



THE STEEPLE CHURCH

A church at the heart of the city with the city at its heart



2020

Despite the current restrictions meaning that our church building has to remain closed and we are unable to physically meet together, there is a lot happening in our Church community and we hope that everyone will continue to feel connected and supported.

By using internet technology we have been able to adapt, develop and continue with many aspects of church life, albeit in a different form.

We are conscious that not everybody in our Church family has access to the internet from home and if you are one of these people, we are keen to keep in regular contact via letters and the telephone.

Please leave a message at the Church Office (01382 200031) if no one from the church has been in touch.



The Steeple Church: Dundee (Church of Scotland)
Nethergate, Dundee DD1 4DG
t • 01382 200031 e • office@thesteepchurch.org.uk
www.thesteepchurch.org.uk
Registered Scottish Charity SC 014314

Dear friends

First of all, I like to thank all of you who have enquired about my health. I need to tell you that I am shielding and trying to behave myself. Leading a quiet life on the Arbroath Road is not easy when you miss meeting people every day. My doctor says I'm vulnerable to the virus because of a condition that I developed as a child in the industrial smog of Lancashire in 1959!

How have you coped with life over the last two months? The shutdown came upon us without much warning. We are grateful to our scientists and leaders who grasped the challenge of Covid19 when it suddenly appeared. We feel desperately for those who have suffered or made big sacrifices. I hope you're able to have some quality of life within the current restrictions.

How has the Steeple Church managed? Divorced from the church building, we suddenly found ourselves apart from each other. But we are discovering new ways to be a compassionate caring bible-reading and Christ-centred community. Online services recorded are watched on 'You tube' and listened to on CDs. Each week you can have conversation or home groups on 'zoom' and we make messages (including the minister) on Facebook. However, we do miss sharing communion and hugging one another.

How has the Church of Scotland managed in this pandemic? Again, without much planning, it seems that the pandemic has become a catalyst to radical changes in the Kirk. While many say it has been 'long time a'coming', new and larger presbyteries are going to be created and tasked to work out what is vitally necessary within their bounds. I'm concerned about the sacrifice of the Growth Fund (which we need more than ever) but am glad to hear a commitment to support those in the poorest areas of Scotland. We are blessed by having Rev. Martin Fair as our new moderator to guide us.

One final question... what does Christ require from the Steeple Church? What does the Lord want from us? What is our *raison d'être*? Like the question that the Old Testament prophet asked in Micah 6 verse 8: "And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly (or prudently) with your God." The answer given was not about how much to give or what to do – but about personal relationships. Micah 6:8 names our 'inward' relationship to ourselves (act justly), our 'outward' relationship to others (love mercy) and our 'upward' relationship to Jesus (walk humbly). The Lord looks for this 'trinity of spirituality' in any and every situation we find ourselves in. Humbly walking with the Lord can help us reflect on how we ought to 'do church' in a future that involves:

- Lack of ministers, members and financial resources in the Kirk
- Serious mental health issues on the increase in our society
- Greater economic and social divisions in the world around us
- Covid19 is going to be with us in the world for some time to come
- Climate change will bring about more migration and refugees

“To act justly, love mercy” means that somehow that we keep as a priority the needs of the poor and marginalised in our society and world. I notice that the partnership between ‘Parish Nursing’ and ‘Eagles’ Wings’ that began before the shutdown has been key to providing support and healthcare during the shutdown. During this time, we’ve discovered new ways to come together and that we can worship together, have house groups and even ‘disciple’ people online. Perhaps these and other kinds of meeting will continue online, even when we are allowed to get back to the building. That may be some time away and there may be more demand for us to host other groups on Sundays and during the week.

I know the church is not the building – but we do need somewhere to build community. What we have has been built up from coming together in a physical space to worship. The Steeple Church is one of four Church of Scotland congregations in the city-centre cluster and some rationalising will happen sooner rather than later. I wonder how many Church of Scotland congregations are needed in Dundee’s city centre.

