

**St. Margaret's Community Church of
Scotland Dunfermline**

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All over the world today, there are Christians who are losing their lives simply because they confess to be followers of Jesus – in particular things are bad in Pakistan, Syria, Egypt, Afghanistan, Nigeria, Eritrea, Iraq, Iran, North Korea, Somalia, Sudan, Libya, Yemen, Southern India, Laos, Bangladesh, Bhutan, China – the list goes on.

We are living under difficult circumstances but they are nothing in comparison to many [millions] of our brothers and sisters in other parts of the world – brave people, who persist in their faith despite the opposition and persecution that they face on almost a daily basis.

I am not saying this to shame us – we are where we are and thank God for it! But this ought to be a time for reflection as we remember the daily pressures that many millions [over 300 million, it is estimated] of our fellow believers have to face. Can we just spend a few moments every day to pray for them? Can we spend a few moments thanking God for their witness and courage? Is there any way we can find to support them – perhaps through Open Doors or The Barnabas Fund?

When you think how hard it is for us to face a virus, how hard must it be to face constant aggression, persecution, imprisonment, injustice, loss of opportunity and a whole lot more, because of following Jesus. Thank God for these brave souls, churches, families!

What then of St. Margaret's? I would like to think that we will come out of this

lockdown as a stronger Church – seeing that adversity has reshaped us positively and made us a more compassionate Church and one that is better equipped to meet the needs of a worshipping and witnessing community in the time that lies ahead.

It is imperative that we shape ourselves as a community of people who unashamedly follow Jesus. Our lives cannot be shaped by the dictates of our society. It seems to me that I can see three responses in Scotland to our current situation. Many are scared because their lives are threatened by uncertainty and death. Many are acting responsibly and caringly for the good of society. A few are acting carelessly and selfishly. What of us? I hope we find ourselves in the second category but with the addition that we are living through this with faith and certainty and not fear or apprehension because we know that our current situation is governed by the sovereignty of God and our future is gloriously certain.

Our first "Zoom" service took place on Sunday past – over 40 people attended and I was so impressed that many who did were over 80! We will continue with this at 11am every Sunday – a link will go out to the 170+ people we have on email. Even if you/we have teething problems, persevere till we get the hang of it and thank God for this new form of technology that allows us to be together.

Our Warmest Congratulations to George and Marion Spowart who have just celebrated their 50th Wedding Anniversary. What a blessing to be able to live so long together!

My blessing to one and all and may the Peace of God be with you all.

Jain

Intimations

Zoom Church will be on Sunday Morning at 11am – a link will be sent to everyone on our Congregational list – if you want your details added, please send them to the Minister.

Zoom midweek service will be on Wednesday at 7pm – a link will be sent to everyone and the same info as the Sunday Morning Service.

Facebook Readings Every Day – this will include Sunday Morning.

If there is anything you would like to share/intimate contact either Irene or myself.

Any ideas for social/fundraising events? Anything is possible!!! Share it with Irene.

“Here is the great truth that, only when we see things in the light of God, do we see things as they are. It is only when we see things in the light of God that we see what things are really important, and what things are not. These things seem vastly important, things like ambition, and prestige, and money and gain, lose all their value and importance when they are seen in the light of God. Pleasures and habits and social customs which seem permissible enough, are seen for the dangerous things they are when they are seen in the light of God. Things which seem evils, hardship, toil, discipline, unpopularity, even persecution, are seen in their glory when they are seen in the light of God” – William Barclay

“Don’t quit when the tide is lowest,
For it’s just about to turn;
Don’t quit over doubts and questions,
For there’s something you may learn.

Don’t quit when the night is darkest,
For it’s just a while to dawn;
Don’t quit when you’ve run the farthest,
For the race is almost won.

Don’t quit when the hill is steepest,
For your goal is almost nigh;
Don’t quit, for you’re not a failure
Until you fail to try”.

Jill Wolf

Interestingly prophetic words by G.K. Chesterton in 1905 as this Christian thinker and writer looked into the future of our world:

“The earnest freethinkers need not worry themselves too much about the persecutions of the past. Before the Liberal idea is dead or triumphant, we shall see wars and persecutions the like of which the World has never seen. They need not reserve their tears for the victims of Bonner or Claverhouse [leaders of religious persecution under Mary Tudor and Charles II]. They may weep for themselves and their children.”
– G. K. Chesterton, “Daily News”
February 1905

The key is to develop peace:

- Take a deep breath
 - Take a step back – see it from God’s perspective
 - Don’t take things personally, don’t take self seriously, don’t need to defend self or justify self
 - Be independent of the approval of others
 - Don’t Judge others, and you won’t be judged
 - respond, don’t react
 - Be humble not arrogant – not timid
 - express, don’t try to impress –
Anon
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