

ERSKINE PARISH CHURCH



THE TORCH



Flashlight
Edition

The Torch is the quarterly Church Magazine of
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We cannot ignore a hurting world...

I need a truer vision, Lord, a vision filled with Thee.
To see the needy world again with eyes willing to see.
A world where people are hurting and hungry every day,
A world that's ready and waiting to hear what You would say.
I need a wider vision, Lord, a vision filled with Thee –
To see that lonely person down the street from me.
The teenager who's all mixed up, people who've been abused,
The daily cares in my neighbourhood - Lord I want to be used!
Give me a new vision, Lord, a vision filled with Thee,
To see the world and my neighbourhood as Your eyes would see.
Help me use my gifts, dear Lord in ways that glorify You,
To act with loving kindness toward those with a different view.
A truer, wider, new vision, Lord, that is what I need,
To carry out Your commands in word, and thought and deed!

“God, grant me the **Serenity** to accept the things I cannot change,
Courage to change the things I can – and **Wisdom** to know the difference. Amen”

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From the Editor.....

A strange and challenging time we live indeed! Lifestyles have been turned upside down and we wonder where it is all going and what the outcomes will be.....

With the lock-down, sadly it was not possible to produce a paper copy of the Torch this time around, but in the interest of contact and continuity, we decided to put together a shortened version to be called “The Flashlight”.

When we are able to print as normal, then the Flashlight will slot into the next paper copy as a supplement. We hope that despite all the trauma and sadness around that you had a peaceful Eastertide, with the hope and comfort that Jesus’ life on Earth brings.

Today, on the international front, there have been more happenings, some caused by Man, and others by Nature, with so many having negative effects on the World community; also there is a “blame culture” around, which is sad to see.....

It is indeed a time of unrest, uncertainty, fear and difficulty for so many. One hope we share is our Christian faith, which offers unequivocal support to all, and this faith and love are around us, helping us at good times and the not so good...

The Gospel story once again reaches out to us and we can marvel at the wonder of Jesus’ life and ministry and His great love for us all. I hope you enjoy this Edition of the Torch – Flashlight Edition!

Blessings to all

Jim Rutherford (aka “Ed”)

Meet your Torch Team!

Here we are, pens and pencils poised, keyboards at the ready!

Jackie Burnett, Elizabeth McDade, Valerie Marquis, John Leonard, Jack McBeth, Jim Rutherford.

Now we have our own space on the EPC Website you can contact and send copy to us at:

torch.epc@gmail.com

It is very helpful to us if you can use this method for articles, as it can save a lot of re-typing! Our preferred font is Arial 14 for the body of articles. Looking forward to hearing from you!

Sharing Thoughts – Rev David

Dear Friends,

I hope this letter finds you and your loved ones safe and well. This has been an enormously challenging situation for individuals, families and churches. Whether we have been shielding, self-isolating, serving our families and neighbours or home-schooling- the virus has brought us into a world none of us could have foreseen or chosen. As I write this today, I am once again trying to do some work in a corner of the house that doesn't have too much noise pollution from my three fed up children who just want their lives to go back to normal!

It has not been easy to minister through this, and it has not been easy to shift our idea of what 'church' is. Nevertheless, as much as we did not plan or foresee this crisis, I firmly believe God not only known from all eternity we would face this, but also equipped us with what we need to come through it as a church, His church. Indeed, in Paul's speech in Acts 17 he declares God has determined the very times, places, and reasons for our lives. That is not always an easy pill to swallow. Sometimes, I myself cannot see what possible good or God-glorifying outcomes will emerge from where we find ourselves. But, several months into lockdown, let me share with you a few, simple things I am beginning to thank God for.

1. Our value for church, for meeting together has been increased. We can have excitement and anticipation for what we can do with our renewed energy and love for church once we can gather again.
2. We have learned to be less reliant on our 'civilisation', from assuming certain things in our lives will always be the same, to relying more on God Himself.
3. We have dramatically increased our reach as a church through broadcasting online, and a new CD ministry for those cut off from the internet.
4. It has shown me as a minister the depth and sincerity of EPC's love and care for one another. It is an honour to pastor a church that loves each other so well
5. My hope, my prayer through all this, has been that since church is (in a way) more accessible than ever, God will have been using this season to draw people to hear the Gospel message who wouldn't have otherwise, so they would put their trust in Christ.

