

# Cupar Old Parish Church

*Where Everyone Matters*

## **Newsletter 24 September 2021**

Dear Friends:

This week we take another step toward 'normal' when our eleven o'clock worship service returns to the sanctuary. All are welcome! A letter has gone out to everyone detailing the safety measures. If you would like to return, but have concerns for how this will work, please feel free to give me a call.

In the coming weeks, we hope to have more activities, old and new, getting started.

Two other items on the horizon: we will receive a Gift Day offering on the third of October. If you would like to make a special gift for the congregation as we move forward, we would be grateful for your support. Second, we will celebrate Harvest at both worship services on 17 October, and you're welcome to bring a gift, culinary or monetary for our local Food Pantry.

As we move into autumn, may our own 'nesting instincts' draw us to remember refugees, asylum seekers, those who are homeless, and those who are not safe due to violence in their own homes. May we remember them and support them in meaningful, tangible ways.

Warm regards, Jeff

## **Worship Online**

We're not able to live stream the worship service from the sanctuary at this time, but you may watch it later at our YouTube channel, Monimail and Cupar Old:

[https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCdOxFrZ\\_kg94DYogyIFAVEQ](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCdOxFrZ_kg94DYogyIFAVEQ)

## **From Our Prayer Team**

- Please pray for the charity Mary's Meals, which has just celebrated feeding one million children in different countries. Please pray that this charity will continue to grow in order that many more children will be fed daily.

- Please continue to pray as the climate summit in Glasgow comes closer: that those in power make decisions which will benefit our planet and address climate change.

The prayer group continues to meet weekly though Zoom. If you would like to join us, have a prayer request or would like a member of the team to pray with you then please contact either Jeff Martin or Janice Geddes.

## **Reflection from Peter Meager**

I had an aunt who had a story for every occasion – many were so far fetched we were sure they were made up. One such was about the Salvation Army who would hold an open air meeting on a Saturday night at the cross in the centre of our home town of Shotts. On a particular evening, one of the musicians was giving his testimony. He said, 'I'm so happy since I came to know the Lord that I could knock hell out of this big drum.'

Several years later I was preaching on the theme of Christian Joy in the garrison church in Münster in Germany and decided to use the story as an illustration. It amused the congregation but I hope also made a point about sometimes forgetting our stoic, dour, Presbyterian demeanour and letting the joy run wild. I didn't anticipate what would happen at the church door at the end of the

service. In the congregation that morning was our son Colin's teacher in the local Army school. She was a Miss Gunn, from Shotts – (you couldn't make it up). Anyway, when I greeted her she asked, 'Did you know that the man in that story was my uncle Sammy!!?'

This Sunday, at long last, we can move back into the sanctuary to worship. Certainly a time for celebration as we get to enjoy afresh the intimacy of face to face worship (even while still wearing masks) in surroundings that have enriched our spiritual life so greatly in the past. In Psalm 122, we read in verse one: 'I was glad when they said to me, Let us go to the house of the Lord!' and at verse 4b we are urged to 'give thanks to the name of the Lord'. The thought of being able to join in fellowship with God's people in his house made the psalmist's spirit soar and his heart overflow with joy. I imagine that, as he counted down the days, his mood was continually lifted as he anticipated the joyous experience of the sounds, smells and sights that he had cherished since he had last been there.

During a recent meeting of Fife Presbytery, the Mission Director, Neil Campbell, recounted those well known words from Isaiah 40:31 *'those who wait for 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.'* He reminded us that this promise was made at a time of earth-shaking change for the prophet's hearers. They were captives in a foreign land but their captors had themselves been overthrown and the new ruler had told them they could return home. They could go back to Jerusalem, their spiritual home, and worship God on ground that was sacred to them. Many of them must have shed tears of joy at such a prospect. But not all!

Some of them had got used to living in exile. They had made new homes and friends; set up successful businesses; become settled and comfortable in this alien land. The thought of going back filled them with apprehension and dread. It meant starting over. There was risk attached to it. They couldn't face it. For us, too, the thought of going back into the confines of our church building with closer

proximity to others than we have become used to might seem scary – even with all the built in safeguards. But I am confident that what we will gain from the fellowship of meeting together with God in his house will far outweigh any risks associated with it.

