

PRISM



News & views from Craigmillar Park Church, Edinburgh

A worshipping and caring community, following Jesus Christ

www.craigmillarpark.org



2020 – 21 A Year in View

Pauline Weibye, Session Clerk

I normally make a verbal report to our Stated Annual Meeting but we are unable to meet for such a meeting yet so I thought I would mention some of my thoughts about this past year in Prism.

This has been an extraordinary year and I'd like to thank all of you for your patience and understanding as we have wrestled with the challenges of keeping in touch, continuing our outreach to the community and stopping and restarting worship with all of the physical restrictions.

Some people have worked their socks off – Lorne MacDougall, our fabric convener, in particular, who has cheerfully borne the burden of more form-filling than any one person should have to do in a single year and who has done so with amazing good grace. His efforts, and those of so many more, including our volunteer cleaners, have kept us all safe but, more importantly, have allowed us to continue to worship God faithfully and appropriately.

Who would have thought 18 months ago that such worship would have been online for such a long period? But our minister, Alex, rose to the challenge

of not being able to hold in-person services for a few months and produced services which we were able to record for the website or to circulate in written format for those without computer access. We know that those services have been greatly enjoyed by many people and we will continue to make worship available in this way.

We tried a number of ways of keeping in touch with members over the year. The elders phoned frequently, of course, and helped with a number of practical and pastoral concerns. The prayer garden proved popular, with local people as well as church members. We distributed goody bags at Christmas time to all members and I'm told that many people enjoyed the prayer and Gospel that we included as well, of course, as the chocolate! We used our Facebook page to publish daily prayers and reflections during Advent, illustrating them with pictures from

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Information about the Lend an Ear Mission Initiative and Presbytery Planning

A Letter from the Editor

Welcome to our special Summer edition of Prism. You may be aware that we usually take a break from publishing Prism in July and August. This year, because the circumstances of the pandemic meant that we were unable to hold our Stated Annual Meeting we are publishing an overview of what would normally be discussed at the meeting.

We are also welcoming back our minister Alex after a period of illness. The Session and congregation are delighted to see him back and we look forward to his first in-church service on Sunday, 1 August.

Also in this edition are the usual rotas for church services through August and September, an article from Presbytery about the planning process currently in progress and an extra column from our regular contributor John Know, for which I thank him very much.

If you have any ideas, suggestions or would like to contribute to our 'My Favourite Things' feature please get in touch.

Blessings and thanks

Lindsay

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the nativity exhibitions of past years. That too reached a surprising number of people.

With the help of Michael, our Mission Development Worker, we made progress on setting up a Listening Service jointly with Reid Memorial and Priestfield (detailed information on the service is included on page 3 of this edition of Prism).

We did not always get it right and we have much more to do, but we have learned that we can be creative and that some of these innovations – maybe all of them – were well worth doing.

We lost a number of members through death last year and we miss all of them dearly. We remember them and their families and friends in our prayers. Our roll has declined but there are many congregations with even smaller numbers than

ours and I'm confident that we can still make a difference. Of course, our congregation, like all others in the Church of Scotland, faces a period of uncertainty as we plan for a different future. We've done our best to keep you informed as that work progresses but do just ask me or the minister if you have any particular questions.

Thank you again to everyone who does so much to support the community we have here in Craigmillar Park. It's not possible to name everyone but we do see your work and we are grateful. Many thanks to all who do so much to advance the work of Christ's kingdom here in this part of the city. We are indeed blessed – thanks be to God.

Pauline

A Festival of Spirits

Our regular column from congregational member John Knox

This summer's Edinburgh festivals will be shadows of their normal size and shape. They will be ghostly spirits drifting through large airy marquees. They will sadly remind us of what life was like before the Covid epidemic. But they will also give us hope that music, drama, and all the arts, will return in full form one sunny day.



Edinburgh will be a quieter town without the half million festival visitors. The formal Festival will only be staging a quarter of its usual concerts, in large marquees erected in Edinburgh University quad and at Edinburgh Academy. The usual 3,000 Fringe shows will be cut and sliced in a similar fashion. The Book Festival will move from large tents in Charlotte Square to rooms in the Art College. The Military Tattoo has been cancelled altogether.

