



CHURCH OF THE HOLY CROSS : www.holycrossedinburgh.org

Congregational e-news for Sunday 29 March (Lent 5/Passion Sunday)

From the Rector, the Revd Dr Stephen Holmes

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I. KEEPING IN TOUCH WITH EACH OTHER

Dear friends at Holy Cross,

It was good to get such a good response to our first e-news and I have incorporated some of your suggestions into this edition. Thank you for sharing it with your friends and families, we have now doubled the circulation and if you know any members of the congregation or others who do not yet receive it but would enjoy it, please encourage them to send me their email address to me. The aim is to keep us together as a Christian community and to provide suggestions to help us keep our Christian life alive while there is no public worship.

We belong to the Diocese of Edinburgh and the diocese has been keeping in touch with us during the crisis. Bishop John phoned me last week to see how we were all getting on and to check that Izzy, Bess and I were settling in well in these strange circumstances – he sent his best wishes to all at Holy Cross. Our College of Bishops have also been sending me and the vestry regular guidance on church life in a time of lockdown (can you name our six Bishops and seven dioceses? – answers at the end of this newsletter!).

The Bishops' latest guidance includes:

- Baptism should only be administered in an emergency and not in church buildings.
- Weddings should not take place until permitted by Scottish Government advice.
- Funerals may not take place in church and those elsewhere may only be attended by immediate family or a friend.
- Church buildings are to be closed but may be visited by the priest, accompanied only by members of their household.
- The ban on non-essential travel means that meetings, for example of vestries, may not take place and other arrangements may need to be made.
- Church income will be reduced by hall closures and the suspension of public worship means that collections can not be taken, church members should thus be encouraged to set up standing orders (when they are themselves not in financial difficulties).

The implications of these are clear, for example the Baptism of our daughter Bess will be postponed until later in the year and the Vestry will conduct business by email and phone and will be exploring meeting online on Zoom next week (plenty of opportunity for chaos!). I had presumed that Government instructions banning travel would mean that I would not be able to continue to pray and celebrate the Eucharist in our Church so I have set up an Oratory in the Rectory. The Church of England has interpreted the instructions this way, but the Government does give an exemption to Ministers of Religion and our Bishops have encouraged us to check the church buildings regularly. I therefore intend to continue celebrating the Eucharist at Holy Cross on Sundays at 10.30am with my household (which sounds rather medieval!) for as long as it is possible and I will continue to ring the bell.

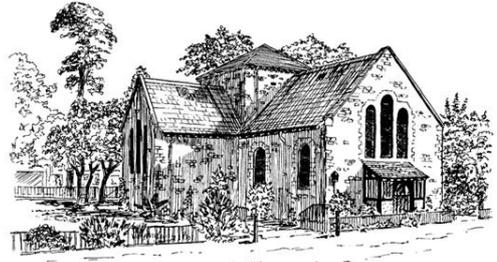
The last point from the Bishops on finance is true for Holy Cross and we will see a serious drop in income for as long as the restrictions endure. Our Treasurer, Colin Mair, asks that if you usually make donations in cash or use offertory envelopes you would consider making payments via online banking or by setting up a standing order. The Church's bank details are:

Royal Bank of Scotland Sort code 83-18-47

Account number 00170278 Account name: Church of the Holy Cross

Good Christian stewardship means generous giving but giving according to your means, so, given these exceptional times, you may need to reduce your giving if you have lost your job or may want to increase it in response to the needs of others and the church.

The Holy Cross magazine for April will be out soon and I received one interesting article too late for inclusion in this edition. It is from Ian Silver whose family have been closely involved with Holy Cross from the start and it is his memories of the Church from when he was a boy. They begin, 'the church was always cold and the boiler broke down about 1950'. Some things don't change!



Despite the crisis we are still working towards installing a new heating system in our Church. Ian Elvin and the Vestry have invited quotes for removing asbestos in the boiler room and drawings are being prepared by our consultant engineer, Andrew MacOwan, who was recommended by the diocese and works for the Church of Scotland. We had hoped to have the project completed in June but it will probably be delayed by the current shutdown. Gordon Kingsford-Smith has already started fundraising for the new heating system which may cost in the region of £30,000 – a large sum at a time when our income is reduced, but a warm, welcoming Church is essential for our mission. Having seen how successfully the stonework repair project was done, though, I have no doubt that Holy Cross will rise to the challenge!

