

Soundings

Portobello & Joppa Parish
Church Magazine

May 2021



Portobello and Joppa Parish Church

From the editor



Stewart asks us this month to think about stories, particularly the many Bible stories which are so much part of our common currency that we sometimes don't think about them very deeply.

When I was a little girl, my dad used to make up bedtime stories about the Poff family, whose children were called Angela, Beatrice, Clara, Dorothy, Ethel, Freddy, George, Henry, Ian and James (who was a baby). It was only when I learned to read that I understood how he could reel off their names, always in the same order. The plot was usually along the lines of: Mrs Poff would ask Angela to go to the shops to buy a loaf, but Angela was busy so she asked Beatrice, but Beatrice was tired so she asked Clara... and so on. Since James was a baby, there was a problem when the task came down the line to him. These were parables of a sort, I suppose... (Take responsibility!)

Early in the magazine-compiling week this edition looked as if it was going to be rather slender, so I asked people for their lockdown stories, and got lovely responses. Thus the magazine is in fact quite plump – what value for money!

Stewart also gives us some food for thought about the future of the church in Edinburgh; and Michael and David tell us about our own church finances. There's a report of the Annual Stated Meeting and we hear about a very different Breakfast Club vigil, a very different Junior Drama and a Zoom Book Club. You can learn which member of the congregation has visited four Pacific islands and where to find the Hanging Gardens of Joppa.

Many thanks as ever to all contributors.

Pam



From the minister

Dear Friends and Neighbours,

Stories, really, are just for children, aren't they?

On Easter Sunday we heard the story of the resurrected Jesus as told in the Gospel of John. Mary, who finds the empty tomb and tells the disciples, is drawn from her tears by the calling of her name.

We heard this story as part of an Easter service rich in energy and imagination. Sheets proclaiming 'Alleluia' were coloured in and held up during the singing of 'Jesus Christ is risen today'; we had about 15 voices contributing to a reading of John 20.1-18, smoothly and expertly edited together by Lourens; and there were video contributions in which people described the time or places in which they had experienced God during Lent.

Since Easter Sunday there have been stories describing events after the resurrection. Jesus appearing to the disciples and to Thomas as told in the Gospel of John, and Jesus visiting the disciples and sharing food with them, as told in the Gospel of Luke.

There is almost an unreality to these stories, with an indefinable, almost elusive Jesus appearing and reassuring his disciples.

Is it an unreality to these stories, or perhaps a deeper reality?

We all live on different levels at different times of our days, weeks, years and lives.

Sometimes we simply float along the surface, often because we have things to do and basic chores to accomplish.

Sometimes, we have the time and chance to think a bit more deeply about ourselves, what drives us and what is meaningful to us.

Sometimes we take the time to think about the people in our lives and their thoughts, emotions, worries, concerns and joys.

Sometimes we try to understand the world around us in its sheer complexity and diversity.

And, sometimes, we seem to catch a glimmer of that light which transcends us or that thread of grace that runs through creation or that river of life that flows beneath us.

Sometimes, sometimes, we see how that light, that grace, that life intersects all of the levels of our lives, and we give thanks to God.

How do we convey that thankfulness, that wonder and that awe? How do we share it with others and how do we re-tell it for ourselves?

Perhaps stories, as incomplete and as human and as imperfect as they are, are the only way. Vivid, provocative, evocative, colourful, simple, complex, suggestive stories live in our minds and hearts and souls, and so often they influence who we are and what we do.

Just for children?

If we think so, we miss the power of our faith. The God who created with words, the God who spoke a Word of love, grace and healing, the Word of light that conveyed his message of everlasting love through... stories.

Take a few moments this month. Immerse yourself in our story of faith, perhaps only one story within this story (the road to Emmaus in Luke? the risen Jesus at the beach, providing breakfast to his disciples, as told in John?), and perhaps you will see all that connects all the levels of your life with the eternal presence of God. And, in seeing this presence at all levels of your life, there will be seen a coherence, which is a form of wholeness, which is, of course, sacred peace.

Stewart

General Assembly 2021: A 'fierce' reduction in ministerial posts and new ways of working together

The General Assembly of the Church of Scotland are meeting in the third week of May this year. There will be several items that will have a direct and far-reaching impact on congregations throughout Edinburgh and the entire country.

