

# Holy Trinity Dunoon & St Paul's Rothesay Scottish Episcopal Churches

## 'Spiritual Communion'

The practice of 'spiritual communion' (the intentional act of linking one's prayer with the whole Church, and receiving Communion in the Holy Spirit, either because one is physically unable to receive it in Bread and Wine or because physical circumstances prevent being physically present), has a long tradition going back to the early church (especially in times of persecution). This practice does not require bread and wine to be present in your own home: only the celebrant would have physical elements. If you wish to participate, please **do not** use bread and wine in your home to join in with the 'spiritual communion'. One can receive Spiritual Communion at the point where the celebrant receives by using a prayer such as:

*God of infinite mercy, we thank you for Jesus our Saviour, who feeds his people and gives them eternal life. Though we cannot consume the gifts of bread and wine, we thank you that we do receive Christ's saving presence, the forgiveness of sins, and all other benefits of his passion. Grant that we may continue for ever in the Risen Life of our Saviour. Amen*



## A message from the Rector

A couple of questions I often ask myself are: "Is my faith making a difference in my life? And if so, how is it affecting my life?" I do think it's important for us to keep asking ourselves these questions, in what we might call normal times, and perhaps most especially in the trying times in which we are currently living.

The answer that we give to these questions will most likely be different for each person. One may answer that it gives us purpose in life; another, that it gives comfort, another will have a different response.

And what about Easter and then the Ascension and Pentecost? Do these festivals in the Christian calendar have meaning for us and a bearing on our lives? Easter is surely about God bringing hope out of a hopeless situation, God declaring that God is in charge despite everything. We desperately need a sense of that, don't we, in our own lives and in our world! And the Ascension and Pentecost some weeks later? Jesus' mission completed triumphantly as he goes to be with the Father, completing the bridge between

earth and heaven, and then God's representative, the Holy Spirit, coming to be with us as Advocate and guide.

I get huge strength from finding God with me in my day to day life, seeing signs of him at work in surprising ways, and from God's assurance that God is ultimately in charge and will bring good through all the whirlwind of life. I don't always feel like that though – and there are periods when I drift into the desert – but it always comes back to the fact that even though at times I may forget God, God never forgets me!

I do believe that we should ask ourselves questions, that we should have enquiring minds when it comes to our faith. So, with this message I encourage you to perhaps consider what effect the Christian faith has on your life – does your faith have any influence on how you live and act? Ask yourself these questions, talk to someone about your answers. I am always willing to talk through any issues or concerns, and I pray that you will be blessed as you seek to grow in faith.

28<sup>th</sup> April 2020

# Live from the Church on the Hill

When the Corona virus pandemic put us all into lockdown many things we had taken for granted changed. Initial panic, ongoing worry and uncertainty are now accompanied with daily inconveniences due to very necessary restrictions. It is a toxic mixture where you can find yourself on something of an emotional rollercoaster. The magnitude and seriousness of this crisis can regularly overwhelm us all. Temporary distractions (e.g. routines, exercise, reading and a Netflix binge) give some relief only to be eclipsed by the latest news bulletins giving details of the updated death toll or governments bickering over essential medical supplies.

For some of us the need to fill a spiritual and religious element in our lives has become of great importance for coping day to day. With church doors now locked and even small gatherings prohibited I have realised how crucial to my wellbeing regular church visits had become. Whether attending the Sunday service, shorter midweek events or a simple visit or walk in the grounds with my dogs, the serenity, tranquility and value of these times have helped sustain me in such a positive and beneficial way. Our beautiful wee church on the hill is a special place indeed. Loved by those who are members of the congregation our wee church tends to also significantly touch the occasional visitors who pass through the front door or wander through the grounds.

Incredibly and in an unforeseen manner the current crisis and lockdown restrictions on worship have it seems boosted the significance of and desire to join our small Christian community. A combination of circumstances has come together and thanks to a tech savvy Rector we have found a way to maintain and at times even enhance the profession and functioning of our Christian way of life.

Who knew that a version of virtual communication could be so deeply meaningful and alive? This often flat and distant format of communication has been it seems infused by the very spirit of God! It is being accessed enthusiastically by the congregations of both churches of what is a linked charge, and many beyond and represents a long overdue increase in church attendance.

So, what is the appeal that has taken this form of worship beyond conventional church services in our parish?

Granted against an unprecedented existential human crisis more of us are perhaps looking for some sense of meaning but what specifically has made our services so popular?

Well firstly the technology, while a leap for some of us, has been applied in a straightforward and user-friendly way. While the platform being utilised, Zoom is a modern one, our Rector David has strived to keep accessibility simple and widely available. There has been no evidence of any potential embarrassment for anyone unsure of the technology, only patience and help where needed. Invitations to services are by email that includes a simple click on link, avoiding the need for entering access codes and I.D.'s. Those who do not have access to a tablet or computer can simply participate using their telephone. The sense of inclusion is enhanced by the Rector introducing all participating in the service in a welcoming preamble. Responses, readings, intercessions, hymns and music are all provided by identified participants. Early services highlighted the fact that single responders are more conducive to a clear narrative and that multiple voices and minute delays in transmissions can sound garbled and chaotic.

Prior to and after services an opportunity to chat socially is provided adding to the authenticity of the event and echo the normal format of coming together and the tea and biscuits after our conventional Sunday service.