None of the above takes away from the many pains and challenges we have had to endure. But the Christian has a great hope, that God can use any situation on earth to glorify Himself and to work for our good. May this season come to pass shortly, that we may be together again, and enter the next phase of Erskine Parish Church's life and witness together, as the Lord's people.

Wishing you God's richest blessing

David

Our Church Family

We are all members of our Church Family, and this column is a regular feature in the Torch, recording and remembering Members who have passed on and welcoming new Members who have joined us.

We hope you will remember those who are now with God, and that you will welcome younger folks and their parents as well as adults who have joined us on our Christian journey at Erskine Parish Church.

"In my Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you"

Members who have passed on into God's Loving Care

Mrs Netta Jess (16-04-20) | Mrs Cathy Montgomery (19-05-20)

Words of comfort and hope, as true today as when they were written

***"All shall be well,
And all shall be well,
And all manner of thing shall be well."***

(Mother Julian of Norwich, 14th Century AD)

*"A ship is always safe at shore, but that is not what
it is built for"*

Albert Einstein

Musical memories linked by flowers

During lock-down, Fiona and I regularly have gone out on our permitted walks, and in doing so, often met people we know; also we met people new to us, frequently when we stopped to admire a garden – in fact we have made some new friends through just admiring gardens– nice to think that something so positive has indirectly come from something so restrictive of our day to day lives.

Looking at the work put in by those able to do so, and the great results, put me in mind of a Scots song written in 1921 (Long before my time!) in Stornoway by Agnes M McKenzie, with music arranged by Marjory Kennedy Fraser, the great collector of songs of Scotland.

I can remember singing it when a member of Greenock Junior Gaelic Choir, which is those days was conducted by the late, and great, Donnie McAllister.

I have set down some of the verses – if you know the tune, why not sing along at home?

When we get back into our Church building, maybe we will have a music night, and we could sing it then!

Enjoy!

Jim Rutherford

The song is called **“To People who have Gardens”**

(Chorus) For day's work and week's work,
As I go up and down,
There are many gardens all about the town.

v1. One that's gay with daffodils,
One where children play,
One white with cherry flow'r
Another red with may.

(Chorus)

v2. A kitten and a lilac bush,
Bridal white and tall,
And later crimson ramblers
Against a granite wall.

(Chorus)

v3. I have passed your railings,
When you never knew
And people who have gardens
I give my thanks to you.

(Chorus – Sing twice last time)

And one to broaden your smile.....

A little boy came home from Sunday school and told his mother that he had learned God's real name.

Asked by his mother what the name was he replied, "Andy."

His mother asked how he learned that, he told her that they had sung a hymn about it.

When asked by his mother to sing the hymn he sang –

“Andy walks with me

Andy talks with me

Andy tells me I am his own.....”

National Church and Guild update.....



As you are all too aware, because of the corona virus everything has had to be put on hold or cancelled altogether. This year's **General Assembly** was no exception. The General Assembly first met in 1689 and has never before been cancelled, even continuing during both world wars - but in line with the ban on all public gatherings it did not meet this year.

Any important matters which were due to be debated by this year's Assembly and which cannot wait until next year will be discussed by a body called the Commission of Assembly.

Although the Assembly did not take place, the new **Moderator**, Rev Martin Fair was still installed at a special ceremony on 16th May which was livestreamed so it could be viewed live, perhaps you watched it.

Martin Fair has been the minister of St Andrews Parish Church in Arbroath since 1992, so perhaps his appointment is significant as this year is the 700th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Arbroath.

You may already have seen Rev Fair in an edition of Reflections at the Quay on the BBC. Also, he fronted a special service for Pentecost Sunday broadcast on-line. Naturally his first few weeks in office will be restricted because of the pandemic. He will serve as Moderator until next year's Assembly.

This year's Lord High Commissioner was to have been Prince William who, after the cancellation was announced, wrote to the Moderator acknowledging the difficulties faced by the Church and its ministers but noting that it was heartening that so many congregations had re-invented themselves digitally in order to continue to provide worship, guidance and support for their congregations. The Prince asked that his warmest best wishes be passed onto all ministers, elder and members of the Church of Scotland.

The Guild too has been affected by the pandemic; to keep in touch with members during the lockdown the national office has been issuing weekly on-line editions of its newsletter containing prayers, thoughts, news and pictures from projects and from various Guilds around Scotland. One notable picture in the 19th May edition features our own Jean Inglis with Aileen Robb in the background. You look good Jean, smiling as always!



