

COMFORT

in

North Carrick

Caring Observant Mindful Friendly Obliging Responsible Tactful

Providing comfort to the people of North Carrick at a time of crisis

Sunday 26th April 2020

A very special message from one of our contributors, Mrs Ellen Hawkes

This week, as some of you may know, this awful virus took its toll in my family with the death of my husband on Monday morning. No matter how strong our faith, our human nature is torn apart with grief. The news, though expected, still shatters.

Yet perhaps this is what Easter is really all about—moving beyond our natural human sorrow, beyond any human experience, even death itself.

Many are sorrowing as a result of this pandemic, our own family yet another statistic, but in the midst of it all I am grateful that Jesus did rise from the dead and we will follow. This is the one consolation, the anchor holding life and death together.

This, in one sense, is my most tragic Easter, in another it has brought home the message of resurrection in a way no other could. Thanks to everyone for their loving support throughout. It is a sure reflection of the love of God working in human hearts.

One of our other contributors, Marguerite Hunter Blair added, "These are tough times for us all. In particular, for our good friend, parishioner and kind neighbour Ellen Hawkes. We send Ellen and family our heartfelt condolences on the death of her husband Jimmy.

In your quiet place of prayer, reflect on the beautiful poem Footprints in the Sand,



"Lord, you said once I decided to follow you,

You'd walk with me all the way.

But I noticed that during the saddest and most troublesome times of my life,

there was only one set of footprints.

I don't understand why, when I needed You the most, You would leave me."

He whispered, "My precious child, I love you and will never leave you..."

When you saw only one set of footprints,

It was then that I carried you."

*In
Loving
Memory* 

A message from Lynne Rankin, Session Clerk of Maybole Parish Church

How are you coping with lockdown?

As the schools returned to the new normal of teachers, like myself, working mostly from home and pupils logging on to receive their lessons and tasks remotely, it's been an odd end to the Easter holidays. Learning and teaching, however, are continuing. Life is continuing.

As part of my work this week, I attended a webinar (basically an online meeting/lecture) on coping with Health Anxiety. Rather apt in our current situation. I expected to hear about coping strategies and symptoms, and I was not disappointed, but what surprised me, and perhaps it shouldn't have, was how much our faith can help us cope. How much our beliefs influence our daily, minute by minute, experiences, and we perhaps don't even realise it.

Let me explain what I mean; the speaker began by saying that anxiety about health or anything else, is perfectly normal. It's a necessary part of human nature. Worry is designed to protect us in dangerous or unpredictable situations. It deliberately makes us cautious and careful, so we can survive.

However, if that worry or anxiety becomes a constant and overwhelming influence in our lives, it can paralyse our physical and emotional wellbeing, and lead to us experiencing poor mental health.

The lecturer then went on to explain ways to manage excessive anxiety, using the acronym - FACE COVID. This was where I was struck by the way our faith supports us through a crisis - any crisis. So here is how I FACE COVID

F—Focus on something that is within your control, just something small and achievable. E.g. Today I will spend five minutes reading my Bible

A—Acknowledge your feelings and thoughts, but don't let them overwhelm you. Good or bad; happy or sad—take it to God in Prayer

C—Come back to your body—If your mind is running away with itself or you're overthinking things, just Stop. Pause, Breathe, and breathe again

E—Engage in what you are doing; really engage—don't be doing one thing but thinking of another, worrying about something else. Live in the here and now, and thank God for it

C—Committed action—be flexible about doing what matters. "Seek ye first the Kingdom of God". Think 'how is this to be achieved today?'

O—Open up; it's okay not to be okay. If it helps, share your thoughts and feelings with others. Remember God is always there

V—Values. Check in with what, or who, is most important to you—stay in touch with others by phone, letter, email. It's good to talk.

I—Identify resources, have the numbers handy of doctors, ministers, family, friends, local support groups. Support is there, you are not alone in this

D—Distance; even when we are separated by miles or minutes, that is just a physical distance. We can still come together emotionally/spiritually.

FACE COVID

From Marguerite Hunter Blair, Chair of Our Lady and St Cuthbert's Parish Pastoral Council

I always think of the third Sunday of Easter as the "follow me" Sunday. It is our call to action, to live out our faith in words and deeds. After the resurrection, Jesus gives Peter three commands: "Feed My lambs, Tend My sheep, and Feed My sheep." Jesus calls us to care for all of those that he loves.

Throughout Scripture, we see that loving God and loving our neighbour are one and the same action. God loves our neighbour as much as he loves us.

In the stories of Jesus seeing his disciples after the resurrection, we are told of Jesus having conversations with his disciples without them recognising him—at least not straight away. They don't recognise him until he does something familiar.

Sometimes we are so preoccupied we don't always recognise Jesus, but Jesus knows how to make himself familiar to us. On reflection many of us can realise that Jesus was with us all along, particularly during tough times.

IT IS NOT HOW MUCH WE DO, BUT HOW MUCH LOVE WE PUT IN THE DOING. IT IS NOT HOW MUCH WE GIVE, BUT HOW MUCH LOVE WE PUT IN THE GIVING.

