

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

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I was struck by something Philip Yancey said. He had decided to go on a tour of all of the churches that were in his local community – after all, if he did not know what they were about, how could he pray for them?

He was very impressed with many of the churches that he visited, even although the services were not always to his taste but was inspired by what many of these churches were doing both internationally, and in their own communities.

Then he makes this telling remark, “In my church tour, the saddest groups were those whose vision did not extend beyond their own building and car park!”

I found this very challenging as it is now becoming obvious that as we come out of lockdown, we are facing a very different future as the Church of Scotland than we imagined.

Christendom has gone! What do I mean by that? There was a time when we believed we belonged to a Christian nation, living in a Christian UK and indeed Europe. That day has gone. We live in a secular culture and Scotland is one of the most secular countries in Europe!

The Church of Scotland that at least nominally had over 27% of the country as members now only boasts 7% - and that is members, when most churches are lucky if one third of that number have any serious commitment to the Church.

Indeed, there are now nominally more Roman Catholics in Scotland than there are members of the Church of Scotland!

What has caused this quantum shift? We live in a culture that feels no need for God and where now the average member of the Church is middle class and over 55.

This is not common throughout the world where Christianity is thriving in Africa, Asia and South America and where the average member of the church is age 30 and from poorer communities.

As we come out of lockdown and the General Assembly brings to us the facts and figures we can expect, in terms of ministries, that we will need to face up to a new reality – the road ahead is not going to be easy, it will call for hard work, innovation, faith and a renewed commitment to the Gospel.

But! But! This is God's Church of which we are a living part. What then are the priorities that he always sets before us?

- Make caring for the poor a priority.
- Always be reaching out to people, embracing them, caring for them, loving them.
- Be evangelical – find innovative and true ways to share our faith.
- Internally, love one another in the Church and be supportive of one another.
- Care for the Church Building because how it looks, and its grounds, will be a reflection of how we value God.

Do all these things and keep on doing them. **Iain**

Intimations

Services will be at the normal times on Sunday – Facebook will go on at 9am, Zoom at 9.45 – we will not be opening the Church for Palm Sunday.

Advance notice of services for Easter:

1st April Maundy Thursday Communion Service in the Church at 7pm.

2nd April Good Friday Zoom Service at 3pm [significance of 3pm is this is the time Jesus died].

4th April Easter Sunday – Facebook 9am, Zoom 9.45 and 11.00am in the Church.

Please contact Irene Cunningham and let her know if you plan on being at the church service – 01383731947

Zoom Service on Wednesday at 6.45 beginning at 7.00pm. We are continuing this Season of Lent with reflections by Con Campbell on the life of Peter with the filming shot in situ – this is number 6 in the series.

Tom McIntosh is recovering from surgery and is anxious that the church garden is not neglected. The Garden is one of the features that speaks positively to our community and we could do with a pool of volunteers to keep things ticking over – contact Tom on 01383 726342

This Newsletter has now been distributed online and by delivery for a year. This would not have been possible without the help of the team of people who weekly deliver the Newsletter and so a huge thankyou to them for the time they give in going this every week.

HYMN VERSES

Our chosen verse for this week comes from two of our members and again, they have remarkably chosen the same verse – it is 181 in the latest edition of the Church Hymnary – For the Beauty of the Earth, verse 4.

For the joy of human love

Brother, sister, parent, child,

Friends on earth, and friends above,

For all gentle thoughts and mild

On person thinks that this part of the hymn reminds them to be thankful for all the people they have in their lives and the other person wants to remember with gratitude all of the special people who are now gone.

[If you have a verse from a hymn you would like to offer – even anonymously – just drop me a note or an email.]

