



God is carrying us

HELLO FOLKS, I'm back! Be it only part time, at the moment. But God is awesome, and he has been looking after you all in so many different ways, through the love and compassion of so many different people. For that I am eternally grateful.

We have all reacted differently to lockdown. Some have embraced the opportunity to sort the garden, decorate the house, clear the loft and empty the garage, all in week one.

Many have started new hobbies, brought out of storage things that they enjoyed years ago, or even learned new skills that will set them up for a long time to come. Others have hunkered down, and concentrated on each day as it comes, tackling the challenges of isolation and contemplating how they are going to manage the shopping without calling in the calvary.

We are all different, because God made us to be unique.

When God lovingly created each one of us, he didn't then set us off to fend for ourselves. Psalm 24:1 reminds us: *'The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it. The world and all its people belong to him.'*

The world has changed, and each individual country, county, town and village is going at its own

PAULA'S PIECE

pace, just like we as individuals are moving along at our own personal rate, that we can manage and control for our own wellbeing.

It is good then to remember that 'God is in all and over all' and that wherever we find ourselves in this state of lockdown, God is not just there beside us, he is carrying us, taking the load, because we, his people, belong to HIM.

As we continue to progress along the 'Route Map' of Government and the 'guidelines' set out by the Church of Scotland, may each of us acknowledge the certainty that God is with us, travelling at our pace and helping us as we either take small steps forward or large leaps in our personal journey.

May God continue to bless you and keep you in his loving care.

Love, prayers and hugs

Paula x

1 Corinthians 12:27 (NIV) - Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it.

ON TUESDAY, July 14, Elgin High Congregational Board and Kirk Session met via Zoom to discuss the possibility of re-opening the church building for communal prayer, worship and/or funerals.

After much discussion, under the current 'Scottish Government's Route Map' and the 'Church of Scotland's Re-opening of Church Buildings guidelines', Board and Session have taken the difficult decision not to re-open our building at this time.

Church building remains closed at present time

There were many factors that led to this decision for example; current two-metre physical distancing; hygiene; no singing; limited numbers. However, our priority is health and wellbeing for all who use the building and we feel we are not able to re-open our building safely at the present time.

An extract from the Church of Scotland's guidelines regarding the challenges that lie ahead: "Many of the restrictions that have been in place since March 2020 will now be with us throughout the rest of this year and probably into 2021. Physical distancing, hand hygiene, enhanced cleaning and disinfection will have to be

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Thanks be to God, who always leads us in triumphal procession in Christ and through us spreads everywhere the fragrance of the knowledge of Him.
2 Corinthians 2:14 (NIV).

Weekly offering

FOR THOSE of you who don't pay their weekly offerings by standing order and would like to contribute to Elgin High until such times as we will be permitted to collect offerings:

The Church of Scotland has set up a 'Donations' page on their website, which can be found if you search donations on www.churchofscotland.org.uk/home

You can either donate to the CofS or to an individual congregation. It also gives the opportunity to tick the Gift Aid box if you pay income tax. (Please note, no personal details are shared by the CofS as they adhere to strict data protection regulations);

By cheque made payable to Elgin High Church and post or pop through the church letterbox;

Alternatively, you can contact Sue Davies suebutlercase@hotmail.com, who will be able to assist in donating by bank transfer or setting up a standing order (temporary or permanent).

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Church re-opening

embraced into a new way of church life.”

The Ministry Team and the Trustees will be monitoring future Scottish Government decisions to relax physical distancing and when the numbers in mass gatherings will increase. This will enable us to revisit our discussions for opening our building again.

In the meantime, please continue to pray for our Ministry Team, our Trustees, for both the Scottish Government and the Church of Scotland as we/they all work towards the challenges that lie ahead.

We will post updates on our web page from time to time if you have access to the Internet – www.elginhigh.co

Worship and pastoral care

THE CHURCH of Scotland recognises that “*Many congregations have wrestled with new technology to allow online worship*” and that “*individuals have felt both included and excluded from activities.*”

This has certainly been a challenge for Elgin High as we realise that not only are many without internet but many of our Trustees, visiting team and helpers found themselves, or their loved ones, in the vulnerable groups or self-isolating.

