

Making God's love known through Jesus Christ

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### “We all need a reason to keep going. What’s yours?”

(The Boy, the Mole, the Fox and the Horse by Charlie Mackesy)

This weekend my grandparents celebrated their 70<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary. In German you call this the ‘anniversary of grace’ (*Gnadenhochzeit*). The name seems most fitting, because who in this lifetime gets to celebrate such a wedding anniversary at all anymore...?

I couldn’t attend the anniversary because of reasons we are all most aware of and perhaps a little tired to speak of. Instead, I decided to write a letter in honour of these two people who have journeyed through life together for 70 years and have become role models for me, my family and the next generation. It is a letter in response to *their* ministry; not primarily and just because they have been married for 70 years, but because of how they decided to

live their lives. The decisions they have made have become a witness and ministry in itself, which I would like to share with you. And perhaps you find a little truth, a ray of light, to take with you into your situation, your question, the moment you find yourself in now. This letter is about their ministry, not mine: my grandparents were born and grew up between the first and second World Wars. As children, youths and young adults,



they have experienced the devastation and calamity of the third Reich, the horrendous deeds, caused by the ideology of antisemitism and purity of race, as well as the Russian army. They have lived through a divided Germany, fleeing to the West as refugees and frightened for their freedom or being sent back. They have experienced the threat of atomic world powers rising; they have seen the possibility of a united Europe and the fall of it and everything we are witnessing in the news today. My grandparents have experienced poverty and hardship as a family and in their personal lives. But... there has to be a 'but' here. Because if the story was to end here, it would hardly be a ministry; their lives would be part of history. So, there has to be a 'but'.

*But*, despite all that has been experienced, I have never witness them losing the will to live. Despite all they lived through themselves and then together, they kept on going, they kept on living, they kept on being joyful and loving, they kept on being humble. My grandparents weren't perfect, by no means and their awareness of that is another reason I am deeply thankful for their lives' ministry. My grandparents found a reason that kept them going.

They knew the answer to the question of *What is your reason to keep going for?*

It was their deep awareness that there is someone who is bigger than all of it. This is the witness they ministered to me; less in words and more in their every-day actions. This is the grace of God I found in their lives, when listening to them 'just' sharing their life-stories. Most likely, they would not choose to summarise the reason for *keeping on going* with the words I chose.

However, this is what their lives ministered to me. They knew that there was someone who was greater than it all, a living God, who offers forgiveness and new beginnings. A living God who is faithful beyond compare. And as I went to bed, I would hear them respond in silent faithfulness to this relationship by reading and praying a daily devotion – every night. Beyond words, their faithfulness carried a witness that touches the lives of three generations: not in loud proclamation; they did so in silent, I would say humble, faithfulness. And because I cannot possibly end this letter, without answering the question, I am also asking you - *What is your reason for keeping on going?* – let me share my short response to that question:

It is as Hebrews spills out and as I have experienced through the lives of my grandparents: now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see. This is what the ancients were commended for. By faith I understand that the universe was formed at God's command, so that what is seen was not made out of what was visible.

By faith my grandparents lived their lives and set one foot in front of another.

Therefore, since I am surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, I want to throw off everything that hinders and causes a target shortfall, which is to live a life with God. Let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us. Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith.

(According to Hebrews 11 and 12)

*Stefanie Conradt*

## A Splash of Rainbows

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Over the past number of weeks, some of the members of the BV Creative group have been knitting colourful rainbows. About 50 of them are now displayed on the railings outside the church for everyone to enjoy.

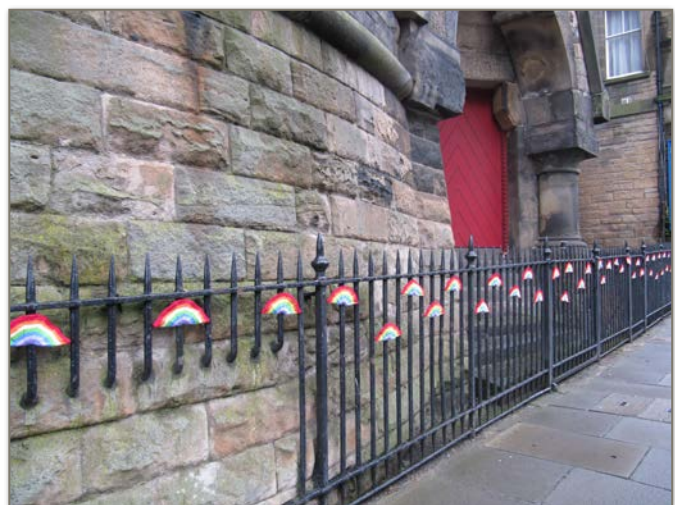
Recently, I was reading a blog about rainbows by J. John. Many of us are familiar with the rainbow appearing to Noah and his family after the great flood. God made a promise to all that never again would a flood destroy all life. God used the rainbow to speak of his offer of forgiveness, peace and hope for the world beneath him.

