

LARBERT WEST PARISH CHURCH

“A Larbert West Church Publication”

WESTWORDS



HOLY WEEK SPRING 2021

Larbert West Parish Church of Scotland Scottish Charity No. SC012251

www.larbertwestparishchurch.org





WestWords News from The Manse



Dear Friends,

Easter is just around the corner, and we are still not able to gather together in the building for worship. I am sure that none of us thought that this is where we'd be more than a year on. It is especially hard for me, as I've been your minister for 18 months and this should be my second Easter with you, and yet I still haven't been able to share any of those celebrations. Of course, we are in a much better position now than we were this time last year. For a start – I am well! And I, like many of you have had my first vaccination which brings a deal of relief and comfort in this very difficult time.

The other good thing to give thanks for is all of the new ways we have discovered to stay connected in this year; from the weekly Worship at Home to the online services we have found new and different ways to stay in touch. We now have a coffee hour each Sunday morning via ZOOM, where we chat and catch up – just as if we actually were in the building after worship. I truly hope we will be able to continue all of these in the time ahead.

You will find information in this edition of WestWords about the ways in which the Church of Scotland is changing as a result of the pandemic and how this will affect the church in and around Falkirk, and especially in Larbert and Stenhousemuir.

Those of you who follow the midweek reflections and online service will know that we had a blessing in the form of a new granddaughter, Daisy Anna, who was born on 15th February. She is a real blessing and we are grateful for her safe arrival and the joy she brings to our whole family.

I am so thankful for you all; the cards and letters of encouragement I received when I was ill, and then later on when I took so long to fully recover were a great comfort and encouragement. If you need to chat or want to catch up with the news, you can watch via Facebook on Tuesday or Thursday live at noon (or anytime after that if you're not free at 12.00); you can join in the Zoom coffee hour on a Sunday from 11.00 to 12 noon. You can also call me, or email me - I am always happy to talk! One day soon I will be allowed to actually come and visit too!



Jamie and Lara with baby Daisy

Every blessing,

Janie Rennick

THE BIG QUESTION!!



“Will the church be opening soon?

Will we be able to worship together for Easter?”

Following the announcement from the First Minister on Tuesday 9 March, that it ***may*** be possible for public worship to restart from 26th March, we have begun trying to work out what we need to do to make this happen.

It is not as simple as opening the doors! The Risk Assessment that we did to reopen back in the autumn must be updated and then approved by presbytery, as you may imagine we are not the only ones, which means that the Presbytery Health and Safety Office will be inundated with papers to be read through and considered. The Kirk Session also has to consider our options and decide when to open, how often to be open and then decide taking all the risk factors into consideration.

In addition, since the autumn we have added new technology, so far this has only been used to record the services, the editing of which takes a further three hours or so. There are a number of technical issues that we will need to work through to enable livestreaming. The “Sunday Work” when only preparing for an in-person service takes me a number of days. Add in creating a Worship at Home Sheet which must be ready to go to print on a Wednesday, and then recording, editing and uploading a service, plus an in-person service and you can see that there will be no time for anything else through the week. So, for my own preservation, I only want us to be in-person if we are able to livestream.

All of that said. My hope is that we will be able to have a service in the church on Easter Sunday. This is subject to the confirming update from the First Minister on 23rd March, the concurrence of the Presbytery Covid Group, and the technological issues being settled. Updates will be sent in the Worship at Home Sheet, our website and our Facebook Page.

As before, booking will be essential. Seating will be limited, and you will be escorted to your seat; you will be required to wear a mask and we will not be singing together – yet. Also - please be aware, being vaccinated is great and gives us protection, but it does not make us all immune, it just makes us less vulnerable. And – not everyone has been vaccinated yet.

On Maundy Thursday – again with all of the above criteria, we hope to have a joint, in-person Communion Service at Larbert East conducted by Melville and me, this will be at 11.15 am, and will take the place of our noon reflection for that day. It will be available online for those who are unable to attend in person. Booking information will be shared as soon as the details are confirmed.