Ministerial numbers

It has been suggested by someone involved in the discussions that the reduction in ministerial numbers will be 'fierce'. At the time of writing, we do not know exactly how many ministerial posts will be allocated to Edinburgh Presbytery but the decrease will be sharp.

One minister did some calculations. There are currently about 80 ministerial posts in Edinburgh. There is talk of 30-40% reductions. If you do the maths, you can get a sense of the scale.

Why? There certainly are financial constraints. These were evident before Covid and have become more pressing. There will be a dramatic reduction in ministers through retirement and the numbers of ministers in training will not cover the vacancies.

Ways of working together

One minister in one congregation working independently will become more of the exception than the rule.

There will be different ways for parishes, congregations and ministers to work together. Sharing resources and initiatives for care and outreach will be vital. There will also be a greater reliance upon the skills and talents of people in the congregations.

Why? Numbers are decreasing significantly: Edinburgh Presbytery had 30,000 members 10 years ago and now has 20,000. Yet there is recognition that congregations do a huge amount for members and the community. Thus, many *congregations* may remain but will be working alongside other congregations *even if they do not have their own minister*.

Doom and gloom? Or focus and effectiveness?

One might interpret events in that manner. And there *is* a challenge.

But, having been involved with three clusters of churches in Edinburgh and a total of about 18 different congregations, it's fair to say that there is also opportunity.

To focus on that which important: the sharing of a Christian faith that can bring hope and healing to a hurting world.

To work with others: I have had a hugely encouraging conversation with someone in a local community who was excited that churches will be encouraging people to get involved in their communities through volunteering. If we can't initiate and run charities, we can support others.

To work with other congregations: ideas and energy can spark when there are new, committed people in the room.

We don't have the numbers we used to have. We are more at the edge of things than the centres of power.

Wasn't that where Christ lived, walked, taught and healed?

Stewart

Report of Annual Stated Meeting held on Sunday 11 April 2021

Due to the ongoing restrictions arising from the Coronavirus pandemic, an online meeting took place directly after the close of 11am Zoom worship service.

In his review of the past 12 months, Stewart reflected on a very challenging year and thanked the staff team of Lourens, Michelle, Anne, Fiona, Kerr, Derek and James for their support and contributions to the life of PJPC. He also noted the work of the Convenors, Kirk Session and members of the congregation for the many practical actions and acts of kindness that have helped to maintain a sense of community during the long periods of lockdown. He commented on how humbling and inspiring this has been. Catherine expressed her thanks to David and Michelle for continuing with the Feast of Life choir during lockdown.

David (Honorary Treasurer) presented a summary of the 2020 accounts to the congregation. These showed a small surplus for the calendar year which was a very creditable outcome. Willie asked what the current level of reserves was and how long they were forecast to last at the present rate of drawdown. David replied that there was approximately £700k held on behalf of PJPC by the General Trustees. To date, the church has been able to maintain its capital position despite falling interest rates because of the ongoing generosity of the congregation. In particular, David pointed to the very positive response of the congregation to recent appeals for funding, both over the summer and more recently with the Just Giving campaign. He was thanked by Stewart along with Anne, Michael, Willie, Adrian and other members of the Finance team for their stewardship and management of the church's finances.

In relation to Property matters, Stewart welcomed the refurbishment of the halls and main corridor which was carried out by Derek and James while the church buildings were closed. He also noted the work done by members of the Property team, including Graeme, Jamie, Ian and Brian over the course of the year to keep the church complex in good condition and also for the lighting that was displayed

during advent. Other contributors to creating a safe and pleasant environment were thanked, including Pat, George, Michael and Anne.

The final item of business related to family ministry and the Growing Young initiative. Stewart reminded the congregation of the strategic importance of the Growing Young initiative and the activities during the past year, including an inter-generational quiz and all-age Christmas and Easter services. A short video interview was shown of Stewart in discussion with three generations of the Donaldson and Wheal families to share first-hand some of the recent experiences. He outlined the plans for the coming year, which will include continuing to experiment with new ideas and inter-generational activities.

Stewart expressed his thanks to the Growing Young team led by Carol with support from Michelle, Ian, Sue, Elaine, Lourens and Kerr. He also thanked the congregation for their response to the recent fundraising efforts in support of family and youth ministry. In response to a question from Catherine about the longer-term funding plans, Stewart and David responded that this would continue to be predicated upon the ongoing generosity of the congregation and the priorities agreed by the Kirk Session.

