your compliance. We will continue to experiment and make changes to find a pattern that works well for us. Please stick with us as we seek to find the best path forward.

## *We've got a lot going on!*

But on to other news: we are busy doing things, new and old, and finding ways to connect, share, and serve, and you're welcome to join in as you're comfortable:

~ Our Sunday afternoon worship service will continue to meet at 4:00 in the Old Parish Centre, with Sunday Club for age three through P7 in the lounge and meeting room. The children have a single biblical focus for three weeks, and then we have a family service to celebrate the theme together. Zacchaeus was our first story of the year, and the children and team did some wonderful things to learn about someone whose heart and life were turned toward Jesus.

~ The Prayer Team has been meeting via Zoom each Sunday evening to raise the concerns and joys of our hearts. If you have something you'd like us to pray about, please speak with Janice Geddes [01334 652 957].

~ The Guild has had its first gathering and will meet again in the lounge in the Old Parish Centre at 2:30pm on Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> October. Please contact Eileen Spurr [01334 655 010] if you would like more information about the Guild and its work.

~ Our Befrienders training began with a focus on listening, and we'll continue in the coming weeks to equip participants to befriend people in times of need. Please speak with Hazel York [01334 659 025] if you're interested.

~ The Thursday Coffee and Chat group had a successful outing to Muddy Boots, and will have other fellowship excursions on the second Thursday of the month. Please speak with Jill Logan [01334655 528] for details.

~ Buddies, our youth group for P5 to S1, will also be starting again soon.

~ Welcome Team, flower donation and delivery, beadles, tech team, bell ringers, readers—if you'd like to volunteer, please speak with me, and I'll get you connected.

~ We have been incredibly blessed in our worship in the centre. The welcome team, tech crew, musicians, and worship leaders have shared wonderful gifts and service.

~ Many people have been working in a variety of ways during the last eighteen months, and continue to do so, and I'm grateful for the broad array of service, within the congregation and in the community, done in the name of Christ.

## An invitation to help in our church, community, and world

I also wish to express my thanks to all who have continued to support the church financially during these challenging times. You have helped us to weather some very difficult months. The lamentable reduction of staff and the government's furlough programme have kept us from more dire straits, and your on-going gifts have been a great blessing for our local ministry and for our support of Church of Scotland ministries in areas of great need.

If you would like to do something extra, here are three possibilities:

Things remain tight for us financially, and as our various ministries get going again, I invite you to make a special gift to help us launch back into activity. We've included an envelope with this letter, which you may return for our special **Gift Day offering on the third of October**, or any time during the month.

I also wish to solicit gifts on behalf of Fife Voluntary Action, which is coordinating the local response to the arrival of **refugees from Afghanistan**. You'll find more information, including how to make a donation, at their website: [www.fva.org](http://www.fva.org). In the coming months, we'll be sharing other ways we can support our new neighbours during this very difficult time.

Last, I invite you to consider a gift for **The Lighthouse**, our local, ecumenical Christian ministry cafe and bookshop, a place of welcome for everyone. They've had some difficult times, but they would like to continue to offer hospitality in the name of Jesus.

Finally: please feel free to give me a call for a chat or to set up an in-person visit, with or without communion. I'm happy to sit in your garden, wear a mask, or do whatever suits your comfort level.

With warm regards,

Pastor Jeff Martin

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