Rev. Julie Rennick

ROLL CHANGES

Deaths.

Mr. Frank Marshall, 4 Titland Hill, FK2 8RQ

Mr. William McGregor, 44 Balmoral Place,
Stenhousemuir, FK5 4LL

Mr. Joseph Taylor, 34 James Street, Stenhousemuir.
FK5 3HS

Certificate of Transference

Ms. Fiona Rae, 9 Dowan Place, Stirling, FK7 9LN
to Cambusbarron Bruce Memorial Church.



To: All members of the Church of Scotland

This is a summary of the update received from Chief Officer of the Church of Scotland, Dave Kendall on progress in reducing National Office costs and future target ministry numbers.

As we all know it has been a year of monumental challenges to the Church due to Covid-19 which in many ways has accelerated the journey of transformational change that we knew was required.

National Office has been significantly reduced (20-30% reductions to costs) with further savings being sought.

Having achieved the target savings it is very clear that our financial challenge requires much more radical action. I am sure that we can and will make more savings within the National Office but my judgement is that these will not be significant.

2021 Budget and Ministry Costs

	2020 Budget	2021 Budget	Difference	Comments
Income	£56.6m	£43.3m	-£11.3m	Congregations -£8.4m, Stipend endowment -£1.2m, Investments -£0.8m, Other -£0.9m
Expenditure				
Ministry costs	£39.7m	£40.6m	+£0.9m	No stipend or salary increases. Increase is due to additional MDS posts.
Faith Nurture	£6.5m	£4.5m	-£2m	30% reduction as per GA 2019 plan
Faith Impact	£3.7m	£2.23m	-£1.47m	£2.23m budget is an increase of £0.43m on the amount agreed at GA 2020 – increase was enabled by prioritisation of work and proposal that original budget provision was not adequate
Service Departments	£6.1m	£5.7m	-£0.4m	Service departments have very little money other than salaries – all programme money is with FNF and FIF

In terms of expenditure in 2021 ministry costs have increased by almost £1m when compared to 2020 largely due to progress in recruitment of MDS posts but this has added to the cost pressure. We are here to provide Ministry to Scotland and that must be our priority. However, it is clear from our forecasts on future income trends that we need **a radical review of these costs.**

Forward Planning

The Church of Scotland has to be more prudent and precise in our forward planning. The dominant factor will continue to be the cost of ministry which, at £40.6m in 2021, now equates to 75% of the national expenditure when taking into account the reduced National Office costs. Future presbytery plans currently suggest that we would be looking to further increase the number of ministers and other roles in ministry as compared to our current numbers. That is simply not feasible given the financial situation and the fact that 40% of serving ministers are approaching retirement. If we take affordability based on projected

trends in congregational income into account, **our future target number for all ministry posts in five years' time would be in the region of 600**. This is a reduction of around 20% on the advisory figures produced by the Ministries Council in 2018 for the number of ministers (611) combined with the target number of MDS posts (120).

What next?

The next steps are bringing the new, financially viable, target numbers for future ministry posts to the 2021 General Assembly as part of an update on presbytery planning.

The priority work areas that we will be progressing in support of the Church in 2021 are shown below;