Michael
Session Clerk

Portobello and Joppa Parish Church

Summary of The General Fund for 2020

Congregational Fund

Expenditure on the normal day to day running of the Church

The Congregational Fund is also funded by interest from the legacies received invested with The Church of Scotland Investors Trust.

Actual To 31 Dec 2019		Actual To 31 Dec 2020	Budget To 31 Dec 2020
£	Congregational Income	£	£
143,086	Congregational Offerings	150,733	136,750
25,955	Income Tax Recovered	33,171	24,000
4,755	Contributions from Congregational Organisations	3,608	3,000
13,507	Contributions for Use of Church Premises	3,978	14,500
0	Fundraising in support of Growing Young and Family Ministry	250	0
7,979	Income From Investments	7,061	7,500
31,657	Drawdown from General Trustees	27,480	25,000
3,648	Other Ordinary Income	2,060	0
230,587	Total Congregational Income	228,341	210,750
	Congregational Expenditure		
53,157	Staffing Costs	47,684	53,920
3,234	Christian Education and Outreach	3,476	5,000
2,562	Communication	1,977	4,000
30,181	Buildings - Heating, Lighting, Insurance and Council Tax	27,419	34,500
4,756	Administration	9,784	6,250
93,890	Total Congregational Expenditure	90,340	103,670
136,697	Net Congregational Income	138,001	107,080
123,402	Ministry and Mission Plus Presbytery Dues	132,361	132,398
13,295	Net Income (Expenditure) for the Year	5,640	(25,318)
3,000	Legacy Received	2,000	0
(2,990)	Legacy Invested With Investors Trust	(1,999)	0
(10,500)	Year End Non Cash Adjustments	10,500	0
0	Legacy Adjustment	0	0
130,859	Congregational Fund Reserves at 1 January	133,833	133,664
133,664	Congregational Fund Reserve Carried Forward	149,974	108,346

Fabric Fund

Expenditure on keeping the buildings in a suitable state of repair

Funded by specific contributions from the Congregation and income from Fundraising.

Fundraising is, in general, to meet the cost of specific items.

The Fabric Fund is also funded by interest from the legacies received invested with The Church of Scotland Investors Trust.

Actual To 31 Dec 2019		Actual To 31 Dec 2020	Budget To 31 Dec 2020
£		£	£
	Fabric Fund Income		
30,313	Contributions Towards The Fabric Fund	27,222	27,500
0	Drawdown From General Trustees	0	0
2,372	Fundraising	821	0
32,685	Total Fabric Fund Income	28,043	27,500
	Fabric Fund Expenditure		
21,166	Building Repair Costs	19,451	62,500
11,519	Net (Expenditure)/Income to be Funded	8,592	(35,000)
131,401	Fabric Fund Balance at 1 January	142,920	142,920
0	Legacy Invested In Church of Scotland Investors Trust	0	0
0	Year End Non Cash Adjustments	0	0
142,920	Fabric Fund Balance Carried Forward	151,512	107,920

Annual Accounts to 31 December 2020

Above is reproduced a copy of the accounts to 31 December 2020.

Due to the pandemic, the Finance Team wrote to the whole of the Congregation encouraging you to think of your Church, both in Financial and in your prayers, at the beginning of last year. As a result of this campaign, I am happy to report that your Church did really well under difficult circumstances. Thanks to your support, the accounts reveal a small surplus of £5,640 in the Congregational Fund. In the budget set in March 2020, we had originally anticipated a deficit but your generosity has meant that we actually ended up with this small surplus.

At present, the Congregational Fund (being the Church's day-to-day income and expenditure) has a Cash Reserve of £149,974 and an investment reserve of £136,943. Overall, the Congregational Fund has reserves of £286,917. The Fabric Fund had a surplus of £8,592 for the year. The Fabric Fund has a cash reserve of £151,512 and an investment reserve of £373,482 giving a total reserve of £524,994, although this is only available to meet the costs of fabric-related costs and maintenance and isn't available for any other purpose.

Once again, a big thank you for your generosity in supporting your Church during this very difficult time.

David, Honorary Treasurer

What lockdown's been like for us

Various people have kindly contributed their thoughts about their lockdown experiences. Here are a few. If you would be willing to add yours to next month's selection, these would be extremely welcome! Do send them to the editors – before they have to ask you! It's lovely to hear our church family experiences, from young and old.

