

# Bennochy Parish Church of Scotland Kirkcaldy

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Website: [www.bennochyparishchurch.org.uk](http://www.bennochyparishchurch.org.uk)

## NEWS SHEET

AUGUST 2020

Hello from Bennochy manse,

As we begin to ease out of lock-down, it seemed like a good time to write to all members of the congregation. I really wanted to communicate more often with you, but not having a complete list of email addresses has not made this possible.

The most important thing has always been people's health. I hope you and your family have been well, and 'survived' the lock-down. It is indeed a strange old world we have been living in these past four months. As many have said before, it is, totally 'unprecedented'.

A special hello to anyone who is or has been shielding. As you get this letter, I am not sure what phase of the Government exit strategy we will be in, and who you might now have been able to meet up with, but I do hope you have been supported at this time and not felt too isolated. If people have been unwell, I hope you are feeling better, and if Covid-19 has affected you or your family, my prayers are for your recovery.

If anyone has suffered any bereavement I have been unaware of, please forgive my lack of contact, and I do ask the blessing of God's peace upon you and your family. If anyone wishes to have a chat, for any reason, please contact me by phone or email.

It was back at the end of March that Bennochy Church closed its building. Some people are now asking, when will we get back into the building? We are now beginning to think about how that might happen, since we have permission from the Scottish Government for communal worship and "life events" to take place. It looks like it will be September before we will open for Sunday worship only. The most important thing is for the building to be safe. People's safety cannot be compromised, and to begin with, worship will look and feel quite different.

Since the closure of the building, Bennochy Church has gone 'online'. I have been producing video reflections each Sunday, there have been some daily reflections, along with other updates from the national church. Our website and Facebook page have become our 'one stop shop' for all communication. If you have not done so yet, please go to either of our websites:

- <https://www.bennochyparishchurch.org.uk>
- <https://www.facebook.com/pages/category/Presbyterian-Church/Bennochy-Parish-Church-Kirkcaldy-566274957216109/>

When we have further updates on building reopening they will be posted online. If you do not have internet, we will do our best, in due course, to let you know.

This experience has taught us many things, not only how to be a church without a building. It has showed up our lack of congregational contact details. Ideally, we would have loved to contact everyone more often, but realistically, this can only be done if we have email addresses. A pro forma has been supplied by your elder to help us do that in the future.

You can also subscribe to our website mailing list by supplying only your **email address** at <https://www.bennochyparishchurch.org.uk/lists/?p=subscribe> or follow the links on the home page to subscribe to news. You will then receive an email each time new information has been posted.

I believe this is a time of opportunity. We cannot simply go back and pick up where we left off at the end of March. Covid has literally changed the world. Our conversation is now about the 'new normal' and how the church faces a hugely different world. No longer is it about looking back but identifying a new future. We are not coming to the end; we are just beginning. Together, and in faith, let us walk that road.

Stay safe. Stay connected. Till the next.

*Robin McAlpine*

My contact details are 01592 643518 or [revrobinmcalpine@gmail.com](mailto:revrobinmcalpine@gmail.com)

Dear Member,

It's been a while since we last worshipped at Bennochty as we have all lived our lives in a somewhat controlled isolation environment.

During this time our Business Team has met (virtually) regularly, and more recently to discuss our return to Worship Strategy where we are hoping to be returning by mid-September. This will be confirmed with a follow up Newsletter.

These discussions have been guided by Government legislation which I would like to share with you, as it has presented us with understandable challenges, designed on the wellbeing of our members and visitors attending our building and worship.

What to expect on return to worship:

- Our numbers on a Sunday can be no more than 50 to allow social distancing. This is a particular challenge as our welcome team may unfortunately have to explain to some members that we cannot allow entry if we are at capacity.
- There will be a Trace & Protect facility where names and contact details need to be obtained from all attendees. This information will be gathered every Sunday and retained for 21 days, after which it will be securely destroyed.

Note: We are also seeking to gain permission from our members to obtain telephone numbers and e-mail addresses where we can improve our communication going forward - we have struggled to achieve this during lockdown. (see supplied pro forma)

- Hand Sanitisers available on entry and exit
- We are not allowed to sing
- We cannot hand out orders of service
- There will be a one-way system
- Toilets will have limited access
- No teas or coffees
- Face coverings are required
- Pew Bibles will not be available
- Pew Cushions will be removed
- The offering will be taken as a retiral collection as you leave the church
- Allocated seating - so it's probable that your normal seating area will not be available
- Services will be much shorter as we will not be singing
- We are limited to certain areas of the building

As we have shared the joy of worship over the years, we have also enjoyed the fellowship together and, whilst these guidelines restrict this, it's important that we continue to focus on supporting each other during these difficult times.

If you have any questions or concerns please do not hesitate to contact myself or Robin McAlpine (contact details below).

I thank you in advance for your continual support with God's work here at Bennochty and look forward to sharing worship with you at this unprecedented time.

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