- MOTHER TERESA -

LIBQU

Emmaus - morning has come
Emmaus - care has gone home
Emmaus - the Lord is with us
Emmaus - our hearts do burn
Emmaus - our grief has gone
Jesus, Jesus is with us
To celebrate the feast of love.

This Sunday Luke tells the story of two of Jesus' disciples, both very despondent, because in the death of their Lord, they feel all hope has gone. Encounter with the risen Jesus changes everything. Their understanding is transformed and with burning hearts they turn back towards Jerusalem.

Jesus left his Holy Spirit for the exact same purpose—so that we would understand his teaching and be transformed by its living truths, ourselves becoming living testimonies. The text of God's word is meant to inspire us to turn back towards our true home in God; the Eucharist to lead to encounter with the risen Lord. In the Mass, we are privileged to be offered both. **Ellen Hawkes**

From Rev Dr John Lochrie, Locum minister at Crosshill and Maybole Parish Church

On the first Easter Day, two of Jesus' followers were returning home to Emmaus. As they walked they were talking, trying to make sense of what had happened. They were joined by a stranger who asked why they were so gloomy. Their reply shows us they were surprised that the stranger seemed unaware of the recent events in Jerusalem. Even when he began to explain that everything had been foretold by the prophets and had happened to fulfil their prophecies, they still failed to recognise Jesus. It was only when they took him into their house to share their meal that in the breaking of bread their eyes were opened so that they knew the Lord.



It is rightly said that there are none so blind as those who will not see. At times we can miss so much because we do not look properly at what is going on. Usually that is because we are so wrapped up in our own thoughts, concerned for our own needs.

In our present situation it would be understandable if we were all self-centred as we try to work out how best to cope with the lockdown. And yet it has been quite amazing to see all the different ways in which people are trying to help and support others. What is happening has opened many eyes to the very real needs around.

It all reminds us that even when self-isolating we can reach out to others. Like the disciples who rushed back from Emmaus to tell the others that they had seen the Lord, when we see what is going on around us we have to be prepared to act, to do what we can to make things more bearable for others.

Christ and His Friend

The Gospel reading for this third Sunday of Easter is Luke 24.13-35; the story of the risen Jesus' appearance to two disciples on the road to Emmaus. They don't recognise him. They are leaving Jerusalem and mourning the loss of their leader. They heard what the women proclaimed—that Christ had risen—but still they left Jerusalem. Jesus hadn't been the leader they had expected or perhaps wanted. Jesus joins them on their walk to Emmaus, he even speaks to them about the Scriptures and how they point to the Messiah—and they still don't recognise him! It is when they get to their house in Emmaus and invite Jesus to eat with them that Jesus breaks the bread and they finally see who he is.

The story of the road to Emmaus has become a symbol in Christianity for a gradual conversion to faith in Christ, but it also contains lessons for the believer. What do we expect from God? Do we see God's work in our lives and in the world or are we blind to it? Do we see Christ in those we meet on our journey through life?

The disciples expected their saviour to come in glory as a strong and mighty leader. But Jesus came to Jerusalem riding on a colt, was humiliated and died upon the cross and he was ultimately recognised in the way he broke bread—in the hospitality and peace of a shared meal. Reading this Gospel story, I am reminded of an icon from the 6th century which is often called 'Christ and his friend'. It shows Jesus with his hand on the shoulder of a man standing next to him. For me, it shows the kindness and peace of Christ that the disciples met that day on the road to Emmaus, who gently rebuked them and helped them to open their eyes. And this is the Christ that I hope we have with us on our own journeys with a hand on our shoulder, even when we fail to recognise him.



Matthew Wyllie, St Oswald's Episcopal Church E: secretary@stoswaldsmaybole.org.uk M: 07540 132 333

From Rev Gerald Jones

In the Scottish Borders is Scott's View, named after Sir Walter Scott and said to be his favourite scenic spot. From a vantage point on a high road leading from Melrose to St. Boswells, the tourist gains a stunning view of the River Tweed and the three peaks of the Eildon Hills, forming a landscape of outstanding beauty.

A man was once asked why he visited Scott's View so frequently. He said that when his Christian faith was at a low ebb, a journey to Scott's View "restored his soul." As a young man he had first felt close to God there, and had often returned to find his flagging faith renewed and restored.



In St. John's Gospel (21: 1-14), we have a scene where, shortly after Jesus's death, some of his fisherman disciples went back to where they had first felt the divine presence and heard the divine call. They returned to the Sea of Tiberias, but the lamp of faith burned low, fearing that their leader had perished on the Cross.

Then the remarkable happened. At the Sea of Tiberias, the faith of these downcast disciples was renewed and restored. The stranger they saw by the shore was Jesus himself, risen from the dead and back among them. 'They knew it was the Lord,' we are told. This story shows us that when our own Christian faith ebbs and flows, as it inevitably does, we may return to a place (as the disciples did) where God feels close, and where we can sense Christ's living presence.

In a time of crisis, everyone pulls together. With all churches closed until further notice, local church members have come together to produce this newsletter. None will be distributed by hand but will be passed on electronically. If you know someone who may be interested in reading it, please send it on. The hope is that that some COMFORT is available. God bless.