

St. Margaret's Community Church of Scotland

Dunfermline

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Marcus Rashford! He is a 22 year-old footballer who plays for Manchester United and England – he is actually very good and scored a hat-trick in a Champion's League game the other night. But it is not his footballing ability that has been hitting the headlines recently.

He used his considerable position to challenge the Government to make sure that during holidays, children who get free school meals did not go without. The Government's response has been a bit of a fudge truth be told – even though all MP's get subsidised meals paid for by the tax payer – the least of whom earn £81,932. Mind you, Mr Rashford earns £10.4 million!

Amid all of this there is a basic Biblical principle and that is that there must always be a concern for the poor in our society. Now, I grant you that some parents are careless, foolish or even selfish with how they spend their money – even the little they have. Putting that aside, this is not true of most parents who have to survive on Universal Credit. But even for those cases where parents are careless, foolish or selfish, what about their children? It is not their fault and so we need to be compassionate towards the children in situations like that.

On our door step there are people living with acute mental health issues, addictions from a wide variety of types, facing unemployment where they have lost jobs on the minimum wage when

they were just getting by and no more. People facing not just Covid, but the fall out from this awful disease, as it attacks the economy – and let's face it, it is the vulnerable who are the first to be hit.

God calls us to be concerned, compassionate, active and caring – doing whatever we can to make a difference.

Human beings are made up of body, mind and spirit – a living soul is how the Bible describes the unity of all three. Too often we are only concerned with the "spiritual" aspect believing that if people get that right everything else will fall into place. But Jesus came to save our souls – body, mind and spirit. If people need physical help and we can give it, that is a witness to the care and love of Jesus.

Listen to how Jesus puts it in Matthew's Gospel:

³⁵ For I was hungry, and you fed me. I was thirsty, and you gave me a drink. I was a stranger, and you invited me into your home. ³⁶ I was naked, and you gave me clothing. I was sick, and you cared for me. I was in prison, and you visited me.'

³⁷ "Then these righteous ones will reply, 'Lord, when did we ever see you hungry and feed you? Or thirsty and give you something to drink? ³⁸ Or a stranger and show you hospitality? Or naked and give you clothing? ³⁹ When did we ever see you sick or in prison and visit you?'

⁴⁰ "And the King will say, 'I tell you the truth, when you did it to one of the least of these my brothers and sisters, you were doing it to me!'"

Jesus asks us to look around – take a really good look around and in His name do whatever we can with what we have available to us, to make a difference.

I want to say thank you to everyone who has supported the “Trolley” – our initiative to put food outside our church every day for those in dire need sometimes – we have been faithfully doing this for 8 months and often when we think we are about to run out of both food and money, more is provided. Thank you to the people who have given money or food and to Carnegie Rotary for their generosity too.

Thank you too to everyone who has supplied quilts, blankets, sheets and clothing – what a difference that has made to many already.

Alistair is effectively managing the day to day running of what we are doing. Please remember that for many of us on fixed incomes the only effect of Covid is obvious but as the winter looms and the economy shrinks there will be many who will suffer and they are our neighbours – and what did Jesus tell us to do with respect to our neighbour?

Finally, Christmas is coming. In past years we have had a “Sleigh” where presents were donated. This year we want to have the Christmas tree in the Church, with presents around it, wrapped and parcelled for young, middle year’d and older people. A Christmas gift to many in our community who will struggle to get anything this year. In the next month please think about what you might do in this respect.

All in the name of Jesus.

God Bless you all

Iain

Intimations

Services will be at the normal times on Sunday – Facebook will go on at 9am, Zoom at 9.45 and the Main Service at 11am in the Church.

How does the new Tier System affect us? We are in Tier 2 in Fife and this does not change the services we can offer through the Church.

No Zoom Service on Wednesday – pray for the Representative Group from our Church who will be meeting at 8pm on that evening with Place for Hope. This is in effect our first stab at the opening negotiations regarding the future shape of our church – Irene Cunningham, Ritchie Campbell, Janet Gresty and Ally and Iain Greenshields will all be representing our church.

We had thought about having a Christmas Fayre but we consider that it will be too big a potential risk.

I am considering having a Christmas Concert on Zoom in December with home baking from the Church to be delivered to everyone “attending” so that we can enjoy a cuppa [maybe mulled wine] and something nice to eat during the interval – more of this soon.

Finally, the Executive are going to invite every member in December, if they are able, to make a Special Christmas Offering to the Church – I hope you will support this, even in a small way.

“Two guys are walking through a game park & they come across a lion that has not eaten for days. The lion starts chasing the two men. They run as fast as they can and the one guy starts getting tired and decides to say a prayer, “Please turn this lion into a Christian, Lord.” He looks to see if the lion is still chasing and he sees the lion on its knees. Happy to see his prayer answered, he turns around and heads towards the lion. As he comes closer to the lion, he hears it saying a prayer: “Thank you Lord for the food I am about to receive.”