That we are blessed with a skilled and sensitive communicator in Rector David is an important element of the success and popularity of our services. His thoughtful and innovative approach to worship and prayer have been wonderful quite frankly. The use of online images has been used to help focus and visualise issues and elements of our faith and have been used with well-structured narratives to produce an experience of deeply meditative prayer. Sermons have been highly relevant to our current situation and have focused on the importance of facing the challenges with and through our faith.

With rising participant numbers, we have as a church begun to think about the continued application of technology to allow wider access to Christian worship and the potential for incorporating some form of live broadcast of services. While I am partial to the ceremony and routine of going to church on Sundays the convenience of the current arrangements are very appealing in busy lives.

In a world where technology seems to make most things accessible at the touch of a button why should our spiritual needs be any different?

## Join in Worship@home



During this time of isolation, of closed churches and no public worship, we are finding different ways of coming together to worship.

One of the better ways of doing this is using technology – which is why I am encouraging everyone to join in worship through the week using a platform called ‘Zoom’. This is a video and telephone conferencing programme that allows us to ‘get together’ either through a computer or tablet, or on the phone.

If you are using a computer, you will be able to see the words for the service, and each other, while if you are using the phone you will be able to hear everyone who speaks, but not see them.

If you are not already joining the services but would like to, please contact the Rector who will give you details as to how you can join.

Contact details, and the list of services, can be found in the sidebar next to this text.

Services online  
until the  
church reopens

*Tuesday:*

Morning Prayer at 9.30am

*Wednesday:*

Compline at 8.00pm

*Thursday:*

Morning Prayer at 9.30am

*Friday:*

Morning Prayer at 9.30am

*Sunday:*

Worship at 10.30am  
(alternating between  
Holy Communion and  
a Service of the Word)

## Other online resources

**There are some decent resources for worship and prayer that can be found online. Details for some sites is listed below**

<https://www.scotland.anglican.org/spirituality/prayer/daily-offices/> has the liturgy we use for Morning Prayer  
<https://www.scotland.anglican.org/broadcast-sunday-worship/> the SEC weekly worship broadcast.

<https://oikodomeo.home.blog/> resources provided by Father Richard Peers, Director of Education in the Diocese of Liverpool.

<https://www.northumbriacommunity.org/> a website with various resources, including Daily Prayer.

<https://www.churchofengland.org/more/media-centre/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-churches>

the Church of England website has some useful information and downloadable resources, including a book of prayers and some Mental Health reflections

<https://www.chpublishing.co.uk/apps/time-to-pray> free downloadable prayer app.



**Contact details:**

Email the Rector on  
[rector@holytrinitydunoon.co.uk](mailto:rector@holytrinitydunoon.co.uk)  
or phone: 01369 702444





## Holy Trinity

Although the doors are locked shut, our church buildings wait quietly for our return.



## St Paul's



### St Paul's Church, Late April 2020

When everything was cancelled – services, coffees, soup lunches, no open church and even no Vestry meeting - life seemed to be disorientated and adrift from all the usual markers.

BUT how quickly do we adjust and find new ways to be a congregation, new ways to meet? We phone each other, Alison sends round a weekly update with not just church news but also local information (email and hand delivered) and David has carried out wonderful online services for computer and phone users that are attracting a very wide and growing "audience".

Despite lockdown, and self-isolation the Vestry are carrying out their work and looking after St Paul's affairs. Maureen has written a piece from both of us treasurers urging you to think about how you can support your church at this time, please do read it.

Sadly, we lost Ian Harrison at the beginning of the month, he had been related to St Paul's since childhood.

Finally, but not least - a very big thank you to Sarah and David and congratulations on their first anniversary with Holy Trinity and St Paul's.

*Janet O'Sullivan* 28.04.20

### Linked Charge Treasurers' Report

Both of us wanted to thank all of you who have responded so well to our requests to think about how you give to church. Everyone is very generous but with the doors shut and no hall income for St Pauls, we must pay our fixed costs – the Rector's stipend and related costs, quota, insurance and some basic heating.

We have had a few requests to set up a standing order and that is terrific. No matter the sum, the bank will pay it to us monthly. Please ask if you would like a form. If you do not currently use weekly envelopes, we have some spare, again just ask. If you normally put money in the plate, please put it in a jar for us and bring it on the first day back.

We do understand times are hard just now so please do not add church finances to your concerns and thanks again to those who can help.

If anyone wishes to contribute to a collection for Bishop Kevin please send or give it to one of us (a cheque payable to Holy Trinity Church or St. Paul's Scottish Episcopal Church is our preferred method if possible, but if not cash is fine).

*Janet* (St Paul's), *Maureen* (Holy Trinity)

### Vestry Report Holy Trinity

The Vestry met on 23<sup>rd</sup> April for their second Zoom Meeting, having met at the beginning of the lockdown to contingency plan. We began with prayer. The Treasurer talked through the financial position and the effects of lockdown. She said she was pleased by the response to her email and she would write to those without email. She reported that Wylie Bisset had signed the Annual Report & Accounts. The Rector reported that he had told Architeco that the Land Project was pending due to the Virus.

The Vestry fed back that the worship during Holy Week and Easter had been very meaningful and thanked the Rector for all his work. The Vestry also thanked the Rector for all he had done in his first year.

As far as fabric was concerned the church was drying well and the Canon 35 application to run water to the back of church was ready to send. There were however problems with the Rectory drains which would be attended to this month and covered by insurance. The next meeting is scheduled for 28 May.