Priority Work Areas for 2021

- Look after the staff: Maintain our focus on staff health, safety, welfare and communications.
- Delivery of our business plan, including the approved work of the Forums, in the most efficient and cost effective way possible
- Finances of the National Church – prioritisation, adherence to the 2021 budget, close control of expenditure, further savings and cost reductions
- New Ministry and Mission System – deliver a model to the 2021 General Assembly that gives a robust future framework for the finances of the Church
- Congregational sustainability – establish a Task Force to help address the situation, close working with Presbyteries who have responsibility, support to Priority Areas programme
- Income generation project – Stewardship and income generation to be a top priority. Access to funds realised from building sales and other assets.
- Presbytery reform – delivery of the new structure, framework, arrangements, funding model.
- **Presbytery planning – forward plan to deliver an affordable, sustainable Church of Scotland. New targets for number of parishes, ministry posts and buildings.**
- Recruitment to Ministry posts – continued focus to address demographics that is aligned with new target ministry numbers in 2025.
- New Ways of Being Church/Under 40's/Youth Work etc. Prioritise reaching out to those who are not yet part of the Church.
- Engage with congregations and the wider world in the work and public witness of campaigning and advocacy for justice, peace, inclusion, partnering, neighbourliness and the integrity of creation against agreed priorities. Speak truth to power on issues of poverty, marginalisation, violence, peace and justice, environmental protection and sustainability.

This is not an exhaustive list and there a range of other issues that will need to be addressed in terms of how we intend to deal with the consequences of our reduced ministry provision before we get to the General Assembly. This includes the requirement to plan further ahead.

We need to consider how best we can work together on supporting each other. It is important that we take this journey together and maintain regular communication. It is also key that our future plans develop based on the real situation whilst identifying a better future for the Church of Scotland.

PRESBYTERY PLANNING UPDATE

Over the past twenty years the Church of Scotland has experienced a serious decline in membership, in numbers of ministers and in income. This has led to the review of all churches, congregations and ministry numbers that has been taking place over the past four or five years. The instruction that came down from the General Assembly in 2017 was to reduce by around 20% - this is both in ministries and the buildings. After much work, discussion and debate Falkirk Presbytery approved a revision of the plan for the area which takes into account these realities. The plan was accepted by Presbytery in October 2020, and the approval from the centre was received in February. The plan for the Larbert and Stenhousemuir area: (which includes, Larbert West, Larbert East, Larbert Old, Stenhouse & Carron, Airth and Bothkennar & Carronshore) is for the six former congregations to come together to form two new parishes roughly south and north of the Bellsdyke Road.

Larbert West, Larbert East and Stenhouse & Carron have been instructed to unite to form one parish, with one minister, with the possibility of a part time minister (OLM), the other parish will be formed by the union of Larbert Old, Airth and Bothkennar & Carronshore.

Representatives from all six Kirk Sessions have been meeting with the help of mediators for the past 15 months to discuss how this all might work.

Over the next 6 to 12 months these talks will continue as we work together to find the things we hold in common and work out which building to retain for each of the new parishes, how to allocate ministries and how to build on the mission to be the church in our community, how to share the Good News and how to reach out offering support to all who seek to know Jesus better.

These are challenging and difficult times – but remember: God is good! And Jesus'

instruction to us all was to share his story, His love, his message of hope. This we do in faith and love.

Rev. Julie Rennick

LARBERT CHURCHES YOUTH TRUST

Scottish Charity No: SC040524

With the further lockdown and closure of schools from Christmas, both Mike and Gregor have been on the Government's furlough scheme, both to protect the Trust's Funds and protect the schools workers and their families.

We have now had a year of reduced interaction in school and restrictions on fundraising which is difficult for supporting our young people, when they need us most, maintaining our aims and objectives and forward planning, however, we know we are in a better position than many others, and are grateful for this.

We have decided to enter a team in the virtual Kiltwalk to raise funds, Mike and Gregor are taking part with some of the management team and our young people - all donations are increased by 50% by the Hunter Foundation and we can also claim gift aid, so all donations, large or small are most welcome. Link for donations here, <https://virtual.thekiltwalk.co.uk/fundraising/ScotlandsVirtualKiltwalk2021-MikeGlass>

Please get in touch for more information, if you'd like to join in, or to make an off-line donation - thanks!

With schools returning after Easter, and the vaccination programme in full swing, we do hope to return to some form of normality, (or as normal as our activities allow!) sooner rather than later.

Thank you to everyone who has continued their prayer and financial support during this difficult time.