Finally, if I may end where I started on a personal note, I treasure many memories of the Steeple Church from when I first started coming here in 1978. I fondly recall the welcome of Jack Martin and his connection with my dad. The influence of faithful men like Stephen Bell and Colin Paterson has been massive. I feel so privileged to stand in a succession of ministers from Walter Strang-Money and Jock Stein after which Graham Foster and David Clark built upon foundations they laid. But that was 42 years ago!

Nothing stays the same. The faith and prayerful enterprise of loyal church members led us into the ‘Steeple development’. Now we wait again upon God. Let’s step confidently into whatever the future holds. Take time during this month of June to consider prayerfully how the Lord wants us to be.

Your friend and minister

Robert A. Calvert

CONGREGATIONAL NEWS



Funeral of Stephen Bell

Our former session clerk Dr Stephen Bell died in St. Andrews Community Hospital after an extended period of infirmity on Friday 20th March. His burial took place at Tayport Cemetery on Monday 30th March with his wife Moira and children Fiona and Graham were present with their partners Craig and Rachael.



Funeral of Colin Paterson

Dr Colin Patterson, former elder and current Building Management team member, died suddenly on the evening of Monday 30th March from a heart attack. His cremation took place at Dundee Crematorium on Thursday 9th April with his wife Sally and Robert, Suzanne and Elspeth were present along with Suzanne's children.

The contents of both services were shared at the time on the Facebook site of Dundee Steeple Church Private Group. We hope to host thanksgiving services soon for these outstanding servants of God at the Steeple Church.

Ordination of Elders

The Ordination took place of four new elders at this stage of the meeting. It was recorded on video so the church could see the event on the recorded Sunday service. Following a reading of the declaration of faith, the candidates were invited declare their commitment by saying 'I do' individually. Maureen Bowser, Piers Bowser, Myra Deakin and Mark Parsons were ordained and declared to be elders of The Steeple Church. A welcome was given in the form of a raised right hand and word of encouragement given from fellow elders. It was also agreed that elders would be in office for a period of four years initially with the option to extend.

Funding for Nepal

The Kirk Session agreed to give £1000 from the International Mission Fund for people in Nepal where Jim Robertson's sister works—details on page 15.

Training for Ministry

Michelle McAdoo from Alloa will start a summer placement with us on 29 June to 9 August. Afterwards, we expect her to work with Rev. Scott Burton in Argyll for three weeks before coming back to the Steeple for a further week of reflection. It has to be said that, unlike previous student placements, her experience will largely be online – but don't be surprised to see a new face on your screens!



Brenda Elwell-Sutton has finished her first placement in training to be an Ordained Local Minister and has another placement, starting in September, at Leuchars in Fife.

Congratulations to Daniel Spencer who passed the online assessment conference and is completing his final course of study. Pray for him as he undertakes placements beyond the Steeple Church over the next two years.

Audio CDs



Following the recording of a weekly Sunday service, we can now offer an audio CD of it and include the minister's six daily reflections from the week before. Normally you can access these by going onto Facebook or the You Tube channel via the Steeple Church's website. The audio CD is ideal if you don't use internet technology with a computer or smartphone. All you need is a CD player and you can leave it playing while you shut your eyes!

Teams and Streams

Please take time to pray for one of the Streams and Teams on page 12.



If you would be interested in joining (or forming) an online Steeple Home Group, using Zoom, (from the convenience and comfort of your own home), please let Brenda in the Office know and we can put you in touch with others.

JUNE

The Scottish Government 'Route Map' suggests that our church building will not open for group meetings until mid-July at the earliest. Even then, the 'new normal' for each one of us, for our church fellowship and for society as a whole will look and feel very different to what we were all used to prior to the pandemic. What feels important, and what feels less so, may well have changed for us all.

