



# Diocese of Aberdeen and Orkney

## Scottish Episcopal Church

### Newsletter – Wednesday 27 May 2020

#### From the Bishop

I have been thinking a great deal about facemasks this week. I imagine that you, like me, will have seen film of people returning to church in Italy, where both priests and people are wearing masks during worship. Here we are encouraged to wear masks in shops and other places where social distancing is difficult. The SEC guidelines to the churches will come soon, but I can see that at the very least I will need to be wearing a facemask out and about.

Now one of my curates, Revd Dr Jenny Holden, is ready to go. Her mother has made masks for her in liturgical colours! This creativity has prompted me to start looking for patterns on-line, as I will be able to make my own. There are lots of how-to-do-it films on Facebook, the one I was looking at had already had more than 40 million views.



When it comes to facemasks, I will follow the guidelines (from the Scottish Government and from the SEC), but there will be a sadness for me. One of my delights before lockdown was being out and about, smiling at friend or stranger. You can learn a great deal about another person by being able to see their face – all of it. In Scripture, seeing face-to-face is used as a metaphor for a relationship where each is fully known. In the Old Testament, Moses saw the face of God, and so shone with God's glory that his face had to be covered! St Paul, in his first letter to the Corinthians, writes of time when we will each fully know God, as indeed God already knows us. *'For now we see only a reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known.'* (1 Cor 13:12) The facemasks that we will wear will be a sign that neither we nor the world is healed. They will make us long for the day when *'And we all, who with unveiled faces contemplate the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.'* (2 Cor 3:18) So, each time we see or have to wear a facemask, it could be a prompt to say a prayer for the healing of the world.

#### **Provincial Worship – Thursdays**

6.30pm Service of the Word (every week)

#### **Provincial Worship – Sunday 31 May – Pentecost**

11am: The Rt Revd Anne Dyer will lead a celebration of the Eucharist from Aberdeen, assisted by members of the churches in Shetland.

The link to these services will be on the Scottish Episcopal Church website and Facebook page.

7pm Sunday, light a candle, place it in your window, and pray for all affected by the coronavirus crisis.

## From David Crosley, St Mary-on-the-Rock, Ellon

How many weeks have we been in lock down now? I must admit that the days seem to run into each other, but with one exception! Right at the beginning of this pandemic we decided here at home that Sunday was going to be different, but how? Well to start with it means putting on decent clothes (not that we don't at any other time) and we would continue to 'go to church'. Not as normal though, sitting in our lounge with a copy of the liturgy and joining the Provincial Eucharist via YouTube on the television. We have also discovered that following our Provincial broadcast we can join the end of Sunday worship program which is followed by Reflection from the Quay on BBC1. And of course, Sunday morning would not be complete without our coffee after the service. Regrettably, no cake, but then as the Dean isn't with us in person either, not too much of a problem. (Sorry Dennis).

But, there are some other daily routines, apart from household that we do try to keep and that is the daily 'permitted' exercise. Ellon is a most beautiful part of Scotland, especially at this time of year and blessed with a large number of varied areas that you can walk. From the many footpaths along the river Ythan, around the various woods or even some of the longer country roads that are much quieter than normal. And during this time of enforced isolation, meeting and exchanging greetings with total strangers (at the prescribed social distancing of course). Is this part of what God is asking us to do in this uncertain time? Talk to more people? You don't have to explain or even tell them your beliefs, you are quite possibly being the one highlight of their day with a smile and cheery greeting.

And of course, stopping whenever the opportunity arises for photographs.



## From Rose Duncan, Westing, Unst

### Western Window

From pounding gale and grey soaking rain the sun gleams out and the vision is changed to the deepest blue of any ocean. Astride it are white, whiter than white stallions, joyously exploding on the little island "holm" thrown up by continental collision aeons ago.

How is it, as I sit by my window, trying to uphold in prayer, the overwhelming flood of suffering and death in the world around us, that an exultation fills my heart? Yes, a mixture of pure joy, love and thanks at the privilege to be here. It reassures me that Life itself, indestructible, will continue to flourish as our earth is given an opportunity to heal the environmental problems we have created. Our amazing planet is filled in Creation with the HOLY Spirit that continues to tell us - Life is eternal. Not just in the somewhat rocky or muddy pilgrimages in this life, no-one escapes the pains, the losses or dying. They are essential parts of Life's cycle. The bones are shattered and hearts broken but all we need to restore life is to breathe.

As we let the wind fill our sails, the grey cloud returns but the inner vision is retained The wind coming from where we know not but cleansing the winter debris of death and the rain falls to maintain the resurrection of spring coming to life.



I am sending out a newsletter every week on a Wednesday.

This newsletter comes as. PDF, and an on-line copy can be read on the Diocesan website.

The editions for previous weeks can be found there – look in the News section on the front page.

I would love to hear from you – tell us what are doing with your time, what is helping you to pray and stay close to God, what is helping you to remain hopeful and faithful.

**A number of you are writing poems and prose – these writings would be very welcome.**

**Tell us about new hobbies or crafts, if you are learning or discovering something new.**

**Tell us what you are missing, and what you are looking forward to as lockdown begins to lift.**

**Please send your news to me at : [bishopanne@aberdeen.anglican.org](mailto:bishopanne@aberdeen.anglican.org)**