The rainbow is only the first of several covenants in the Bible in which God progressively proclaims ever greater love, forgiveness and commitment towards the human race. The final one of these covenants is that which is fulfilled and sealed in the death of Jesus.

The rainbow tells the beginning of the story of God's love, but not its conclusion.

A rainbow in the sky is wonderful and beautiful, but it is a tantalising phenomenon that we cannot reach or touch.

Maybe, if we wait a little while we will see more of God's love revealed to us on the church railings.



*Anne McCulloch*

### Congregational news

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#### Death

Mr Donald Craig

24 June 2020

#### Wedding Anniversary

Douglas & Catherine Stewart

68 Years in June

Ed and Gladys Bain

Ruby (40) wedding anniversary in July

Hugh and Ann Paterson

Golden (50) wedding anniversary in July

## Prayer at BVC

***“Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.”*** Philippians 4:6

We might not be able to meet together at the moment, but we can still support each other in prayer. There are several ways in which we can do that and you are invited to take part on one or more of them.

**Prayer Gathering** – Sunday evenings (6:45-7:45) by Zoom. A number of us meet every Sunday to take part in the ‘national prayer’ prepared by leaders of 13 national churches in Scotland. We then spend time listening to God and sharing prayer requests, before we pray in groups (yes; we can split into virtual rooms to pray in smaller groups). Email Elaine Hogan for the link (or to ask us to pray for you or a circumstance at the gathering).

**Prayer Circle** – our online prayer circle has been running for a number of years now. People sign up to this (contact Elaine Rumney) and commit to praying for requests as they come in. Anyone can request prayer by phone (to a staff member) or by email to [prayer@barclayviewforth.org.uk](mailto:prayer@barclayviewforth.org.uk) The information is then sent around the people who have signed up. Some requests are anonymous/initials only, while others give all the details. We leave it up to the person requesting prayer.

**Church Online** – if you join us live for the service at 11:00 on a Sunday morning via the Church Online platform you have the option to request prayer. Once you hit the prayer button, you will be met by one of the hosts for the day who will have a prayer chat with you. No one else can see what you’re saying.

Be assured of our prayers for all of our church family – and know that God hears our requests.

*The Ministry Team*

## Afternoon Fellowship



This photo, taken last September on the Falkirk Wheel, seems such a long time ago – when we lived in different times.

Sadly, it will not be possible to run the usual Afternoon Fellowship programme until it is safe to do so. We had thought about arranging a socially-distanced picnic, but that would mean limiting the number of people as we’re still not allowed to gather in large groups.

We know that you are missing seeing each other, but hopefully your phones have been red hot over these weeks as you connect with each other.

We will try to keep you up-to-date with any changes as the situation changes – and we look forward to seeing you all soon.

*Elaine Hogan*

## What we need to know about opening the church building again

The information provided by the Church of Scotland starts with the following statement: Theologically, congregations have often stated that the church comprises the people and not the buildings. However, when faced with the reality, it becomes apparent that our church buildings provide a sense of place for many to express their faith, experience worship and grow in relationship.

Many congregations have wrestled with new technology to allow online worship, coffee time, banner groups and Sunday schools. Individuals have felt both included and excluded from activities. Ministers and those working in parishes have identified the challenge of engaging some regular church attendees while also reaching many individuals in the community for whom a traditional model of church would not be enticing.



For many, the effects will last well beyond the lockdown. There will be tension in how congregations move forward whilst recognising that which has gone before. Kirk Sessions and the wider congregation may wish to consider discussing:

- What place does a physical, dedicated church building have in the ongoing missional strategy of your congregation?
- Looking back over the period of lockdown, what innovation has been seen? What might be kept? How might that alter the focus of congregational life moving into a post-pandemic phase?
- In relation to 'church', what feelings of loss have been articulated in the congregation and community?
- How might the Kirk Session prayerfully consider and evaluate what aspects of pre-lockdown church might be restarted to enable relationships to grow and mission to prosper?

