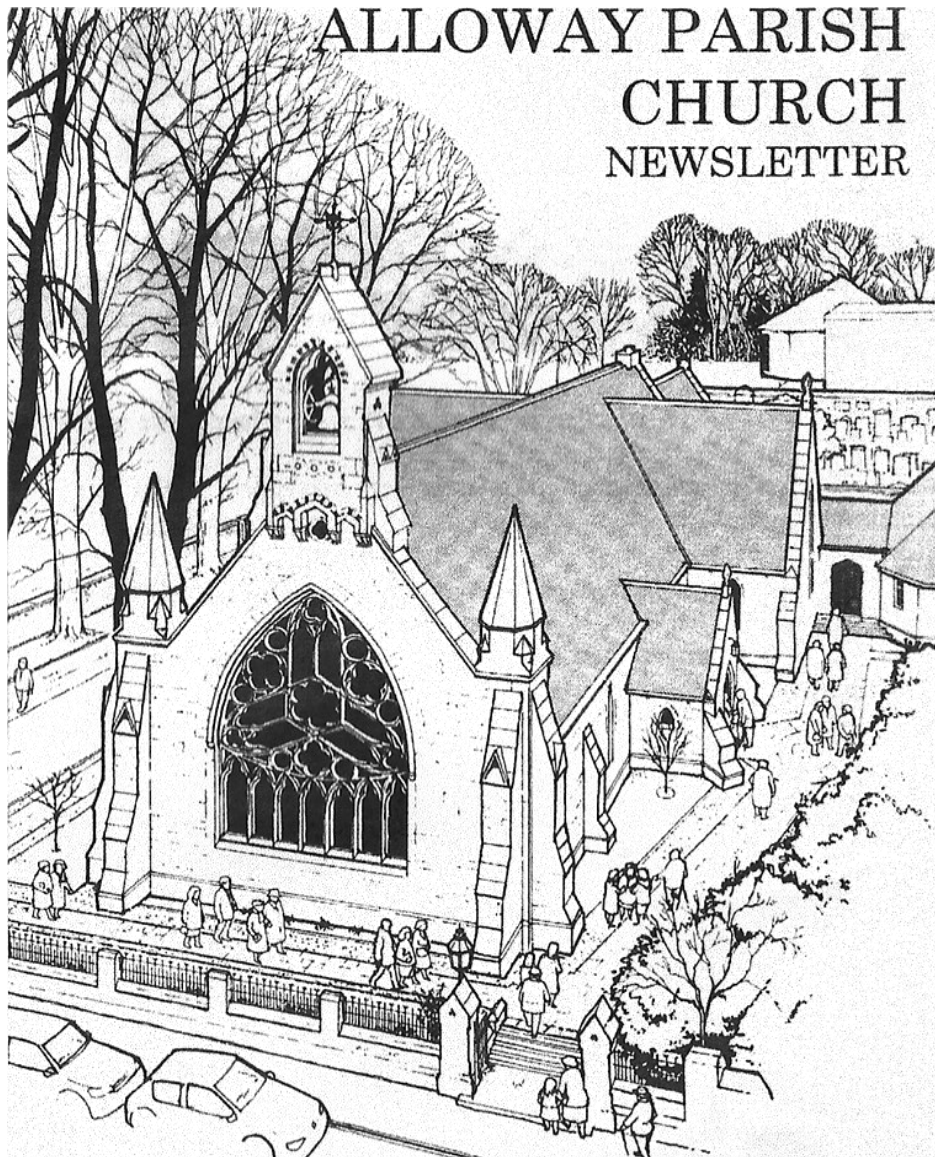


ALLOWAY PARISH CHURCH NEWSLETTER



MARCH

2021



Dear Friends

There is an old Jewish saying: God could not be everywhere, and therefore He made mothers.

Mother Church, Mother Earth, Mother of the Gods - our human mothers - all of them have been part of the celebration of 'Mothering Sunday'.

It has been celebrated in the UK since at least the 16th century.

In Roman times, great festivals were held every spring to honour Cybele, Mother of all the Gods. Other pagan festivals in honour of Mother Earth were also celebrated. With the arrival of Christianity, the festival became one honouring Mother Church.

During the Middle Ages, young people apprenticed to craftsmen or working as 'live-in' servants were allowed only one holiday a year on which to visit their families, which is how 'Mothering Sunday' got its name.

