

Welcome to Stonehaven Fetteresso



Life of Worship • Life of Love • Life of Service

7th August

Each of you should give
what you have decided
in your heart to give,
not reluctantly
or under compulsion,
for God loves a cheerful giver.

2 Corinthians 9:7



DailyVerses.net

From Sunday 26th July
Sunday Services will now be
held at **9.30am** and **11am**

See letter, from James, on next
page for more information.

Dear Member of Fetteresso Church,

Reopening the Church after Lockdown

I hope that you will forgive the impersonal form of address, however, as events are moving fairly rapidly at present, writing to you in this way allows us to get in touch with our entire membership more quickly.

As you probably know, the Scottish Government has now permitted churches to open for private prayer and, on 9th July – it announced that, from the 15th, church services may begin again subject to appropriate restrictions to avoid the spread of the virus. You may have received a call from one of our elders about this already – but, as the situation is changing – we felt that it was also sensible to write to everyone and let them know what we are planning.

We are planning to re-open the church in the following steps.

On Sunday July 12th and July 19th the church will be open for private prayer only between 10am and 12noon.

From Sunday 26th July two short church services will be held each Sunday, the **first** at 9.30am and the **second** at 11am.

The reason why we are putting on two services on Sunday mornings from the 26th is that the social distancing and Scottish Government church service capacity requirements, a maximum of 50 people at a Sunday morning service, put a significant limit on how many people we can fit the church and, from what we understand from the phone survey of members which we have recently done, more people would like to come back to church at this stage than we can fit into one sitting.

We really don't want to have to turn people away at the door because our numbers are too great – so, to help us to manage that risk, we would like to ask you, if you are coming to church – to try to come to the following services:

- People with surnames A-K, please try to come to the 9.30am service
- People with surnames L-Z, please try to come to the 11am service.

You don't have to take this as a strict rule – if your allocated service time is really inconvenient for you – then please come to the other one – but we hope that you will be understanding and only do this if you really need to.

We also need to advise you that there will be a number of safety precautions which need to be adhered to.

On entering the building, you will be asked to:

- Put on a face covering – ideally bring your own – but we will have a few spares available.
- Wipe your feet on the mats provided.
- Give your name and telephone number to the person registering entry at the door (this is to allow for contact tracing if anyone in the congregation later shows COVID symptoms)
- Disinfect your hands with alcohol gel for 30 seconds.

All these steps may take a bit of time – so you may have to wait before you can enter the church. We hope, however, that you'll understand the need for this and be patient.

Once in the building we ask you to:

- Observe social distancing rules (2 meters) at all times – the chairs will be spaced out – but please only sit with someone if they are a member of your household
- Do not touch your face and only touch the surfaces you need to.
- Please **don't sing**. Although there may be music played at some points – congregational singing is not allowed under the guidelines.

You should also be aware that:

- There will be no activities for the children.
- The service will be recorded on video (although the camera will only be pointed at those leading the service).
- Once recorded, the video will be put on the “church at home” site so that those who are unable to make it to church can share in what we did.
- Scottish Government advises that those who fall within the extremely clinical vulnerable group, have been shielding, are unwell in any way, are living with anyone with Covid-19 or have either themselves or a member of their family been asked to self-isolate, should not attend.

Once the service is over we would ask you to:

- Leave by the EAST door (the one on the right of the church as you look at the organ).
- Leave promptly (we will need to clean the church after you go).
- Continue to observe social distancing restrictions (this may also mean that you need to wait a bit to exit the church)
- Disinfect your hands with the gel provided.
- Keep your face covering on until you have left the building.

Sadly, we will not be able to serve coffee and tea after the service. You should also be aware that the church hall will be locked – and therefore **access to the toilets will only be available in an emergency.**

I hope that you understand the need for all these precautions. Our primary purpose in re-opening the church is to allow us to worship God again together after the long months of lockdown. With no singing and no children it won't feel very much like the Fetteresso Church that we have grown to love, but our hope is that a good number of us will still be able to assemble, despite the restrictions.

