

# Aberdeen

# NORTH NEWS

APRIL 2021



**Jesus said “ This is what the kingdom of God is like.  
A man scatters seed on the ground”. (Mark 4:26)**

Spring is my favourite time of the year. I have always been fascinated with helping things grow. In the past I have planted seeds of various kinds, vegetables and flowers. It's just one of my ways of relaxing and gives me time to think and pray. Planting seeds has taught me spiritual principles too.

Several times I have bought a packet of seeds, left it in the garden shed and forgotten to plant them. I have learned that a seed has no power until it is planted. When I plant a seed, whatever I plant, whether it is carrots or marigolds – that is what I will harvest. It is amazing what a small packet of seed produces and I find it remarkable that I always harvest more than I plant. If I want to increase my harvest I can do so by planting more seeds. Each time I plant I use good seed, usually purchased from a garden centre. While waiting for my

harvest I have learned that I must be patient, for growth can be slow, and not give up.

We learn the spiritual laws of the universe not by studying nature, but by studying God's Word. The more we understand these spiritual laws the more fruitful, the more effective, and the more productive our lives are going to be. Seeds can be ideas, a new way of looking at things, new habits. We can plant relational seeds in our relationships. We can plant personal seeds in our character.

For many of us, 2020 was the worst year on record. But we can't do anything about last year's harvest. It's over. But we can start planting good seeds today. So what new thing could you start? What small step can you take today in growing the Kingdom of God?

A much loved song is “Great is thy faithfulness”. One of the verses goes “Summer and winter and seed time and harvest”. The seasons are intentional and it is exciting that we are in a new season in the life of our church – Aberdeen North.

Wishing you blessings of hope, peace and love this Easter. Love Susan

## THE MINISTRY TEAM

Dear Friends,

The dark clouds are lifting and there is light on the horizon. I have noticed a change of mood in the country as we see ourselves coming out of lockdown and the possibility of life returning to normal. We have all missed meeting up with friends and family and those coffee mornings and shopping trips to the sales. This past year has been a real testing time for many of us and just to imagine being able to visit family and friends fills us with a sense of relief and expectation. We are hopeful of a better year ahead. In the words of Captain Tom, “Tomorrow will be a better day”. It certainly has been a time of mixed emotions.



Life is a bit like that, a roller coaster some might say, and the story of easter is a good example of that. The Passover celebrations began with Jesus' entry into Jerusalem to the sounds of cheering and the welcome of a king. “Hosanna in the highest”, the people sang. But by the end of the week the mood had changed. The arrest, trail and eventual death of Jesus filled the disciples with grief and disappointment. They could not understand the meaning of it all, in spite of Jesus' teaching, and yet it was all in God's perfect plan. From the high of the arrival of the King into Jerusalem to the low of the death of Jesus and the scattering of his followers, nothing could have been more disappointing. It is hard for us to imagine the disappointment in the lives of the disciples.

Yet in it all, God had a purpose, the salvation of mankind. Jesus chose the way of the cross, hard as it was, in obedience to his Father's will and by his death our sins are forgiven. The price has been paid. Jesus gave his life as a ransom for sin so that we might be forgiven and set free from the power and consequences of sin.

But that is only the beginning. Three days later Jesus rose from the dead. The resurrection means so much to us in that it gives us, some would say hope but I would say the assurance of life after death. That is the core belief in the Christian faith and one which gives us comfort and strength in all that life might throw at us. Yes, there will be ups and downs, heartache

and joy, triumphs and failures, but through it all the Spirit of Jesus is with us in his resurrected power making us more than conquerors.

The reality then for the believer is that death is not the end but rather the beginning of a new life for all who put their trust in the Lord. Therein lies a peace and a strength in adversity that is quite miraculous and comforting. We receive this gift by faith and by prayer, trusting in the wonderful grace of our Risen Lord Jesus. May the blessing and peace of Easter be with you and all whom you love.