Buildings are very important but it is people who are the living stones of the Church (1 Peter 2:4-6). As I keep in contact with members of the congregation I am pleased to see how Holy Cross is a community who looks after each other. Members of the congregation have joined various neighbourhood groups who support those who are ill and self-isolating such as the 'Cramond Volunteers' and the 'Blackhall Mutual Aid Group'. We have also set up our own pastoral team who would be happy to support those who need help, for example with shopping, and would like a familiar face. They are, in addition to me:

- Alan Kirkpatrick (07891 237940 or muttley.1@blueyonder.co.uk)
- Helen Smith (07917 695491 or Helgillard@yahoo.com)
- Angela Gardner (07703 443291 or angela.gardner@ajenterprises.co.uk)

For those of you on Facebook, we continue to keep in touch via our Facebook page, 'Holy Cross, Davidson's Mains'. If you haven't already, please 'like' the page and encourage your friends and family to do the same. We recently shared a fine address by Pope Francis on the coronavirus crisis in which he talked about Jesus' teaching which gives us a good principle to live by in these times: 'Love your neighbour and do not be afraid'.

With love in Christ,

Stephen

2. KEEPING IN TOUCH WITH GOD

Christianity is a very physical religion. Our God became a real human person and told his followers to meet together and perform rituals with bread, wine, water and oil. We have continued to do that through the ages and so not being able to meet together and celebrate the sacraments together can be very painful for us. Ours is also a spiritual religion where we 'worship the Father in spirit and in truth' (John 4:23-24) and so we can continue being a spiritually united community even if we don't meet. Here are a few suggestions based on conversations I have had with you over the last week.

Praying Together

I will continue to celebrate the Eucharist at 10.30am on Sunday and Wednesday and will pray for you all then - that may be a time you want to pray too. Below in section 3 are prayers and readings which Episcopalians all over Scotland use each day, you may wish to use some of these.

Many of us joined Christians all over the world in saying the Lord's Prayer at 11am last Wednesday and also lit a candle in our windows at 7pm last Sunday 'as a visible sign of the light of life, Jesus Christ, the source of hope in this life. Church leaders in Scotland have asked us to continue lighting the candle at 7pm on Sundays and have recommended this prayer to be used then:

We turn to you, our Father, for we need your help.
Lord Jesus, as you have promised, be with us, whatever lies ahead,
Strengthen us, Holy Spirit, as we face this together.

We pray for our world and our country,
as coronavirus threatens our lives and our livelihood, leaving many in lockdown,
while key workers continue, despite the risk.

We pray for government leaders at Westminster and Holyrood,
responding to medical and scientific advice,
making tough decisions for the wellbeing of all.

We pray for all who serve on the frontline in the NHS and in social care;
facing increasing numbers, overstretched resources
and distressing human need.

Bless those who are ill, those who are alone and afraid,
those exhausted looking after their family, those worried for the vulnerable,
those fearful for their finances, those shut in to their fears.

Thank you for those who have returned from retirement to help,
or joined the volunteer army.

Thank you for those working:
to manufacture needed resources,
to find a vaccine,
to keep in contact with the isolated,
to encourage others at this time.

Have mercy on us, O Lord.
Give us faith, hope and love and hear our prayers,
in Jesus' name. Amen.

Online Worship.

There is a lot of worship of varying qualities from churches round the UK being broadcast on the internet each day. The Scottish Episcopal Church has committed to broadcasting a Eucharist each Sunday at 11am. This Sunday it will be celebrated by our own Bishop John Armes from his own house. If you are reading this on your computer you can press the CTRL key and click on the links below to go to the relevant web page.

It is available on [YouTube](#) and [Facebook](#) (use the links here or search for “The Scottish Episcopal Church”) and [the Scottish Episcopal Church website page](#) will also contain a downloadable video and audio format of the service, when these are ready. The booklet for this service is on the SEC website and [available to download here](#).

Some of you had some problems watching the Primus’s Eucharist last Sunday but I am told that they have been sorted, though I can’t comment on Bishop John’s technical skills!

Compline

One of the most beautiful and consoling services of the Church is Compline, a service sung before going to bed which is broadly the same every day. I have heard that some of you, like me, love this service. Old St Paul’s have produced a fine video of this service which is on YouTube and their website (together with a service booklet):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NI DEkrks9Mw>

<https://www.osp.org.uk/worship/online-resources/>

Spiritual Communion

Our Scottish Prayer Book, in its Order for the Communion of the Sick, teaches that if for practical reasons a person cannot receive the sacrament but has faith in Christ’s Passion ‘he doth eat and drink the Body and Blood of our Saviour Christ profitably to his soul’s health, although he do not receive the Sacrament with his mouth’.

This is ‘spiritual communion’ and can be practiced whenever you can’t get to Holy Communion. It goes right back to the early Church and was used in times of persecution. It is based on the fact that any sacrament has two aspects: ‘an outward and visible form’ and an ‘inward and spiritual grace’. God wants us to receive the reality of the sacrament via the material elements but if these are not available, God would not want us deprived of grace.

