



# Link magazine

June 2020

Making God's love known through Jesus Christ

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## A letter from lockdown

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This is perhaps the most unusual letter I have ever written. I am the minister of Barclay Viewforth Parish Church, but I've only been in the building twice: once for interview and once to preach as nominee. My induction was carried out online and has been viewed over 2000 times, but I could only see a handful of people from Presbytery. I've met regularly with the staff on Zoom and caught up with a few folk at the prayer meeting and bible study, but it's just not possible to do the kind of things that would help me get to know other people. Some of you will not even have seen a picture of me yet! We're still living in Prestwick, but hoping work in the manse can be finished off and we can finally move across in the next few weeks. It has been an unsettling time for us, but we know that we're not alone.

The last few months have resulted in unprecedented changes for our country and the church. None of us would have imagined a time when all of our buildings would be closed and we would not be able to meet. Many people have had to cancel weddings. Other celebrations are postponed. Families have had the extra pain of not being able to attend the funerals of loved ones.



## Listen to services over the phone...

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Don't have a computer or internet access? Want to listen to our services/sermons by phone? This facility has now been set up – the number to call is **0131 357 6007**. There will be a welcome from David, followed by a reading and the sermon, a prayer and a hymn. You don't have to listen to the whole thing – you can hang up at any time.

We know that many people have found the lockdown hard – and as I write this it is Mental Health Week where we're encouraged to recognise those who struggle in this area and offer support and encouragement. One of the things I have seen online and in the press is talk of a loss of hope and that brought this passage to mind:

Lamentations 3:19 (NIV)

- <sup>19</sup> I remember my affliction and my wandering,  
the bitterness and the gall.  
<sup>20</sup> I well remember them,  
and my soul is downcast within me.  
<sup>21</sup> Yet this I call to mind  
and therefore I have hope:  
<sup>22</sup> Because of the Lord's great love we are not  
consumed, for his compassions never fail.  
<sup>23</sup> They are new every morning;  
great is your faithfulness.  
<sup>24</sup> I say to myself, "The Lord is my portion;  
therefore I will wait for him."



I don't want to minimise the difficulties people have, or suggest that there is any easy answer to mental health issues, or even to loneliness. Nor I am suggesting that God's people never suffer from such issues – there are many examples in the Bible and they are not all resolved. That's not the point of the reading. It is, though, good to be reminded that as God's children we can have hope, and the way to get it is to remind ourselves of who God is and what he's done. Although we don't always 'feel' it, God gives us new blessings each day. He is faithful to his promises and when we trust God we will find that hope rises in us.

We need to be careful though. This doesn't just happen. In the midst of real trial the writer didn't just get up one day and suddenly find everything was fantastic. He had to actively decide to focus on God – and it was only then that hope came. We don't know if his other circumstances had changed, but I suspect not. What had changed was his perspective. He decided to 'wait' on God: to choose to focus on God, to talk to God, to listen to God, to think of God's promises and faithfulness.

If we're honest, the situation for the Church of Scotland as an institution looks difficult. Too few ministers, too many buildings, a huge deficit and falling membership. If ever there was a time to wait for God and have hope renewed this is it. Actually, more people are viewing online services than attended services (I know many of us are watching more than one, but many of those who usually attend aren't watching any!) and congregations have shown incredible creativity during the lockdown. There is hope. There are good things still to come. God hasn't changed. His faithfulness endures.

*Rev. David Clarkson*

## Rev David Clarkson - an interview

On Wednesday 29 April 2020 Rev David Clarkson was inducted as the new minister of Barclay Viewforth Church, Edinburgh. However, it wasn't the usual grand service with Presbytery procession, 'raise the roof hymn singing', followed by the ubiquitous bun-fight. Due to lockdown, Presbytery had to proceed *pro re nata* – 'in the circumstances' – and inducted David via zoom. David and his wife, Linda, are still living in Monkton in Prestwick, but hope to move to Edinburgh once restrictions are eased.

Prior to his induction, David was interviewed via Zoom about his background and what brought him to Barclay Viewforth Church. The following is a snapshot of that interview (the whole interview is available on our YouTube channel – search for **BV Church**).

**David** I was born in the 2nd half of the last century in Kilwinning, in Ayrshire, but the family moved around a lot as my father was a secondary school teacher. After school I went to Carlisle and trained as a radiographer and from there I joined the police. I was too short for Dumfries and Galloway, but met the criteria for Northern Constabulary. I spent 19 years in the police based in Dornoch, Stornoway, Balallan in Lewis, Inverness, and Thurso. It was a great experience.