This special day became a day of family rejoicing and the Lenten fast was broken.

In some places the day was called Simnel Day, because of the sweet cakes called simnel cakes traditionally eaten on that day.

In truth I am not a great simnel cake fan!

However, I do believe that to have been blessed with a good mother is a blessing indeed.

So of course, on the fourth Sunday perhaps we recall our own mothers.

We remember those who never bore their own children but acted as a caring loving mother to others.

We think of all the wonderful people we have met and now know within the fellowship of the Church our spiritual Mother.

"Blessed be all mothers
who have come into our lives
whose kindness, care and loving
Remain with us to guide."

Keep safe.

Every blessing

Neil McNaught



A note from David... "Against All Odds"

Dear Friends -

I was so touched by a news report this week. A tiny baby girl who was born eighteen weeks premature was finally allowed home with her parents after four months in hospital. Sofia Viktoria Birina weighed a mere 1.1 lb when she was born. At 10 inches long, Sofia was no bigger than a human hand. Believed to be one of Scotland's youngest surviving premature babies, she was given a 10% chance of survival during labour and even less chance of surviving after that. Against all odds however, Sofia overcame many battles and is now home with her family.

Over the past year we have all become very familiar with the terms: pandemic, coronavirus, COVID-19 and lockdown. At times, things have been very grim with high rates of infection, tragic levels of COVID related deaths, the necessity to stay at home and the inability to meet with family and friends. During such times, some may have thought that there was no possibility that the situation would improve - this may have seemed 'against all odds'. Thankfully, within the United Kingdom, as a result of the lockdown restrictions and the impact of the vaccination programme, the situation appears to be improving - there is some evidence of 'light at the end of the tunnel'. Let us hope and pray that similar trends become commonplace across the world.

As I get to know the folks of Alloway Parish Church, I know that some experience really difficult times and sometimes feel that life is a bit of a struggle. In such

circumstances it may feel that it is 'against the odds' that we can keep on going. Whilst no-one knows what the future holds for us, we have the assurance - the complete assurance - that God will not leave us or forsake us (Hebrews 13:5). God is always with us, with His arm around us - even as He leads us to our heavenly home.

When things in your life seem dark, I pray that you sense the presence and sustaining power of God and that even 'against all odds' that lightness replaces the darkness.

Psalm 91:1-2 Whoever dwells in the shelter of the Most High will rest in the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the Lord, "He is my refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust."

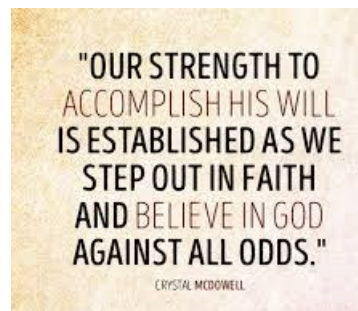
God bless!

David Hume

Church Family and Schools Worker

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Alloway Parish Church Newsletter—March

Dear Friends

I do so miss seeing you on a Sunday morning in our beautiful sanctuary! However, we must keep each other safe!

While tier 4 restrictions are in force, we will not gather on a Sunday at 10.30am.

God willing if and when we revert back to tier 3, we will resume our service again on a Sunday at 10.30am (max capacity 50). Even then we fully understand why many cannot meet!

Meanwhile the work of the Church continues.

Do visit our website allowaychurch.org for our online weekly service.

The Alloway Church Facebook page is worth a regular visit.

Join us for our midweek service every Wed 10.30am with the Zoom codes available from the secretary.

There is a joint monthly meeting of the Board and Session with Zoom codes available from the secretary.

This month we would be delighted if you could join our annual stated meeting on Sunday 21st March at 10.30am followed by a virtual coffee morning! (Bring your own pancakes).

The Zoom codes will be available from the Church secretary along with the business papers.

New members of the Board will be elected and, in some cases, re-elected.

We do indeed live in interesting times.

Keep safe.

Every blessing

Neil





Open Doors

Serving persecuted **Christians** worldwide

Here in the UK, we may struggle to hold services because of coronavirus, but at least no one in the government is threatening to arrest and imprison us for just being Christians!

Yet that is the harsh reality for hundreds of millions of Christians around the world today. This article will help remind your readers of the struggle of their brothers and sisters in Christ.

A Christian persecution watchdog has warned that more Christians around the world are suffering because of their faith, and the kind of persecution they're experiencing has intensified.