Andrea Dunkin, Publicity Officer



HELLO from JOHN

About Me

A wee bit background about me, my name is John Haston and I was brought up in faith in the former Kerse Parish Church which then united with Dundas Parish Church to form what is now Abbotsgrange Parish Church. I like my "Wild" shirts and suits as you have maybe seen at the Church Services either in person or online. I've lived in Grangemouth nearly all my life.

Calling to Ministry

My calling to ministry actually came at a very young age, around 16 when my Minister at the time planted the seed by saying "Have you considered ministry?" You can probably guess what the answer was then and that was a big fat "NO!" However, by remembering being asked that, just goes to show that I had kept that thought in my head for a long time. Fast forwarding a few years into my mid-twenties and a feeling of a sense of call grew even more and intensified.

I attended the General Assembly where I experienced what could only be described as a push from the Holy Spirit, which led me to dip my toes in the water and I entered into a Period of Discernment to discuss and reflect on what my calling was. At the end of that period I felt that it wasn't for me and closed that door. Anytime that someone told me to go try again, I kept saying no and left it there.

Two more years passed, I then got a phone call that changed things slightly. I was asked to be Moderator of Falkirk Presbytery. It was in that moment my mouth said 'Yes' and my head said no. I was 28, 29 when I started, which I think I was the youngest ever Elder to be honoured with this role. The experience of doing this helped in some way to realise my calling a wee bit further. I then went on a second discernment period with Rev Alison Meikle at Zetland Parish Church which I loved. As my Local review drew closer, the Covid-19 pandemic hit and everything changed. My Local review took place online, which was a massive change to what I had prepared myself for.

I then was able to proceed to National Assessment which normally takes place over 2 days, which also moved online. These changed made me uneasy as there was no one that could tell me what to expect. As you can guess, I was allowed to proceed into training and what an experience that has been. What has been evident is that this was written in the bible within Ecclesiastes 3, there's a time for everything.

University

I am currently studying for a BA in Theological Studies at the University of the Highlands and Islands in its Highland Theological College. I am loving studying and although online, have been able to create friendships with others in training which has made this big change a little more bearable. Friendships, I'm sure, will last for life.

Larbert West

Finally, my calling has led me to learn and reflect alongside Julie with all of you here at Larbert West. Although, it is a very different experience from what has been expected, I still have been able to learn a lot. This time with you all has allowed me time to look at how the Church Service works and its structure. An aspect that I have not been able to do is that of Pastoral Care for obvious reasons. I haven't really been able to get to know you all properly and I am sorry for that, but I am truly grateful for all your continued prayers and support as I continue my journey with Christ.

John Haston

*When you go through deep waters,
I will be with you.*

Isaiah 43:2

OUTREACH TEAM

FLATS AT THE POTTERIES, MUIRHALL ROAD

A letter has been sent to each of the six flats with information about the church and its activities. All of the houses in the estate were visited before the lockdown and Welcome packs distributed.

Beatrice Grant, Team Leader.