**Elaine** How did you come to faith? A 'burning bush' moment or a dawning realisation?

**David** I came from a Brethren background, but realised there was a growing awareness of Jesus in my life. At some point, it all really made sense to me.

**Elaine** Tell us some more about the story of your call to ministry.

**David** I had made enquiries about ministry when stationed in Balallan – but was perhaps doing it for the wrong reasons. When I moved to Inverness, I started training to be a Reader in the Church of Scotland. I then led services when my police work allowed. I left the police and signed up for International Christian College in Glasgow. We (David and Linda) felt that we were meant to be missionaries in Japan, but after a visit there for a month we realised it wasn't meant for us. I came back and was encouraged to start the enquiry process for the Church of Scotland. During a spell as a locum in Port Glasgow, I realised that God was calling me into ministry.

**Elaine** We often quote Jeremiah 29:11: "For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future." Your story is an example of God discerning His plan for you even though you may want to resist.

**David** I would never have left the police to go into ministry...but God did what He had to do to get me where I was supposed to be.

**Elaine** You've been in Monkton and Prestwick North Church for nearly 10 years...what was it that attracted you to Barclay Viewforth?

**David** Well, I have to be honest...ministers receive copies of church profiles regularly...and I don't often read them. I was the interim moderator for a church in Ayr and was helping them look for some parish profiles. As I read the BVC one I began to think, "Oh...oh! Oh no!" It had lots of the things I was looking for in a congregation. (Among other things)...BVC appeared to be willing to look at new ways of engaging, serving and being and that's what attracted me to it. I'm really looking forward to coming and getting involved.



**Elaine** Some lightweight questions... what is your favourite hobby?

**David** As I'm still studying, I don't have much time for hobbies...but I do love cooking... more savoury than anything, although I do a really good pavlova.

**Elaine** Football or rugby...and which is your favourite team?

**David** Neither really, although when we were in Inverness we liked to support Inverness Caley Thistle. I like the 6 Nations rugby and it will be nice to get to some of the games at Murrayfield when we come to Edinburgh.

**Elaine** When you are eventually able to visit folks at home...tea or coffee?

**David** Definitely coffee. Good coffee.

**Elaine** Favourite Bible verse and why?

**David** It's from the Old Testament – understanding the OT is vital. It's Zephaniah 3:17

The Lord your God is with you,  
the Mighty Warrior who saves.

He will take great delight in you;  
in his love he will no longer rebuke you,  
but will rejoice over you with singing.'

It's that idea that here is God all powerful, who looks at us and thinks, "Wow! You're amazing. I'm going to sing about you." I find that amazing that God sees us as people that are worth rejoicing over and singing about.

**Elaine** - David, we look forward to welcoming you here in person at some time in the future and seeing what God has planned for all of us.

Please pray for David and Linda as they seek to minister from afar, and as they try to get to know us in these difficult conditions.

*Elaine Hogan*

## Kirk Session news

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### New elders

Thank you to everyone who, earlier in the year, suggested people for consideration as possible new elders. We had a large number of nominations and Session met at the end of April to review these. It was really encouraging to have so many people to consider who would make great elders, and after discussion we decided that adding seven new elders gave a good balance between old and new members. We would also expect to come back to some of the other names in future for ordination.

I'm very pleased to say that all seven people approached have agreed to serve and they are:

- Lindsey Anderson
- Elaine Coull
- David Craigie
- Katharine Ellis
- Kingsley Nwafor
- Elaine Rumney
- Andrew Stephenson

### Mission in Lockdown

Kirk Session isn't the only group using technology to meet 'virtually', and we heard reports from the Missional Communities on how they were continuing to share fellowship during the lockdown:

- **The Net** has set aside a time each week for prayer and has also arranged children's activities;
- **Connect Plus** moved group meetings online and everyone has really enjoyed the chance to catch up over the past few weeks;
- **Tollcross Community Pastors** has been able to keep in touch with the shopkeepers and provide pastoral support; and
- the new **BV Creative Group** is starting regular 'Craft and Chatter' meetings online.

Session has also been thinking about how, once the lockdown restrictions have eased, we continue to keep in touch with the additional people who have joined us online. How do we keep an online presence and use this for growth and mission? Groups were set up to look at that future thinking, as well as at the practical questions around moving back into the church building with social distancing in place.

As ever, your prayers for all those on Session are appreciated; please particularly remember the seven named above, as well as the work in mission and witness across our congregation.

