



# Summer Greetings

*to Communicants and Friends of Tay and Lyon Churches*

*July 2021*

## WELCOME BACK!

### **Rev Robert Nicol, Interim Moderator**

What a joy it was to be back in church on Sunday. It was great to see so many turning out, and we had a few visitors too. Despite being behind masks and out of practice, the singing was remarkably good. And the interior of Kenmore Kirk looked so good with its fresh coat of paint. Most of all, we enjoyed being in God's house, with our friends, gathered to worship the Lord.

In these past weeks, as we have been thinking about and preparing for re-opening, I have often thought about what the Bible tells us about the Israelites returning from exile to their beloved homeland. Of course, there is no real comparison between what they had gone through and what we've experienced over the past year. They were taken into exile in Babylon for 70 years. Their mood in those days is captured in the words of Psalm 139 – "By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down and wept when we remembered Zion". When they returned, Jerusalem was in ruins and the Temple destroyed. When the Temple was finally rebuilt, we can imagine them joyfully singing Psalm 122 – "I was glad when they said to me 'Let us go to the

house of the Lord'. Our feet are standing within your gates, O Jerusalem".

What was true for them, though, and I think is true for us too, is that "you don't know what you've got 'till it's gone". While YouTube and Zoom have kept us together as a worshipping community, to an extent, and we can see some good things that have come out of that, they can only ever be a second best to the experience of physically meeting together as God's people.

It looks like it will still be a while before things return to normal, and I completely understand that some may feel this is not yet the time for them to come back, for whatever reason. But for now, we can celebrate the fact our doors are open again, and in our churches – music will be heard again, prayers will rise again, and the Word will be preached again; also, that friendly greetings will be exchanged, encouraging words will be given and received, and the joys and burdens of life will be shared. Christian community is being restored.

***Blessings to you all.***

## CHURCH OPENING

Well, it has been a long and difficult wait but at last the doors of the Church of Scotland at Fortingall and Kenmore are re-opening. **To begin with, services will alternate between the two churches on Sundays at 11.00 a.m.** The first service was held in Kenmore Church on Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> July. I am sure that members of the united charge are delighted to see the newly painted interior of Kenmore Church which shows the lovely old building in a beautiful new light. On the following **Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> July, the service will be held at Fortingall Kirk at 11am.**

However, restrictions will still apply to ensure we follow the Church of Scotland guidelines on re-opening, therefore:

- **PLEASE DO NOT ATTEND IF YOU HAVE COVID SYMPTOMS**
- Please bring your own bible
- Your details will be taken for the **NHS Test and Trace programme**
- Everyone must wear a face covering inside the church building
- Please observe the 2m safe distance at all times inside the church
- Please make use of the hand sanitising dispensers when entering and leaving
- **Other points to note include:**
- The service will last between 30–40 minutes
- The offering will be taken by use of a plate at the door of the church
- Refreshments will not be served at this time
- Hymn sheets will be made available

I know this is not what we are used to in church, but we are living in very strange times and the health and safety of our congregations must come first. Yet, it will be good to be able to worship together once again and we can but look forward to a day when church life may return to that which we knew before the pandemic.

I look forward to seeing you all in church once again.

**Alexander Towns (Session Clerk)**

## Greetings to all from Sandra, your Outreach Elder...

So here we are again living this strange half-in and half-out of lockdown life. So tantalising to get a glimpse of the freedom which lies ahead, but unsure of how much we should grab! I am finding these ever-changing goalposts all a bit draining! What say you?

How delighted we are to be able to open our churches once again, albeit with restrictions still in place. Those who managed to attend our first real service since the pandemic closed everything down, I'm sure would appreciate all the efforts that have been made to repair and re-decorate the lovely old building of Kenmore Kirk, standing as it does in all its glory at the head of the Loch.

Your nominating committee is actively searching for a new minister to take us into the future of living our faith, being strong and not afraid to journey with the broken, to repent and begin again, to be risk-takers and join in where God seeks us to be active in our community and further afield. Even before this ghastly pandemic, change was in the air. We look forward to finding a new minister, a new leader to take us to a new place and take part in the mission of God. We are ready, bring it on!!

I do hope you are all keeping well. As ever, if you have a problem, a need or require a bit of help, please call 01887 830 316.

**With my very best wishes,  
Sandra**