But you can't stamp out the festival spirit completely. It's part of our human nature, to celebrate, to take days of rest, to enjoy performances and the arts. Churches have been great champions of festivals throughout history: Christmas, Easter and Saints Days. Mosques and Temples too have their festivals. The secular world is no less devoted to carnivals and rock concerts.

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Indeed, I think the arts should play a bigger part in our lives and in our economy. Scotland's "arts, entertainment and recreation" sector already employs 78,000 people. That's more than the finance industry or agriculture but it's still less than three per cent of the economy.

The arts is one of what I call "the infinite industries", like education and health, where there is no limit to the final output and no great strain on the earth's resources. The Covid crisis has shown us that governments have been slow to recognise the employment potential of the creative industries, being more interested in saving manufacturing and transport. We should be "building back bet-

ter" by investing in our long-term future as human beings.

Festivals and the arts are not just good for our economic health, they are essential for our spiritual health as well. They challenge and delight us and give a wider perspective to our work-a-day lives.

So this summer I am going to enjoy what there is of the Festivals. And indeed, my local community centre, Bridgend Farmhouse, is one of 17 organisations staging events over the weekend of 14-15 August in a brave attempt to revive the famous Craigmillar Festival. Do come along.



Telephone 07789 024 011

The listening service *Lend an Ear*, our joint Mission initiative with Reid Memorial and Priestfield churches, is now up and running, writes our Mission Development Worker and originator of the project, Michael McMullin.

What is it?

Lend an Ear provides a listening ear to callers who want to speak about anything that is on their mind, in a safe, confidential and non-judgmental environment.

The listeners aim to offer back reflection and empathetic support to encourage and empower callers to find their own way to cope with their particular challenges, great or small.

What isn't it?

While listeners will be equipped with contact details of other organisations that callers might find useful, it is not intended to be a comprehensive general information service.

Nor is it a formal counselling service, or advice centre.

Who is providing the service?

Volunteers from the congregations of Priestfield, Craigmillar Park and Reid Memorial churches have undergone training and will provide the listening service.

Who can use it?

Initially, it is available to the Church family of the three churches, so please pass on details of it to anyone you know who might find it useful.

We aim to expand it further into the community,

once the volunteers have had an opportunity to gain experience and the service has had a chance to become established.

How does it work?

At this stage, it will be by phone only, **every Thursday, 10am to 6pm.**

The number to call is **07789 024 011.**

When someone calls, the listener explains the boundaries of the initiative, especially regarding confidentiality, and if both caller and listener are happy that the service is appropriate, then they can proceed.

Each call can be no longer than 40 minutes, but further calls, if necessary, can be arranged, to a maximum of six calls. The phone is only manned every Thursday, from 10 am till 6 pm, and calls cannot, unfortunately, be taken at any other times.

Finally.....could you please continue to keep the Lend an Ear initiative in your prayers. The volunteer listeners have all put in great efforts to get us to where we are, and the support across all three congregations has been both humbling and strengthening to everyone involved.

Thank you, and God Bless

Michael

A Few of My Favourite Things

Continuing our series, the Editor Linsay Given Black shares some of the things that she loves.

Hymn

Choosing a favourite hymn is difficult – there are so many that evoke feelings and memories. After a lot of thought I have gone for 'Jerusalem' with words by William Blake of course, set to music by Sir Hubert Parry in 1916. It is perhaps now a hymn associated most closely with England (it was the official Commonwealth Games England Anthem in 2018, or so Google tells me) and the Women's Institute but I remember singing it with great enjoyment at school, back in the days of black and white. The words are both stirring and beautiful while the melody is uplifting – always a good thing in a hymn, in my opinion!