Another victim of the lockdown is the cancellation of the Guild's annual National gathering which was due to take place on 4th September in Dundee. Nevertheless, Mabel Wallace from the Lochaber Presbytery will take over as national convenor from September.

John Renwick

(Ed): *Thank you for this helpful and informative update, John.*

If members are interested to receive a copy of the Guild Newsletter, please contact Aileen Robb on 0141 812 5894.



Hi Folks,

Postponement and Interim Results!

Hope you are all keeping safe and well during our very challenging times! It has certainly brought out our creative side as we adapt to a new way of communicating with our family and friends. I have found it heart-warming to see people's reaction and their acts of kindness, from the very small gestures to the more significant with Captain Tom, but each so important in their own way.

Unfortunately, as with many large events, the Glasgow Kiltwalk had to be **postponed** on 26th April but we are still hopeful that it will go ahead later this year so watch this space! In the meantime, I wanted to acknowledge the tremendous efforts of our team **Kiltwalk Amigos** for their fundraising prior to COVID-19 lockdown and to offer our sincere thanks to all of you who kindly supported us and our chosen charity - **Alzheimer's Scotland**.

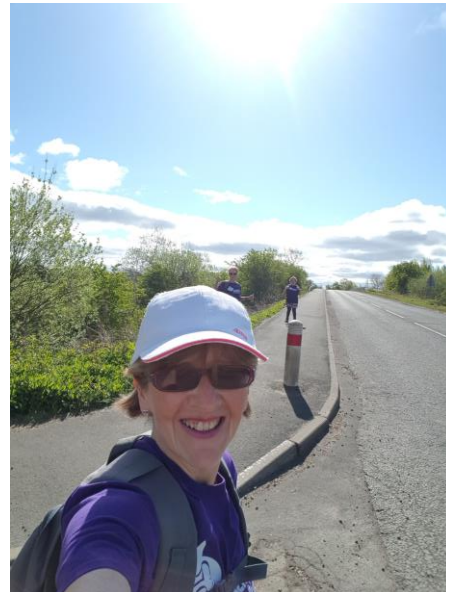
I'm delighted to tell you that our *interim* team total was £1,479.00 and with the **100%** top-up boost from Sir Tom Hunter & Hunter Foundation, this brought our total to **£2,958**. That's a fantastic amount, so well done all you! 😊 This has already been paid to Alzheimer Scotland in April and included any funds received via team transfers. Unfortunately, some of our team hadn't managed to kick-start fundraising before lock-down so here's a breakdown of the individual amounts raised so far:

Name	Fundraising Total	Total with top-up
Valerie (captain)	£612.00	£1,224.00
Margaret	£217.00	£434.00
Linda	£410.00	£820.00
Eileen	£240.00	£480.00
TOTAL	£1,479.00	£2,958.00



For anyone who pledged support and didn't get a chance to pay, or who still wants to help when the Glasgow Kiltwalk is rescheduled, then don't worry, we will be back to collect when our congregation and friends are reunited, though realise that things may have changed for some of you. God bless you all special people – take care and look after each other until next time. 😊

As a small tribute to all our supporters, some of the team did a mini trial **10-mile** social distance Kiltwalk on 26th April, so I thought I would share some photos with you. Our thoughts were with you then and now!



EPC Walking Group

As with most organisations, the walking group is currently unable to meet to ensure compliance with social distancing. We hope to resume soon and enjoy the continued sunny weather.

Perhaps you have enjoyed walking a few extra miles solo during Covid-19 isolation and want to continue with some company? It's a great escape from everyday life and proven to improve physical and mental health and mobility.

If you would like to join us and make new friends, feel free to come along. Runs fortnightly on Saturday mornings from 09:00 hrs at EPC until around lunchtime. For more information, please speak or call Val Marquis on 07956 081493.

Poetry for your delight...and contemplation...

(Ed: Poetry has often been described as nurture to the soul.

I do hope you will find something to interest you in this Torch June short selection!)