If you don't feel free to join us again under these circumstances, we fully understand. We want to remain **one** family under God, even if we worship apart. For that reason we will be continuing our "Church at Home" weekly on the website, **Fetteresso.org.uk**, and Matt will continue to be posting activities and worship content for the Children and Youth (and those young at heart!).

Thank you for taking the time to read this letter.

Yours faithfully,

James Dickinson

Session Clerk

Scottish Christians join together in prayer this Sunday

This Sunday (9 August), Christians across Scotland will once again join together in prayer at 7pm in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

As with previous weeks during lockdown and the phased easing of restrictions, 14 Christian churches and organisations across the country, including the Church of Scotland, have co-signed the letter calling for prayer.

Scottish Christians have been continuing to answer the call to pray at the same time each week, and Rt Rev Dr Martin Fair, Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, has been taking part alongside them.

"I'm delighted to have read that in the last couple of months online searches for 'prayer' have increased dramatically," Dr Fair said.

"But reading about what prayer is and how to do it is only the start of it. After that it's time to actually pray.

"And what better than to join with brothers and sisters from across the nation at 7pm on Sunday to pray our way through this ongoing crisis. I commend it to you and look forward to being with you, in Spirit, on Sunday evening."

This week's letter accompanying the prayer, which is also available in Gaelic, states:

"Have you ever been afraid? Even as we ask the question, we know the answer. Have you been especially afraid at any point in these recent months? Once more, to ask is to know.

"Collectively and as a society, have we experienced in recent decades anything comparable to the fear and anxiety that has gripped us during the Covid-19 pandemic? Fear and anxiety paralyse us and, as we now see, fear and anxiety can at times paralyse a society and leave it profoundly uncertain.

"The Gospel of Matthew records that early one morning the disciples of Jesus were afraid. They had spent the night in a boat on the water and had been 'battered by the waves' and now they find themselves terrified and unable to recognise the presence of Jesus.

"Jesus speaks to them and says 'do not be afraid'. In response, the disciple Peter steps out of the boat and walks towards Jesus. However, as he does so, fear begins to overtake him once more and he cries out: 'Lord, save me!' In response, Jesus reaches out his hand and brings him to the place of safety (Matthew 14: 22-33).

“Today, to the fearful and to the anxious, Jesus reaches out his hand.”

We pray:

Lord, you are our Creator and our Maker.

We are fashioned in your image

And all that we are is known to you.

Hear us as we cry out and respond to us in our time of need.

Lord, in your mercy,

Hear our prayer.

Lord, your Word has become flesh and lived among us

Full of grace and truth.

As the living Word comes, we respond with open hearts

And ask that you will meet us in the place where we are today.

Lord, in your mercy,

Hear our prayer.

Lord, you see all that takes place around us

And nothing is hidden from your sight.

You see waves that batter us and the storm that seems unceasing.

Come to us in response to the depth of our need.

Lord, in your mercy,

Hear our prayer.

Lord, your presence is revealed in the life of your Son.

He knows us as we are and even now he prays for us.

May he hear us when we are anxious

And respond when we are afraid.

Lord, in your mercy,

Hear our prayer.

Lord, you inspire in us faith

And yet we confess that our faith is weak.

Hear us when we cry: “Lord, save me!”

And in response reach out your hand to all who cry to you today.

Lord, in your mercy,

Hear our prayer.



HELP REQUESTED - MISSION AND DISCIPLESHIP

Although we are still in the middle of lockdown - the call for us to "go out into the world and make disciples" remains. In this regard, one of our elders, Alistair Maclean, is putting together a team to think through how we go about reaching out into our community and nurturing disciples more effectively in the post-Covid world. If you would like to be involved in this please e-mail office@fetteresso.org.uk or, alternatively speak to Alistair directly when you next see him.

The New quarterly Bible Notes
"Word for Today "
beginning 1st August are here.

Because of the restrictions of Covid-19 copies will not be left in the Church vestibule but anyone who would like a copy should contact Betty Robertson by phone at 01569 760356 or email at betterob@outlook.com and she will deliver a copy to you.