JOE TAYLOR 1929 – 2021



Joe was born, one of seven, into a Bellsdyke nursing family who lived in initially in Plantation Cottages. Four of his siblings continued the nursing tradition as too, latterly did his daughter. A typical lad, who enjoyed football he became a member of the 1st Larbert Company of the Boys' Brigade and was an early recipient of the BB Kings Badge, something less common because of the fewer activities available around wartime. Unfortunately because of his part time job at a Kinnaird Farm, where he suffered a fractured thigh from an encounter with a heifer; coupled with a delay in effective treatment, he endured a lifelong severe limp following his very long hospital stay. This completely interrupted his secondary education at Larbert Central School. He finally left there at the age of 14 and went on to become a skilled sheet-metal worker and tinsmith in Scottish Enamelling in Foundry Loan. There he met his future wife Moira McOustra, from 'The Valley' and they were married in 1955 after his National Service in the RAF. He boasted all his life that his demob suit still fitted him! They were married on 2nd April, a popular time of year for 'tax advantage', and on anniversaries thereafter always returned to Stenhouse & Carron Church, sitting in the McOustra Pew! However, following his BB service at Larbert West he became leader there, in Charge of the Life Boys (Junior Reserves of the BB). He also served briefly as an Interim BB Captain to enable the annual summer camp to take place uninterrupted. Short of a pianist he enlisted the help of the daughter of a member of the congregation Margaret McCallum, then only about 10 years old and who had to be lifted on to the piano stool. (She later married Ian Sharp who became Captain of the Company). From Foundry Loan, work moved on to Carron Company where he progressed from 'the tools' to the drawing /design office where work often on catering equipment for shipping and sometimes found him sailing on trials whilst installation work was completed. There too he was a keen member of the Carron Golfing Section winning the Harper-Orr Trophy at the Tryst. At home, which moved on from 'a rented room' to 'a room & kitchen' and thereafter to an upstairs flat in 'the building' in James Street, he and Moira had a family of two sons and a daughter. Later they flitted across the road to their semi at no 34, where because of the available garden allowed his prowess in that aspect to grow prize winning vegetables for the local show in the Dobbie Hall. However at the demise of foundries in the area Joe was forced after a brief painful attempt to return to the tools, to seek alternative employment as a postman, which bearing in mind his walking difficulties was no little sacrifice to ensure his being the breadwinner. He learned to drive there and after study aspired to move to 'the counter'. The only post which became available at the time was in the Charring Cross Post Office in Glasgow which entailed long days by train, as the work was 'split-shift', his afternoon down time being sent in reading and study at the Mitchell Library. Eventually he was able to move to the Grangemouth Crown P.O. where he became following being Union Rep to his becoming the Scottish Rep for Postal Workers, annually attending Annual Conferences all over Britain. To facilitate travel to work and conferences he obtained an older Black Morris Oxford Series 3 Saloon "Betsy" whose exploits, breakdowns, repairs and journeys became legend!

In 1959 he was ordained as an Elder at Larbert West, to which calling he diligently applied himself, still visiting 'his' members well into his 80's. In 1968 he became Clerk to the Managers (later Congregational Board) where he served till 1990. During his life he was to be hugely involved in many important changes in the Church. He, along with Moira, typed, duplicated from 'skins', the Bulletin' (forerunner of WestWords) on an old hand operated Roneo machine in their flat and collated and stapled the final productions. The Sanctuary was refurbished with the rails surrounding the chancel being removed, the central pulpit and organ console being replaced as they are now, all woodwork throughout the building being stripped and lightened along with carpeting and redecoration. A huge infestation of dry-rot below the whole hall floor was removed, the substructure dug out and lowered and replaced

with new maple flooring. In 1981 the Lesser Hall and toilet facilities were added in place of a wooden hut on the site. All of these made financial demands on the Congregation and Joe was at the forefront of replacing the previous hit and miss fundraising of daffodil teas, dances and the like with a scheme of regular givings by members reinforced by very regular personal visitations to ensure everyone was aware of the advantages of Giving as they Earned; something which saw Larbert West at the forefront of financial potential within the Presbytery for more than 30 years. After retirement from work, Joe still had an interest in the BB where his sons had been members; his daughter too being in the Girls' Brigade. In 1993 he was a founder member of the Falkirk & District Stedfast Association where he later became President. That interest and involvement continued till his death, as did his being an active Office Bearer in the Larbert Men's Christian Association. Latterly he even managed to master IT skills to enable him to keep in touch with family and Church meetings by way of FaceTime and Zoom. Crosswords and printing from his computer were skills enjoyed, as well as longer interests from his days in the Post Office in collecting First Day Covers. Alongside his enjoyment of hymns he served on the Sound Desk in the church and could be seen singing with a smile, 'What a Friend we have in 'Joseph''. And indeed truly many in so many spheres had just that. A real 'Anchorman' following in all aspects of his life the objectives of the BB in his habits of Obedience, Reverence, Discipline, Self Respect and all that led to his true Christian Manliness. After a very full life, not always easy and often subject to personal difficulty and tragedy, he will be sadly missed by his loving, supportive and devoted wife Moira, his children, grandchildren, great grandchildren, relations and so, so many friends. I'm sure he would be suitably amused with the replacement of the traditional 'well done good and faithful servant' with a note on his 'departure''Returned to Sender'!

