

PERTH METHODIST CHURCH

MESSAGES AND INFO

FRIDAY 11TH SEPTEMBER

Our usual news-sheet sheet is renamed Messages and Info and we hope it will be one of the ways we can keep in touch with each other during this strange and difficult time.

Please encourage others to read it and please print a copy for anyone you know who is not on email. Please also send in any items such as personal messages or info that you wish to share with members of the congregation.

Nik Wooller gives us her Manse Musings.

Another week - and many around us find they have another set of Restrictions to deal with! Just as we think we are getting somewhere, people find that they are being slowed down again. However, it is for the good of all and everyone must play their part in keeping our community safe. That may mean, soon, having to deny ourselves the pleasure of the company of others. Interestingly Scripture does have some wisdom to offer us which may be appropriate at this time. That Scripture is **Romans Ch 13 vs 8-14**. Read it now and reflect on its words.

Paul talks first of all about love. That is, love for one another. F.F. Bruce, who wrote a Commentary on Romans said that the meaning of these first few verses is "Let the only debt you owe anyone be the debt of love." That would very much echo the words of the writer Origen who said "The debt of love remains with us permanently and never leaves us: this is a debt which we both discharge every day and for ever owe."

It is love for others that should be the driving force in our behaviour during this time of Covid-19. As well as taking steps to protect our own health we should be mindful about others and therefore willing to endure restrictions if it means that it helps others keep safe.

Paul tells us that if we show love in our lives then we will have fulfilled the Law. Sounds simple, doesn't it? However, if it is that simple why is the world not a better place? Well the honest answer is that it isn't all that simple. It might be easy to love those who love us. But those who don't like us? Love our neighbour? But what if they annoy us and are difficult? The answer is yes, that is the debt we owe because Jesus died for all - even those who persecuted Him.

As Christians we are asked to live a different kind of life. Part of that life is to make the effort to extend love to people we don't like particularly. If we can show love then it removes these other feelings that are likely to be harmful to our own well-being. As we can see from that passage, Paul does expect Christians to be better than just obeying the "Thou shalt not" rules - he expects us to be pro-active in showing love to others.

One of the good aspects of this pandemic and the ensuing lockdown was that people did go out of their way to show love to others. Whether by making an effort to keep in contact with people who were on their own, or by doing errands and lots of other little acts of kindness. In the midst of a pandemic, the world was a better place! My hope is that these acts of love towards others will continue even when some form of normality returns. The dynamic of love is vital in the world today

Perhaps one of the other aspects of this Covid-19 time is that it has acted as a 'wake-up' call to many. The time of lock-down, and the general slightly fearful atmosphere that was generated, have given people cause for reflection. Many have looked back on their lives and decided that change was needed. Many perhaps, feared for their lives and decided that they needed to put certain things in place before it was too late.

In some ways that echoes Paul call to 'wake up from sleep' It is no exaggeration to say that quite a few people just sleepwalk through life with no real thought about what they are doing or where they might be heading. Paul is telling his readers that it is time to wake up and make some decisions.

Now, for Paul, that may have been because he was expecting the Second Coming of Christ to be imminent and he felt that time was short for people to start living a better life as followers of Christ.

However, it works for the modern day too. We should be preparing ourselves to emerge from this time ready to go out and have an impact on our world. We who believe should be looking forward with confidence because we know that the future is in God's hands and that God will be at work for our salvation in the future as he has in the past. Perhaps we Christians have needed some kind of 'wake up' call to help us demonstrate our Christian values to the world.

If we can look to each new day as being a gift where we can discover new possibilities then we are taking steps to fulfil the plans God has for us. If we believe that God has a plan for the places that our circuit churches serve, then we need to take positive steps towards fulfilling it. We want to make it a place where it is evident that the people live and work in God's loving ways.

That involves us all in 'waking up' and starting to exhibit our Christian values. As Paul says, we have to 'put on the Lord Jesus Christ'. What does that mean? We have to live our lives in love, and consciously make a difference in the world. It is not enough just to say that you are Christian - you must live your lives in such a way that others know that you are a Christian.

