



THE STEEPLE CHURCH

A church at the heart of the city with the city at its heart

November 2021



The Steeple Church: Dundee (Church of Scotland)
Nethergate, Dundee DD1 4DG

Church Office

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Registered Scottish Charity SC 014314

Dear friends

As your new interim moderator, allow me to introduce myself. My name is Jean Kirkwood and I have been the minister of Stobswell Church linked with Trinity Church for the past five or six months. Although I'm new to ministry in Dundee I did live in the city for 11 years in the 1980s and 90s. I arrived here aged 18 to study biology at Dundee University and liked it so much that I stayed on to do a PhD in microbiology. It was here that I met my husband Allan and where our first child was born. We then lived in Fife for 24 years, bringing up our family there (2 more children came along). After completing ministry training in 2015, I became the minister of two ex mining village churches near Dunfermline. By the end of last year, the time seemed right to move back to Dundee and I answered the call to be the minister of Trinity Church which was in deferred linkage with Stobswell Church. I was inducted into Trinity Church in June 2021 followed quickly with being introduced as the minister of Stobswell Church the following month.

Now I find myself as your interim moderator in your time of vacancy. I understand that this must be a difficult time for you, especially as your vacancy coincides with the changes happening within the Presbytery. My job is to help you navigate your way through all it all. To do this I am reliant upon your Kirk Session, your Nominating Committee and your members of staff who are all working hard to make things happen and I would ask you to continue encouraging and supporting them.

As I write, next Sunday I will be preaching on the prophet Jeremiah's words: "For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, 'plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future' (Jeremiah 29:11). These words are probably over-quoted these days but, nevertheless, they have real power to help us trust God for the future. They were spoken to the people of Judah who were facing the destruction of their city Jerusalem and a time in exile far from home, in Babylon. God was telling them, through the prophet, that their time of trouble would not last forever. They would come home again one day. God goes on to say that when they call on him and pray to him, he will answer them; and when they seek him with all their heart, they will find him. Jesus said something similar. He said "Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you." (Matthew 7:7). I want to encourage you to take these words and allow them to speak to you. Keep on seeking God in all this uncertainty. As we approach Christmas, find hope in Jesus, the Christ-child once again. And may the Holy Spirit inspire you to find new ways of being now, and in the future.

Wishing you every blessing this Christmas time,
Jean



ADVENT & CHRISTMAS

Theme: Waiting for the Arrival of the New Born King

28 November	1. Waiting for Peace - Isaiah 9
5 December	2. Waiting for Love
12 December	3. Waiting for Joy - Luke 1
19 December	4. Waiting for Jesus - service of 9 lessons and carols
26 December	He Has Arrived

In January we plan to focus on the book of Acts and the Early Church.

There will be no Christmas Eve or Christmas Day services at The Steeple, but we are encouraged to join with other churches in our city centre grouping for services on either day



St Andrews Parish Church - Minister: Rev Anita Kerr

2-6 King St, Dundee DD1 2JB

Christmas Eve 7pm - 9 lessons and carols

Stobswell Parish Church - Minister: Rev Jean Kirkwood

170 Albert St, Dundee DD4 6QW

Christmas Eve 7.30pm - Christingle service

Christmas Day 10am

The Christmas Road
at Teen Ranch
(Ballindean House, Inchture)

11 - 19 December 6pm - 8pm

Come and see the Teen Ranch driveway & 'Big House' lit up
Carol Singing, hot drinks &
home baking. Free Admission.



The Dundee Concert this year will be at Chalmers Ardler Church on Friday 10 December at 7.30pm. It will be an evening of festive cheer, with beautiful acoustic carols and original songs from Yvonne Lyon, Paul Bell, Ellyn Oliver and David Lyon. Tickets (£6) are available now – please email info@chalmersardlerchurch.org Remember to advise the number of tickets required and provide the name of the person who will uplift and make cash payment for the tickets on the night of the concert.

The Scottish Bible society has three new resources available this Advent to help you, your church and your communities engage with the Bible and the Christmas story:

- Christmas Journeys is a fantastic resource featuring seven days of all-age adventure as we discover the Christmas story!
- Light and Life – a newly produced, photo magazine edition of John’s Gospel.
- SBS Advent Reader for 2021 focuses on the theme of Immanuel – “God with us”.

More details on their website

[Christmas 2021 | Scottish Bible Society](#)



FINANCE UPDATE

Congregational Giving January to September

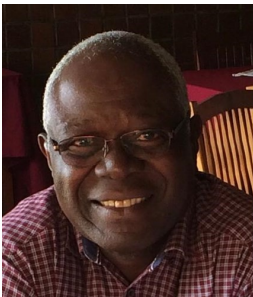
Total to 30/09/19 £75,203	Total to 30/09/20 £70,582	Total to 30/09/21 £68,247
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In 2019 our main source of income was from congregation giving but we also received over £50,000 from hall lets. In line with practically every other organisation Covid dramatically changed the situation so that there were very few hall lets in 2020 and only now are some restarting. Holding Zoom services also reduced the amount of congregational giving and in the current year a lack of occasional visitors has reduced donations at Sunday worship.

