



THE LATEST NEWS FROM GREYFRIARS & ST. NICHOLAS

Working together to support our community



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ST. NICHOLAS & GREYFRIARS CHURCHES PLAN FOR REOPENING AFTER LOCKDOWN

Find us ...

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closed.scooter.sofas

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The Church of Scotland
in Lanark

Scottish Charity Numbers
Greyfriars SC016504
St. Nicholas SC011368

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As the recovery from Covid-19 is a rapidly evolving situation the Kirk Session's will endeavour to keep all of the members and friends of the churches updated through newsletters, emails and as many other means as possible, on a regular basis.

www.churchofscotland.org.uk

Dear friends

As ministers we know how difficult these last three months have been for our church families. We been separated from family and friends and unable to gather in person, for worship. Many have been unable to say goodbye to people in ways they might normally have done at funerals.

As Christian communities we have been unable to serve the community in the same ways, with many groups and activities for young and old being cancelled.

Both of us have often struggled during this period of lockdown. Unable to lead worship in our churches, unable to visit people who are sick or in need and offer comfort. It has not been possible to sit with families when they have lost someone they love and care for. These changes to our ministry have been profound and will take much time to return to anything we could relate to as 'normal'.

However, this period has also brought out the very best in our community. Local Voluntary organisations have pulled together to create Lanarkhelps, a helpline to support those who are in need. We have witnessed neighbours supporting neighbours, new friendships formed, new ways of supporting people realised. It has seen our two churches grow even closer in supporting our community.

For many in our town and further afield this period has brought a real sense of isolation. Isolation can be a worrying place. When we are alone for many days

with only ourselves for company it can be easy to dwell on thoughts that drag us down. Our thinking can shift to only focusing on the negative and struggle to see the positive, not only in the situation we find ourselves in, but in our self as well.

For some it can be easy to spend time on their own and for others it can be profoundly challenging but we can take comfort in knowing that no matter how alone we may feel God is never far from us. God has been with us through the loneliest times during these past few months and he will remain present with us as we move into the future.

As our country slowly comes out of a lockdown some will be delighted, and others will be fearful. We all need to work together to continue to support each other and recognise that each of us will have different feelings and emotions as we move forward and move forward we must.

Already there are signs that life beginning to change and open up once again but there is still a long way to go, and as churches we have a long road ahead of us. Wherever that road takes us, we know that God will be with us.

Both of us along with our churches will continue to support our community through the love of God.

With love, care and concern



Bryan & Louise

CHURCHES OPEN FOR INDIVIDUAL PRAYER



In line with Scottish Government regulations our churches will be opening for individuals to visit for private prayer.

The Kirk Sessions of Greyfriars and St. Nicholas have both taken the decision to begin to reopen the church buildings with plans and risk assessments that have been approved by the Presbytery of Lanark.

At the time of writing, the Scottish Government only allow churches to open for individual private prayer and for funerals to take place.

St. Nicholas and Greyfriars are working together to provide a co-ordinated approach to opening. Our churches will both be open one day a week for prayer. This means that anyone can come into our buildings and sit with their thoughts, contemplate and offer their own prayers to God.

Our buildings will open with all of the changes you will have seen in other locations such as physical distancing, hand sanitiser stations, one way systems and face coverings.

St. Nicholas Church will be open on Tuesdays from 10am - 2pm.

Greyfriars Church will be open on Fridays from 10am - 2pm.

A maximum number of people allowed in the buildings at any one time has been set and you may be asked to wait outside so please dress appropriately. Doors will also be left open in the church to allow air flow.

Those who are in a high risk category are reminded to think about the risks to their health before they attend. Those who are in a clinically high risk (shielding) should not attend at this time.

We will have ushers on duty who will ask you to use the hand sanitiser and encourage you to wear a face covering if you are able. Face coverings are for the protection of those around you and we invite you to contemplate Christ's command to love one another as you consider whether or not to wear a covering. There will be a stock of disposable and reusable face masks for your use at each building.