Harry Johnston

"STATED ANNUAL MEETING 2021"

'To be or not to be'? No not Shakespeare but the Stated Annual Meeting seems to be another casualty of 'Lockdown'. The current limitations do not allow there to be meetings of the Congregation, which is exactly what the S A M would be.

The purpose of the meeting minimally is to allow the Church Members to see the Annual Accounts, (which actually have been approved by the Trustees, to comply with Charity requirements) and given the opportunity to question any details. Secondly, Board Members retiring and /or standing for re-election together with any vacancies being filled would also be dealt with at this meeting.

Additionally it is the norm for the Minister to give 'an Annual Report'.

So, to achieve these ends without the need for a face-to-face congregational meeting needs some readjustment for this year: - The Accounts are reproduced in a shorter form in this addition of 'WestWords', enabling all members to see them. Any questions you may have should be addressed to me and I'll do my best to resolve any queries.

Members retiring will have indicated their willingness or otherwise to stand for re-election. There will also likely be 3 vacancies on the Board. As a consequence, for this year, we are advised that such confirmations, or election of new Board Members, can be dealt with by the Kirk Session who 'can' meet by way of Zoom technology. Thereafter, that decision can be recorded in the Congregational Records in lieu of a minute of the 2021 SAM.

An Annual Report can be given by the Minister as part of a 'normal' church service, whether live, recorded or streamed. If anyone wants a copy of the full version of the Accounts, please let me know. If there are any questions, similarly contact me. If there are any Members who might consider becoming a Board Member to fill current vacancies, please give me a ring and I'll be happy to enlarge on what is involved.

Really, please do consider!

For any or all of the above please ring me on 01324 553 413.

Thank you for assisting in being part of these unusual arrangements

Best wishes and stay safe.....**Harry Johnston**...Clerk to the Congregational Board.

LARBERT WEST PARISH CHURCH (CHARITY NO SC012251)			
FINANCIAL REPORT FOR YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2020			
	ACTUAL	ACTUAL	BUDGET
	2020	2019	2021
SPEND	£	£	£
Ministry & Mission & Wider Work			
Central Ministry Expenses, incl Stipend Fund	45,334	38,666	37,800
Presbytery Dues	835	863	-
Local Staffing Costs			
Ministerial Expenses	1,409	3,565	1,500
Pulpit Supply	70	300	300
Vacancy Supply	-	8,779	-
Organist	3,516	3,714	3,650
Salaries	28	248	200
Building Costs			
Property Maintenance & Repairs	10,236	5,238	6,000
Installation of Railing and Outdoor Lighting	-	2,354	-
Installation of Streaming Equipment	4,005	-	-
Heat & Light	6,428	8,696	7,200
Insurance	3,114	3,182	3,400
Council Tax (Manse)	3,147	1,490	3,210
Other Local Costs			
Church Cleaning	1,613	3,110	3,260
Local Mission	364	247	400
Education & Training	22	347	350
Printing & Stationery	1,439	1,604	2,000
Catering	35	231	200
Sundries	1,040	4,645	1,500
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	<u>82,635</u>	<u>87,279</u>	<u>70,970</u>
INCOME			
WFO Scheme - non Gift Aid	5,712	9,879	51,000
Gift Aid Donations	45,716	41,278	-
Ordinary Offerings - Open Plate	182	1,404	-
Tax Recovered on Gift Aid	12,908	11,244	11,000
Other Offerings/Donations	1,629	9,705	2,000
Church Boxes	267	450	-
Bank Interest	936	1,136	800
Hall Lets	1,766	7,718	1,000
Legacy	-	5,500	-
TOTAL INCOME	<u>69,116</u>	<u>88,314</u>	<u>65,800</u>
SURPLUS/(DEFICIT) FOR THE YEAR	<u>(13,519)</u>	<u>1,035</u>	<u>(5,170)</u>
Balance brought forward - General Fund	-	-	-
Transfer (to)/from Reserve Fund	3,907	15,172	-
Transfer (to)/from Legacy Fund	9,623	17,169	-
Transfer (to)/from Fabric Fund	(570)	(33,579)	-
Transfer (to)/from Organ Fund	559	203	-
Balance carried forward - General Fund	-	-	-
STATEMENT OF FUNDS			
Reserve Fund	48,393	52,300	-
Legacy Fund	38,768	48,391	-
Fabric Fund	52,870	52,300	-
Organ Fund	2,981	3,540	-
TOTAL FUNDS as at 31 December	<u>143,012</u>	<u>156,531</u>	-