In the light of all this, the new Church of Scotland Moderator The Right Rev. Dr Martin Fair has pointed out that ***"we find ourselves in uncharted territory, having to re-imagine church"***, He has challenged us that God is ***"causing us to look again at that which really matters and at the possibilities that lie before us, if we will but have the courage to embrace them"*** and that our call to serve ***"has always been about a willingness to venture beyond the familiar and comfortable"*** and ***"to do things differently"*** He reminds us that in this, Jesus ***"lights the way for us"***.

The Kirk Session believes it is the right time to invite the whole Steeple church family to join them, throughout June, in praying about the future – using this enforced time of 'apartness' to 'come together' in this.

We want to listen for God's guidance as to how He wants us to love and



serve each other and the community around us. We hope to discern the way He is lighting up for us. What might He be leading us away from and what possibilities might He be laying before us and calling us to embrace?

In the final week of June, the Kirk Session would love to hear what God has laid on each of our hearts. An e-mail to our Session Clerk, Tom Ramsay sharing insights gained would be so helpful. [tomramsay@blueyonder.co.uk]

Will you join us in this? It would be wonderful if you can.





The extraordinary developments of the past few weeks, which have necessitated us all to physically 'distance' ourselves from others and for the Steeple Church to suspend our normal activities including Sunday Worship, have made us so very aware of the vital need to do all that is possible to help all of our Church family to keep in touch, to support those in need and to find new ways of communicating God's love. While face to face contact is discouraged, the use of modern technology allows us to do this and we hope to harness this in ways that will actually strengthen our Church fellowship rather than the reverse during these unsettling times.

We are building our Church Office database of folk who are happy for us to hold and contact you by e-mail, post or phone.

If you haven't yet done so, please let Brenda know, and give her your contact details, if you are happy for the Steeple to keep in touch with you in any of these ways.



Now that so much of our Church life is happening 'on-line' do you feel you are missing out because you don't have the skills or equipment you need to join in?

If you would like someone from The Steeple to help you 'get on line' then please let us know. Anything is possible and most folk find it's easier than they fear!

Many of the Celtic prayers that Robert reads in his daily Reflections, can be found in the book 'Power Lines' by David Adams.



It can be bought as a downloadable e-book (though N.B. NOT for Kindles) from Blackwells on-line:

<https://blackwells.co.uk/bookshop/product/9780819225283>

Despite the current restrictions meaning that our church building has to remain closed and we are unable to physically meet together, there is a lot happening in our Church community and we hope that everyone will continue to feel connected and supported. By using internet technology we have been able to adapt, develop and continue with many aspects of church life, albeit in a different form.

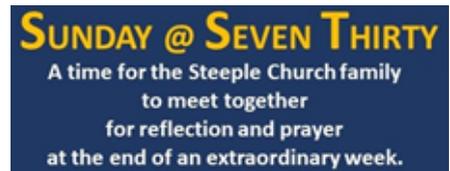


We are conscious that not everybody in our Church family has access to the internet from home and if you are one of these people, we are keen to keep in regular contact via letters and telephone. Please leave a message at the Church Office (01382 200031) if no one from the church has been in touch.



Every Sunday, a pre-recorded 30 minute **'Steeple Service'**, led by the Minister and members of the congregation can be found via the Church website, www.thesteeplechurch.org.uk Steeple Facebook Groups and via 'YouTube': <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC3No73xjivpUfQwdw1vbj2g>

If you are interested in any of these opportunities but don't know how to access them, please phone or email the Church Office: office@thesteeplechurch.org.uk



Every Sunday evening at 7.30 pm, we are meeting using 'Zoom' video conferencing technology – which is very easy to use if you have access to the internet - to pray together. The special 'links' to join these times are sent out by e-mail each week.



In addition, every day a short **'Daily Reflection'** is posted, which can be found on the website, YouTube, Facebook pages or WhatsApp.



Folk are also meeting to keep in touch and to chat, also via Zoom, at our regular Thursday Coffee Morning and Tuesday Afternoon Tea Break times. The special 'links' to join these times are sent out by e-mail each week.