What lockdown's been like for us - the beach and beyond

Through Lockdown, we have walked around Musselburgh quite a lot as a family. Paul and I moved here eleven years ago, and in this last year we have been to the beach up the road more times in one year than we had collectively over the 10 years prior. It has been a place of exploration, prayer and play. It has been a space to throw rocks and scream at the waves through the frustrations of lockdown and remote learning. It has also been a calm place to sit, listening to the waves and seabirds whilst talking with God. Meanwhile, we have A LOT of shells, sea glass, pottery bits and driftwood cluttering our bookshelves as there have been so many treasures to find. We have looked across the water to see PJPC in the distance and we've worshipped God from the shore. Eilidh and Ben also learned to ride bikes over lockdown. There have been many cycles up

Fisherrow promenade to the sand park and Sizzler truck. The harbour and beach have become an extension of our flat this last year.

I collect magnets from our holidays. This year on my birthday, Paul gave me an East Lothian magnet to commemorate our “holiday” for this year. I’ve missed leaving East Lothian, as much as I love being here. I can’t wait to be back in the city centre and view the castle again, walk up Arthur’s Seat, stroll through the Botanics and visit the penguins at the Zoo. I can’t wait to venture further than Portobello and to go into Edinburgh more often than just the very rare occasion to physically go to work. I can’t wait to reconnect in person with family and friends. I can’t wait to know for sure it is possible to once again travel even further – to one day see my American family and friends again. Mostly I can’t wait to hug my mum again, whenever that may be possible.

Michelle

What lockdown’s been like for us - how time went by (just a snippet)

Coming back from school today on the train and with a sense of us slowly returning to a less frightening time, I couldn’t help but reflect on the same train journey from Dalmeny to Brunstane just over a year ago. We were told through the tannoy system to go home at lunchtime and not to return to school but to await further clarification. I’ve got to say that I gathered a few things quickly and left the building feeling very frightened and panicked. The whole business of taking care not to touch surfaces with my bare hands was totally stressing me out. I just wanted to be home and that was the only thing in my head.

I hadn’t been that person who had prepared for this and had stocked up with essentials. Why, for goodness sake, did I not realise that we were going to be under siege!

I suppose we’ll never forget that fear which descended. The last ‘stock piling’ frenzy had been in case of a nuclear attack which never happened. I still remember all those public announcements on the telly telling us to hide under the table if under attack and to have a good stock of tinned food. Was it a supply

to last 5 months? Can't remember. That's why I didn't stockpile, wasn't needed the last time.

I heard on the radio not so long ago that when you are a child you are not aware of making memories, so time goes by slowly. I do think I had a long and happy childhood given that I spent a lot of time kicking a shoe tin in and out of chalked boxes on the pavement. I think that is why this Covid time has flown by but in a bizarre way has gone on forever. We've all done so many things differently, Easter, Christmas, Zooming to keep in touch with family and friends further afield, just coping with the everyday. Being in a bubble, seeing only a certain number of people, still so strange. Not being together in church with the excited chatter before the start of the Family Service. I always think each Sunday, how is Stewart or Lourens going to bring us all to order? They always manage somehow!

We've all got our stories to tell and hopefully when we are back together properly, we'll be able to do that. We have heard many stories already through the Magazine, the many E-mails, midweek emails, YouTube, and even at Christmas time those wonderful daily YouTube surprises for Advent. There will be the more to tell, with I think, some very sad and heart aching experiences not yet shared. Some experiences can only be told in person.

I'll share a few photos. Please bear with the captions.



Photo 1 - 27th March 2020. Deserted beach in rain and sums up how I feel.

Photo 2 - 20th April 2020, my son is in deserted York. Two ducks for company though.



Photo 3 -My friend started painting – Still Life. Certainly is still.

Photo 4 - Veg boxes are suddenly exciting.



Photo 5 – Rainbow.
Thank you to the NHS
and The Frontline
workers.



Photo 6 - Our Feast of Life Choir master and no
piano in sight



Photo 7 - Feast of Life Quiz before Zoom

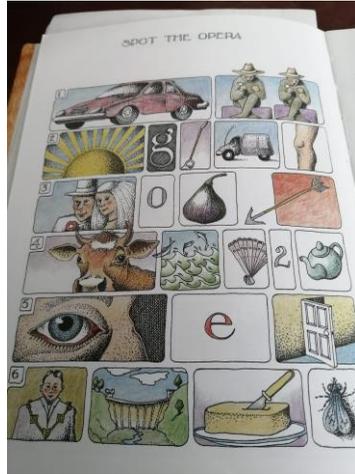


Photo 8 - It's Christmas and the church is lit up. Thanks Jamie.

