



8th edition, 28 June 2020

OK, so for this edition, I'll just jump straight to answering the question most of you are probably asking, "Did you finish the shower room, Tim?"! Yes, indeed I have. Well 98% there — putting this edition of *Newstand Lite* together has intervened in the final few beads of sealant and other finishing touches going in.

Well, I say "Finished"... We have a fully functional, modern looking shower room that I can be proud to say I thought of, designed and built, with a few swear words along the way, but there is more to be done. There is the pile of waste from the old suite and shower cabinet that has taken over the patio, and the empty boxes, off-cuts and tools littering one of the bedrooms and half the landing. Then there are those little niggles where I didn't quite cut something to the correct size, where a tile or bit of flooring got chipped slightly, or I had to compromise on how something was fitted due to the space available.

That's how we should feel about our church, our faith and our relationship with God. Outwardly we may appear to be our interpretation of "perfect" Christians, but the job is never finished; we haven't quite got it right. We may compromise in how we interpret the Bible and how we live as disciples in this modern world - this new "normal". We (should) constantly question ourselves and push to learning more and rethink our faith.

But that doesn't necessarily mean that everything has to go. There are going to be things we have to retain, like the walls, floor and ceiling of the shower room. We will find things that can be reused or recycled — in my case flooring from the loft, and bits of wood and piping — to form part of the new "normal".

Ultimately we as a church will be able to be proud of what we have become and what we have produced, so we can make the call to say "come and see; come and lead".

Stay safe everyone, God is with us!

Tim



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   [monkseatonurc](#)

Reopening of St. Andrew's

Following the recent announcement by the government that churches could open for worship from 4th July, the Revd Carla Grosch-Miller, Bill Hopper, Chris Hales and I held a 'consultation' as to whether we should try and bring forward the original plans which were to reintroduce worship in September. September was of course the month suggested in the Survey, in which many of you took part, and was the option which the majority supported for a return (see full results on page 4).

Bearing this result in mind, along with the following:

- our supplies of equipment etc are not due until mid August,
- the new proposals still require social distancing, hygiene and sanitisation,
- the possible restriction on size of a congregation,
- the concern expressed by a number of people not to rush and
- the desire to ensure the safety of those attending church,

we believe that the reintroduction of worship would be best achieved if we continue to work for a return in September, a view that has been endorsed by the other Elders.

We do appreciate there is a wish for communal worship at St Andrew's to be reintroduced as soon as possible and we will do everything we can to facilitate this. However, please be aware that the practical arrangements which will need to be put in place mean that St Andrew's will be very different to what you are used to. In the words of the Revd John Proctor, General Secretary of the URC "With care, with distance, with gladness, we shall one day be able to worship together. For some of us that day may not be far ahead. But let's do it responsibly."

Take care and keep safe.

Regards
Ray

Following a short illness, a vicar lost his hearing, but he continued to preach the following Sunday morning. At lunch he told his family it was a very strange experience because he couldn't hear himself preach. One of his mischievous children promptly responded with, "You don't know how lucky you were."



Please do send in your feedback, amusing stories, photos, poems, prayers, thank you notes, reflections, memories and anything else you think fitting to include in *Newstand Life*. They can be emailed to standrewsnewstand@gmail.com or posted to Tim Cooke, 4, Kingfisher Way, Blyth, NE24 3QR

Minister's Musings

Dear Friends,

I subscribe to the Church Times, which is the Church of England newspaper. I do so because I often teach Anglican priests or students and need to keep up with what the CofE is doing and thinking. They also have a good book section so I get a sense of what is being published in theology, biblical studies and the like.

For the last few months they have been running a series called *Coronavirus Comfort Collections*. They ask one person – usually a known name in the Anglican world – to share what they have turned to for comfort in these strange times. The writer chooses a picture or painting, reflects on what it means to her or him, and also shares a piece of music, a meaningful passage of scripture, a book they are reading and a favourite prayer. For mid-July, they asked me (they are scraping the bottom of the barrel, I think). I enjoyed writing it and thought, *well, this is helpful*. I was pleased to be able to reflect on what really is helping me through the pandemic. And I realised that I would love to hear what **you** are looking at, reading, listening to and praying to get through these days.

So with Tim's permission, **I invite anyone and everyone to write a paragraph or so about something that is getting you through these days and email or post it to Tim** for inclusion in a future edition of Newstand. To get you

started I'll share a paragraph from my Church Times contribution about what I'm reading these days:

"I have been immersed in reading nature writing in the hours I'm not working for the church or researching, writing or Zooming about congregational trauma as part of the Tragedies and Congregations team (www.tragediesandcongregations.org.uk).

First *How to read water*, to help me better get to grips with the most soul and body strengthening thing I do: year-round skins swimming in the North Sea (thank goodness I could resume that a few weeks ago – in desperation I had waded into the Wansbeck River that meanders through Morpeth). Now *Underland* by Robert MacFarlane. I had forgotten how

claustrophobic I was. The chapters on caving were a white-knuckle ride. Now I am in the more familiar setting of cold and sea as he traverses walls of arctic ice and sea cliffs to visit prehistoric cave paintings. MacFarlane's writing is so sumptuous that I will follow him anywhere, beyond my deepest fears. It is connection to the earth that is sustaining me these days."