THE GUILD

Our theme for the next three years is "Looking Forward in Faith". As yet we do not have the details for each year, but we can all look forward in faith. Although we have not been meeting in the hall, we have been trying to keep in touch with all our members and a letter was sent to each one at the beginning of Lent. Phone calls, e-mail, letters and prayers help to maintain contact and, until recently, "doorstep" visits were also possible.

We are supporting two projects this year as usual, first:

THE BOYS' BRIGADE (Faith in Young people). The money the Guild raises is being used to supplement the Training of officers, especially in teaching Faith and new skills. A small loans scheme was started for companies who needed to buy things like equipment. This has been reopened recently especially to help in areas of deprivation to purchase things like hand sanitiser and recognising that last year regular fundraising events could not take place, Some money went towards the online activities programme in 2020 called #BBatHome and which was open to ALL young people.

The second one is **MALAWI FRUITS** (Growing the Future) this is about providing farming training for young people to encourage them to stay in the country to cultivate the land instead of migrating to the city, where there is no work for them. The fund has been purchasing solar water pumps to irrigate the land and to enable them grow two crops a year, which doubles the number of crops, and the household income. The pandemic has provided particular challenges for Malawi because of poor healthcare, inadequate water supplies for personal hygiene and cramped living conditions. The staff, all locally employed, have been supplied with appropriate PPE.

Throughout Scotland the Guild has raised nearly £500 over the last 2 years for our six Projects, this being the last year of the current 3 year cycle, but fundraising is

particularly difficult just now as local guilds are not able to meet during the pandemic. If you would like to donate to our Guild's contribution give Myrna, our treasurer, a ring at 556315 and she will advise how it can be done.

As we look towards Easter and remember that God's love for us was such that He gave His Son, Jesus Christ to be our Saviour. The Guild prayer reflects this love for all of us.

"Heavenly Father, thank you for loving me right where I am. Help me to know that there is love deep within my heart and enable that love to flow from me to those with whom I come in contact". Amen.

Wishing you Easter blessings.
Beatrice Grant & Mae Marsden

This may make you smile

I have heard the phrase I might as well be talking to a brick wall..... this is clever

Lockdown is making us stir crazy, so it's important to talk to someone you trust. I was discussing this with the microwave and toaster.

I didn't mention it to the washing machine because she puts a different spin on everything. I couldn't share it with the fridge because he's been acting cold and distant. In the end, the iron straightened me out by saying: 'The situation isn't that pressing and all the wrinkles will be ironed out.'

The vacuum cleaner was unsympathetic and told me: 'Just suck it up'

The fan was optimistic and gave me hope it will soon blow over; the toilet looked flushed, but didn't say anything when I asked its opinion; the front door knob told me to get a grip; and, guess what, the curtains told me to pull myself together.

All good advice.

