

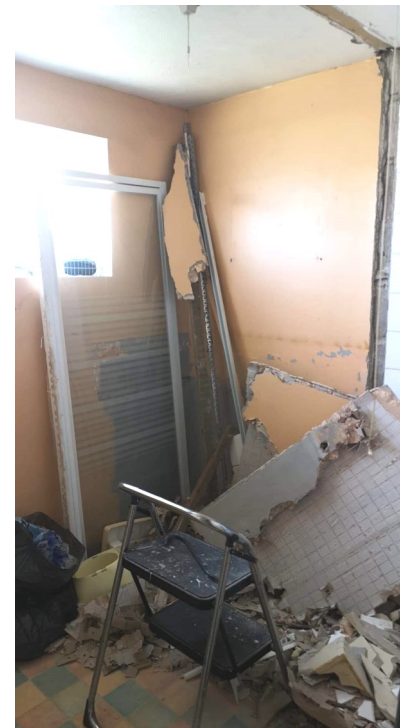


5th edition, 17 May 2020

"A Church is only alive when people come together to worship in it."

Words written by Revd Alfred Webb in the May 1970 edition of *Newstand* after his return to being "in the harness" from a period of illness and hospitalisation. As Ray alludes to on page 4, we hope that we can begin preparations to be able to meet again, with a new definition of "normal" for our services (those who find the tradition of shaking hands at the door difficult may be relieved!).

Whilst we still cannot yet meet as a Church and may well have found our own new "normal" for our ways of worship and living our lives, we will all be running the gamut of emotions, but as Carla says in her musings "we can endure this. God has not abandoned us, and never will". We each endure in our own ways. The Cooke family are fortunate that we have each other and that we can tolerate being in the same building for long periods. My own way of coping, particularly as a break in working from home, is to undertake my biggest DIY project yet, namely replacing our shower room. The 24 year old suite installed by the previous owners was definitely showing its age, both in style and gradual failing of the electric shower. It's involved destruction (as the photo shows), pain, puzzlement ("why are the pipes that way round?"), annoyance ("so that huge gap between the floor and wall is why it's so cold in here all the time"), and many more, but most of all satisfaction that I'm learning new skills to produce a new "normal" for us, at least till the next project comes up (new kitchen Lucy?). By the way, we have a bathroom too, so aren't without a toilet or washing facilities!



We will likely go through similar emotions as we come out of lockdown, work out what is going to be normal for St. Andrew's as we continue our journey into vacancy and hopefully celebrate together in praise and thanksgiving at the enduring love of God.

Stay safe everyone — God is with us.

