

Soundings

Portobello & Joppa Parish
Church Magazine

June 2020

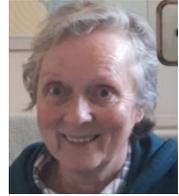


Portobello and Joppa Parish Church

Worship is temporarily suspended during the virus lockdown

From the editor

As I write this, it's with the hope that lockdown may be about to ease slightly and we may be allowed to socialise to a limited extent with our friends and families. We're currently missing our children and grandchildren, but phones and computers can be a great help in sending photos and anecdotes as well as in allowing us to chat on video.



The parents of schoolchildren have also had it hard. Our biggest granddaughter said to her mother the other day, "I don't like people who are consistent." Our daughter was slightly startled, till it turned out that our granddaughter meant that when she asked more than once if she could watch YouTube, the answer was *still* that she needed to do her school work first. It shows good vocabulary skills, I suppose.

Meanwhile, there's a lot going on from our ministers and family worker, much of the communication being again online. Stewart and Lourens are working to produce their "Thought for the Day", which often contains lovely music from talented members of the congregation, and Michelle is also keeping things going with the young people, as are others.

Not everyone uses a computer, and because of that, there will – unusually – be editions of "Soundings" in June and July. A limited number will be printed and delivered so that those not online will still be kept in touch with what's happening at PJPC.

Thanks as ever to all contributors, including Corinne, who tells us about her lockdown experiences. It would be good to hear how this strange time has been for other people – do send a few sentences about how you've managed to get through this strange time in our lives.

Pam



From the minister

Dear Friends and Neighbours,

‘What does it mean to be?’

That was the first question in my first lecture in my first year of college.

I had stumbled across campus for an 8am class (yes, you read that correctly, 8am!) and as a first year student I had to contend with a corker like that. And there were a load of more experienced students from other years who knew how to handle questions like that. I listened quietly in the back. Survival strategy.

It was Religion 101, a fascinating and challenging and perplexing course. I’m pretty sure I felt more at sea by the end of it than I was at the beginning. I suspect that was the point.

At one stage we were looking at origin stories and that included Genesis. The professor mentioned in passing, ‘If it never existed, we could never return to it.’ That thought has stuck with me over the years.

Revelation describes the new heaven and the new earth. In some respects it’s a return to the Garden of Eden, a paradise of sorts, although it is changed and altered substantially.

In this Easter season, when many of the readings focus on the risen Christ, the stories remind us how much Christ changed after the resurrection. Mary did not recognise him until he called her name. The disciples on the way to Emmaus only recognised him after they invited him to remain and he broke bread with them. In the calling of our names, in the invitation and the breaking of bread, we recognise that which we knew but which has simultaneously changed.

Is there any going back now?

The 'new normal' suggests that normality will be very different indeed after Covid-19 and the lockdown and the careful steps back to something resembling life as we knew it.

But, what was normal? And normal for whom?

Maybe that normal needed and needs to be left behind in many, many respects.

Of course there will be difficulties on the way ahead and of course there has been, and will be, suffering experienced by many. It is a suffering nobody would have wanted but it will only be more tragic if nothing is learned from it.

We exist between the Garden of Eden and the New Jerusalem. It is not a perfect world. It is perhaps disorientating to live between an image of perfect harmony with God and nature, and heavenly worship surrounded by angels and everlasting light. Perfection on earth and perfection in heaven.

And here we are.

Yet the Christian story tells us again and again, and then repeats it for us, that we are never abandoned by God who is revealed in Christ and sustains us through the Holy Spirit.

Yet the Christian story invites us again and again to respond to the call of God ('here I am!' responds Abram and Isaiah) and the call of Christ ('follow me').

Where, now, do we hear Christ calling our name? In the loneliness of the older person, the confusion of the teenager, the weariness of the parent? If we respond, we see the risen Christ.

Where, now especially, can we share bread with others and with Christ? A minister once said that a sermon is the breaking open of scripture the way a loaf of bread is broken at communion. Sharing a conversation over the garden wall or over the phone or on Zoom, sharing our own worries and fears, sharing love given to us reveals the grace of Christ at the table.

We don't need to return to the Garden of Eden. God actually is here with us if we listen.