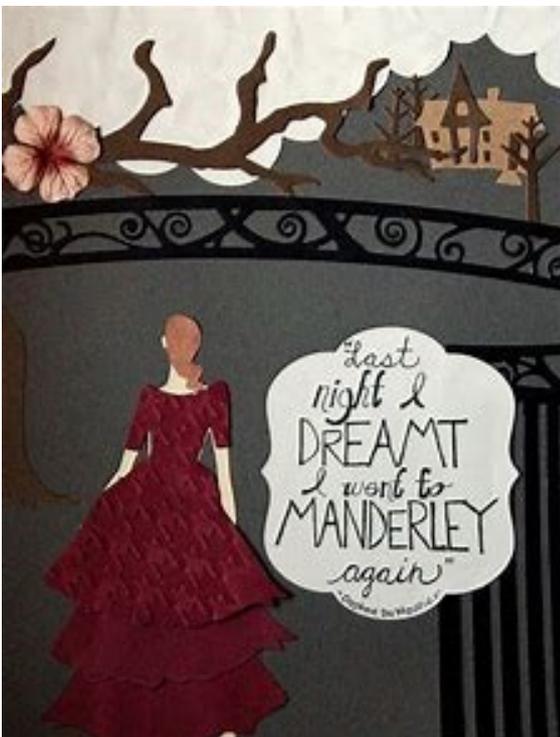
Book

As a person who usually has two or even three books on the go at any one time, this is another very challenging choice! I have plumped finally for Rebecca by Daphne du Maurier. I love almost all of her books and she was a most interesting if not necessarily entirely likeable person – I recommend highly the biography written by Margaret Forster, who was given access to personal papers, not previously in the public domain, by du Maurier's family

I choose Rebecca because it is a book which I read first as a teenager and reread periodically over the ensuing years without any loss of enjoyment. Written in 1938, it has never been out of print and has of course been adapted many times as a film and television series. It must surely have one of the most famous opening sentences in literature. What I did find, however, was that my perspective changed with maturity! As a young girl I thought Max de Winter impossibly glamorous and the second Mrs de Winter, the never named narrator of the novel, rather wet! Rereading it perhaps 20 years later, I found my opinion had completely turned around. I return to it perhaps every ten years and it never disappoints.

Film

I love the movies, particularly old Hollywood movies and have often played a variation of 'Desert Island Discs' involving choosing eight films to take to a desert island.



Obviously some of the choices change with time but a constant is 'Some Like It Hot', Billy Wilder's classic black and white romantic comedy from 1959. It is to me a perfect film. Beautifully written, impeccably cast and so very funny. Who can forget Jack Lemmon and Tony Curtis in drag, Tony Curtis' fantastic imitation of Cary Grant, Joe E Brown tangoing with Jack Lemmon in his female persona or indeed George Raft sending up his stereotypical gangster character.

It simply cannot be beaten and I return to it often on rainy and cold days when I want to laugh and admire great cinema artistry. I love it.

Members of the congregation are asked to share a few of their favourite things: the constant is the hymn (though we may change to carol for December!) but otherwise it is quite free form – you can

stick with film and book or choose, perhaps, painting or city or graphic novel. As long as you choose three things, the world is your oyster.

Linsay, Editor

Presbytery Planning

The Way Forward

Rev. Jack Holt, Convenor of the Presbytery Strategy Team, outlines the issues that the Church faces:

This year at the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, the sombre tone of some of the debates revealed the present state of the Church as an institution. The difficult but necessary decisions made will have very real consequences for the national Church, and for the future of our own congregation. This was recognised by the Church's magazine

Life & Work, which took the step of producing immediately afterwards a special four-page supplement sharing the outcomes. *General Assembly 2021: Special Supplement - Life and Work*.

Pre-COVID, the Church was already aware that to safeguard its future in an increasingly secular society, something far-reaching needed to happen to the structures of the Church. Also, that there needed to be a renewed focus by the local and regional Church on its core values of mission and service, seeking to look outward and to proclaim with urgency and boldness its gospel message in word and deed. So, through the agreement of a Radical Action Plan, and by the appointment of Assembly Trustees and, through them, a Chief Executive, this major overhaul was initiated.

But then the pandemic struck, and while the Church supported the national effort to suppress the virus by closing its buildings, its impact affected the Church mostly financially. Local congregations learned quickly how to produce worship online, followed by the courts of the Church discovering how to conduct their business via online Zoom meeting, but nothing could block the significant loss of income the Church has endured. And it was this factor that required both a speeding up of the process for change, and the need to propose the dramatic steps to achieve stability.