Couples and families will be able to come together, sit together and pray together if they wish.

We are pleased to be able to welcome you into our churches to pray.

PRAYER FOCUS

We recognise that not everyone will be able to come to church for private prayer, nor will they want to. We offer this prayer for you to share in a moment of quiet.

God of all hope
we call on you today.

We pray for those
who are living in fear:
Fear of illness,
fear for loved ones,
fear of other's reactions to them.

May your Spirit give us
a sense of calmness and peace.

We pray for your church
in this time of uncertainty.
For those people who are worried
about activities resuming in our
buildings;
for those needing to make decisions
in order to keep people safe;
for those who will feel more isolated
by not being able to attend.

Grant us your wisdom.

Holy God,
we remember
that you have promised
that nothing will separate us
from your love,
demonstrated to us in Jesus Christ.

Help us turn our eyes,
hearts and
minds to you.

Amen

Funerals in Church

One of the biggest upsets for many during lockdown was the difficulty in arranging and attending, or not attending a funeral for a loved one. All churches in Scotland took the difficult decision to close for funerals during lockdown to protect everyone involved.

As our churches can now open for limited use, our ministers are able to allow funerals to take place in the churches. At this time these will only be for funerals where the committal is taking place at a cemetery and will continue to be in line with Scottish Government regulations.

In Phase 2 funerals can only be attended by

- household members of the person who has died
- close family members of the person who has died
- if no-one in the above two categories is attending, a friend of the person who has died

To ensure that those the family wish to attend in our churches with restricted capacity, our ministers will be asking for a list of individuals up to a maximum number who will be attending. Our ushers can then ensure that those the family are expecting to attend are given access to the building.

Currently the Scottish Government, along with the UK Government are not allowing singing in church buildings, and have informed Crematoria that singing should not form part of the service. Our ministers will work with families to ensure that the service is a fitting tribute to your loved one.





Our churches have been pleased to play such an active role in Lanarkhelps throughout the pandemic. The project is an initiative of local voluntary organisations - the churches in Lanark, Healthy Valleys, CCI Scotland, Lanark Community Development Trust and the Community Council.

Lanarkhelps provides a helpline which is open Monday - Saturday and offers people the opportunity to request help with prescription collection and shopping, or to seek support.

Lanarkhelps was successful in gaining significant funding from the Scottish Government Wellbeing Fund and the Renewable Energy Fund managed by South Lanarkshire Council to establish a number of different support project. These projects are open to anyone in our community who is struggling with isolation, anxiety or boredom.

The projects are:

Healthy Minds: Lanarkhelps operates a weekly lending library of jigsaws delivered to your door and can gift a mindfulness colouring book to individuals.

Dementia Support: Lanarkhelps has a

large resource bank of puzzles, games and reminiscence items that allow people suffering from memory loss or their carers to keep active. Again these items are loaned on a weekly basis and are delivered to your home.

Community Check In: Lanarkhelps operates a phone system where individuals can receive a phone call for nothing more than a chat once a week.

If you, or someone you know or care for, would like to sign up for any of these projects then visit

www.lanarkhelps.org.uk and complete the activity registration form. You can also call us on the lanarkhelps number above and ask join the projects. If you would be more comfortable, please feel free to call Bryan or Louise directly on the numbers on page 2.

Our Kirk Sessions have been delighted to work in partnership with other community groups and pray that these new links will continue long after the pandemic.

Lanarkhelps will continue to be active for the foreseeable future and we would be delighted for as many people as need it to use the service.

Remembering Robin

The congregation of St Nicholas along with our friends in Greyfriars and the wider community will have been devastated by the death of Robin Murdoch, our much loved Session Clerk. Since Moving to Lanark in 1977 with his wife Margo, Son David and Daughter Aileen, Robin has become a huge part of Lanark.