In the circumstances the reduction in congregational giving could have been much greater so thanks to all our regular givers. Adjustments have been made to control our expenditure but financial planning for next year is difficult because of a number of uncertainties.

Bob Potter
Finance Team Leader

ADVENT OFFERING



Our Advent offering this year will go to support the Hospital project that our former Elder Zedi Nyirenda had been working on in Malawi before his death. His widow Jo is continuing to raise funds for this project. Information about the project will given during the service on 5 Dec. and details about how to give will be circulated.

MUSICIANS WANTED!



Have you sometimes thought that you would like to be part of The Steeple worship group?

Can you play an instrument (keyboard or any other instrument)

Or can you sing?

If you have answered **YES** to any of the above or you know someone who is too shy to volunteer then please get in touch with Mark Parsons email: parsonsbfb@yahoo.com for an informal chat.

We would love to hear from you.

The worship groups operate a rota so that you would not be playing/singing every week. We practice on a Sunday morning at 9 am before the Sunday service.



CRAFT GROUP

Good News—cards and crafts are now available again in Haldane? For November, December and January all cards will be **buy one get one free**. All the profits are going to Parish Nursing.

If you would like to know more about the Craft Group please speak to Shona Harper at church, or contact the church office.



FROM THE PARISH NURSES

There have been a few changes in Parish Nursing. Since June 2021 Kirsty Nelson has been working full-time with us. She is loving this, because she is able to focus her work in the one arena of Parish Nursing rather than being split between our and NHS work. SHE HAS ALSO COMPLETED HER QNIS PROGRAMME. CONGRATULATIONS, KIRSTY.

RACHEL is now working back in NHS-land as a Specialist Nurse in Haematology, working with people who have haemophilia. She is settling well into that too. SHE IS STILL A PARISH NURSE, but her hours mean that she currently has little availability to be with us.

SARAH AXT JOINED OUR TEAM as a Parish Nursing Assistant-in-training. She is awaiting a place on the first available course for this. She is NOT a nurse, but has a lot of skills and abilities that will support our work. She's been volunteering with us for over a year now. Sarah comes from Germany, and is at Uni here in Dundee; it was lovely to meet her parents when they visited her recently.

We are still WORKING VERY CLOSELY WITH EAGLES WINGS; we need the extra staff at both drop-ins because we have to provide 'table service' for our guests. But we also support each other spiritually and as friends, and both our teams of volunteers are getting to know one another really well now, and working well together in both venues.

We are really concerned about how the CUT IN UNIVERSAL CREDIT payments is affecting our folk. They all struggled anyway to make ends meet each month or fortnight, and as the weather gets colder, many will not have adequate heating and also risk their nutritional status. We've just had a small grant from the Council to support people to prevent rough-sleeping, but I suspect it will not go very far. So we are praying for a mild winter...

I hope you have all downloaded the free Dundee Recovery Road Map to your mobile phones and other devices. You will then have loads of helpful and supportive resources for people you may meet. It is applicable for lots of people, not only those who have very complex needs related to problem substance use. If you have this app in our phone, the GOOD NEWS is that it will be upgraded to a new version by the end of this year, which will be more interactive and more up-to-date. The work for this is being undertaken by a local IT company, ZUDU, and they've been great to work with. Thanks to KIRSTY for loads of work she has done with them. BUT it would never have happened if Stefan hadn't made the original app, so a huge THANK YOU to Stefan.

Kirsty has started a new group for women in recovery, a COFFEE CLUB, on a Monday morning. It is going great. Kirsty invites women who are at the right stage in recovery to attend this very supportive group. Each of them is on their own person-centred journey to improving health and whole-person wellbeing.

We have been exploring how God wants us to continue working with our changed team dynamics and with our available resources. We would thank you as a congregation for your



regular prayer for us every Sunday morning, and at Sunday evening prayer meetings, and ask you to KEEP ON PRAYING that God will be our guide, our leader and our counsellor as we go forward.

Barbara, Kirsty and Sarah

CONNECTIONS CAFÉ and what might be next?

The last update in July drew attention to several new opportunities for Connections Café which took place through 'Covid times'. It also recognised that the lives of many in the Connections Café community have moved on since the café started three and a half years previously, and it may be time to call it a day.

The update also asked two questions; 'What's next?' and 'Maybe God's "next" for Connections Café can no longer be contained in the wine skin of the past three years?

Since July we've been in a 'desert', contemplating these questions and looking out for a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night to guide us. Disappointingly neither has appeared. However, metaphorically, both seem to be leading to the promised land of Charleston where many refugee families live, including some older, less mobile friends.