Photo 9 - More and more ambitious thanks to technology and Lourens



Photo 10 - A new friend showing me a new walk. Thanks Ella.



Photo 11- There were numerous WhatsApp pictures sent to me, such as this one - left by accident on my phone.

Elaine

What lockdown's been like for us – gardening

Covid has been an opportunity to share a love of gardening and a love of cooking with one of my granddaughters, Sarah. Sarah is in her twenties and due to Covid lockdowns, has less work and therefore unexpected spare time. We share the wonder that seeds sprout and cuttings root! Enthusiastic questions come on WhatsApp almost daily, asking how to grow and look after the herbs and fruit she will use for her vegetarian recipes. A great pleasure to us both.

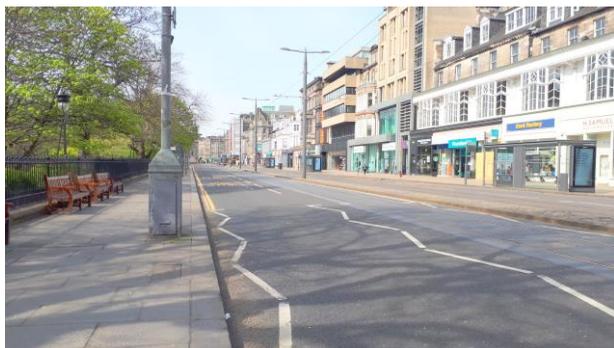


Shirley and Ian

What lockdown's been like for us – walking and missing friends

Over the last year I, like many other people, have done a lot of walking, some running (plodding) along the prom and a few cycle runs. I miss walking with the church walking groups but there are many regulars on the prom every day who give a cheery smile and wave, or a few words of encouragement.

The wildlife I've seen has been lovely – deer and foxes by the River Esk, otters in Dunsapie Loch and lots of birds. At the end of the first lockdown last year, when we were allowed to walk with one person from another household, Joan Lamb



and I walked into the city centre, which was deserted. It was eerie - a very strange experience. We walked up to the castle where there was only one couple and they were from Portobello! We walked along George Street and were amazed by the wonderful buildings there, which we don't

normally notice when we're hurrying through the crowds. We walked into town again in February just after the snowfall. There were more people around but it wasn't nearly as busy as normal. The ponds at the parliament where we had dipped our weary feet in May were frozen.

We are so lucky, living here, to have a beautiful city, stunning countryside and the coast all nearby. I enjoyed seeing the colourful painted stones lining the sea wall at Port Seton, games chalked on pavements, birthday wishes on the prom, rainbows everywhere and stopping to chat to others.

Now I can pick up my grandchildren from school and have dinner with them before taking them home. Last year I could only wave to them at their window.

Our ministry team have done a wonderful job with services and meetings on Zoom and services now in church. I look forward to when we can all attend church, sing hymns and have a cuppa after the service.

I asked my grandchildren about their thoughts on lockdown. Rory (aged 8) said, "It was bad because I couldn't see my friends. It's good we're starting to come out of lockdown and can go to other places. I was able to meet with my cousins in West Lothian on Saturday. We hadn't seen them face to face since September."

Lois said, "I was upset and annoyed that I couldn't meet with friends. I did some activities on Zoom – dancing, junior drama Brownies and some birthday parties which was okay but it's nice to see people face to face in school now".

Sheena, Lois and Rory

Breakfast Club Easter Vigil at Home

By: Michelle

For the second year in a row, our Easter Vigil for our youth group needed to be cancelled due to lockdown restrictions. However, our young people and leaders wanted to find some way to still mark what would have been the night we stayed up all night in the church remembering Holy Week and bringing in Easter morning at the sunrise service to celebrate Jesus' Resurrection. Iona suggested Vigil at Home gift bags for the young people and leaders might be a good idea this year. Then Lourens suggested we have a youth worship service on Holy Saturday. We couldn't yet meet for youth group indoors, in-person, but we could hold a worship service indoors for limited numbers with Covid-safety measures in place. We decided to run with both excellent ideas.