We need to recognise that there are a wide range of responses to the closure of church buildings. Many people have felt disconnected and isolated, with a sense of loss of the familiar. It is understandable that there is a desire among some people to start meeting again as soon as possible. That does not mean that they are looking backward or to maintain the status quo. Nor does it imply an unwillingness to change. We must be careful, however, to ensure that the desire to 'reopen the church' is not minimising the work done by so many in keeping the life and work of the church going although the building has been closed. We are not 'reopening the church', we are reopening the building.

We must also realise that there are so many restrictions on what is going to be possible in the building that we are not going to be doing what was done before the building was closed. There is a significant amount of work to be done before the Session can ask Presbytery for permission to open for worship. When we do, the following things are important (as of 20 July):

- People in the vulnerable age group, who are shielding or have symptoms, should not attend. Online services and free Twilio phone calls will continue and we encourage you to participate in those where you can. If you need help with using technology, there are volunteers who can help you.
- Volunteers will be on hand to explain the precautions in place and answer questions.
- There will be no handshaking or physical contact.
- A one-way system will operate for entry and exit.
- We need to obtain name and contact details from everyone attending to assist with track-and-trace.
- There will be no offering during the service, but an alternative method of giving will operate. We encourage members to give by standing order where possible, but especially at this time where collecting an offering or counting cash is problematic – standing orders or online giving ([www.churchofscotland.org.uk](http://www.churchofscotland.org.uk)) are preferred.
- You will be shown to a seat, not choose your own; and we may need a first-in-last-out policy.
- We will be limited to a maximum of 50 (but we have still to measure the sanctuary to confirm actual numbers).
- We cannot use the balcony.
- Face coverings will not be required, but are recommended.
- Alcohol gel will be available.
- There will be no tea/coffee or fellowship time before or after services.
- There will be no singing or chanting.
- We cannot use hymnbooks, pew Bibles or give out notices or magazines at a service.



In light of the restrictions placed on us, the Session needs to consider very carefully when it will be appropriate to open the building. We're not rushing, but we're not dawdling either. As you can see, it's not easy; but we will keep you up to date with developments as we go. Of course, everything might have changed by the time you read this!

*David Clarkson*

## In Memoriam: Donald Craig

We received the sad news last month of the death of Donald Craig, one of our senior elders, a few weeks after his 90th birthday.

Donald lived his whole life in the local area – born in Morrison Street on 4 June 1930 and then living in Brown’s Place, Keir Street and, finally, for many years in Panmure Place. He met and courted his wife Nancy when she was a trainee nurse at Chalmers Hospital. Donald trained as an apprentice watchmaker and jeweller, and worked as a watchmaker for many years, having two shops before moving on to employment at Ferranti, Napier College and finally the British Geological Survey.

The church was a big part of his life, and in earlier years he would regularly assist at the General Assembly. He was ordained as an elder in Barclay Church on 14 June 1981 and took an active part in the life and work of both the congregation and wider community.

When Nancy died in 2013, he went out less regularly, but kept in touch with friends at church and through Minister’s visits. As Donald’s son, Donald Jnr., commented at the funeral ‘failing eyesight did not affect his clarity of thought, his charm and humour.’

The Moderator came to Barclay Viewforth Church in 2014 and a number of long-service certificates were presented to our senior elders. Donald wasn’t able to be there, so Sam

Torrens took the certificate to give to Donald at home. Delighted to receive it, he said he still felt he didn’t need a certificate for doing something he loved, serving His Lord and Saviour in this way.

We remember in prayer Donald Jnr., and grandchildren Leighton, Erin and Ewan, in their loss.

*John Richie*



## An exciting something new...

We are starting a second morning service aimed at both families and the wider congregation.

Join us online on 9 August at 10.15am for our Back to School service through which we brave-up like Daniel to go back to school and the life that comes with it. See you then!