We don't have to cast our eyes to the New Jerusalem. Christ is actually here with us if we choose to invite and choose to share.

If we do that more consciously, more consistently, more generously, more faithfully, more fully in the days ahead, then we need not return, we need not hearken back, we need not fear. We can leave the old 'normal' behind and abide in the normal as it now is, a normal in which God is very much present.

And abiding in God's presence is what it truly means 'to be'.

Stewart

Ministers...

In this edition of the magazine there are a few memories of Glyn Taverner, who was minister at St. Philip's from 1969-1983. Though I had met him a few times and very much enjoyed the conversations with him, the memories shared about him were fascinating. And humbling too.



Indeed, when I first arrived in Portobello and Joppa, I heard many a story about previous ministers not only in St. Philip's but also in the other local churches. Glyn was known for his assiduous, dedicated visiting and his love of organising outings for the church. Peter was known for a deep, beautiful voice and a restless mind that, it seems to me, liked to stir things up a bit. And of course my predecessor, John, whose warmth, humour, preaching ability and wonderful raconteur skills were evident from the many stories told about him.

Yet there are other memories of ministers that come to mind. I remember how beautifully and well Andrew wrote and the depth of his interest in people who were perhaps suffering or bereaved. Stories of him visiting abound. Calum and a combination of humour and enthusiasm that galvanised so many in Portobello, or Neil (who is now a member of PJPC, evangelised by the Drama Group!) and that rich, throaty laugh that is so infectious and the way he genuinely was interested in hearing what other ministers were doing as we gathered at the Old Parish.

Stories of Glyn, which seemed to conjure up thoughts of other ministers, are perhaps more pertinent and powerful now because of recent events. We can gain reassurance and inspiration, and no small amount of humility, remembering those people who have guided congregations through smooth and rough times. Every now and then I hear another snippet that speaks of our church and our community: I had no idea it was Glyn Taverner that unleashed George on unsuspecting Guilds everywhere!

It would be lovely to hear more.

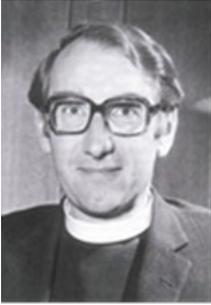
If you have any thoughts, memories or stories of those who have served as ministers in Portobello and Joppa, please do share them.

At a time of change, of moving forward, of charting a new direction in a new landscape with no map, looking back to the past can perhaps be the richest, most fruitful and faithful way of helping to make all things new.

Go on. Share a tale or two. We'd love to hear. Or at least I would!

Stewart

The Reverend Glyn Rees Taverner, 1930 – 2020



Many of the older members of congregation will have been saddened to hear of the death of Rev Glyn Taverner, the minister of St Philip's from 1969 to 1983.

Glyn was born in Berwick-on-Tweed, a son of the manse, but was brought up in England from the age of four till his parents moved to Edinburgh during his senior school years. He was very good at sports, especially cricket and

hockey, and after university did some teaching and then entered the ministry. Before St Philip's he served at St Giles, Bonnyrigg Parish and then Kilmarnock Henderson Church. While at St Philip's he introduced various innovations such as the summer services in country churches, which were very enjoyable social events as well as chances to experience worship in different surroundings. He was also a founder of Kirk Care Housing, which still runs sheltered accommodation.

After St Philip's, he moved to St Boswell's linked with Mertoun in the Borders till his semi-retirement to Innerleithen in 1995 – though he performed locum and other preaching duties till the age of 75.

Sadly, he lost his wife Isobel in 2016 but he continued living on his own and then spent his last days in the care of his family. He was a lovely gentle man – though not without opinions and often with a twinkle in his eye - and will be much missed by his sons and his grandchildren.

George shares some memories of him:

I hold Glyn Taverner as the one who caused much pain to Women's Guilds and other innocent groups across Scotland. It was he who started me on my various rounds of lectures and talks to such groups.

There was a time some years ago while he was minister at St Philip's when we had Sunday evening services. He became concerned that they were not fulfilling the need he saw. Attendance was falling. He decided to come up with what he called 'The Sunday Alternative'. This was a service that would be led by members of the congregation. Harry McNulty spoke about his role in the police and I was asked to provide a talk on 'Plants of the Bible' - and so it started.

