



Springfield Cambridge Church Newsletter – 18th July 2020

Letter from our Minister – *betwixt and between*

Writing my magazine articles is always something of a challenge. Partly because I am trying to reflect where we have been as a congregation in recent times, and at the same time attempting to cast forwards into the future. This is especially true just now. After a long period of lockdown and a list of prohibitions on our shared public life, things seem to be opening up again, sometimes at a slow pace and at others very quickly. So how then do I look back and forwards when the future seems so uncertain?

I have been reading about how others have coped during this time and reflecting on my experiences, and those of others, during 'lockdown' to try and make some sense of it all.

From where I sit at my study desk in the Manse writing this article, I have come to recognise that we are living nowhere between two somewheres. We are entering what some have called 'the liminal season.' Liminal has its roots in the Latin word, *limen*, which means a threshold, the bottom part of a doorway that must be crossed when entering a building. In Latin, *limen* referred to the stone placed on the threshold of a door that physically had to be mounted to cross from one space into another. As we move from Phase 1 to Phase 4 it very much feels as though we are in uncharted territory crossing various thresholds. Biblical stories often have a liminal tale to tell. Each Biblical journey is a venturing forth: an ending, followed by a disorienting season of transition, and finally a reorientation to something new that is substantially different from what was left behind. Clearly, God works with liminality. Through liminal experiences human beings are transformed and brought into a deeper relationship with God. So, what will that look like for me, for you, and for those around us?

I am reminded of the Irishman Brian Keenan who went from his native Belfast to lecture at Beirut University in 1985 and was held captive for 4 ½ years by Shi'ite militiamen. His experiences of 'lockdown' lead on his

release to his book, "An Evil Cradling." There he writes, "On fishing boats there is a device called a fail-safe fixed on the anchor chain. In storms or strange seas, when the anchor is let down to measure the fathoms, and it seems the anchor will not find a bedding place and the ship is beyond hope, the anchor chain locks at its 'Bitter End'. But it is not the end. It is simply a point of measure. It assures the crew that there is more. The bitter end is never the end. It is both warning and reassurance, from which we forge new hope and new determination." (p.87)

I have returned to that paragraph in recent days, as it reminds me amid the stormy seas through which we are trying to navigate, sailing from two somewheres to we know not where, that we have a hope to which we can anchor ourselves. In Hebrews 6:18-20 we recall that, *"...we who have taken refuge might be strongly encouraged to seize the hope set before us. ¹We have this hope, a sure and steadfast anchor of the soul, a hope that enters the inner shrine behind the curtain, where Jesus, a forerunner on our behalf, has entered, having become a high priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek."*

We have to be prepared to allow ourselves to be drawn out of 'business as usual' and remain patiently on the threshold (limen) where we are betwixt and between the familiar and the completely unknown. This is a sacred space where the old world will fall apart and a bigger world is revealed. The threshold is God's waiting room. Here we are taught openness and patience as we come to expect an appointment with the divine Doctor.

As I sit writing this at my computer screen, I also suddenly recall words from the prophet Jeremiah (6:16), no stranger to uncertainty,

"Thus says the LORD:

Stand at the crossroads, and look, and ask for the ancient paths, where the good way lies; and walk in it and find rest for your souls."

When we are living in a time of scarcity or deep uncertainty it seems to me that in this 'liminal space' it is imperative that we embrace the uncertainty. So, I can say to you now, *"I am a traveller, not a mapmaker. I am going down this path same as and with you."* So, let us take time to stand, look, ask. The ancient paths and good ways are there before us in Christ who is our sure and steadfast anchor in whom we shall find rest for our troubled souls.

Rev Ian Taylor

Covid-19 Update (as at 14/07/20)

As you will be aware the Scottish Government (SG) are leading us through their Route Map out of the Covid-19 lockdown – and by the time you are reading this we will be working through Phase 3. In Phase 2 Churches were permitted to open their buildings for the limited use of private prayer, subject to a number of conditions. Our Kirk Session met virtually on 30/06/20 and carefully considered what we could do at this time. Conscious that we can pray anywhere, at any time, the Kirk Session decided that in light of the various requirements that will need to be fulfilled before our buildings can open in **any** circumstances, we would wait until other restrictions had been lifted before reopening. However, we have begun our preparations to have our Covid-19 Risk Assessment completed and approved by the Presbytery of Glasgow to allow that to occur.

As most of you will be aware the major change for us is that the date from which church buildings may be used for communal worship and other “*life events*” has been brought forward from 23rd July to Wednesday 15th July. Any Services held must not include singing which will be clearly a vastly different experience for us. The two-metre physical distancing rule still applies and this will lead to different capacity calculations for different buildings. However, the First Minister also said that there would be a maximum number cap regardless of the capacity of the building. We are awaiting confirmation of that number from the Scottish Government and until that is received, we cannot complete all our own preparations. The Kirk Session will meet on Tuesday 11th. August, 2020 by which time we hope there will greater clarity on what and how we need to prepare to reopen. As the next changes in SG Regulations and Guidance are identified we will work towards reopening for the benefit and safety of all our members and hall users. We look forward to that day when all might safely cross our threshold once more.

Rev Ian Taylor

Treasurer's Report - Thank you to everyone who has contacted me over the last few months to ensure that the church received your offerings. This is much appreciated and has enabled us to meet our outgoings over the summer months, although our income is still substantially less than normal. Offerings have been received in many different ways - Standing Order, PayPal, Cheque and good old-fashioned cash. Please do not hesitate to get in touch with me if you have church envelopes gathering dust in your home. I am more than happy to arrange collection and can be contacted on 772 6015.

Jim Kerr, Treasurer

The Guild – It is with sadness that I report that the Guild will not be resuming in September. I am very grateful to our phone volunteers for maintaining contact with Guild members and keeping the Guild alive. If you would be willing to volunteer for this role, please get in touch. To raise funds for the Projects we have been invited to a Virtual Tea Party at 2pm on 8th August and if you decide to participate and collect donations please send these directly to Guild Office in Edinburgh. Guild office have been in touch and have advised that the Annual Gathering will be a virtual gathering at 11am on 5th September. For those unable to access the internet a DVD will be available.

Ellen Robertson, Guild Convener

268th Glasgow Boys' Brigade - BB nationally are providing guidance for potential return to face to face activities from 1st September. The staff will be working behind the scenes over the coming weeks to provide a safe environment for all our Boys when we return in conjunction with Church guidance. Parents and guardians will be contacted soon with further information as soon as we have it ready.

John Armour, Captain

Girls' Brigade – The Girls Brigade was due to recommence in mid-August for girls aged P1 to S6. Due the ongoing Covid restrictions our session will in all probability need to commence virtually using Zoom as per GB Scotland guidance. We will be sending out registration forms by e-mail in due course. For further information please contact me on 0734030213. By e-mail on gb65thglasgow@hotmail.co.uk. Facebook: facebook.com/groups/65thglasgow

Katie Byrne, Captain

The Record. There will no church magazine in August. No new date has been put in place for the next issue of our church magazine; rather, it was judged better to align next publication to the period of when the re-opening of our church is established.

James Robertson, Editor