*Stefanie Conradt*

## A Portable Paradise

I came across this poem very recently, and thought it might be an encouragement to some. Roger Robinson is a British writer, musician and performer, a man of faith who lives between Trinidad and England. In his recently-published book, *A Portable Paradise*, he addresses the issues raised by the tragedy in Grenfell tower, the Windrush era, and the legacy of slavery today. This is a link to an interview which appeared in the Guardian in January: <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2020/jan/16/ts-eliot-prize-winner-roger-robinson>

The poem, which attracted my attention when listening to a podcast of BBC Radio 4's Poetry Please, is this one:

### A Portable Paradise by Roger Robinson

And if I speak of Paradise,  
 then I'm speaking of my grandmother  
 who told me to carry it always  
 on my person, concealed, so  
 no one else would know but me.  
 That way they can't steal it, she'd say.  
 And if life puts you under pressure,  
 trace its ridges in your pocket,  
 smell its piney scent on your handkerchief,  
 hum its anthem under your breath.  
 And if your stresses are sustained and daily,  
 get yourself to an empty room – be it hotel,  
 hostel or hovel – find a lamp  
 and empty your paradise onto a desk:  
 your white sands, green hills and fresh fish.  
 Shine the lamp on it like the fresh hope  
 of morning, and keep staring at it till you sleep.



*Elaine Rumney*

### Join our mailing list!

Want to get the latest BVC news and updates delivered direct to your inbox? Sign up to our email mailing list!

The BVC mailing list uses Mailchimp, which keeps your email address secure and makes it easy to unsubscribe at any time.

Sign up here:

<https://mailchi.mp/555645924d2e/barclayviewforthchurch>





## Kirk Session News

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Questions about **how and when we return to the church building** will be discussed at a Session meeting on Monday 3 August.

There is quite a lot required before any return – physical changes in the building, risk assessments, Presbytery sign off needed – and any services would feel quite different (no singing, physical distancing, 50 people maximum, no fellowship meeting up afterwards). So, even with the preparatory work being done now (and particular thanks to Lesley Anderson and the Halls Group looking at this), it will take some time after the meeting on 3 August before we can restart services in the building.

At Session in June we discussed possible involvement with a Church of Scotland Fuller Youth Institute Programme called **Growing Young**. This would draw on Fuller's expertise and experience to help reach and draw in 15- to 29-year-olds.

Thank you to everyone who sent in **feedback about our online services and communications** during lockdown. We will be discussing the results on 3 August, and the comments will be summarised in the next church magazine.

*John Richie*

## Connect Plus

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We have been meeting regularly over the last three months, and enjoying getting everyone more involved. There is still much hilarity as the challenges become more tricky.

Last week we all had the challenge of trying a Kim's game. The aim was to see how well we could focus, and was followed by a discussion on what God might be asking us to do during this lockdown, and how we might not miss His leading. We have also got everyone to try Stefanie's trick of doing everyday things with one hand behind our back to see how we all need to help with bringing people to Jesus.

Borrowing fairly closely from Sunday services, our next attempt will be to try to see who can hold up their hands the longest. Thank you Elaine H for this idea (we are indebted to the whole staff team for ideas, as you can see). We are continuing the theme of all of us pulling together to pray more effectively.

We have been set the challenge as a group to come up with ideas for the next Ability Sunday in September. This will be a trickier project than last year as we try to involve everyone and record the various contributions.

Now that the lockdown is easing off a little, we hope to get the team together for a social event – outside and suitably socially distanced. Not with everyone so far, but maybe that will come.

There seems to be a habit of people bringing their animals to Connect Plus meetings. So far we have seen two cats, two guinea pigs, a dog, a rat and a smiley puppet. This never happened when we met in the church.

*Elaine Rumney*

## Behind the scenes with the band

If you have been tuning in for our online services, you will have heard that many of the worship songs used are being recorded by our very own worship band especially for BVC Online. Putting the songs together is a team effort, with five or six people involved in each recording. So how does it get from page to video?

The journey of our song starts with one of our pianists – Anna and Becca have been recording about half the songs each so far, and Emma has recorded her first few piano tracks during the July break.

Once the pianist has made the recording, they put it in a shared folder in the ‘cloud’ where all the other musicians and singers can access it. Emma and Becca have been recording vocals, Elaine R has been adding violin, Linda doing flute and Elaine H some cajon. Each of us downloads the recording of the piano part, and then listens to it with headphones on while we sing or play along and record. You can see a picture of Emma’s ‘recording booth’ on the right!