(Thanks to [Selkirk Parish Church](#) 'Open Space' for sharing this)

*I will light a light
In the name of the Maker
Who lit the world
And breathed the breath of life for me.*

*I will light a light
In the name of the Son
Who saved the world
And stretched out His hand for me.*

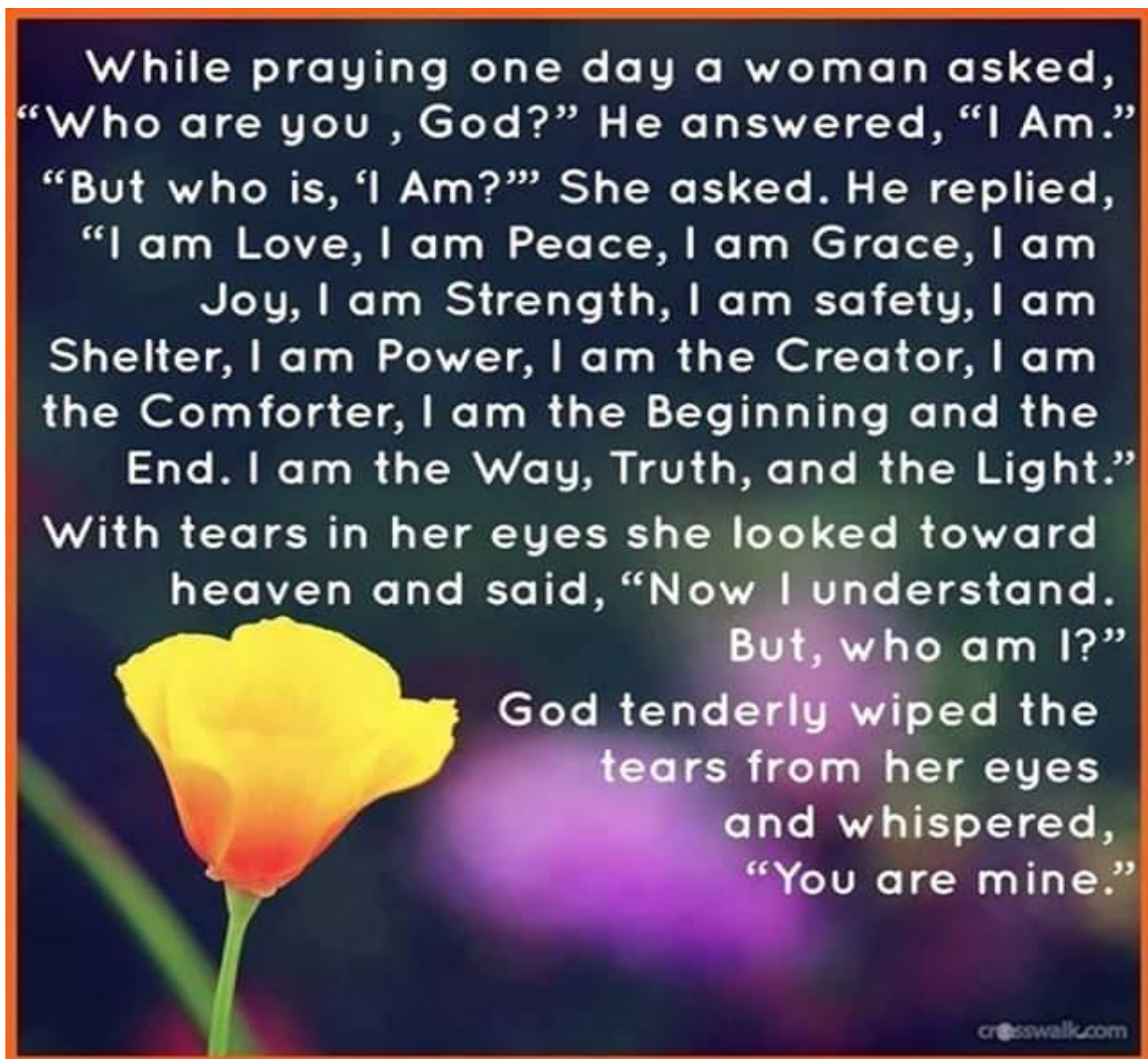
*I will light a light
In the name of the Spirit
Who encompasses the world
And blessed my soul with yearning.*

SNOWFALL by Margaret Clunie

I've always wondered through my life when snow is on the ground
Why it's so quiet and peaceful and hardly any sound
Just a picture scene of purest white before it turns to slush
To stand and marvel for a while why there is such a hush
Children revel in the snow, throw snowballs, have such fun
Build snowmen, slides and sledging as I did when I was young
But now that I am older my joy is just the sight
The peace and silence of a morning and the world of purest white.