The ministry team and Breakfast Club leaders worked together to plan and lead an hour-long youth worship service in the main hall on 3 April. With our caretaker Derek's help, we set up tables and chairs so that 4 people could meet around a table group – all spaced 2m apart. Ian Downie made some beautiful wooden crosses to put on the tables and I put some tea lights on the tables as well so that we could transform the main hall into a café style worship space (though without the food). As the Breakfast Club met at the breakfast table pre-covid, worshipping around tables would feel more natural for this group.

Fourteen young people and five leaders gathered together on 3 April, socially distanced, to worship together. Jamie welcomed us and broke the ice, then Stewart guided us through a meditation and then I led a lament prayer activity for us all to think through the loss and worries of this year. We scratched onto art crosses our prayers of lament to God and through scratching revealed the rainbow colours beneath the scratch art. As we progressed through this time of lament, we scratched away all the layer on top to reveal a full rainbow cross to symbolise the hope and promise found on Easter Sunday through the Resurrection. We then watched the final film in the SU Ireland NUA: Easter series and held discussions around our tables about the Resurrection and the NUA video. After this, Stewart gave a quick talk and blessed us as we went out to continue our vigil at home. Each participant brought home a gift bag with prayer, baking and craft activities for home along with some special treats. For those young people who couldn't attend, Michelle and Jamie delivered their Vigil at Home bags to them. Michelle, Stewart and Jamie also delivered out thirteen P7 bibles along with Vigil at Home bags for our young people coming up at Easter from Sunday Stars and Messy Church. This is their welcome to join the Breakfast Club.

Breakfast Club has been meeting online on Sunday nights throughout this current lockdown. However, restrictions are easing and we are once again allowed to meet outside in groups of 15 people for youth work. Jamie, Lourens and Michelle will be planning out a spring/summer term of BC outside for Sunday afternoons starting after the Easter school holidays.

The book group



We enjoyed a very lively and interesting Zoom discussion one Sunday evening about **Three Hours** by Rosamund Lupton. It raised lots of issues. There were 10 of us altogether so plenty of chat...

As summed up by George: A truly gripping story that was enjoyed by all who read it. While perhaps slow in its build up as the author set the scene and background to the main characters, there was a tenseness about the storytelling that kept the pages turning. One mild criticism was the lack of a map of the school site.

The storytelling was excellent and through a series of flashbacks the author brought together the plight of refugees, socially isolated and easily radicalised teenagers, the dark web, our reliance on mobile phones and the use of digital technology to research and find solutions to problems.

There were many aspects of love portrayed, from romantic love with all its attached fantasy through the close filial love shown by Ravi and Basi, parental love and concern and the love for others shown by Hannah in her care for the fatally wounded teacher.

Hope, hopelessness, loneliness, isolation, rejection, responsibility and inevitability were all emotions portrayed as the story developed and unfolded.

A good, thought-provoking read.

We are to read **The Girl with the Louding Voice** by Abi Dare for the end of May - very different again – and **The Inheritors** by William Golding for July. Stay safe and keep reading.

George Anderson

Junior Drama Games Night

Hi everyone! We hope you are all keeping well and are coping.

Junior Drama had their first game night of 2021 in March and what fun they had. Charlotte and I had ten young people for the game and we played TOP 10. Categories are given and they have to pick ten things that would be in that top ten category. For example TOP 10 favourite ice cream flavours. We played it slightly differently in that we made it into an Escape Room style game. They had to name correctly the top ten favourite ice cream flavours and the top ten sweeties. If they can't name them in time then they can't escape from the room so poisonous gas comes out of their computers and that's the end of them. (No children or adults were harmed during this game.) Luckily, with two minutes to spare, they managed to get all the answers correct and were saved to play another day.

One of the young ones chose a game for us for the next week and she led the game, which was nice. We did plan on playing the games every two weeks for 30 mins each time but the young ones wanted to play every week so that is what we will do.

After the Easter Holiday we will play for an hour every week so that we can play more games like Trivial Pursuit, Family Fortunes, Escape Room and Detective Mystery type games using coded messages, which will be fun. With spring arriving and the weather getting warmer we may even be able to meet outside for outdoor games and hopefully back to Junior Drama in September.

Well, look after yourselves and keep safe and we all look forward to seeing you all soon.

Jamie



Jamie has sent in one of his paintings (a first for “Soundings”). He says: “It’s from one of my trips to the Isle of Arran a couple of years ago. I painted it in watercolour and ink last year from one of the photos I took from the ferry. I thought it might help cheer up anyone if they are feeling a bit low.” Very cheering – thanks, Jamie.