So, at the General Assembly, the Assembly Trustees set out the problem: presently the Church is using £11million of reserves annually to meet its commitments. This cannot continue indefinitely. To live within its means, the Church could now afford only 600 ministry posts (parish ministers plus Ministries Development Staff), plus maintain 60 vacancies (presently that number is over 200). To achieve this number the presbyteries across Scotland were allocated a number of posts, and



instructed to achieve that number by 2025. For Edinburgh Presbytery that presently works with the number 78.2, the allocated number is now 48.5.

Two quotes from the conveners who presented these proposals are worth repeating here:

The Very Rev Dr John Chalmers, Convenor of the Assembly Trustees said,

"We are well aware that this is not an easy ask. Every one of us is a member or minister serving in parishes that will be affected by this. We know reshaping the Church around this will involve painful decisions. But in the goodness and grace of God we trust."

The Rev Rosie Frew, Convenor of the Faith Nurture Forum said,

"We are draining the resources of the Church – people, morale, finance – just to keep this broken system going. Without a radical treatment plan the Church of Scotland will not survive."

In a few months' time, the Presbytery of Edinburgh will have its first look at the draft Plan that seeks to achieve not only the reduction in numbers, but also the reduction in the buildings being considered necessary, plus enabling the local church to fully engage in the Five Marks of Mission which is at the centre of national planning:

1. To proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom
2. To teach, baptise and nurture new believers
3. To respond to human need by loving service
4. To seek to transform unjust structures of society, to challenge violence of every kind and pursue peace and reconciliation
5. To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the life of the earth.

The Plan will outline the future of our own congregation in all these respects, and this article is to prepare all of us that change is likely and to see how we creatively may respond to this changing time.

2020 Accounts



As we told all members, it was not possible to hold a Stated Annual Meeting this year because of Covid restrictions. Instead, we circulated a couple of finance papers, offered the full Accounts 2020 to anyone who wished a copy, and invited questions.

Only one question was received and it concerned the inclusion in the budget for 2021 of the amount of £3000 for the organist's salary; the person posing the question thought that the organist had retired and wondered if the inclusion in the budget of this sum meant that we would be seeking another organist.

The answer provided by the Treasurer is:

"The budget was drawn up and approved in January before the organist resigned from his paid position in March. The sum is retained in the budget for the moment in case of any further changes. As regulars will know, the organist has not retired and is instead playing on a voluntary basis, for which we are hugely grateful."

As ever, please feel free to raise questions on our finances at any time, either through your elder or directly to the Treasurer, Christopher McLeod (his contact details are below).

Who's Who at Craigmillar Park

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Church Website	www.craigmillarpark.org	webmaster@craigmillarpark.org

Rota for August and September

	Reader	Church Officer
August		
1	Linsay Given Black	Julia Yarker
8	Norman Weibye	Gordon Braidwood
15	Christopher McLeod	Sam Breadon
22	Torin Wyndham-McCoy	Martin Given Black
29	Chloe Black	Julia Yarker
September		
5	John Humphrey	Gordon Braidwood
12	Alison Leslie	Sam Breadon
19	John Kelly	Martin Given Black
26	Linsay Given Black	Julia Yarker

Stewarding

August	
1	Christopher McLeod (convener), Linsay Given Black, John Humphrey, John Kelly, Alison Leslie
8	Christopher McLeod (convener), Flora Paton, Ann Thanisch, Pauline Weibye, Julia Yarker
15	Sheena Stenhouse (convener), Flora Paton, Ann Thanisch, Pauline Weibye, Julia Yarker
22	Sheena Stenhouse (convener), Colin Aitken, Sam Breadon, Kathleen Cockerell, Linsay Given Black
29	Gordon Braidwood (convener), Colin Aitken, Sam Breadon, Kathleen Cockerell, Linsay Given Black
September	
5	Gordon Braidwood (convener), John Humphrey, John Kelly, Alison Leslie, Flora Paton
12	Christopher McLeod (convener), Linsay Given Black, John Humphrey, John Kelly, Alison Leslie
19	Christopher McLeod (convener), Flora Paton, Ann Tanisch, Pauline Weibye, Julia Yarker
26	Sheena Stenhouse (convener), Flora Paton, Ann Thanisch, Pauline Weibye, Julia Yarker

The deadline for the next edition of *Prism* is Sunday 29th August.

Please send items to Linsay —
prism@craigmillarpark.org or 0131 667 2849.