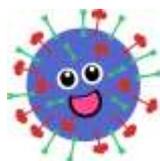
Ian Howarth & Carol Sergeant



An Ode to Coronavirus...

*The wonderful Pam Ayres...
now 73 years old and penned her latest
ode ~ to coronavirus...*

I'm normally a social girl
I love to meet my mates
But lately with the virus here
We can't go out the gates
You see, we are the 'oldies' now
We need to stay inside
If they haven't seen us for a while
They'll think we've upped and died
They'll never know the things we did
Before we got this old
There wasn't any Facebook
So not everything was told
We may seem sweet old ladies
Who would never be uncouth
But we grew up in the 60s -
If you only knew the truth!
There was sex and drugs and rock 'n roll
The pill and miniskirts
We smoked, we drank, we partied
And were quite outrageous flirts
Then we settled down, got married
And turned into someone's mum,
Somebody's wife, then nana,
Who on earth did we become?
We didn't mind the change of pace
Because our lives were full
But to bury us before we're dead
Is like a red rag to a bull!
So here you find me stuck inside
For four weeks, maybe more
I finally found myself again
Then I had to close the door!
It didn't really bother me
I'd while away the hour
I'd bake for all the family
But I've got no flaming flour!
Now Netflix is just wonderful
I like a gutsy thriller
I'm swooning over Idris
Or some random sexy killer
At least I've got a stash of booze
For when I'm being idle
There's wine and whiskey, even gin
If I'm feeling suicidal!
So let's all drink to lockdown
To recovery and health
And hope this awful virus
Doesn't decimate our wealth



We'll all get through the crisis
And be back to join our mates
Just hoping I'm not far too wide
To fit through the flaming gates!

Contributed by Sandie Harvie

LARBERT WEST – HOW TO KEEP UP.

Worship at Home: this sheet is emailed out for those who have that facility; we also print and post out a number of copies, so if you would like to be added to either the postal list or receive the weekly email, just let us know – email Julie on.

jrennick@churchofscotland.org.uk.

Facebook Reflections:

Tuesday and Thursday at noon:
www.facebook.com/larbertwestpc

Sunday Service-online: Sunday available from 9.00 am, a link on the Facebook Page will take you to Julie's YouTube Channel.

EASTER



Every word of God is pure: He is a shield unto them that put their trust in Him - Proverbs: 30:5

And I will give them an heart to know me, that I am the Lord; and they shall be thy people, and I will be their God; for they shall return unto me with their whole heart - Jeremiah 24:7

So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth; it shall not return to me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.- Isaiah 55:11

Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear. – Hebrews 11:3

Every way of a man is right in his own eyes; but the LORD pondereth the hearts – Proverbs 21:2

Rejoice in the Lord always; and again I say Rejoice – Philippians 4:4

CHRISTMAS GIFTS for HOME-START FALKIRK

In the last edition of WestWords, I wrote a brief “thank you” note to those who had donated gifts or money to Home-Start, but because of the deadline for WestWords I was unable to give details.

As you will know, as well as being unable to hold a Gift Service, we made a couple of changes to our



normal routine and gave options for how to deliver your gifts to us and allowed payments in cash or by cheque instead of gifts. The results were SPECTACULAR. We received around 70 wrapped parcels plus £210 in cash and cheques – far more than we would normally have donated. The “cash option” also allowed Home-Start to buy gifts for specific cases where the child’s circumstances or their medical situation required particular, special gifts.

At this time of year, Home-Start also look for ways of acknowledging the part which parents, grandparents and/or carers play in looking after the children all year round and provide gifts for these adults too, if they still have resources available after catering for the children. Home-Start now cover the whole of Falkirk, so their needs are ever increasing. Home-Start have asked me to pass on to you all their very sincere thanks for what you have done for them in 2020 and hope that you enjoyed your Christmas as much as their children did.

The picture shows most of the gifts being received by Sandra on behalf of Home-Start and the little grey box in the centre of the photo contains the cash and cheques.

Arthur Priestly