We will all be looking forward to reading about what has been your Coronavirus Comfort. Don't be shy!

*In Christian love,
Carla*

**What is getting you
through these days
of lockdown?**

**Nobody made a greater mistake than they who did
nothing because they could do only a little.**

Edmund Burke

Consultation Survey

Many thanks to all who took part and responded. Basically the results were:

Question 1 Shielding and self isolating:

Yes 53 No 41

Question 2 What month safe to return:

ASAP/August 11 September 44

October to December 21 2021 January to April 4

Not sure 5 Not attending 3

Question 3 Planning to attend:

Yes 72 No 13 Unlikely 2

Not sure 4 9.30 service only 2

Question 4 Happy for others to attend:

Yes 52 No 1

Question 5 If not attending would you like to receive Order of Service and sermon:

Yes 56 No 13

Question 6 If not attending would you like to receive live screening:

No 41 Yes 35

Regards

Ray

Activities Team

Due to the lockdown it's only recently that we received the following reply from Blood Cancer UK in response to our donation in March.

Dear Supporters of St Andrew's United Reformed Church,

Thank you so much for fundraising for Blood Cancer UK and raising a fantastic **£500!** We are truly grateful, as the money you've raised means we can keep investing in life-saving research and providing vital information and support for people affected by blood cancer.

Best wishes,

Jessica Addison.

Supporter Relations Team.

Ann Hammond

The church treasurer came down early one morning and complained to his wife that he had hardly slept a wink. His wife asked, "Why on earth didn't you count sheep?" He replied, "I did, and that's what got me into trouble - I made a mistake in the first hour, and it took me until early morning to correct it."

Tuesday Prayers – at 9:30

From all our different homes let us come together in prayer.

O God, your Spirit draws us into your presence, and so we come – drawn by love, upheld by grace – to encounter Jesus, our Saviour. In him we see the Father, whose love sent Jesus to us. Spirit, Son and Father, we draw close in faith to offer our prayers.

Amen.

With a relaxation of the lockdown rules the Hope 4 Team invite you to a 'prayer walk' either physically going out for a walk, keeping the recommended social distancing of course, or a 'virtual' walk', using your imagination to take you out around the local community.

Before your 'prayer walk':

Lord Jesus, give me the eyes to notice the thirsty around me, behind closed doors, on the streets, in my family.

Give me the strength to turn off my lukewarm self-absorption and to turn on the refreshing tap of your compassion, your generosity, your cleansing.

Give me the daring to offer a cup of compassion to another and the courage to step out of myself, to place that cup into the empty hands of another in need, acknowledging my own need to reach out for your living water day by day.

Amen.

Come with us. Take your time. Think of those you meet and the folks behind closed doors. As you walk, wonder... how these folks might be feeling right now:

stressed?

struggling?

lonely?

happy with something to celebrate?

Hold each person, each family behind closed doors, before God. You don't have

to say anything, just let your mind fill with their presence as you walk by.

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father...For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory for ever and ever.

Amen.

Prayers of concern for others and ourselves.

God of welcome, we thank you that you are always waiting for us, always ready to hear our prayers.

This prayer could be an endless list with situations unnoticed and people missed, but we know that you are able to see beyond our limited sight and hold all that pains creation.

We pray for those in our world who feel forgotten: for refugees in camps worried about when their lives might change for the better alongside the invisible danger of Covid 19; for men, women and children behind closed doors living with danger at the hands of people who profess to love them; for people living with health concerns and anxiety; for all those within care-giving services, doing what is needed to ensure hospitals and care homes run smoothly and safely; so many places, so many concerns, Lord. Thank you that we can bring them to you. Merciful God, accept these prayers in the name of your Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ.

Amen.

Blessing

May faith and the love of God's will and calling determine our way.

Amen.

*Submitted by the Hope 4 Team.
Inspired by Sue Ames,
Rev. Pat Wardle & Roots.*



Precious Memories

Perhaps, like me, you have spent time during 'lockdown' clearing papers and sorting through photographs, I have and rediscovered papers that brought back precious memories. One such memory was an Order of Service from Prestongrange Parish Church dated 3rd September 1995.

Prestongrange Church is my 'first home' church. This is the church where I was baptised, attended Sunday School, played piano for the Beginners Class and

became a Sunday School teacher. I became a Member of Church there and Jim and I were married there.

Prestongrange Church is situated in Prestonpans on the Firth of Forth. The town has a long history that can be traced back to the 12th century; it grew up around a nearby monastery and was first named *Priest Toun*. There were several changes of name, at one point named *Salt Prestoun* that linked with the salt industry - rock salt was imported from Germany and boiled down in huge pans to leave the salt. There was a battle there in 1745 when Bonnie Prince Charlie defeated the English. For a small town, Prestonpans made a mark in Scottish history and Prestongrange Church contributed to that history.