When Gill and I moved down to Eastfield in the 1970s, we searched around for a church to attend. We attended St Philip's one Sunday morning and Bob was on the door. In his hand he held a Scottish Office notebook and so, sensing a kindred spirit (because I was also an employee of The Scottish Office), I spoke to him. Bob in his inimitable fashion managed to extract much of my background and history and within a week Glyn was knocking on the door and asking me to become involved with teaching in the Bible Class, as it was then called.

He was a gentle and thoughtful man, much loved by all he met.

Fay Ewan

It was with great sadness that I had a phone call on 7th May from Patsy, Fay's niece, to say Fay had passed away that morning at the age of 96. Although she had been failing a bit over recent years she had only been unwell for a few days.



Fay joined St. Philip's in 1953 and was a very loyal member all her life. She was one of the first woman Elders, a member of the Woman's Guild, later to become the Guild, and was a committee member in her younger days. Along with Rena Hay and Janet Bogie she ran the crèche of the Young Mothers, later to become the Young Woman's Group, looking after approximately 30 babies and toddlers and children who came in after school.

In the 1980s Rev Peter asked Fay to organise and run the Coffee Club which she did for many years very successfully. Until last year she went every Monday morning from her home in St. Anne's being collected by 6 ladies, on a rota basis. It was important to give her the help she had given others. The last Coffee Club outing she went on was to the Kingsknowe Hotel in Galashiels, the reception hotel for her wedding.

Fay was a member of St. Philip's Golf Club and played until she was not so able. She was also a member of the Church Country Dance Group. Keeping active obviously contributed to her long life. Along with many ladies from the Church she was a volunteer at the WRVS shop and café at the Eastern General Hospital for many years.

Most of all Fay was seldom seen with an empty car. It would be impossible to list the number of Church members she ferried to the Church, Guild, Coffee Club, doctors, dentists, shops, hairdressers. You name it she was always on hand. She knew all the care homes because she had visited people in them all.

No one, in my experience, has done more pastorally than Fay.

She was one in a million!!! May she rest in peace.

Pat

Tributes

It's lovely to remember friends from the congregation – thanks to Pat for her tribute to Fay. Such articles are always welcome in the magazine.

View from my room....

So, the view from my room just now is not the view from my home, although both views are very similar. I'm going to share with you 3 'views' today.

When we knew lockdown was going to happen, we took the decision that Ava and I would move in with my Mum and step-Dad. Our houses are just



along the road from each other in Portobello – at either ends of the prom. As my Mum and step-Dad are in the vulnerable category, we have not left their home since lockdown - not even for a daily walk. However, we are very fortunate to have a lovely

garden to exercise and play in, and beautiful views and most importantly we are together.

This first view is of the sea, and is the view we have from our bedroom here – the sea and over to Fife. You can occasionally see an all-weather swimmer or two out swimming in the sea. I love seeing the sea, but also hearing the sounds of it, which we can hear from the garden or by an open window, and no matter how challenging life is, I look and listen to the sea and everything feels calm and I know it will all be OK.

The second 'view' I have every day are these faces; I feel so blessed to be in lockdown with them. This decision has had its challenges – Ava can only see her Daddy over Facetime or Zoom, so regular chats this way have now become the new normal. Ava's Daddy is a key worker just now, so this is the best way to keep us all safe and keep structure and routine in Ava's life, which is so important just now. It also means since my Mum is a retired Primary school teacher, she is able to home educate Ava and enable me to work in one of the spare rooms.



The third and final 'view' is of my memories... This time last year, Ava and I took our first solo trip to the US, to Walt Disney World in Florida and then on to Boston to see our dear friends. I am reminded of these happy memories every day, which will never be erased from my mind, and every day we are making new memories – whether that be stories in Ava's tepee, family board games nights or watching Ava chat virtually with her best friend on Facetime...

So, despite the lockdown, my 'view' – whether that be the actual view that I can see with my eyes or the 'view' in my head / mind.... Is pretty calm and peaceful. I am keeping a journal with words and photos so that Ava and I will be able to look back at this time in our lives, but despite this feeling a very 'odd' and at times frightening period, I feel so blessed to have my family and my faith, a wee girl who is resilient and taking it all in her stride, the sounds and views of the sea - and these smiling faces.