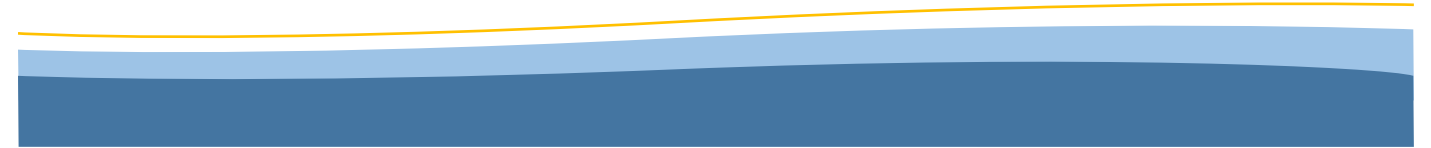
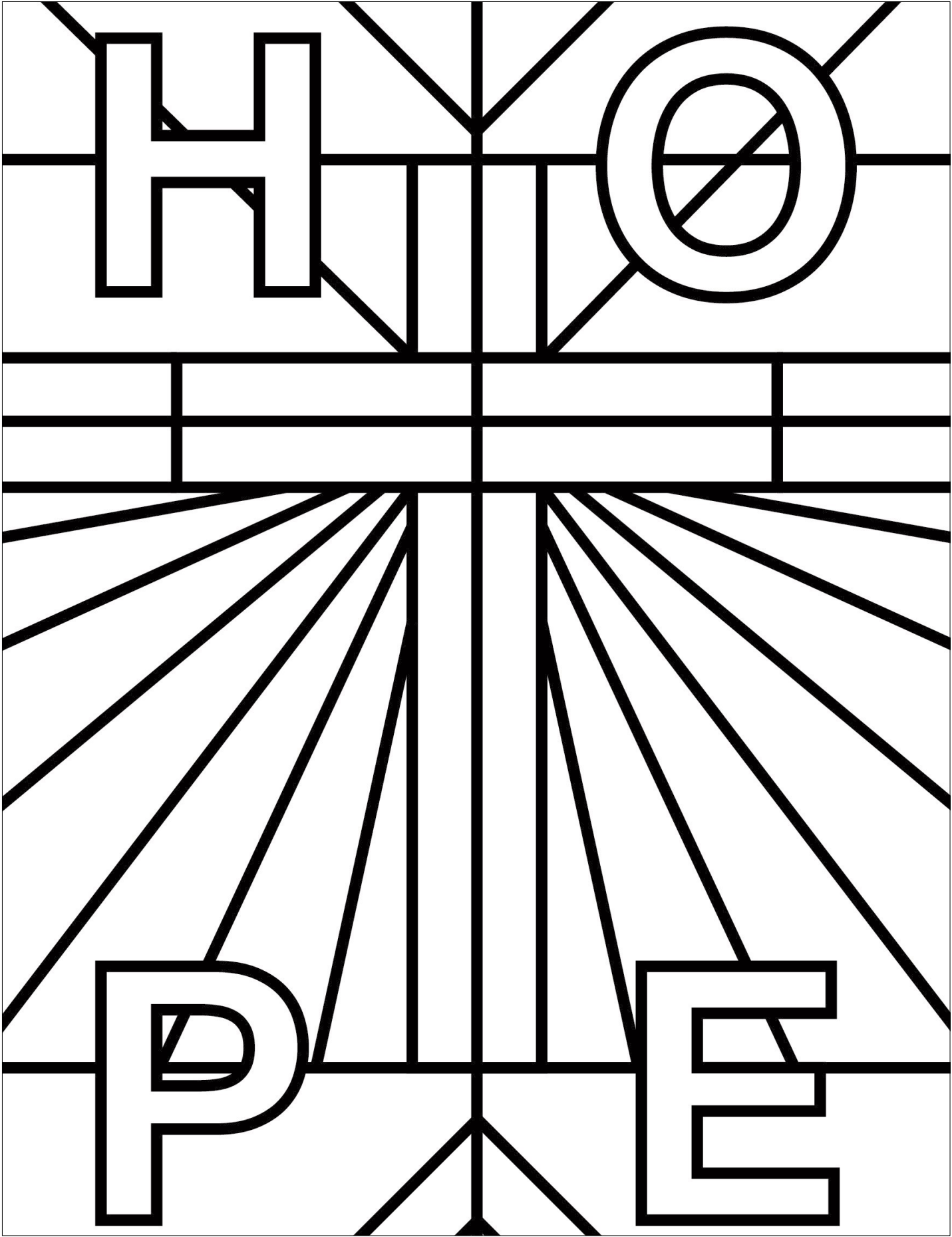
Tim

St. Andrew's United Reformed Church
Eastfield Avenue, Monkseaton, Whitley Bay, NE25 8LU

<http://standrewsmonseatonurc.org.uk>

   monkseatonurc

Get creative! Colour this in and cheer up a window for all to see.



Minister's Musings

Dear Friends,

I hope you are all bearing up well. I've been surprised by how unpredictable my emotions and energy levels are. I cry easily at the news (especially good news), laugh a little too hard at talking dog videos (I love those!), and generally never know how I will feel at the end of the day or the beginning of the next. Sometimes I lie in bed for another hour in the morning, trying to remember my dreams or thinking big thoughts. Even though I study and write about trauma (www.tragedyandcongregations.org.uk) and know that this is all normal behaviour during challenging times like these, I still have to labour to cut myself some slack. So – if you are anything like me, be kind to yourself. We're all doing the best we can with what we've got.

I think about our ancestors in faith and some of the horrendous things they faced: the destruction of the House of God and their city, being carried off into exile to a foreign land, famine, occupation, persecution. The list is long; the events catastrophic. Perhaps we are getting a little taste of what it is to wake up to a new reality that we would never have chosen, no longer able to worship in the way we want or be with people we care about, and with the possibility of suffering and loss always present. Those men and women who sought to walk with God before we were born knew something that we can learn more deeply: we can endure this. God has not abandoned us, and never will. And we

may emerge in an even better place. Things are learned and strength can be forged in adversity, eventually.