Camperdown Church in Charleston has excellent indoor and outdoor (e.g. for a summer BBQ) meeting facilities, and our brothers and sisters in CALM (Camperdown and Lochee Ministries) are very supportive of exploring together the possibility of hosting Connections Café and its



many offshoots. So, we are meeting in the small hall on the 6th December and will review the prospect of continuing. We're excited by the offer from the Siobhans Trust of their electric minibus and a driver to transport folk who we know in Whitfield who would also like to come to the café in Charleston.

Alex Sandison, who has recently been appointed as a part time Community Development Worker for Faith in Community, will be at the café on the 6th and we look forward to exploring, with Alex and the Director, Jacky Close, innovative ways to support the integration and resilience of our refugee friends.

We're excited that Balgeiss, a long-term friend of Connections Café and an experienced and qualified cook, has offered to cook for a small occasional lunch club for older folk and we'll pilot this when she returns at the end of December from a family visit to Libya.

So, it remains to be seen whether or not we occupy the 'milk and honey' land of Charleston, or if we'll still be wandering around in the wilderness..... time will tell.

In the meantime Connections Café volunteers continue to enjoy the friendships which have formed over previous years and in that context are providing appropriate support in many different ways.

Wellgate Mural update

We heard recently that the decision makers on Common Good Fund applications have decided to defer a decision until the next round. This means that the application will be reconsidered alongside any new applications received by the mid-November deadline and we should have a decision one way or another by mid-December.

SUNDAY @ SEVEN THIRTY

A time for the Steeple Church family
to meet together
for reflection and prayer

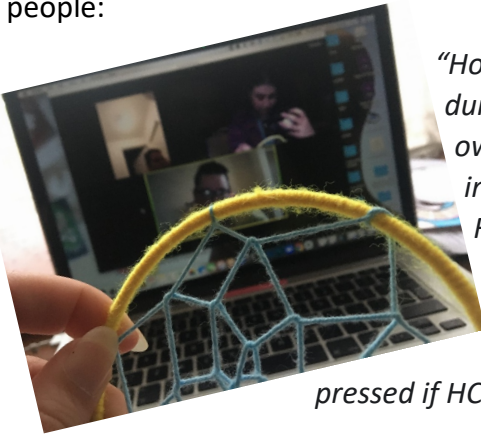
Every Sunday evening at 7.30 pm, we meet to pray together, using Zoom. Details from the office.

HOT CHOCOLATE - an update from Dave Close

We miss you!

Hot Chocolate's youth work has been mostly in person since the early summer – both outdoors and indoors. That means that while we're still doing a lot of work from home, we're also in the building a lot more. It's made us realize how good it was to be neighbours and see Steeple people in and out too. Those incidental encounters and conversations are the stuff of life, but they've also been one of the biggest losses under pandemic restrictions.

Our team have worked incredibly hard and with great skill and ingenuity to keep that experience of loving community alive for young people:



“Hot Chocolate let me have company during the pandemic. I live on my own, so socialising wasn't an option in lockdown. But HC was always on Facebook and when sessions started outside that gave me a chance to be my old social self. I'd have been way more depressed if HC hadn't been around.”

“I've lost loads of friends in the past year, so I've lost a lot of support and trust. It's been tough. But I've gotten better communication with Steeple. With HC you can be as vulnerable as you want, and you don't have to worry. It's good to have an external source, someone who isn't friends or family, someone who can open the door to your brain and ask 'what are your thoughts?' Because sometimes you need another person to help you level your head out.”

“Everything seems really detached right now, but HC feels more like a constant. And that's helped a lot, with the world changing so much, to have something so stable.”

On FaceBook, Zoom, Roll20, Instagram, and Minecraft... on doorsteps, pavements, beaches, and parks (green ones and also car parks)... creating homely spaces outside the Steeple, and re-designing and risk-assessing the spaces inside... youth workers and young people have found ways to sustain and build community and work out life together. Rejoicing with those who rejoice, weeping with those who weep.



This is how we've spent ourselves, loving our neighbours. But we realize we've missed our neighbours-through-the-wall... we're all still carrying heavy burdens in the face of so many changes but we'll be glad to find new ways to connect and support each other in the months ahead.



DON'T BE CAUGHT NAPPING!

There was [Joseph](#), dozing off after a hard day's work at his carpenter's bench, when an angel appeared to him in a dream, reminding him to get his order in for free [Dundee](#)

[Nativity](#) DVDs for hospitals, care homes, churches, prisons and other community groups to distribute to people who are "digitally excluded" – that's to say, who don't have access to the internet.

This year's [Dundee Nativity](#) is entitled [Joseph's Story](#), and tells the story of the birth of Jesus from Joseph's point of view. Besides the DVD version, this professionally-produced hour-long film will also be available to view online, via YouTube and Vimeo.

Because of Covid restrictions last year on live performances, many churches unable to organise their own live Nativity play, used the [Dundee Nativity](#). Thousands of people in this country and abroad viewed the online version at home. Two thousand copies on DVD



were distributed in Dundee and also further afield.

Why not plan to make the [Dundee Nativity - Joseph's Story](#) part of **your** plans for Christmas? Contact the producer allanfwebster@aol.com for further details.