When you are old and grey and full of sleep,
And nodding by the fire, take down this book,
And slowly read, and dream of the soft look
Your eyes had once, and of their shadows deep;
How many loved your moments of glad grace,
And loved your beauty with love false or true,
But one man loved the pilgrim soul in you,
And loved the sorrows of your changing face;
And bending down beside the glowing bars,
Murmur, a little sadly, how Love fled
And paced upon the mountains overhead
And hid his face amid a crowd of stars.

WB Yeats



A note from the Financial Convenor

The church is a gathering of God's people and although we cannot gather together for worship just now, we still have to maintain our building and meet our financial commitments. And in these difficult circumstances for everyone I want to thank you for continuing to support the church through your offerings and donations.

Many of you responded by switching to banker's order. In May our monthly offerings from that source have risen by around 21% compared to May last year. Thank you too to those who have arranged to have your free will offering envelopes uplifted from your home.

If you wish to have details of how to use banker's orders, then please contact Maureen Burnett on 0141 812 2343. Or Maureen can also make arrangements to uplift FWO envelopes from your home. And just a reminder that if you pay a significant amount of tax and haven't signed up to the gift aid scheme then please consider it. By signing up the church may be able to claim a tax rebate from the government of 25% of your charitable donations at no cost to yourself. Maureen will be willing to give you details of how you can do this.

Your response has been magnificent. But naturally our total income has dropped substantially, not only through the absence of Sunday collections but also the loss of rental income from the community organisations who are prevented from using our premises. Also, the closure of the Hub will have a severe impact on our finances. Last year the Hub donated £18,000 to the church but that figure will not be achieved this year. Whilst there will be some savings in gas and electricity all our other congregational commitments still have to be paid so please continue to support your church.

Thank you and God bless

John Renwick

Deep Clean.....

The Torch understands that the Church premises have been given a Deep Clean, and that the process will be repeated before the Church building will be open for use by the congregation, whenever this will be.....time for us to remember as written in the hymn “We are the Church together”

We are missing the interchange with each other so much, but it will all work out in the scheme of things...

Blessings

Jim R

Thanks, Best wishes, more Thanks!

I noticed that some changes had happened that I felt merited a mention here.

Fred Thomas has been a stalwart Elder of this congregation for many years and also very capably handled the Hall lets, keeping things running smoothly to the benefit of all concerned.

He has now stood down from both responsibilities due to health reasons – thanks Fred for all you did for our church community, and for the way you did it. We do hope your health will stabilise.

Jackie Burnett is also moving on – she has been Church Officer for over 8 years and has been a real resource person in that role – Thanks are certainly due Jackie, for all the ways you helped the church to function, and we wish you all the best in your new enterprise !

While I was chatting to Jackie she said that she and Fred would also like to thank all the caring folk in EPC who had helped their family through a very difficult time over the past few years due to bereavements and health issues – the Torch is happy to pass this message on!

Jim Rutherford

“Afore we go.....”

OUR SERVICES:

At the time of writing, lock-down regulations are still operative, so there are no services with the congregation present; however, Rev David has used available technology to have two sessions each week – to find out more, please follow the church Website which will give you current information on the total situation as it unfolds!

WHAT DID YOU DO DURING LOCK-DOWN?

Here's a chance to share how you have coped during lock-down..... Things you did; New skills developed; Old skills re-used; Kindnesses shown; Poignant moments; Laughter shared; Virtual celebrations; Making music; Keeping fit; Keeping fed; Social distancing; and anything you can think of that you would like to share with our Church community in the Torch.....

POEM WRITTEN ABOUT THE HUB

On page 20 of the March 2020 Torch We printed a poem written about the Hub –at the time information as to the author could not be found – anyway, we are pleased to let you know that the verses were written by EPC's very own Margaret Clunie – thanks again Margaret, and we look forward to enjoying more of your work in due course!

Thanks to all our contributors, and we also would like to thank you, our readers, for reading this “Flashlight” edition of the Torch and we hope you have enjoyed it!

Watch out for new articles, thoughts and issues, and remember we are very happy to have contact with our readers, so get that e-mail ready, or write/ type out what it is and leave it in the Torch Box in the Hall of Fellowship when the Church is accessible once again! (Remember to give a contact in case we need to call you).

If you are unsure about writing for the Torch, do not worry, help will readily be given. We do not know all the answers, but are happy to chat things through and help if we can!

Jim Rutherford