Nominating Committee Update

The Nominating Committee has continued to meet during covid-19 restrictions through the use of zoom technology. We have contacted a number of Ministers directly via telephone and email to highlight our vacancy and to find out if they themselves knew of it or of someone who may be interested.

Within the last month we have had some interest from ministers completing the familiarisation process with the Church of Scotland, and from Probationers coming to the end of their probation period. We have conducted informal visits for those ministers and their families, providing a tour of Fetteresso Church and Manse and a tour of Stonehaven.

We ask that you continue to pray alongside us, that those ministers currently showing an interest will prayerfully hear a calling to apply for our vacancy.

Prayer Focus for August

This month, we feature the work of Embrace. Here below is printed an awe-inspiring story of a young woman who has, with the help of Embrace and its partner organisations, overcome many challenges. Najwa's story is just one of many examples of how Embrace and its partners work with people in dire straits.



Please pray for everyone at Embrace and their partners who work so hard to support individuals and communities in extreme need. Please pray for Najwa and for all those who face such challenges every day in life.



Learning crafts is just one of the activities

We hope that you've seen the latest issue of the Embrace magazine is out now. In this issue, we shared the amazing story of a brave young woman called Najwa, who overcame all the odds to achieve her dream of getting an education.

It's such a good story, we wanted to make sure as many of our supporters as possible read it - so we've decided to share Najwa's story in this week's re:action email. Read on for her inspiring tale of courage and determination...

Najwa remembers feeling as though she was about to travel to the moon. Although the city of Mallawi was only 12km away, it was beyond anything she had ever experienced.

Going there for the first time was a daunting prospect – but also incredibly exciting. Najwa, 29, was born without sight, and like many young Egyptians with disabilities, she grew up facing limited prospects. Her family assumed she needed constant supervision, which stifled her independence.

‘My parents accepted my disability and took care of me all these years, but they did not allow me to go to school. We are a poor family and they are illiterate, and they did not want the expense of educating a blind girl.’

Najwa’s experience is far from unusual. Although it’s difficult to know exactly how many Egyptians live with a disability, there could be up to 13 million – and their abilities and talents have traditionally been overlooked. In 2018, the Egyptian government passed legislation to enshrine the rights of disabled people in education and the workplace – a historic law that has been welcomed by Egypt’s disabled community but is yet to overcome entrenched social attitudes.

Our partners at BLESS – part of the Coptic Orthodox Church – aim to improve disabled people’s access to opportunities. Najwa heard from church friends that BLESS ran a project specifically for young blind women. ‘When they told me about the project, I was dancing!’ says Najwa.

‘I wanted the chance to travel to the city, get some money in my hands, go to education classes, learn crafts, eat good food, drink juice, talk to people ...’

So that’s when Najwa set off for Mallawi for the first time. She has now been attending BLESS’s programme for four years and her life has changed. She has a mentor who helps her develop her daily living skills, and she attends seminars about employment, social issues, women’s rights and more.

Her confidence and independence have grown so much that she has become a volunteer supporting other young women, and has set up a small business selling perfume.

‘I’m not “the blind girl” any more,’ she says.

‘I’m an educated woman who can travel independently, dress well, train others and advise them on starting their own small projects. Thanks a million to everyone who has worked on this project to give me my vision of what I can achieve.’

We hope you are as inspired as we are by Najwa's story. She represents one of the many resilient and brave beneficiaries with whom our partners work to provide opportunities in the most difficult circumstances.

We'd love it if you'd consider sharing this story with those you know. It feels like everyone needs some positive good news at the moment.

To read more stories like Najwa's, download our latest Embrace magazine here:

<https://www.embraceme.org/magazine>

And if you'd like to help our partners provide vital services like those which helped Najwa, you can to Embrace here:

<https://www.embraceme.org/donate-embrace>

With many thanks,

Anna Tetlow

Digital Coordinator

Embrace the Middle East



donate

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