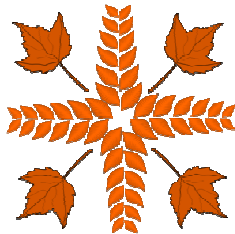


**Blackbraes and Shieldhill
Parish Church
linked with
Muiravonside Parish Church
Newsletter September 2020**



www.bsandm-church.org.uk

Interim Moderator : Rev Scott Burton

Locum : Rev Sandra Mathers OLM

Registered Charity

Blackbraes and Shieldhill SC 002512

Muiravonside SC 007571



A Message from our Interim Moderator
Rev Scott Burton

Dear friends,

Since my last letter in July there has been even further changes in our circumstances – schools back, easing of various restrictions, local lockdowns in parts of the country, unprecedented storms...the list could go on.

So, it probably shouldn't come as a surprise that I need to write to you and communicate another update to our plans for our ongoing life as a church family. In July, I wrote that the office bearers felt it best not to open the sanctuary for private prayer during Phase 2 and at the time that made a lot of sense. Nevertheless, since then we have been told that if we do not open after the 23rd September then our insurance premiums will triple in cost – which would bring a monthly increase of around £250-350. As such, the Elders have had to review the situation and agreed an amended plan.

We hope that from Sunday 13th September for Blackbraes and Shieldhill, and from Sunday 18th October for Muiravonside, the sanctuary will open for a short 30-minute service at the usual times. Afterwards, Blackbraes and Shieldhill would be open each month on the first Sunday of the month and Muiravonside on the third Sunday of the month. There will be a maximum permitted attendance at each location, and it is unlikely everyone will be able to attend on each occasion – once we have more details, we will let you know

Anyone wishing to attend will need to book in advance and all who do attend will be required to wear a face mask, sit 2 metres apart from other households, and stay for the full service. There will be no singing and you will not be allowed to choose where to sit, as this will be allocated on the basis of when you arrive; neither will you be able to “mingle” afterwards. Further health and safety arrangements will be in place upon arrival, for example hand sanitiser, leaving your contact details, etc and these will be explained to you at that time. The services will

be led by Sandra Mathers our Locum, and include musical pieces for listening only, plus prayers, readings and a short message.

I realise that this list of “to do’s” is not very appealing, but if you wish to take up this opportunity, then please book your attendance by calling the relevant Session Clerk: Jackie Napier at Muiravonside (01324 713258) and Rena Moore at Blackbraes and Shieldhill (01324 628989).

Additionally, I need to let you know that the Church of Scotland has crafted a “risk assessment tool” to help everyone evaluate whether they should attend worship, or if the risks may be too great. A copy of this document is included, and we would ask everyone to read this in weighing up whether to attend or not.

As I say, this list of requirements is not particularly attractive, but the plan allows us to meet the requirements of the insurance company whilst minimising risk, and at the same time make the most of an opportunity presented to us: a short time of reflective worship for those able and willing to attend.

Nevertheless, if you feel unable to attend, then please do not feel you have to or that you are letting down the church by not attending – we are well aware that people may feel uncomfortable, unable or are happy accessing other resources at this time. For example, there are a variety of services available online or via radio/TV – please explore Brightons Parish Church as one online option. There are also Sandra’s monthly Pastoral Letters and you would be welcome to access copies of Brightons’ services on CD/DVD or the “catch up” phone line we have in place. What is more, you could utilise the printed material prepared by the Braes Churches Ministers for Sunday mornings. If you wish to know about any of these resources, then please do get in contact with Sandra.

Whether you decide to take up this opportunity for Sunday worship or not, please know that there is a wide church family that wishes to support you and journey with you in these difficult and uncertain days. If you need support, please do say – there

are folks willing to give pastoral support, whether it be picking up messages or giving a phone call. If you need spiritual input, then try one of the resources mentioned above. But please do not think that you have to muddle through on your own, for as the Apostle Paul said:

'Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ. For we were all baptised by one Spirit so as to form one body...God has put the body together, giving greater honour to the parts that lacked it, so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other. If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honoured, every part rejoices with it. Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it.' (1 Corinthians 12:12-13, 24-27)

I know that many have experienced the on-going sense of being the body of Christ, the family of God, in this season and as time goes on, with restrictions continuing to limit the activities we can provide, it is crucial that we maintain diligence in looking out for one another – but also a humility and openness by reaching out when we need help.

Friends, it has been an honour to see how our church family across the Braes has responded in love for one another in these days and the resilience and faith you have displayed. Truly, you have evidenced a character like the Philippian church, who shone *'like stars in the sky as you hold firmly to the word of life.'* (Philippians 2:15-16)

With love to one and all,

Scott

September 2020

Assessment ‘Tool’ for individual and group health risks

The assessment ‘tool’ below helps you to see how different risk factors may combine to give serious health complications should you catch the Covid-19 virus. It does not include the factors that may make you clinically extremely vulnerable, where you should be following the guidance for those who are ‘shielding’ (see section 7.1). It includes the factors where there is significant statistical evidence but does not include any rarer conditions which you may have, so this only offers a starting point. You may want to discuss the results with your doctor or with those who have expectations about your involvement with church life.

This should be read alongside the full text of the Church of Scotland’s “Covid-19 (Coronavirus) Reopening of Church Buildings” which includes guidance about minimising risks in the church context, and other government or local advice about staying safe. We are not claiming medical expertise in sharing this way of scoring your risk but giving a way to show how serious catching the virus may be for you or the groups using your church building(s).

Circle the score next to each one that applies to you and add up your score.

A score of under 3 indicates a lower risk, but you should still be following the guidance for staying safe.

A score of 3-5 suggests a greater risk and you should consider ways of reducing your risk by taking additional precautions or avoiding some activities.

A score of 6 or more suggests a high risk and indicates that you should continue to work or participate in church life from your home.

The scoring is based on an article from the British Medical Association website. Risk Stratification tool for Healthcare workers during the Covid-19 Pandemic; using published data on demographics, co-morbid disease and clinical domain in order to assign biological risk: David Strain, Janusz Jankowski, Angharad Davies, Peter English, Ellis Friedman, Helena McKeown, Su Sethi, Mala Rao medRxiv 2020.05.05.20091967; doi:

<https://doi.org/10.1101/2020.05.05.20091967>

Risk Factor		Total
Age	50-59	1
	60-69	2
	70-79	4
	80 and over	6
Sex at birth	Male	1
Ethnicity	Caucasian	0
	Black African	2
	Descent Indian Asian	1
	Descent Filipino	1
	Descent	1
	Other (including mixed race)	
Diabetes & Obesity	Type 1 & 2	1
	Diabetes Type 1 & 2 with presence of microvascular complications or HbA1c \geq 64mmol/mol	2
	Body Mass Index greater than or equal to 35 kg/m ² online BMI calculator: http://www.nhs.uk/live-well/healthy-weight/bmi-calculator	1
Cardiovascular disease	Angina, previous heart attack, stroke or cardiac intervention	1
	Heart Failure	2
Pulmonary (lung) disease	Asthma	1
	Non-asthma chronic pulmonary disease	2
	Either of the above requiring oral corticosteroids in the last year	1
Malignant neoplasm (cancer)	Active malignancy	3
	Malignancy in remission	1
Rheumatological conditions	Active treated conditions	2
Immunosuppressant therapies	Any indication	2
Total Score		