

The Church of Scotland

Maxton and Mertoun linked with Newtown linked with St Boswells

Scottish Charities No: SC013481, SC000575, SC010210

February 2021

Dear friends

I sincerely hope that you are all keeping well and that you coped with the restrictions of Christmas and New Year and are coping still as they have continued. 2020 is behind us, but the restrictions at present are not and at the beginning of the year these were increased. As I was listening and watching some of the Inauguration of the new president of the USA recently, I was touched especially by the young poet laureate and her words of hope. She may only have been focussing on the USA and all that was happening there, but there was a message of hope for us too. She spoke about Unity, and of course as we in our linked Charge come together in union, these words are good for us too. I know that along with this letter you are being asked to vote on our union and ask you to prayerfully consider this. "In truth and faith we trust", she says. For Christians the truth and faith the hope we trust in is that of God, our Father, son and Holy Spirit, who loves us unconditionally. There is always light she says if only we are brave enough to see it. That light for us is the light that we know from the gospel of John chapter 1 verse 5, is the light that shines even in the darkness.

As we began this New Year, we began with the hope of a vaccine that would bring hope, and that is still the case. As people are vaccinated, we hope that our NHS staff will get some relief from the pressures that they are facing at this time, and we give thanks to God for them, for all who are involved with the research, manufacture and distribution of the vaccines that will help life as we know it get back to some kind of normality. So hope continues through darkness, and light and hope is always there for us. Of course the restrictions also meant that our limited number within Church services had to also be suspended again. But Helen and I were still permitted to be in Church to record services, which we are continuing to do. These can be seen 'live' on our Charge Facebook page at 10.30 am, and a You Tube recording is

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uploaded to our Charge website on a Sunday afternoon, as well as on our on demand phone line - the number for which is: 01896 404491.

We are continuing with our monthly zoom services, which means we can see one another, even if it is on a screen, and we have begun a Bible Study group, which you are all welcome to join in too, the details of these are on our Website. Other meetings to take place on Zoom, our elders come together in meetings so that the work of the Church continues and our buildings kept secure, and our treasurers welcome all the donations they receive to help them pay the bills which continue to come in. So thank you for your continued support as members in keeping our buildings going at this time.

Our used stamps are still being collected, so if you have stamps, please keep hold of them until we our Churches are open again, Ann Smith will be happy to have them and pass them on for the work of world mission in our Church nationally.

It has been amazing as to how we have adapted in Church and in society to how we do things. I know that many of you are missing seeing loved ones, I miss my family too. We do however have technology that is helping some of us. Who would have thought that we would be using technology to the extent we have been in the past year. It is not the same as seeing someone physically, and I am aware that there are many in our congregations, our parishes that do not have technology to help them, so their isolation is felt so much more I think. We are of course fortunate in our communities to have good neighbours and people who look out for one another.

And we think too of our young people, the work they are doing along with their parents in keeping up with school work along with their teachers, giving guidance, helping them continue with their learning has been awesome.

We do have so much to give thanks for at this time, so please keep hoping, keep praying, keep loving, and keep giving thanks to the Lord our God, who is with us, his light shining for us to follow.

Shalom

Sheila