

A Message From The Manse...

5th January 2021

Dear Friends

All those comments about Covid--19 which we have heard for so many months - how we're in an unprecedented position, we've not been here before, this is totally new...seem to have worn rather thin. Since yesterday, all over the UK, we're back where we were before in March - in lockdown bar a few tweaks. And it's precisely where no one wanted or wants to be - and that includes our scientists, virologists, advisers, politicians, as well as all of us. And from a practical point of view that means a change for the Church: no face to face worship, other than funerals and weddings and they remain restricted. As long as these restrictions remain in force, that means we shall not be able to worship in the Church building or in the hall. Disappointing though that is, we have always emphasised at Castlehill that all we do in this pandemic must be safe for all and follow the government guidelines. That cannot and must not change now.

As a result, Church will focus for the foreseeable future on online presentations on the Church website and Facebook page. We shall later this week together with our friends produce the next booklet which will be posted out to those who do not have access to the Internet. Also available is the Presbytery Prayer booklet and we can post that out as well if you don't already receive it - let us know if you are interested. We shall continue to explore new ways of keeping in touch: can I encourage you to do the same and also to contact me for a chat if you're getting a bit Covid-weary. It's ok not to feel ok at this time but it's not ok to keep those feelings to yourself - let's make a more determined effort to share that load this time round.

We are a community within the community but we shall only be such if we communicate with each other: good news as well as bad. If you hear of something happening, pass word on - it doesn't matter how often we hear of it.

It is vital that we remind ourselves that places of worship may be shut again, but the Church will not stop - the Church is the people: let no one feel isolated or forgotten at this time. Your friends at Castlehill are here for you: we ARE in this TOGETHER. Let's make the first positive goal to communicate when people receive the vaccination: so far I know of two in our congregation: let me know as that changes because every individual vaccination is like lighting another candle in our present darkness. But we ARE in this TOGETHER with GOD and we trust that sooner or later the light will overcome the darkness and the negativity and the feelings of hopelessness and helplessness. As we journey on

through these strange and challenging times together, so we shall travel out of them together, when we do not know but we trust that time will come.

Significantly this week saw the death of Gerry Marsden who became famous for the song You'll never walk alone. The song lives on and offers up-to-date encouragement for us. Can I suggest we seek it out on Youtube or Spotify or whatever and listen to it again - together at a distance!

May you all be more aware of God's blessings at this difficult time and discover again the strength and wealth of our friendship.

Your friend

Paul