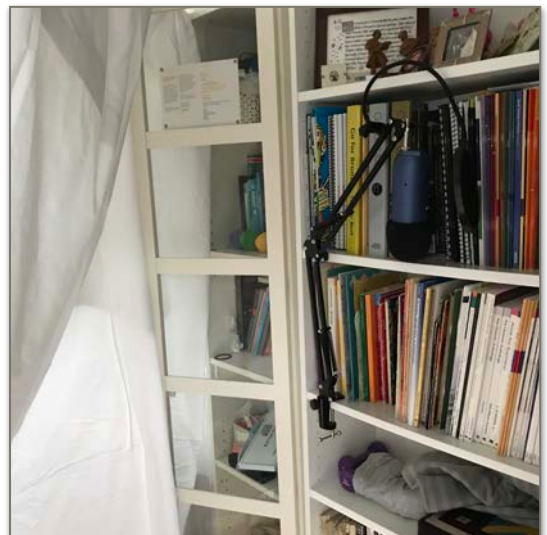
Then, the magic happens. Moray, Anna or Noah take these recordings and edit them together. Our talented music production team touch-up and tweak all kinds of details to make sure we are all sounding as good as possible, before balancing the parts against each other. The final mix is then shared with the ministry team who add it into the video with words ready for the service.

Moray has also been doing a sterling job with sourcing and tidying up the recordings of hymns from old service audio.

Special thanks must also go to Becca for keeping us all organised and on-track throughout. Working on band songs has been a steep learning-curve for all of us – most of us had never recorded ourselves before! It has also been surprising how much this has helped us improve as musicians too. Being able to play things several times or practice harmonies isn’t something we can normally do on a Sunday.

Singing and playing with others has been so important for all of us to feel connected to each other and our church community during this time of social distancing. We have all enjoyed making the recordings, even when it has been stressful or challenging!

If anyone is interested in helping with the music during this time, please get in touch with the ministry team and they will connect you with us!



*Emma Torry*

## Open Doors – a pandemic doesn't stop persecution

While lockdown is lifting here in the UK, many people around the world are still living with either continuing lockdowns, dangerously high levels of virus circulating or both. We are looking forward to meeting again as church, but for Christians in some countries, their faith in Christ can mean they are struggling for access to basic necessities. The following is an extract from an article in Open Doors' most recent magazine.

We spoke to Heena\*, an Open Doors partner working in India, to find out what sorts of discrimination they were hearing about.

### Is it true that Christians are being neglected in the aid distribution?

*Heena:* Yes. Imagine you're a Christian family in a Hindu village. It's very likely the villagers are socially-boycotting you. Even when there isn't lockdown, you're not allowed to buy from the local shop or draw water from the local well. You will have to try to get food and other daily necessities from nearby Christians or go to villages where the opposition against Christians isn't so strong. But now your village is in lockdown. You've lost your income. Aid is being distributed to the local shop or the local village committee and they won't give you the food, not even when you have a food ration coupon.

[...]

### Do you have examples of Christians being bypassed?

*Heena:* We know of so many, but here are a few we can share. We have to withhold certain details to not give away the identity of these Christians, or else they will be punished for sharing the information with us. Recently I heard of a family of labourers who'd lost their income who didn't receive help from the local village committee. The Hindus said the Christians already received help from foreigners, which they hadn't.

A disabled Christian man and his family of six were also bypassed. He can't even walk, but still the local people aren't giving him and his family any food. They have been opposed by the village since they came to faith.

We also received a cry for help from a family of five. The police have been threatening them a lot because they are Christians and do ministry. Now everyone in their village received relief aid, except for the Christian families. These are just some examples out of many. In some cases, we have been able to help. In others, we're still hoping to reach them soon.

\*Names changed for security reasons

Open Doors face huge challenges in their work with the persecuted church. Please pray for them and for those Christians they work with.

Emma Torry



## Barclay Viewforth Helpline

Since lockdown started, we have been running a helpline for people who have been unable to leave their homes. Although there has not been a great demand for the service, we have had a few regular 'clients' from our local community. It's been great to get to know them over this period.

A special thanks to the people who have helped out with shopping/prescription collection/hedge trimming (so that carers could access safely)/

etc. – you know who you are. Your efforts have been much appreciated.

**The Helpline will finish around the start of August**, when those shielding will be able to do their own shopping. If the COVID-19 situation changes, we will review this decision.



*Elaine Hogan*

## Next issue

The next issue of Link Magazine will be published in **October 2020**. Articles for inclusion should be sent to the editor at [magazine@barclayviewforth.org.uk](mailto:magazine@barclayviewforth.org.uk) by 22 September 2020

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