I think of Paul's letter to the Romans (thanks, Val, for the reminder) – how suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character hope, which does not disappoint us because God's love has been poured into our hearts (Romans 5:3-5). His letter to the church at Philippi promises the peace that surpasses understanding (Phil. 4:4-7), which Eugene Peterson in *The Message* interprets this way:

Don't fret or worry. Instead of worrying, pray. Let petitions and praises shape your worries into prayers, letting God know your concerns. Before you know it, a sense of God's wholeness, everything coming together for good, will come and settle you down. It's wonderful what happens when Christ displaces worry at the centre of your life.

**"we can endure this.
God has not
abandoned us,
and never will"**

Today I choose to let Christ's peace that passes understanding subsume my frets and worries. I may still shed a tear or laugh too loudly or ponder the universe from a prone position, but I will do so within the orbit of Christ's peace. Thank you, Jesus. Thank you, God.

In Christian love,

Carla

The Pentecost Project

I was listening to my favourite podcast *On Being* whilst plodding around my neighbourhood one morning when I heard a young writer, Ocean Vuong, say: *They say to us that the future is in our hands. But it's not. It's in our mouths. We have to articulate the world we want to live in.* This set me to thinking.

At Pentecost, the Spirit came as tongues of flame and all of a sudden all kinds of different people (Medes, Parthians, Cretans, Arabs....the list is long) could understand what the Galileans were saying. The Spirit descends, mouths and ears open, and a new day, a new Way, a new world is born.

So I've asked all of you to send me some lines beginning with the thought: *In the world I want to live in....* I'll take all the contributions and weave them together into a crowd-sourced Poem for Pentecost. The more concrete and specific you can be, the better. Poetry sings when we use concrete and active



language. You can email your lines (cagroschmiller@yahoo.co.uk), post them (64 Lindisfarne Lane, Morpeth, NE61 2UL) or text or phone them (07427 838 370). Please do it **by Monday 25 May** and then please pray that the Spirit can do something with them for us.

For Pentecost Sunday (31 May), Lucy Cooke and I will record the poem and her gorgeous singing. We will post that on the website and distribute it any way we can.

Carla

Another world is not only possible, she is on her way.

On a quiet day I can hear her breathing.

Arundhati Roy

Ready for the new "Normal"

The recent changes in the 'lockdown' rules, coupled with the suggestion that if all goes well the relaxing of restrictions on businesses and churches may follow, has given us the incentive to start looking at the extent to which we would be able to re-open St Andrew's premises.

Nationally the URC has provided some useful general guidelines on the necessary steps to be considered by us in coming to a decision.

Further information will be provided in due course.

Ray

Tuesday Prayers—at 9:30

Let us come together and pray

PRAYER OF APPROACH

Almighty God we come before You in prayer, each in our separate spaces but we come to You truly united as the people of God, united as the family of faith following Your Son our Lord Jesus Christ. **AMEN**

IN A PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Almighty God, we open our hearts to You; no secrets are hidden from You. Come to us in love; embrace us. So, hear our sins we silently name to You....

Forgive us.

Cleanse us.

Embrace us in Your love.

We do this in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour.

And we say together the prayer Jesus taught His disciples:

Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name;
thy kingdom come, thy will be done;
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those
who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation;
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
the power and the glory,
for ever and ever.

AMEN

PRAYERS OF THANKSGIVING AND INTERCESSION

Almighty God, we thank You for the family of faith, united in the desire to follow Jesus Christ. Thank You for those with whom we pray together, and in other times and other places in whose company we have listened to Your voice and sought to see You face to face.

Almighty God, bless those who are burdened with the responsibilities of work at this time; those who face the tragedies of life and are called to make crucial life-changing decisions; for those in Government who have significant national choices to make. Through our prayers, may they feel Your grace and courage in their struggles.

Almighty God, bless those who are grieving, those whose lives have been darkened by death; for wives, husbands, families and friends left with an empty space in their lives. Through our prayers, may they feel Your grace and courage in their struggles. And may those who have departed from us rest in the peace that is Yours to give.

Almighty God, bless those who are separated from their loved ones at this time unable through distance, be it great or small, to be re-united as families. Through our prayers, may they feel Your grace and courage in their struggles.

Almighty God, bless those across the world who continue to face not only a global pandemic but also the terror of destruction in the name of ethnic, religious and political differences. Through our prayers, may they feel Your grace and courage in their struggles.

Almighty God, we offer and recommit ourselves to You and Your service. Grant us Your grace and courage to give strength to our actions as we come to You, united as the people of God, united as the family of faith following Your Son our Lord Jesus Christ. **AMEN**

BLESSING

Almighty God, come close to us
Surround us with Your love
Now and forever more.