Open Doors has found that more than 340 million Christians suffer high levels of persecution and discrimination for their faith, amounting to one in eight worldwide.

Now the charity has released its 2021 World Watch List (WWL) which highlights the top 50 countries that are most hostile toward Christians.

1. **North Korea** Being discovered as a Christian is a death sentence in North Korea. If you aren't killed instantly, you will be taken to a labour camp as a political criminal.
2. **Afghanistan** ISIS and the Taliban continue to have a strong, violent presence in Afghanistan, with the Taliban controlling large regions.
3. **Somalia** Islam is considered a crucial part of Somali identity, and if any Somali is suspected of having converted to Christianity, they are in great danger. Members of their family, clan or community will harass, intimidate or even kill them. Women may be raped and forcibly married.

4. **Libya** There is no freedom of speech, no freedom of religion and very limited possibility of public church life in Libya. Although there are around 34,500 Christians in the country, only a tiny number (approximately 150) are Libyan - the majority are expatriates and migrant workers.
5. **Pakistan** Pakistan's notorious blasphemy laws are used to target Christians, and Islamic extremist groups vehemently "defend" these laws, including attacking or killing those believed to have contravened them.
6. **Eritrea** Government security forces monitor phone calls, scrutinise activity and conduct countless raids which target Christians, seize Christian materials and damage house churches. Christians can be arrested and imprisoned without trial.
7. **Yemen** Christians in Yemen usually keep their faith secret, because if they are discovered then they could face the death penalty. Leaving Islam is forbidden, and all Yemenis are considered Muslims by the state.
8. **Iran** The Iranian government sees the conversion of Muslims to Christianity as an attempt by Western countries to undermine the Islamic rule of Iran. Christians from a Muslim background are persecuted the most, primarily by the government, but also by their families and communities.
9. **Nigeria** More Christians are murdered for their faith in Nigeria than in any other country. Violent attacks by Boko Haram, Hausa-Fulani Muslim militant herdsman, ISWAP (an affiliate of ISIS) and other Islamic extremist groups are common in the north and middle belt of the country, and they are becoming more common further south.
10. **India** Hindu extremists believe that all Indians should be Hindus, and that the country should be rid of Christianity and Islam. They use extensive violence to achieve this goal, particularly targeting Christians from a Hindu background.

Sunday 21st March 2021

Please note the virtual annual congregational stated meeting this year will take place on Sunday 21st March at 10.30am. This will be followed by a virtual congregational coffee morning. A chance to catch up over a cuppa and share fellowship! The codes for this Zoom meeting will be available from the secretary from Thursday 18th March 2020.

Election to the Congregational Board Part of the normal business of the Stated Annual Meeting involves election to the Congregational Board. If you are interested in standing for election, please contact me. [Details under] I shall be pleased to answer any queries you may have. Please also feel free to nominate candidates aged 18 or over.

Ian Stewart, Clerk to the Congregational Board Tel 01292 443951
ifstewart@btinternet.com

An abbreviated set of accounts for 2020 will also be available from the secretary from Thursday 18th March 2021.

Meanwhile many thanks for all those who are supporting the work of the Church through this time.



Vehicle Parking in the Vicinity of Alloway PC

As I recently advised we have for many months suffered nuisance arising from significant volumes of litter thrown out of vehicle windows that have been parked, after dark, in our halls car park, particularly at weekends. Worryingly some has been related to the use of controlled substances.

During Lockdown, our halls have not been in use in the evenings so the halls car park has been open house to many.

To control this problem the Congregational Board approved the purchase and installation of a matching pair of lockable gates on the vehicular access lane down the left-hand side of our halls.

These have now been delivered and installed and will probably remain locked for several weeks.

Hopefully, you will agree that their design is duly sympathetic.

Inevitably our members may experience difficulty in finding somewhere suitable to park their cars, even short-term, in Auld Nick's View or on-street in the near vicinity.

I must advise that Council agents have recently come to the village, as they promised, and have handed out several fixed penalty fines for parking on double yellow lines or in parking bays designated for our registered disabled.

Hopefully, we will be back to normal in the not too distant future.

Ian Stewart

Clerk to the Congregational Board



SLOGANS QUIZ

Can you identify these companies from their slogans?