The hymn writer Andrew J Scobie urges us to ‘look forward in faith and hope’. I would add, ‘look forward with joy.’ One of my former parishioners in Elie, Claire Pollock, planted more than 100,000 sunflowers in one of her fields at the start of May this year to read the word ‘HOPE’, in a bid to bring people joy during the pandemic. The field at Ardross Farm near Elie, the size of four football pitches, recently came into bloom five months after it was planted. Thousands have already flocked to experience this joyous spectacle and it should be in bloom till the end of September.

In the Christian family we are, above all else, people of hope. I hope to see as many of you as can physically manage, in church on Sunday to join in joyful, exuberant worship. We are assured of God’s renewing, refreshing, reinvigorating and sustaining power as we start out on the next stage of the adventurous journey he has called us to. Even if we can’t let it rip on a big bass drum, we can sing our hearts out and celebrate as, once again, we go to the house of the Lord.

### **Sunflowers in the field of ‘Hope’ near Elie**



## **Reading: Psalm 122**

*I was glad when they said to me, 'Let us go to the house of the Lord!'*

*Our feet are standing within your gates, O Jerusalem.*

*Jerusalem—built as a city that is bound firmly together.*

*To it the tribes go up, the tribes of the Lord, as was decreed for Israel,*

*to give thanks to the name of the Lord.*

*For there the thrones for judgement were set up, the thrones of the house of David.*

*Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: 'May they prosper who love you.*

*Peace be within your walls, and security within your towers.'*

*For the sake of my relatives and friends I will say, 'Peace be within you.'*

*For the sake of the house of the Lord our God, I will seek your good.*

## **Song**

Sir Hubert Parry composed this setting of Psalm 122 for the coronation of King Edward VII in 1902:

<https://youtu.be/9B7H7RCATLo>

Here is a link to Andrew J Scobie's hymn 'Look Forward in Faith'

<https://youtu.be/Fe9CfPI0E08>

## **Prayer**

Lord our God, you have given us the privilege and honour of worshipping you. We know we can do it anywhere, but we also know that it is especially enriching when we can do it as part of your family, the church. We have missed being able to meet in our church building and we are really looking forward to getting back. But we know, Lord, that things have changed. The world is different; the rules are different and we ourselves are different. But you, Lord are the same; yesterday; today and forever. Therefore we look forward with anticipation, expectation, and gladness and with hope that you will bless us, speak to us, inspire us, guide us and guard us; for Jesus' sake.

Father, we remember with sadness all who will no longer be with us because they have died in recent months. We ask your comfort for their loved ones. We remember all who will be too afraid to return because of concerns over their health and entrust them to your loving care.

Gracious God, we commend to you all who will continue the battle against Covid on Sunday while we will be at worship. We pray for frontline medical staff; for those working in vaccination centres; for those doing research in laboratories; for those in factories manufacturing vaccines; and for those co-ordinating the process. Lord, may all of them be conscious of our gratitude and our prayers.

Loving God, may we never take for granted the freedom to come together as part of the world wide family of your people and, through the accompanying and enabling of your Holy Spirit, may we always be worthy of our calling; through Jesus Christ our Lord.  
Amen

Should you wish to get in touch, I can be contacted at [meager52@btinternet.com](mailto:meager52@btinternet.com)

### **Befrienders Training**

This week our speaker will give an overview of special ministry concerns in supporting people with dementia and their carers. The workshop runs from 10:00 to 11:30 on Saturday, with fellowship beginning at 9:30. All are welcome. Next week, we'll talk about how our Befrienders ministry will function.

### **Zoom Communion**

If you would like to join in a Zoom communion service at 4:00pm on Thursday 30 September, please email Jeff, who will send you the link: [jmartin@churchofscotland.org.uk](mailto:jmartin@churchofscotland.org.uk)

## **Guild**

Our Guild will meet in the lounge at the Old Parish Centre at 2:30 on Wednesday 29 September. Jeff is the guest speaker.

## **Worship In-Person**

Please join us for gathered worship:

11:00am on Sunday, in the sanctuary

4:00pm on Sunday, in the Old Parish Centre

Sunday Club meets during the 4:00 service.

## **Worship Online**

The service will be available on Sunday afternoon at our YouTube channel:

[https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCdOxFrZ\\_kg94DYogyIFAVEQ](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCdOxFrZ_kg94DYogyIFAVEQ)

**Sanctuary First**, an online faith community of the Church of Scotland, has a live stream service each Sunday afternoon at three, which is available to view afterward:

[www.sanctuaryfirst.org.uk](http://www.sanctuaryfirst.org.uk)