Corinne

A Call to Prayer



These trials will show that your faith is genuine – 1 Peter 1.7.

The tests we face reveal both our weaknesses and our strengths. When the Bible speaks of “a refiner’s fire” (Malachi 3,2) we’re inclined to think of the negative things that we should remove from our character. But we also have inner strengths and gifts that need to be refined, but we’re not aware of them because a demand hasn’t been placed on them.

In 1 Kings, 17, when the widow and her son met Elijah there was famine in the land, and Elijah asked her to share her last meal with him. Her response changed her future and saved her family.

So when you’re faced with a need, how do you respond? Do you withdraw? Withhold? Give from a sense of obligation? Or see it as an opportunity to obey God and change the future?

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



Life under lockdown is made a lot easier when one has a garden or a space within which to grow and nurture the odd plant or two. I count my blessings every day as I am luckier than most and have both a garden and an allotment in which I can grow food

and paint pictures with plants. A garden provides us with space to sit and think somewhere where we can forget about the troubles of the world and focus on the here and now.

This spring, for obvious reasons, I have been making a point of combining my gardening with some recycling, repurposing and reuse. I have been making use of the many plastic cartons and tins that we would normally discard. There are only two of us in the house and so containers like old yoghurt pots filled with compost and with a couple of holes punched



into the base serve as a small pot in which to sow a pinch of cress seed sufficient for a couple of egg and cress sandwiches when large enough to harvest. Discarded tins that previously contained the ingredients for Gill's marmalade have been called into service for growing cabbage, lettuce, onion and other seedlings. Only sow a pinch of seed at a time. When sowing cress,

lettuce or salad-leaves, the amount to sow is what you can pinch between your finger and thumb.

Once large enough, many of my new seedlings and plants will be planted out in my small veg patch at home or in the allotment where the potatoes are through the ground and the new emerging foliage has been nipped by the recent frosts. They will recover, but it is annoying. Leek plants have arrived through the post and have been planted along with broad beans, peas, salad crops, cabbage, sprouts and cauliflower. Crops for now and those for later.

Gardening, like life, is sprinkled with hope, faith, anticipation, expectation, joy and the occasional sadness. It is all about growing and sharing the results of our own personal labours and about passing on tips and hints to friends and neighbours.

The sharing of the produce from my garden and allotment remind me of the way that we all shared our experiences of life and faith each Sunday and will continue to do so once lockdown is lifted.

As late spring morphs into high summer, the daylight gets longer and the temperatures hopefully rise, we need to pay more attention to watering and feeding our plants, especially any that you have in pots or containers. Keep any plant in black pots out of direct sunlight in the middle of the day as the black pots absorb the heat and the compost heats up dramatically and can occasionally cause the roots of plants to die. Water containers either in the early morning or the late afternoon and use slow-release fertilisers or liquid feeds to keep your plants safe and healthy.

Happy Gardening
Stay safe

George



Brain teaser

The phrase “difficult days” came into my head when I was thinking about this month’s puzzle so I’ve made up some clues using the letters which form it. I’ve missed out alternate letters. Can you work them out?



- | | | |
|---|----------|--|
| D | D-N-E- | He was in the lions’ den – really difficult! |
| I | I_A_C | He was nearly sacrificed by his father – also difficult! |
| F | F-S- | Jesus did this in the wilderness. |
| F | F-S- | Jonah spent three days and nights in the belly of a - ? |
| I | I-A-A- | He was a prophet at a difficult time. |
| C | C-I- | He became enraged and killed his brother. |
| U | U-I-L | The name of an angel – though only in the Apocrypha. |
| L | L-D-N | “Come to me, all you who are heavy - ?” |
| T | T-O-A- | He doubted. |
| D | D-R-N-S- | This “covered the deep waters” in Genesis. |
| A | A-A- | The first man. He had his problems. |
| Y | Y-K- | “My -? is easy.” |
| S | S-S-H-R- | Jesus is known as the Good - ? Alison |

What's happening so far with Junior Drama this year?

Rock Bottom - Cancelled until further notice



Hi everyone! Everyone at Junior Drama is hoping you are all keeping well. Our children are fair missing being with each other at Junior Drama rehearsals and we really miss them as well - but we'll get through it.