Rev Michael Shewan

### **WEEKLY FREEWILL OFFERING SCHEME (WFO)**

Hello everyone, my name is Peter Ewen and I am arranging for new WFO sets of envelopes to be distributed to all members who use weekly envelopes to make their donations. These envelopes, for donations made to Aberdeen North Parish Church, should be used from 4 April 2021. Any old envelopes (Mastrick, Northfield and Summerhill) should be suitably discarded.



If you have not received new sets of envelopes before Sunday 4 April, please contact your Elder and arrangements will be made to have envelopes delivered to you. *Peter Ewen, WFO and Gift Aid Co-ordinator.*

### **ABERDEEN NORTH PARISH NEWS DESK**

During recent months we have all had to get used to new ways and master or at least attempt to master new ways of communication. Who had heard about Zoom a year ago or FaceTime for that matter? While many people have been able to stay in touch by these methods, we realise that this has not been the case universally. If you feel forgotten or left out in any way over these past few months, we apologise and hope this letter rectifies things. A separate Consent Form is enclosed for completion and return. If you are on email, we will be able to update you more quickly and reduces our costs.

As you will know the three churches of Northfield, Summerhill and Mastrick have joined together as of the 1<sup>st</sup> February to form the new parish of Aberdeen North. This has always been the Presbytery Plan but has been accelerated due to the retiral of Rev Scott Guy. It is with sadness that we will see our churches close and I understand the feeling of loss and the memories of special occasions which we will always associate with our respective churches but there is a new chapter to be written.

The vision is to build a new church centre which will serve the new enlarged parish with modern and attractive facilities to serve the next generation and beyond. Agreement has been given by Presbytery and we welcome the active support we have received so far. Further negotiations will take place to secure a site which we have identified and the sale of all three church sites should finance the development. The plan has the support of the General Trustees in Edinburgh and now the hard work begins negotiating the purchase of a site and getting planning permission.

A new church centre will have many benefits in attracting new members and providing facilities for church and community use. Susan and I have both seen the difference modern facilities make in the life of a church and some of us will remember St Madoes Church centre in Perthshire on one of our bus tours.

Yes, there will be a grieving process we must go through, but we must look forward to the dawning of a new day full of opportunity and see the possibilities for the Kingdom of God. Please pray that the many challenges that lie ahead may be overcome and that above all, God's will is done in all of this. I sincerely hope you will be part of this new venture and give it your prayerful support. Rev Michael Shewan

### **MINISTRY TEAM CONTACTS**

Rev Michael Shewan, 36 Stronsay Drive, Aberdeen AB15 6JL, 01224 324669, MShewan@churchofscotland.org.uk  
Rev Susan Sutherland, 8 Corse Wynd, Kingswells AB15 8TP, 01224 279562, SSutherland@churchofscotland.org.uk  
Church Office email address : office@aberdeennorthchurch.co.uk

### **EASTER DAY SERVICES—4 APRIL**

The Scottish Government has advised that we can now meet for Sunday Worship in church for up to 50 people. We will still have to adhere to 2 metre social distancing, wearing of masks and no singing. The Kirk Session has agreed to have a service in each of the churches - Mastrick, Summerhill and Northfield - to celebrate Easter Sunday. All churches are required to implement a system for Test and Protect.

**Mastrick Church** - Services at 9.45am and 11.00 am. To book a seat phone or text 07861316643 on **Friday 2 April.**

**Northfield Church**—Service at 10.30 am.

**Summerhill Church**—Service at 11.00 am. Communion will be shared during the service. Full measures will be taken to ensure everyone's safety.

### **THEREAFTER ....**

The Kirk Session also agreed that from the 11 April services will be in Mastrick Church. There will be 2 services - 9.45 am and 11.00 am. Please phone or text the designated number – **07861316643** each Friday to book a seat for Sunday. *Due to the current restrictions we are unable to run the minibus.*

### **MINISTRY AND MISSION CONTRIBUTIONS**

We have just been **advised by the central offices of the Church of Scotland in Edinburgh** that our Ministry and Mission contributions from 1 February until 31 December 2021 will be **£54,436**. This is a huge commitment for all of us to meet. *Bill Sutherland, Treasurer*