*John Ritchie*

## Postcards from home

As we come into the summer, we are often on holiday and some of us send picture postcards to our family and friends. These are usually scenes of mountains, beaches, sunsets and animals.

But as we will not be away on holiday for a while, would you like to join with us during the summer months by sending in some 'Postcards from Home'?

These could be photos taken from your window, or in your garden, or while out on your daily walk.

Please take inspiration from what you see around you, be it nature, architecture or fun activities. Anything that brings you joy.

Alternatively, you could use the blank postcard sent with this magazine, for your own artwork or inspirational words.

Some of the children shared their beautiful artwork with us several weeks ago on the church Facebook page. Maybe they could create postcards by colouring, painting pictures or making collages?

These postcards would then be shared with the church family on the Barclay Viewforth Facebook page and in a future edition of the magazine.

If you would like to contribute, please send your 'postcard', either by post to the church office – Barclay Viewforth church, 1 Wright's Houses, Edinburgh, EH10 4HR – or by email to [administrator@barclayviewforth.org.uk](mailto:administrator@barclayviewforth.org.uk)



*Anne McCulloch*

## Barclay Viewforth Mailing list

Want to know what is going on?

Don't want to miss anything?

Want to stay in touch at this time of physical distancing?

Please sign up to the Barclay Viewforth mailing list. You can find a link on the front page of the website, and on Facebook; you may have already been sent a link by the leader of your missional community or church group. Just because we already have your email address DOES NOT mean you are included in this mailing list – it is an opt-in system via MailChimp, which also gives you the option of unsubscribing at any time. The site is secure and we only ask for your name and email address.

*Julie Nicholson*

## Connect Plus in Lockdown

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The first sign we had that things were about to change were when the Church of Scotland said we could not meet together as a vulnerable group. Everything happened very quickly after that. For a while we took stock, contacted our members to let them know what was happening and made sure they were okay.

After a couple of weeks of inaction, we realised we could do something about the situation. Our team met together to plan how to have meetings online, and since then we have got together every second week with most of our members. The first time we saw everyone's smiling faces was wonderful. We have been able to sing together, learn together and pray together. As a team, we have been learning some basic sign language, with some rather hilarious results. It has been possible to have everyone take part in some way.

Two of our members are not yet able to access the technology to meet with us, but we are hopeful that something can be done.

We are very grateful to our church staff team for encouraging us in this, and also very thankful that we have the technology to do it. So much to thank God for in the midst of all the chaos and uncertainty. I think everyone will come out the other side stronger and more creative than when we went in.

*Elaine Rumney*

## BV Creative Group

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After our successful gathering in February, unfortunately we have not been able to meet again in person and the planned crochet workshops have been cancelled.

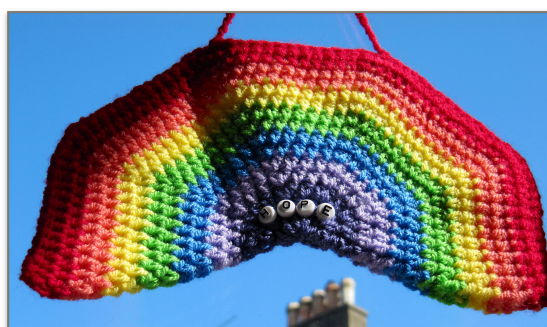
Recently, we have begun to use the technology of Zoom to see each other and have a chat, as well as keeping in contact by email and on the phone.

Our lives may have changed over the last few months, but we are still able to enjoy our knitting, sewing, colouring, painting, embroidery and gardening.

We hope to explore new projects while keeping in contact with each other.

You are welcome to join us for some 'Craft and Chatter'. Please contact the office for more information.

*Anne McCulloch*



## Magazine for 2020

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Due to the current situation, Link Magazine will be published in August, October and December only for the rest of 2020. Content for the **August** issue must be submitted by 17:00 on **Tuesday 21 July**.

*Emma Torry, Editor*



Join us for a zoom-tactic meeting every fortnight for fun and games too! Next meeting will be on 14 June. Contact Stefanie for details: [children@barclayviewforth.org.uk](mailto:children@barclayviewforth.org.uk). Don't forget to check out our webpage with fun ideas, videos and games too!

*Stefanie Conradt*

## Key contacts

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## Contacting the Church while the building is closed

If you need to contact the church staff during this time, you can telephone the office on 0131 229 6810 and leave a message. Messages are still being checked regularly.

You can also call 07902 965522 if you have any urgent needs. This might include practical help such as with shopping or a need for pastoral care.

You can contact all the church staff on their usual email addresses as listed above.