What's been happening since our last meeting? Well, we are now on Zoom (a video conferencing website), which is fantastic as we get to see all our young ones again. Rehearsing on Zoom is quite a challenge. For example, there is a fraction of a second gap between each person talking so when we have 3 or 4 children with lines at the same time, everyone is out of sync by that fraction, which sounds quite funny. It is also hard to judge expressions and show the young ones what you mean through physical direction, but it is fun - and it is what it is.

Charlotte is also on Zoom with us and does some amazing warm-up and games with them, which they love. Well done and thank you Charlotte.

Show week should have been 14th and 15th May and the kids were disappointed on that particular rehearsal night. However, they understand what is going on and will have something to look forward to in the future.

From everyone at Junior Drama, we wish you and your family good health and hope to see you all sooner than later.

Jamie

Getting to know you – Lynne. Lynne says, “I was born on the 13th



of July in 1959 in Doncaster. Due to Dad’s civil engineering work we moved to a few places before moving to Scotland, where we built our house in Longniddry. I went to Longniddry Primary School, Preston Lodge High School and Esk Valley College where I qualified as a Nursery Nurse in 1977, a job I am still doing today. I got married in 1979 to Pete and have two sons, Craig and Iain. Coming from a Methodist family I went to Acton Methodist church as a baby when we lived in Ealing, and Boyne Hill Methodist church in Maidenhead. When we moved to Scotland we joined the Edinburgh Methodist church in Tollcross. I joined the choir at the age of 15 and was in it for 34 years before leaving in 2007 and moving to Portobello and Joppa Parish Church. Along with my parents, who also joined the church, I then joined the choir here.

Q. What is a favourite hymn, and why?

A. “And Can It Be?” to the tune Sagina. I love the words and the harmonies in the tune. Always a great sing and uplifting.

Q. What is an early church memory?

A. Going to the church Christmas Pantomime at Boyne Hill Methodist church in Maidenhead.

Q. What’s your earliest *childhood* memory?

A. Sitting in my big pram on the promenade in Burnham on Sea.



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

A. Before I went to college I had wanted to join the mounted police division. Unfortunately it was in the days of the height restrictions and I was too short.

Q. What are you reading at the moment?

A. I'm reading the sixth book in a crime series by Tony J Forder "Endless Silent Scream". Perhaps a fitting title in these strange lockdown times.

Q. How are you finding lockdown?

A. Apart from missing being with family and friends, not bad. Pete and I are spending time in the garden. We are lucky that we live in a cul-de-sac straight into fields and lots of open space so we can get out with the dog. And there's always a knitting or sewing project on the go.



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

A. I have been enjoying baking, which I don't do very often usually. We are planning on sorting out my craft/ spare room but as we can't get to any recycling centres or charity shops that's on hold for the moment. I have become a dab hand at video conferencing and zoom.

Q. What are you longing to do once lockdown is at least partly over?

A. Getting together with friends and family and having a big celebration. Socially distancing of course!

Q. What is your most prized possession?

A. According to my husband it's him!

Q. What do you do to relax?

A. Listen to music or read.

Q. What kind of music do you listen to?

A. I have a very eclectic taste in music and a lot depends on what kind of mood I'm in. If I want to sing, it can be anything from Andrew Lloyd Webber musicals to Celine Dion, Shania Twain, Jane McDonald, Queen. And if I want to chill, a bit of Mozart helps. The only music I'm not a fan of is jazz. Sorry, jazz lovers.

Q. How would you like to be remembered?

A. As someone who was an optimist, kind, cheerful.

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

A. Usually Shadow, my dog.

Q. What makes your heart sing?

A. Sunrises and sunsets. I love the changing colours of the clouds from yellow, oranges and reds to pinks. I never tire of watching a sunset.



Shortly after getting married, a young couple started arguing over who should make the coffee. Being a good Christian woman, the wife went to the scriptures for the answer. She then announced that the Bible specifically said that men should make the coffee.

Puzzled, the husband asked to see the passage. She opened up her Bible and pointed confidently. "Right here," she said. "Hebrews."

A man died and went to heaven. He was met at the Pearly Gates by St Peter, who led him down the golden streets. They passed stately homes and beautiful mansions until they came to a rundown cabin at the end of the street.