Life has been tough for us through this pandemic. Let's pray that there is light at the end of the tunnel and that we can see the way ahead becoming clearer and clearer. This is the time during which we are called to live out the holy love of God for us in our relationship with each other and with our neighbours. We can do it - never doubt that.

Prayer

Lord Jesus Christ, you have called us to love and serve you.

We will do our best but we need your help.

Give us the wisdom to know what we should do.

The courage to keep on loving even when it is difficult

The faith that will see us through into a bright future

Christ our advocate, we want to be more like you, we want to show our love for others

So we pray for our brothers and sisters throughout the world

Bring them to the knowledge of all that you have done for them

Show them the way ahead especially in places where life is very challenging at present

May your love shine upon them.

We pray too for our friends and neighbours in this our communities

When we look at them may we see your face. When they look at us may they see your love

Help us to be aware of where our presence and our help is needed

Help us always to be willing to offer our help. May your love shine through us

We pray too for our own church families

Asking that you help us to build them up to be communities

that live to serve your divine purpose

We ask for you to be with any who are suffering at present through bereavement, illness or anxiety. May we be the embodiment of your love

All these things we pray in the name and for the sake of Jesus Christ who gives us the way to be, and the way to do, so that we become your people and do your will. Amen

Worship, this Sunday 13th September.

The link for this week's service is <https://youtu.be/OZI4zhODxJU> or it can be found on the Angus Dundee and Perthshire YouTube channel from 9am Sunday. If you know of anyone who doesn't have access to YouTube and would like the service on DVD or a full script, please let Nik Wooller or Sue Marshall-Jennings smj4409@hotmail.co.uk know, so it can be posted to them each week.

Church Walk

We planned to have a church walk on **Monday 21st September**. Unfortunately we are now limited to 6 people which means we can no longer accommodate anyone not already booked. **Gerald**

Revd Nick Baker – exploratory phased return to active Circuit Ministry

Following 5 months of ill health our Superintendent Minister Revd Nick Baker is currently on a phased return to circuit work. This is an exploratory return and during this time Nick will not undertake any District, occasional offices or direct pastoral work. Please, therefore, do not contact him on any of these matters.

Please remember Nick, Revd Mark Slaney (Chair of District) Sue Marshall Jennings (Senior Circuit Steward) and the Circuit Leadership Team in your prayers.

Sundays at 7.00pm. We are reminded that Scottish Church leaders encourage us to continue to light a candle in a window and offer a prayer on Sunday evening. The prayer for this coming Sunday 13th Sept is as follows:

God of forgiveness, We thank you that love abides in the depths of your heart

And that you will to forgive us through Jesus Christ.

Knowing this to be so, we cry out to you.

Lord, in your mercy, *Hear our prayer.*

God of forgiveness, We thank you that you know our hearts

And that you accept us as we are.

We turn to you in the hope of forgiveness.

Lord, in your mercy, *Hear our prayer.*

God of forgiveness, We thank you that your promise is sure

And that there is forgiveness with you.

We embrace you, knowing that you have already embraced us.

Lord, in your mercy, *Hear our prayer.*

God of forgiveness, Create in us a pure heart,

That we might love more deeply all who are made in your image.

As we have been embraced by you, we embrace the world of your creation.

Lord, in your mercy, *Hear our prayer.*

God of forgiveness, May love abide in our hearts as it abides in the depths of your heart.

As we have been forgiven through Jesus Christ,

May we celebrate this gift in the company of all your people.

Lord, in your mercy, *Hear our prayer.*

Church Re-opening

When the Church Council 'met' on Monday 7th Sept a sub-committee was appointed to carry out the detailed planning to make the premises Covid safe. It was agreed that the church will reopen **for Sunday morning worship** when the group is satisfied that all the recommended conditions and national guidelines can be fulfilled This would not be before the 4th of October 2020.

Once this has been achieved the situation regarding lettings will be addressed.

This **Messages and Info sheet** is currently being produced by Gerald, please send items for inclusion to him by 12 midday on Thursday each week.

His details are in the church directory.