Robin's faith has always played a huge part in his life, the book of Joshua inspired Robin to join the church when he was young and he was ordained as an Elder in Greenbank Church, Glasgow in 1971 and then admitted to the Kirk Session here in St Nicholas not long after settling in Lanark. A little over 11 years ago he was invited to become Session Clerk, a position he held proudly until his death.

Robin enjoyed the opportunity to make connections with folk in the congregation and also the wider community in Clydesdale. He was extremely caring and compassionate to people in difficult or emotional circumstances, especially when he began to conduct services of worship and funerals. Many people have been comforted by Robin's pastoral care and sensitivity over the years.

As minister I have greatly appreciated the huge support and advice Robin has given to me over the past few years and we formed a great minister-Session Clerk relationship. We shared many smiles, tears and laughters along the rocky road of Church life.

Along with so many others in our church and community have been inspired by Robin's deep, strong faith, a faith which especially carried him through the last few months of his life. His sense of duty and discipleship were characteristics



which endeared Robin to our church and community.

Robin's faith was at the centre of his life alongside his family. He has been a loving husband to Margo, a wonderful dad to David and Aileen and a devoted grandpa to Catherine, Morven, Ethan and Gregor. He knew he was so very blessed to be able to be so involved with them, watch them grow up and they will have their own special memories of him.

The last few months have been very challenging, Robin's battle with a cruel and vicious cancer mixed with Lockdown restrictions have meant that life has not been easy for the family.

However Robin faced this horrible illness with courage and dignity and with the faith that God was with him.

As we mourn the loss of such a loving and compassionate gentleman we can hold onto the love which Robin leaves behind and the faith that we will meet again.

But as for me and my household, we will serve the Lord." Joshua 24:15

Join us for Worship

This period of lockdown has forced our churches into looking at the way we worship. We have been encouraged by the number of people who have commented on the ways in which different aspects of our worship have touched them in these months.

For many, not being in the church to worship is painful, but we pray that all will be able to find some hope in the different opportunities we offer.

Sunday Worship

Join us online at 11am for live worship at ondemand.greyfriars.church You can also use your phone to listen to the service by dialling **01555 807519**. You can also watch on your smart TV by activating the YouTube app and searching for Lanark Greyfriars.

You can also watch and listen to the service at any point during the week by visiting the website or calling the number.

Midweek Worship

Every Tuesday and Thursday evening at 7pm we meet using Zoom for a short act of reflective worship. Email us at zoom@lanarkgreyfriars.com for the Meeting ID and passcode.

Midweek Reflection

Each week (normally Wednesday evening) Louise posts a midweek reflection on facebook. You do not need a facebook account to watch, just visit fb.me/lanarkstnicholas to view.

Sixty Second Sermons

Bryan is posting a sixty second sermon each week. These are short and snappy and can be viewed on our facebook page (you don't need an account to view) at fb.me/langreyfriars or the YouTube page (search for 'Lanark Greyfriars').

We hope to welcome you to worship wherever and however you join us.

GIVING TO YOUR CHURCH

As Christians, we believe that one way we thank God for the love he has shown to us is by making a financial offering to his work. As members of a church family, we believe that one of the best ways to do this is to give to our church to enable God's love to be spread by our work in the community.

There are a number of ways you can give you your church.

You can give online by visiting www.churchofscotland.org.uk and clicking on the 'Donate' button. When you select 'Give to a congregation', start typing 'Lanark' and the names of our congregations will appear. You will then be able to give a gift online.

You can send a cheque to the church (addresses on page 2) made out to 'Greyfriars Parish Church' or 'St. Nicholas Parish Church'.

Should you have FWO envelopes with cash that you have put aside each week, these can be handed in to the respective Church Offices. Alternatively, if you are unable to get out you can contact us and someone will arrange collection. Please call the church offices (details on page 2) and leave a message and someone will be in touch.

We acknowledge that these are difficult times for many people however both of our churches have lost significant income due to the lockdown and the continuing closure of our buildings to community groups who pay to use them.

These are challenging times for our churches and we appreciate anything you feel able to give.