For those who have Internet, there are many resources online for weekly services, again some can be found on the Church of Scotland or Elgin High's website. A few are listed below.

For those who don't have access to the Internet, reflections in leaflet form are available for delivery. If you would like us to drop some printed reflections through your letterbox, or perhaps you would welcome a phone call from us, you will find a list of contacts listed at the end of this newsletter.

In the meantime, keep an eye out for one another, keep connected with one another, spreading His Word and His love.

Ephesians 4:1-3 - As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received. Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.

Online worship resources

KEITH Community Radio - 107.7FM, kcr.fm – Mondays 7pm “Revving Up” :: **Rev Sonia Palmer** – Youtube.com :: **BPEH / Blair Jackson** – Youtube.com :: **Rev Jenny Adams** – Facebook and Youtube.com “DSH Youtube channel” :: See <https://moraypresbytery.org.uk/alternative-worship-arrangements/> for some of what's on offer around Moray Presbytery :: **Sanctuary First**, the Church of Scotland's online church community is at www.sanctuaryfirst.org.uk or download the Sanctuary First app on your phone or tablet.

Vacancy

BIRNIE and Pluscarden linked with Elgin High forming a Hub Ministry with St Giles' and St Columba's South.

You may remember just before lockdown, a joint Parish meeting was arranged for March 19 to discuss the possibility of forming a Hub Ministry with St Giles' and St Columba's South.

A Hub Ministry is based on a team approach to ministry and leadership. It brings together lay and ordained people in an identified ministry team which can include full-time Ministers of Word and Sacrament. The team's responsibility is to ensure that ministry and mission are developed across a given area.

This meeting was cancelled due to lockdown.

It doesn't look as if we will be permitted to hold a joint congregational meeting for many months to come.

However, our buildings may be temporarily closed but normal church business has not ceased. The possibility of a Hub Ministry will need to be addressed before we can build a Parish Profile and advertise for a Minister.

Some facts and figures

Church of Scotland

	2005	2015	
Membership:	520,940	363,597	(30% drop)
Children:	78,535	54,579	(30% drop)
Ministers:	1,032	786	(24% drop)
Elders:	41,218	30,301	(26% drop)

In 2015 -

- 76.5% of ministers were aged over 50
- 18.7% of ministers were aged between 40-50
- 4.8% of ministers were aged under 40

Big issues we face in Leadership:

- Fall in the number of ministers – more than half due to retire within five years
- Age range of ministers – only around 20% are under 50
- Getting harder to find key office bearers
- Very few elders are under 50

Action required by Elgin High Church congregation:

- Please read the attached copy of the Statement on Hub Ministry Version 3 dated February 2020 which would have been presented for discussion and vote at the meeting on 19th March;
- If you have any queries or questions regarding the attached, please contact Session Clerk, Hazel Dickson, hazelandjohn@mypostoffice.co.uk, or leave a message on 01343 540949 as soon as possible. Either the Rev Jenny Adams or Session Clerk will respond to your enquiry;
- **Any objections to the attached Hub Ministry proposal must be with Session Clerk by no later than 31st August 2020;**
- If you are in agreement with the attached Hub Ministry proposal, no further action is required.

Ephesians 4:11-12 NIV: So, Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up□

Mission Statement

Elgin High Church's vision is to be a welcoming, vibrant church in our community with Jesus Christ at the centre, inspiring our worship and service

REG SCOTTISH CHARITY: SC005240 / SC016720

Contacts

Paula Baker 01542 832662
pbaker@churchofscotland.org.uk

Rev Jenny Adams 01343 830276
JAdams@churchofScotland.org.uk

Locum: Rev Sonia Palmer 07748 700929
sonia.palmer@yahoo.com

Session Clerk: Hazel Dickson 01343 540949
hazelandjohn@mypostoffice.co.uk

Clerk to the Board: Shona Jamieson 01343 860367
shondie44@aol.com

Treasurer: Sue Davies 01343 333552
suebuttercase@hotmail.com



Rev Sonia Palmer



Rev Jenny Adams