AMEN

Submitted by the Hope 4 Team

A couple of Thank-Yous

Thank you to Carla and all my friends at St Andrew's who have been extremely kind, caring and thoughtful regarding dear Muffin who will be sadly missed by so many. All your cards, kind thoughts and flowers are much appreciated.

With love from Audrey

Dear Friends

I would like to express a heartfelt thank you for all the kind messages, cards, phone calls and beautiful flowers I have received over the last few weeks when I have been unwell. At a time when personal contact has been impossible, these have meant such a lot to me and have helped me greatly during a difficult and challenging time.

I look forward to the day when we are all able to worship at St Andrew's again and enjoy the fellowship and friendship which is so much a part of our lives there.

With my thanks and love

Susan Clark

Acts of care are proven to counter impacts of trauma and adversity, reduce rates of adult-onset illnesses, and expand health. Simple acts of kindness can make a world of difference.

From the Institute of Collective Trauma and Growth



The twins had been doing Messy Church at home.

Activities Team Charitable Giving Scheme

The result of the voting for the three charities for this year 2020, was as follows:

Woodlawn School	18 votes
Admiral Nurses	17 votes
Pearey House	14 votes

In view of the lack of social and fund raising activities this year due to the closure of the premises because of the Pandemic, it is proposed that we retain the above as the charities for 2021 which will, hopefully, mean we will be able to present them with a reasonable amount in early 2022.

Ann & Ray Hammond

URC Daily Devotions

Some of us at St Andrew's have subscribed to "Daily Devotions" from the URC. These are organised by The Rev'd Andy Braunston, one of the ministers of Shawlands URC Glasgow.

Since the beginning of Lockdown he has organised Sunday worship allowing anyone to be part of a virtual congregation. Andy has taken part with a different minister each week.

During Lockdown we often find it difficult to know the day of the week as most days are the same but it is good to know it is Sunday when we "go to church" on our iPads.

Towards the end of the service this week, a lady sang a beautiful hymn which she had composed entitled "NigHtingaleS". We loved this hymn and wanted to share it with you. The composer, Joanna Baird, is organist at Nairn URC so we got in touch with the church secretary who was happy to send the words and a recording of Jo singing her hymn.

We are grateful to Lucy and Tim for the production of a very welcome Newstand and hope they won't have to do it for much longer.

Margaret and Joan

Our NigHtingaleS

Give us strength, keep us brave, help us fight to keep our sanity
In a world that is turning upside down.
Distanced from all our friends, from our neighbours and our family,
Attempting to defy this hidden foe.

As we try to make sense of the new world we are living in
Feeling stunned as the gravities unfold
Spare a thought, say a prayer, for the Angels in our community
Risking life and limb to save our weakened souls.

Let us sing with reverence,
For our Nightingales.
Those who give, with no thought for their own protection,
Are our true heroes.

When this battle is won, and the enemy defeated,
Help us to view our future with fresh eyes.
Reinforce what's important, friends and family, our community,
Love and care before possessions and wealth.

Let us never forget all the sacrifices made for us,
By the few, for the many in our world.
Strength in love, power in prayer,
Help us make our sad hearts sing again,
Keep a bright light shining on our weary souls.

Let us sing with reverence,
For our Nightingales.
Those who give, with no thought for their own protection,
Are our true heroes.

A recording of
the hymn is
available on the
church website,
with this edition
of Newstand
Lite.

If you would like
a copy on CD,
please ring Tim
and Lucy on
01670 354834
and leave a
message with
your name and
address.

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Prayers and thoughts for this moment

Time of distress

Keep us, good Lord,
under the shadow of your mercy
in this time of uncertainty and distress.
Sustain and support the anxious and fearful,
and lift up all who are brought low;
that we may rejoice in your comfort
knowing that nothing can separate us
from your love
in Christ Jesus our Lord.
Amen.

Give us strength

Lord Jesus Christ,
you taught us to love our neighbour,
and to care for those in need
as if we were caring for you.
In this time of anxiety, give us strength
to comfort the fearful, to tend the sick,
and to assure the isolated
of our love, and your love,
for your name's sake.
Amen.

Be our hope

God of compassion,
be close to those who are ill, afraid or in isolation.
In their loneliness, be their consolation;
in their anxiety, be their hope;
in their darkness, be their light;
through Him who suffered alone on the cross,
but reigns with you in glory,
Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

*Prayers by Barbara Glasson,
President of the Methodist Conference*