The first minister of *Salt Prestoun* was John Davidson. As a student, John Knox had a profound influence on him. Davidson continually challenged the Crown's right to church property and wealth, and several times had to flee from the wrath of King James; he was a thorn in the king's side. Losing patience with Davidson, King James transferred him from Edinburgh to a small

seaside town that had no minister for fifty years, no church or manse. Davidson was banished to remain within the boundaries of what is now Prestonpans.

However, Davidson raised the money and built a church and manse. He was also commissioned to write prayers and metrical psalms by the Presbytery of Haddington. Psalms tended to be written in the Scots language... 'Say furth, *Israell, unfenzeitlie*' ('let Israel now say' from Psalms 124), but under the influence of



John Knox were written in English, since Knox had lived in England and Europe and become unfamiliar with the Scots language! The Church of Davidson's day sang only Psalms or Paraphrases, few of the congregation could read so their repertoire was small, and perhaps would have sounded dull to our ears. Davidson's first service was held on Nov 17 1595.

The service on 3rd September 1995, to celebrate the four hundredth anniversary of the Church, used materials known to have been associated with Davidson. The Order of Service included Psalms 121, 124 and 130; Davidson's Paraphrase of Psalm 23 and Paraphrases of Matthew 6.33, 7.7, 4.4 (Seek ye first the kingdom O' God) and the Hymn *I bind unto myself today*. The Readings were: *Revelation 3:14-22* and *Matthew 4:12-17*.

The Order of Service of 1995 brought back precious memories but also took me even further back to the very foundation of Prestongrange Church that stands today and still echoes to the sounds of folk coming to worship God.

Ann Sinclair

Transitional Ministry update

As we contemplate a return to the beginning of a new normal of Sunday gathering, I thought it important for you to know what I and the Synod are thinking about my tenure at St. Andrew's. As you may remember, we were supposed to have a review of the transitional ministry the weekend we locked down and I was supposed to wrap up the ministry and say goodbye on 19 April. We never got the chance to complete that review, which is an important part of the ministry. A review gives the congregation a chance to have a conversation about what has been experienced and learned since July 2019 and to talk about where you are heading now.

All of that now seems like it happened very long ago. Our world has been turned upside down. When we went into lockdown, I asked, and the Synod and elders agreed, that I stay on to offer whatever support and ministry I could on a reduced call of 20%. (I knew that our funeral ministers are in the vulnerable category or have family in that category.) Then I imagined we'd get back to normal and could complete the transitional work. Now I realise that we may have some other work together to do first – the work of transitioning to a new normal and of recollecting and making

sense of all that has happened. We still need to wrap up the first transitional work as well.

The current plan, which the Synod Moderator and Elders agree with, is that when we resume Sunday gathering I will resume a 50% call – leading worship 2-3x a month and doing what seems right to help with all the change going on. I will consult with the Transition Working Group and the Elders about how and when to wrap up my ministry with you. My sense is that we need some settling in to a changed world before St Andrews can begin the work of writing a profile and seeking a permanent settled minister. As there are very few ministers looking to move this year, the vacancy process in the whole of the URC has slowed. So you are not losing time so much as gaining perspective and clarity about what you are looking for in a settled minister.

I have loved my time with you and am pleased that I can stay a bit longer. Maybe too much! I remind myself regularly that my ministry is about helping you to be ready to take the next steps in vacancy. It's about your future, not about me. I am very privileged indeed to be able to walk through this with you all.

Yours,
Carla

A PIZZA IS A PIE CHART THAT
UPDATES IN REAL TIME HOW
MUCH PIZZA YOU HAVE LEFT



**THE CHURCH NEVER CLOSSES.
WE ADAPT!**

**RATHER THAN BEING PART OF THE PROBLEM,
WE SEEK TO BECOME PART OF THE SOLUTION.
WE WILL FIND NEW WAYS TO WORSHIP
AND SERVE A BROKEN WORLD.**

Prayers and thoughts for this moment

When the erosions of age begin to leave their mark on my body, and still more on my mind; when the ills that must diminish my life or put an end to it strike me down from without or grow up from within me; when I reach that painful moment when I suddenly realise that I am a sick person or that I am growing old; above all at the final moment when I feel that I am losing hold on myself and becoming wholly passive in the hands of those great unknown forces which first formed me: at all these sombre moments grant me, Lord, to understanding that it is You (provided my faith is strong enough) who are painfully separating the fibres of my being so as to penetrate to the very marrow of my substance and draw me to Yourself.

*Pierre Teilhard de Chardin
Hymn of the Universe*



Faithful God,
When you call, may we respond;
 When we falter, be our guide.
When you speak, may we hear;
 When you ask, may we answer;
When we hesitate, be our resolve.
 When you show, may we see;
When we disregard, be our conscience.
 When you lead, may we follow;
When we stray, be our shepherd.
 When you send, may we go;
When we fear, be our courage.
 When you challenge, may we listen;
When we fail, be our rock.
 When you give, may we receive;
And may we love, as you first loved us.
Amen.

*Paul Martin
Taken from the Methodist Church
Prayer Handbook 2019/2020*