

Cupar Old Parish Church

Where Everyone Matters

Dear Friends:

It has been a tumultuous week, as the nation has moved rapidly from heightened awareness and concern about the coronavirus to the startling reality of the significant changes that are now sweeping over us.

The impact of the pandemic finally became real to me on Wednesday afternoon, when I stopped at the cashpoint by Tesco. A woman was at one of the machines, and another woman stood about five feet away from the other machine, leaning on her zimmer.

As I walked up, I asked the latter if the second machine was not working. With a look of horror on her face, she leapt away from me, saying, "I can't be near anyone!" I apologised for startling her, but she just waved me toward the cashpoint. It made me sad that she was so fearful. And she's someone I've spoken to in the store more than once. No more a neighbour, now I'm a potentially lethal threat.

In these strange times, may we be gentle with one another, and find ways to reassure and comfort those who are frightened. May we find ways to support one another, even as we are adapting to new boundaries and restrictions. May we be the presence of God's love for one another.

Caring for one another

Jill Brown, the Centre Manager, has agreed to act as our Coordinator of Support during this time. Her mobile number is 07979 352 314. Please contact her if you are able to help others, or if you are in need of support. If you need something from the shops or pharmacy, or if you'd just like to talk with someone, please give Jill a call.

And if you know of someone who might be lonely or isolated, pick up the telephone and give them a call.

Ways of worship

During this time we are not able to gather together for worship, but that doesn't mean you have to go without. I will provide a written reflection this week at the Cupar Old website. By next week I may have gotten a tutorial on uploading an audio message, though I might find it difficult without a "studio audience."

cuparold.org.uk

My more tech savvy friend, neighbour, and colleague, the Reverend Gavin Black, is providing a brief daily reflection at his church's website. Click on the link to Digital Ministry below the words of welcome for the link to Gavin's messages.

cuparstjohnsanddairsie.org

The Church of Scotland has announced that the Moderator, the Right Reverend Colin Sinclair, will provide a Sunday worship and daily devotional at the website:

churchofscotland.org.uk

There are many other high quality worship resources available, including Christian Aid, the Taizé community in France, and many local congregations that live stream worship.

An invitation to prayer

The Church of Scotland has joined with other denominations across the nation to invite people to join in a National Day of Prayer on Sunday, 22nd March. In addition to your personal practice throughout the day, the organisers invite people to light a candle at 7:00pm and place it in a window for the world to see. If you do so, please be careful with the open flame.

They offer this prayer as a suggestion:

For all that is good in life, thank you,
For the love of family and friends, thank you,
For the kindness of good neighbour and Samaritan stranger, thank you.

May those who are vulnerable, hungry or homeless, experience support.
May those who are sick know healing.
May those who are anxious or bereaved sense comfort.

Bless and guide political leaders and decision-makers with wisdom.
Bless and guide health workers and key workers with strength and well-being.
Bless and guide each one of us as we adapt to a new way of living.

And may the light shining from our windows,
across road and wynd, glen and ben, kyle and isle,
be reflected in our hearts and hands and hopes.

Through Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.

Praying with one another: 14:15

If you are able, set your mobile to ping at 2:15 each afternoon and spend one minute in prayer, knowing that our entire congregation is invited to pray at that moment. Wherever we are, if we are able, we can offer our brief, focused prayers of praise, gratitude, and supplication, knowing we are bound together with one another at that time.

Why 2:15? Because that's 1415 in 24-hour time. Just before I moved to Cupar, you celebrated the 600th anniversary of the church's presence on Kirkgate. That's a long history, filled with times of struggle, difficulty, and fear. Those years were also filled with faith, growth, and peace. God has been present through it all, to strengthen, uplift, comfort, redirect, and bless. When we face challenges in the days and months ahead, it can be good to remember the One who has been with us in all the days and years gone by, remains with us in all the days and years to come.

With kind regards,
Jeff