Our **Café Night Church** evenings on a Tuesday, **Steeple Men Group** on Thursday mornings and the **Connections Café** on a Monday morning to support those new to Dundee with learning English are all now back up and running, again using Zoom. John Clark would be happy to tell you more about these or contact the church office: office@thesteplechurch.org.uk



We have set up private Facebook and WhatsApp Groups for the Steeple family so that folk can easily and quickly inform others in the Steeple community of any prayer requests or practical needs, in particular if they become unwell or are needing to self-isolate.



Several of our Home Groups are also using Zoom to continue meeting for bible study and fellowship. If you would be interested in joining one of these, please let Robert or the Office know and we can put you in touch



PARISH NURSING



From Monday 23 March the Parish Nurses suspended drop-in session at The Steeple Church and joined forces with Eagles Wings Trust operating together at the Eagles Wings unit in 10 Douglas Street. They are now affectionately referred to as Parish Wings!

Apart from handing out bags of food the Parish Nurses continue to assess folk for all health and related issues and mental wellbeing is a very important issue. There has not been any appreciable drop in drug use across the city, and sadly, there have been several more drug-related deaths. As far as we know, there has not been any confirmed outbreak of Covid-19 among our team or our folk. We have, and are using masks, alcohol hand rubs and good hand hygiene. What really matters is maintaining contact with people and following up people about whom we have particular concerns. We have given out a number of basic mobile phones to support this. We have had grants from SSE's Scottish Resilience Fund and Foundation Scotland for Covid-19-related expenses.



John Alexander, Painter and Decorator, has been providing the services of his staff, vans and premises to collect, store and distribute food supplies across the city. This is invaluable support, and their team works closely with Dundee city Council and Faith in Communities Dundee. The amazing workers at Shell donated gifts of unused sleeping bags, duvets and bedding from a rig that is being decommissioned.

Before lockdown was introduced Jacky Close of Faith in Community Dundee brought together 24 local emergency food projects, and senior managers from the Council and Third Sector Interface, to coordinate and support emergency food across our city. They worked with The Northwood Trust and the NHS Innovation Fund to provide £37,000 funding to secure food stock for these projects.



They developed a WhatsApp group for all food projects to share food and support each other, and connected with local businesses offering excess food stock and, with the amazing support of John Alexander Community Development, this has been delivered to the projects. The Council is also giving £10,000 worth of food each week to all the emergency food providers. We also benefit from this, and twice a week we get food support from Social Bite. Jacky is doing a FAB job supporting all this – it makes our lives much easier. There is a weekly Zoom meeting, and the whole operation is working pretty smoothly now.

We continue to work very closely with the NHS Homeless Outreach Team, and we are also part of the Nursing team supporting the Safe Zone Bus, reaching out to vulnerable people on Saturday evenings around the city.

So much happening, but it is a real privilege to be able to serve as key workers and Gospel ambassadors at a time like this when people are asking serious questions about what is happening to our world.



Please continue to pray for Parish Wings as they continue to serve some of the most vulnerable residents in our city.

tearfund

Coronavirus is spreading among the world's poorest communities.

Tearfund's local church partners are on the frontline, providing crucial hygiene and sanitation assistance but they need your help.

For more information about the appeal please visit the Tearfund website (www.tearfund.org) or Facebook page



STREAMS AND TEAMS

The 'CARING' stream

- Pastoral Care
- Social Fellowship
- Steeple Men
- Small Groups
- Membership

The 'OUTREACH' stream

- Parish Nursing
- Community Engagement
- Connections Café
- Café Nights
- Alpha Course

The 'NURTURE' stream

- Developing Worship
- Musicians
- Prayer
- World Mission
- Students
- Young People

The 'SUPPORT' stream

- Finance
- Buildings Management
- Halls Marketing
- Data Protection
- Health & Safety
- Catering
- Safeguarding
- Human Resources
- Servicing Sunday
- Communications

Please take time to pray for one of the Streams and Teams.