You can read the prayers and readings of the Liturgy or watch an online celebration of the Eucharist and instead of eating and drinking the bread and wine pray one of these prayers recommended by our Church:

We do not presume to come to this thy Holy Table, O merciful Lord, trusting in our own righteousness, but in thy manifold and great mercies. We are not worthy so much as to gather up the crumbs under thy Table: but thou art the same Lord, whose nature is always to have mercy. Grant us therefore, gracious Lord, so to eat the Flesh of thy dear Son Jesus Christ, and to drink his Blood, that our sinful bodies may be made clean by his most sacred Body, and our souls washed through his most precious Blood, and that we may evermore dwell in him, and he in us. Amen

or

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

or

God of unending love, you are present to us in Word and Sacrament. With all around the world who gather to worship, I offer you my praise and thanksgiving; and though I cannot eat the bread of God, or drink the royal wine of heaven, I pray that I may know the fountain of your love drench my heart and your Incarnate presence encompass me behind and before, that through the power of your Spirit, I may rejoice in the sure and certain hope that I abide in your wondrous love now and for all eternity, in Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

More information is on the Scottish Episcopal Church website:

<https://www.scotland.anglican.org/coronavirus-updates/college-of-bishops-reflection-on-worship-during-lockdown/>

3. PRAYER & READINGS FOR THE FIRST WEEK OF PASSIONTIDE

These are offered so we can stay together in our prayers even if we can't meet together.

Below are the collects used in our worship this week (the Sunday collect is repeated on the weekdays unless there is a feast), some suggestions for prayer intentions from our congregation and diocese, and readings.

The readings are those used at the Eucharist on Sundays and Feasts while on ordinary weekdays they are those the Scottish Episcopal Church gives for daily Morning and Evening Prayer where at the moment we are reading through Exodus (having just finished Genesis), Paul's letters to the Corinthians and Mark's Gospel. Priests use all these readings each day but you may wish just to follow one, for example the Exodus story.

If we use them we know we are part of a big community all meditating on the same bits of the Bible each day, this can be a consolation when we are isolated.

All the readings for the whole year can be downloaded by clicking on this link:

<https://www.osp.org.uk/worship/calendar-lectionary/>

Sunday 29 March - Fifth Sunday of Lent (Passion Sunday)

Lent changes gear this week as we enter Passiontide and fix our attention more firmly on Jesus' Cross and Resurrection.

- *Collect:* Most merciful God, who by the death and resurrection of your Son Jesus Christ delivered and saved the world: grant that by faith in him who suffered on the cross we may triumph in the power of his victory; through Christ our Lord, Amen
- *Readings at the Eucharist:* Ezekiel 37.1-14 ; Psalm 130 ; Romans 8.6-11 ; John 11.1-45
- *Prayer intentions:* our Church Community (Nancy M; Jennie C); those with Covid-19 & their families. *Edinburgh Diocese Prayer Cycle:* Bishop John and the conveners of the diocesan committees.

Monday 30 March

- *Daily Prayer Readings:* Exodus 4.1-31 ; 1 Corinthians 14.1-19 ; Mark 9.30-41

- *Prayer intentions:* our Church Community (Helen A; Graham H), families with children at home from school. *Edinburgh Diocese Prayer Cycle:* the Homeless, Refugees and Asylum Seekers, those affected by HIV/AIDS, Alzheimer's/Dementia and Mental Health issues and the Faith in Older People Project

Tuesday 31 March

- *Daily Prayer Readings:* Exodus 5.1–6.1 ; 1 Corinthians 14.20-33a,39-40 ; Mark 9.42-50
- *Prayer intentions:* our Church Community (Andy; Eric T), those worried about their jobs, businesses & financial situation. *Edinburgh Diocese Prayer Cycle:* Chaplains in Hospitals and Hospices including Duncan MacLaren, NHS Lothian; and Timothy Njuguna, Forth Valley NHS Trust.

Wednesday 1 April (St Gilbert of Moray)

- *Daily Prayer Readings:* Exodus 7.8-24 ; 2 Corinthians 2.14–3.6 ; Mark 10.1-16
- *Prayer intentions:* our Church Community (Heather A; Mike H), St Margaret's RC Church. *Edinburgh Diocese Prayer Cycle:* The Cathedral Chapter especially Provost John Conway and Vice-Provost Marion Chatterley, and the honorary Canons especially Douglas Kornahrens

Thursday 2 April

- *Daily Prayer Readings:* Exodus 7.25–8.19 ; 2 Corinthians 3.7-18 ; Mark 10.17-31
- *Prayer intentions:* our Church Community (Lucy; Peter S), the NHS, medical staff, emergency services and all key workers. *Edinburgh Diocese Prayer Cycle:* Revd Frances Burberry and St Ninian's, Comely Bank.

Friday 3 April

- *Daily Prayer Readings:* Exodus 9.13-35 ; 2 Corinthians 4.1-12 ; Mark 10.32-45
- *Prayer intentions:* our Church Community and those who live around us (Dan R; Andrew), especially those self-isolating; those who are expecting a baby in the next few months. *Edinburgh Diocese Prayer Cycle:* Revd Colin Reed and St Margaret's, Easter Road.