The man asked St Peter why he was getting a hut when there were so many beautiful houses.

"That's the best I could get," said St Peter, "on the money you sent us."

No diary

For obvious reasons there is no diary section of the magazine with notices of services, rotas etc.

Remembering

- 29 April** Evi Carmichael of Portobello
7 May Fay Ewan of Joppa and Musselburgh
19 May Margaret Veness of Portobello



If you or another member of the congregation have a special birthday or anniversary coming up and would like to share news of this, or if you would like to share a tribute to a member who has died, please feel free to contact the editor with your contribution.

Correction

It was incorrectly stated in the last edition of “Soundings” that Margaret Watret’s funeral had taken place on April 16.

In fact, that was the date of her death. Her funeral actually took place on May 11.

Many apologies to her sister Irene and the rest of the family for this error and for the distress caused by it.

CrossReach news

Covid-19 emergency appeal

The COVID-19 pandemic is affecting everyone and frontline care services face unprecedented challenges. The impact of COVID-19 means CrossReach residents can no longer receive visits during this worrying time. Staff are also under immense pressure as they continue to provide vital support in CrossReach's residential and non-residential services. The organisation has also been hit hard by the suspension of normal fundraising activities due to Coronavirus.



The CrossReach COVID-19 Emergency Appeal has so far raised more than £230,000 to help support the charity through the crisis. To support, visit: www.crossreach.org.uk/news/crossreach-coronavirus-covid-19-emergency-appeal

Get creative!

If you live close by a CrossReach service, why not get creative with your children and draw a picture to send in, to encourage residents in isolation and the staff that are providing their care?

Mental health awareness week 2020

Looking after our mental health is a vital part of being well. Normally, we can each rely on our strengths and experiences to stay healthy. However, at a time where taking control of our lives is very difficult due to the necessary social isolation restrictions, taking care of our health and mental well-being can be exceptionally challenging.

The theme of this year's Mental Health Awareness Week is 'kindness matters'. There are many opportunities to take part in meaningful activities which can help us maintain our health and mental wellbeing while supporting others. [Virtual Grey Cakes](#) and the [PushUp Challenge](#) are two such opportunities being run by CrossReach.

LIFE AND WORK – June 2020



During this challenging period, Life and Work is committed to helping keep our Christian community connected. The magazine continues to be published and distributed to our loyal readers. If you need to contact our team please email editorial enquiries to magazine@lifeandwork.org or all other enquiries to admin@lifeandwork.org

This month, we have launched Lockdown Weekly, a free weekly update which we hope will be a useful resource to help people keep in touch with events in the Church of Scotland while churches are shut and many of us are in isolation. Free every Friday to download from www.lifeandwork.org/features/features/view/441-lockdown-weekly

On the Frontline With Covid-19

The stories of some of the frontline workers – in hospitals, prisons, schools and the police force – dealing with the impact of the pandemic

Coming Home

Jackie Macadam hears about the early life of Margaret Beetham, daughter of Church of Scotland missionary and theologian Lesslie Newbigin

21st Century Churches

The start of a new series looking at church buildings in the 21st century hears from a minister and an architect who have been involved in new building projects

The Strength of a Seed

In the continuing series marking the 50th anniversary of the Church of Scotland's SRT, biologist Ruth Bancewicz says the church should draw attention to the wonders of God's creation

In Love, Faith and Hope

Dana McQuater, the last Moderator of the Church of Scotland's National Youth Assembly in its current form, reflects on some of the highlights of her year in office.

Family Feuds

Continuing her series on conflict and reconciliation, Ruth Harvey looks at Joseph's story in Genesis 37.

'We Are Deeply Connected'

The Very Rev Dr John Chalmers considers the long-term impact of the Coronavirus Covid-19 on churches.

Subscribe online from £12, or download a digital copy for £1.99; return the form in the magazine or speak to your church's Life and Work coordinator.

MAGAZINE/DIARY DEADLINES

July 2020

August 2020

September 2020

Sunday 21st June 2020

Sunday 19th July 2020

Sunday 23rd August 2020

Scottish Charity Number : SCO11728

Portobello & Joppa



Parish Church

Photography by Kim Kjaerside