We are so blessed in The Steeple Church Family that we have been given by God such important challenges -to build up and nurture each other and to reach out in His name to those around us.

As the congregation looks to the future and to how we can seek to best achieve this, everyone in the Church Family is invited to prayerfully reflect and 'think afresh' about what your part in the 'one body' should be.

Each of us has one body with many parts. And the parts do not all have the same purpose. So also we are many persons. But in Christ we are one body. And each part of the body belongs to all the other parts. We all have gifts. They differ according to the grace God has given to each of us. Do you have the gift of prophecy? Then use it according to the faith you have. If your gift is serving, then serve. If it is teaching, then teach. Is it encouraging others? Then encourage them. Is it giving to others? Then give freely. Is it being a leader? Then work hard at it. Is it showing mercy? Then do it cheerfully.

Romans 12:4-8



I am sure we all realise that this is not just a health crisis but also an economic crisis with many people losing jobs and seeing reduced income. Churches are not immune to this crisis. We are probably in a better position than some congregations as much of our congregational giving comes through

standing orders. However, while there are no Sunday services our income is clearly down and we still have ongoing costs. If you normally give by envelopes or cash on a Sunday then please set aside what you would normally give (if you can afford to) for when services return. Alternatively, if you can please contact the Treasurer and arrange to make a donation by bank transfer or cheque. Please contact the church office for further details.

While this may not be top of our priority list at the moment some of you might have noticed that we normally have a Stated Annual Meeting about March. Therefore, just to keep you updated this is what I might have said if it had happened.....

“ The accounts for calendar year 2019 have been approved by the Kirk Session, a few significant facts from the accounts are shown below: -

In 2019 congregational giving increased by about 4% and hall lettings income increased by about 11%. Thanks to all those who give generously financially and to those who volunteer so that hall lettings may take place. Overall expenditure was within budget but there was a significant increase in electricity/gas costs. The overall surplus for the year was approximately £18,000 which compares with a deficit of approximately £18,000 in the previous year. I would like to thank the Treasurer, Alister Stibbles, for all the work he put in to prepare these accounts and the work he puts in throughout the year. I would also like to record thanks to the Parish Nursing Treasurer, Jan Potter.

”



Chhahari literally means "shade" or "shelter". This Nepali expression, highlights the importance of shelter being provided, wherever a person may be, rather than at any static point.

The organisation Chhahari Nepal for Mental Health have close links with Jim and Morag Robertson, through Jim's sister Gael, and are doing vital work on the streets of Kathmandu. We hear from Jim that they are actively praying for us here in Dundee but also that they are in need of emergency funds so that they can respond to the real challenges of the coronavirus epidemic in Nepal.

They write: "Chhahari Nepal (CNMH) promotes a holistic person-centred approach to support mentally distressed women and men found on the street and disconnected from their family. CNMH responds to the much neglected urban poor groups in Lalitpur area. Currently we are working with 130 Clients for whom we have managed to provide the first phase of emergency health kit, medication, food supplies and communication packages. Our first priority was our street Clients, then our Clients living alone by themselves and finally those living with family. We are now looking at the second phase of relief support as the lockdown continues. We are fund raising to support our Clients and their Carers during these challenging times of the coronavirus pandemic."

The Kirk Session has decided to make a significant donation from The Steeple International Development Fund to support their crucial work.



Have you joined yet?
The Steeple Family Support
WhatsApp Group
....another valuable way
of keeping in touch
and supporting each other

Rev Dr Robert Calvert

email ● minister@thesteepchurch.org.uk

mobile ● 07532 029 343

The Steeple Church: Dundee

Nethergate, Dundee DD1 4DG

email ● office@thesteepchurch.org.uk

office phone ● 01382 200031

www.thesteepchurch.org.uk