	CLUE
1	Because You're Worth It
2	Every Little Helps
3	Finger Lickin' Good
4	I'm Lovin' It
5	Vorsprung Durch Technik
6	It Does Exactly What It Says On The Tin
7	Never Knowingly Undersold
8	Live Well For Less
9	The Power Of Dreams
10	We're Better Connected
11	The Master Chocolatier
12	It Won't Let You Down
13	Just Do It
14	Fanatical About Film
15	The Make Up Of Artists
16	The World's Local Bank
17	Loves The Jobs You Hate
18	The World's Favourite Airline
19	Once You Pop, The Fun Don't Stop
20	The Best A Man Can Get

1. L'Oreal; 2. Tesco; 3. Kentucky Fried Chicken; 4. McDonalds; 5. Audi; 6. Ronsard; 7. John Lewis; 8. Sainsbury's; 9. Honda; 10. O2; 11. L'Oréal; 12. Sainsbury's; 13. Nike; 14. Odeon; 15. Max Factor; 16. HSB; 17. Mr. Muscle; 18. British Airways; 19. Pringles; 20. Gillette

Parish Record



"Blessed are they who die in the Lord"

31.1.21	Jean Robertson	Berelands Nursing Home
7.2.21	Anne MacIntosh	Castle View
13.2.21	Sydney Devine	Corsehill Avenue

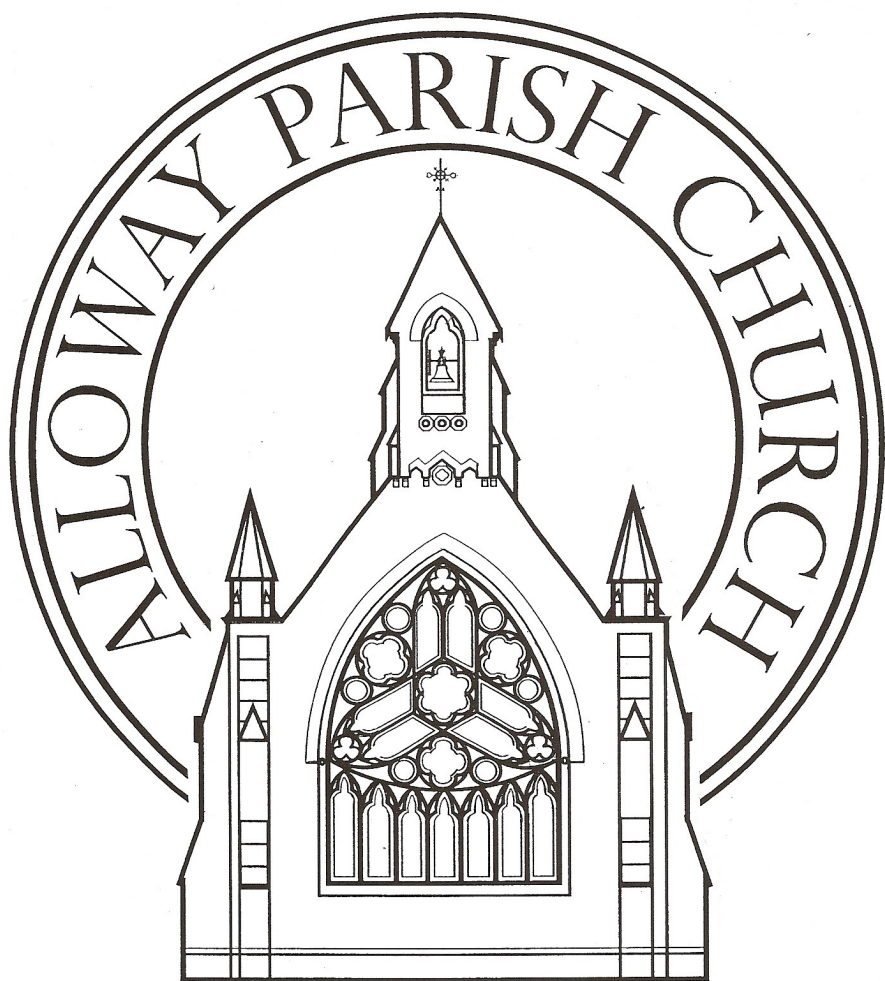
Deadline for April Newsletter—Tuesday 23 March —12 noon

Contributions should be sent to:

allowayChurch.newsletter@gmail.com

Please visit our website www.allowayChurch.org or our Facebook page





Alloway Parish Church of Scotland
No. 100538

Scottish Registered Charity
No. SC012456