Or, for further cheering...

- *My husband purchased a world map and then gave me a dart and said, “Throw this and wherever it lands – that’s where I’m taking you when this pandemic ends.” Turns out, we’re spending two weeks behind the fridge.*
- *Why did the chicken cross the road? Because the chicken behind it didn’t know how to socially distance properly.*

Gardening with George - More plant lore from George, horticulturist and star of the small screen.



There was a bit of turmoil in the garden recently. The pair of resident, nesting blackbirds were displaying some serious irritation over an intruder that was trying to reach their nest in a conifer tree. The blame was laid at the door of one of the many local cats who wander through our garden or one of the marauding magpies that are often seen sitting on our neighbours' television aerial, surveying the scene. However, no harm seems to have come to the distressed couple's nest or nestlings as the parents have continued to collect grubs and worms and fly off to their nest site.

This is an exciting time of year. Tulips are in full bloom, bluebells are raising their bright blue spikes to the skies and the last of the daffodils are starting to fade in the late spring sunshine. Time to deadhead the daffodils and give them their last feed of high potash liquid fertiliser. I use the one that is recommended for tomatoes and it seems to do the trick. Once their foliage has withered and died it will be pulled off and the bulbs left to rest until next year.

The early spring flowering shrubs such as flowering currant and forsythia have done their bit to brighten up our gardens and now is the time to give them their annual haircut. However, please refrain from trimming them into tombstone shapes or spheres - rather I suggest that it is better to selectively remove around one third of the older wood from the plant while retaining its original shape as much as possible.

Meanwhile the ‘ hanging gardens of Joppa’ as we like to call them are producing some early savoury greens. Made out of empty plastic milk containers which have been cut to shape and filled with compost, they hang in the cold glasshouse. They could equally well be sat on a windowsill.

Drainage slots are cut in the base with a pair of scissors and various seeds are sown. We have already enjoyed rocket, cress and salad leaves and soon will harvest some radish seedlings. The radish seeds germinate quickly and are harvested as seedlings rather than as the familiar red radish roots often seen in the supermarket. The small seedlings are full of flavour and can be cut and used after about two weeks.



In each container I only sow as much seed as I can pinch between finger and thumb. That is sufficient to supply enough to top a salad roll or add to some other delight from the kitchen. We also use the containers that come with grapes and strawberries for seed sowing and for these, two pinches of seed are used. There are many seedlings that can be grown in this way: dwarf dill, celery, basil, radish, turnip, cabbage, sprouts, rocket, cress, lettuce, peas and spring onions. Lots of flavour is packed into these little seedlings and so they bring a freshness and full flavour to the salad plate.

So get out the scissors, cut your milk cartons to shape and start up the production line for micro veg.

I’m just off to boil an egg for an egg and cress sandwich.

Happy Gardening
George



A call to prayer

“Whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God” 1 Corinthians 10, 13.

There are two “whatever” verses in Scripture. Both include the phrase “whatever you do”.

One is: “Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men.” (Colossians 3,23.) Your goal in life should be to love what you work at and to work at what you love. That isn’t reality at all stages of life – sometimes work isn’t enjoyable. However, try to thank God that you have a job that supplies your needs.

The other is: “Whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God.” (1 Corinthians 10,13.) Paul is using our daily rituals to make an important point: even the most mundane activity is absolutely miraculous. You take approximately 23,000 breaths every day, but when was the last time you thanked God for one of them?

We tend to thank God for things that take our breath *away*. But maybe we should thank Him for every other breath too. Any way. Anywhere. Any how. Whatever. Wherever. Whenever.

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Brain-teaser



I expect that many of us watched the funeral of the Duke of Edinburgh. I thought that this month I'd make a puzzle using the letters of his name – PRINCE PHILIP.

All the words of the answer have *some* sort of connection with church – all you have to do is work out what they are. I've put the answers in alphabetical order - eg if the answer were CHURCH it would appear as CCHHRU.

Good luck!