Saturday 4 April

- *Daily Prayer Readings:* Exodus 10.21–11.8 ; 2 Corinthians 4.13-18 ; Mark 10.46-52
- *Prayer intentions:* our Church community (Molly; our families), those suffering from Covid-19 and their families in the USA & Spain. *Edinburgh Diocese Prayer Cycle:* Revd David Richards, Revd Libby Talbot and St Paul's and St George's, York Place, especially their work with the homeless, Soul Food.

Sunday 5 April - Palm Sunday

- *Collect:* Almighty and everlasting God, who in your tender love towards the human race sent your Son our Saviour Jesus Christ to take upon him our flesh and to suffer death upon the cross: grant that we may follow the example of his patience and humility, and also be made partakers of his resurrection; through Christ our Lord, Amen
- *Readings at the Eucharist:* Gospel of the Palms: Mt 21.1-11 ; Isaiah 50.4-9a ; Psalm 31.9-16 ; Philippians 2.5-11 ; Gospel of the Passion Mt 26.14–27.66
- *Prayer intentions:* our Church community (Douglas and Arabella; Isobel W-I); Rev Dan and Davidson's Mains Parish Church; for all consumed with worry. *Edinburgh Diocese Prayer Cycle:* St Martin of Tours, Tynecastle, currently in vacancy

4. HYMN OF THE WEEK : O sacred head, sore wounded (NEH 90)

The New English Hymnal is a precious treasure of Christian devotion from all centuries. What we sing is often more memorable than what we say and it is good sometimes to think about what we sing and take a bit of time to meditate on the words.

This Passiontide hymn is an example of the riches of Christian tradition: a medieval prayer to Jesus in his passion attributed to St Bernard but probably written in the thirteenth century, translated into German by the Lutheran Paul Gerhardt in the seventeenth century, translated from German to English by the poet laureate Robert Bridges and sung to an old German tune harmonized by J.S. Bach.

In this hymn the few words of scripture and the detached reflections of theologians give way to passion and emotion as we contemplate Jesus on the Cross. Even the complex poetic language in the third verse contributes to the power of the hymn. It teaches us not to be afraid to give our emotions full freedom; for many of us our background and emotions hinder this. This passionate reflection is appropriate in this time of pandemic when so many are experiencing their own passion and pain.

O sacred head, sore wounded,
Defiled and put to scorn:
O kingly head, surrounded
With mocking crown of thorn;
What sorrow mars thy grandeur?
Can death thy bloom deflower?
O countenance whose splendour
The hosts of heaven adore!

Thy beauty, long desired,
Hath vanished from our sight:
Thy power is all expired,
And quenched the light of light.
Ah me! for whom thou diest,
Hide not so far thy grace:
Show me, O Love most highest,
The brightness of thy face.

I pray thee, Jesus, own me,
me, Shepherd good, for thine;
who to thy fold hast won me,
and fed with truth divine.
Me guilty, me refuse not,
incline thy face to me,
this comfort that I lose not,
on earth to comfort thee.

In thy most bitter passion
My heart to share doth cry.
With thee for my salvation
Upon the cross to die.

Ah, keep my heart thus moved
To stand thy cross beneath,
To mourn thee, well-belovèd,
Yet thank thee for thy death.

My days are few, O fail not,
With thine immortal power,
To hold me that I quail not
In death's most fearful hour:
That I may fight befriended,
And see in my last strife
To me thine arms extended
Upon the cross of life.

You can hear it by clicking this link: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M_quvj5MHdM

5. AFTERWORD : A Poem for Passiontide

From Rainer Maria Rilke's *The Book of Hours: Love Poems to God*, translated by Anita Barrows and Joanna R. Macy. Photograph, the Oratory at the Rectory.



I love you, gentlest of Ways
who ripened us as we wrestled with you.

You, the great homesickness we could never shake
off,
you, the forest that always surrounded us,

you, the song we sang in every silence,
you dark net threading through us,

on the day you made us you created yourself,
and we grew sturdy in your sunlight...

Let your hand rest on the rim of Heaven now
And mutely bear the darkness we bring over you.

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Answer, from the first page: the Bishops and Dioceses of the Scottish Episcopal Church are:
1. Edinburgh, Bishop John Armes; 2. St Andrews, Dunkeld and Dunblane, Bishop Ian Paton; 3.
Glasgow and Galloway, Bishop-elect Kevin Pearson; 4. Brechin, Bishop Andrew Swift; 5.
Aberdeen and Orkney, Bishop Anne Dyer; 6. Moray Ross and Caithness, Bishop Mark Strange,
the Primus; 7. Argyll and The Isles, Bishop Kevin Pearson.