AEIPRS	P – what we sing hymns of
CEEIJOR	R – what we do when we're happy
AEILRS	I – Promised Land
BEMNRSU	N – a book of the Old Testament
ACIIHNRST	C – Onward Soldiers
DEELRS	E – members of the Kirk Session

AEPRRSY	P – when we talk to God
AEGHILN	H - when we are made better
AAHIIS	I – a prophet of the Old Testament
AAEILOMNSTT	L – a book of the Old Testament
AACIS	I – son of Abraham
ACEEHPRR	P – Stewart or Lourens or Kerr

Alison



Getting to know you – Kay

Hello. My name is Kay. I was born Kay Sarll, in Melbourne, Australia. My maternal great-grandmother lived in Leith, so now that I have moved to Edinburgh

perhaps you could say I have come full circle. I grew up in the Presbyterian Church (it was nearer our house than the Church of England). I met my husband, Alan (from Renfrew), at an ecumenical work camp in Holland in the sixties. We moved from Australia to Scotland in 1978 for Alan to study Divinity at St Andrews. We stayed. Our family spent 3 memorable years in Kenya in the eighties. Alan was latterly a minister in Annan and subsequently in the Hills Parish of Hutton and Corrie, with Boreland and Eskdalemuir. I moved to Edinburgh just between lockdowns last year. I am very happy here and look forward to getting to know my Christian family at PJPC.



Q. What is a favourite hymn, and why?

A. Thine be the Glory, Risen Conquering Son

This is a resoundingly confident statement of our Christian faith, which, like the Hallelujah Chorus, cannot be sung while seated.

Q. What is an early church memory?

A. (very naughty!) As a Sunday School child, using the fly leaf pages of two pew bibles to make notes during a talk about the missionary, C T Studd, as I was determined to write the winning essay! The two winning boys were awarded the book 'C T Studd'; the two girls were given '100 Things a Girl Can Make'. I was really miffed!

Q. What's your earliest childhood memory?

A. The weekly delivery to our house of a big block of ice to go into the metal icebox in our kitchen (before the days of refrigerators!) with the 'iceman' shouting 'ICE!' as he came through the back door with the ice in a hessian bag on his shoulder.

Q. In an alternative life, what job would you have chosen?

A. A wildlife movie photographer.

Q. What are you reading at the moment?

A. War and Peace

Q. How did you find lockdown?

A. Apart from the busyness associated with moving house, a time for reflection.

Q. What extra tasks have you done/ are you planning to do before lockdown is completely over?

A. Sorting through digital photographs, and deleting old and unimportant computer files.

Q. What are you longing to do once lockdown is completely over?

A. Visit my son and family in London.

Q. What is your most prized possession?

A. Two things – my engagement ring and a very small china teapot, the only remaining piece from my much-played-with childhood tea-set.

Q. Tell us something that not many people know about you.

A. My husband and I 'sailed' from Lima to Sydney via 4 Pacific islands and four stops in New Zealand.

Q. What luxury would you take to a desert island?

A. A sewing machine (it would have to be a treadle), with sewing kit including a sharp knife and a huge supply of fabric.



What do you do to relax?

A. *Play a version of Scrabble online.*

Q. Where would you go in a time machine and why?

A. *To Guatemala in South America, before the time of Christ, to learn about the ancient Mayan civilization and empire.*

Q. What is a favourite quotation?

A. *"Another world is not only possible, she is on her way. On a quiet day, I can hear her breathing." Arundhati Roy.*

Q. What kind of music do you listen to?

A. *Mainly classical.*

Q. What do you miss (or not miss) about being a child?

A. *The sense of timelessness.*

Q. What gets you up in the morning (apart from your alarm clock)?

A. *The thought of a cup of tea.*

Q. What makes your heart sing?

A. *All the signs of spring.*



Remembering

25 March Tom Dickson of Portobello
29 March Hilda Fenton of Joppa
7 April Rita Brown of Joppa
9 April Bill Laidlaw of Craigentenny
12 April Mary Finlay of Musselburgh



LIFE AND WORK MAY 2021



The Privilege of Democracy Thomas Baldwin explains why churches have a key role to play in this month's elections to the Scottish Parliament

'A Cherished Part of the Church's Tradition' The Rt Hon Baron Wallace of Tankerness QC looks ahead to his year as Moderator-Designate to the 2021 General Assembly with Lynne McNeil, as he encourages elders to serve more widely in the Church of Scotland

Assembly 2021 Timetable and reports to this year's General Assembly, which will be held online

God's Table The first in a new series of Bible studies by the Very Rev Dr Derek Browning, focusing on hospitality

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Sunday May 23rd 2021

July 2021

Sunday June 20th 2021

August 2021

No Magazine in August

September 2021

Sunday August 22nd 2021

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