



St Mary's & Old with Teviot & Roberton

Joint newsletter May 2021

And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, 'Look! God's dwelling-place is now among the people, and he will dwell with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.'

He who was seated on the throne said, 'I am making everything new!'

Revelation 21:3-5

What a glorious vision we have in these words. They speak of the new creation to come after Jesus returns. There will be perfect, uninterrupted, unending fellowship between God and his people in the heavenly city. No more tears. No more death or mourning. No more pain. No evil, no sin. How wonderful it will be. And we can be there because of Jesus. As the song by Matt Redman says:

*There's a place where the streets shine
with the glory of the Lamb.*

*There's a way we can go there
we can live there, beyond time*

*because of you,
because of your love,
because of your blood.*

That is the wonderful prospect that awaits us. The best is yet to be.

But see how the passage above ends, with God saying,

Please contact me if you are anxious, or need help and prayer.

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“I am making everything new!”

That applies now, as well as then. “If anyone is in Christ, they are a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come”, Paul says in 2 Corinthians 5:17. If we have trusted in Jesus, we are already a new creation. God has given us new life and we are being continually renewed in that. Even as we get old, and our bodies wear out, this remains the case. “Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day” (2 Corinthians 4:16).

I have said a number of times to Sheila during the course of this pandemic, referring to my ministry here, “if we can see things safely through to the end of this, that will be an achievement in itself.” As I think about this, I now see that as being an inadequate aim. It is not enough. For even in this world., in all its brokenness, God has plans for us, which as yet we do not see. “I am making all things new”, he says. We need to fix our eyes on what God wants to do, as we go beyond this crisis into the future. Our horizons can be too limited.

We can also try to live in the past. A popular expression just now is “making memories”. The aim is to make lasting memories as we go through happy events and good experiences. It strikes me that for a Christian that has to be an inadequate aim. It is not enough. Treasured memories to look back on are important. But we don’t live in and through our happy experiences to make memories we can look back on. We live for God in them, we give thanks to him for them and those we share them with, we seek to be a blessing to others in them, and we move forward into the future strengthened by them. As those who are in Christ, we are not to live looking back. We are to live in the present, looking forward in faith. God has good plans for us, as yet unknown. They may involve hard times for us and our loved ones, but we know the Lord will be with us in and through them all. And then... in his time, there is glory to come. The best is yet to be.

In this broken world, may we trust fully in the Lord who is making everything new, as we move onwards and upwards.

Your friend and minister



Easing of restrictions

Alongside the various progressive relaxation of restrictions we are all familiar with in everyday life, the

rules around worship and use of the church are also slowly easing.

The maximum cap of 50 has now been removed but it does not make

a massive difference for any of our church buildings as the maximum attendance is still determined by what physical distancing (which remains at 2 metres) permits. So in Teviot, with its 38 seating positions, if we had a large number of couples or family groups coming along, seated in the side pews, the number would go above 50. In St Mary's, with its 15 seating positions, and Roberton, with its 14 seating positions, the numbers are unlikely to reach 50.

It is now permissible to use balconies, and the Kirk Sessions will be assessing the risk/benefits of that. The numbers booking currently do not require the opening of the balconies.

By contrast, we could with appropriate safeguards hold socially distanced outdoor worship in our church grounds from 17th May beginning with 500 seated or 250 standing and increasing progressively until the end of June. That of course could only apply to St Mary's and to Roberton.

Sunday School/Junior Church/Teens Group could now meet in the church (or the halls once they open) under the Scottish Government guidance for youth work with limits on numbers—the maximum number of children and leaders allowed currently appears to be 30. Detailed discussion however still needs to take place regarding the implications of this. The joint

Sunday Club and the Teens Group continue online for now. Formal youth work (including uniformed organisations) could also now take place under Scottish Government Guidance with limits on numbers but that is a matter for the BB/GB in liaison with ourselves.

It is (strangely) still not permissible to hold meetings (eg Prayer meeting, Kirk Session, Guild) in the church building. It is unlikely that such meetings will be permitted before summer 2021. We could however have after service tea and coffee, or coffee mornings in church—but with only 6 people from up to 2 households just now, increasing progressively to 10 from up to 4 households at the end of June!

And what about singing? Congregational singing is still not allowed at the moment, indoors or out. I was however given some encouragement during recent communication with the Church of Scotland offices where the hope was expressed that singing might be allowed sometime in June. We will have to wait and see. Even without singing, it remains a great privilege to be able to gather together for worship. And the continuation of live-streaming from Teviot allows ongoing participation in worship for people from their own homes.

Further updates will be given as we go forward. AWC

Thy Kingdom Come

Once again we will join with Christians all over the world from Ascension to Pentecost, which is 13th to 23rd May this year, to pray for our families, friends and communities. You can find more details at www.thykingdomcom.global

We plan once again to have a series of virtual prayer times over the ten day period – on the two Thursday evenings (13th and 20th at 7pm) and also half hour gatherings on Sunday 16th at 3pm, Tuesday 18th at 7pm and Friday 21st at 2pm. To request a Zoom link for any or all of those please contact Alistair on alistairwcook@icloud.com

Every member of the two churches should have received along with this newsletter a *Thy Kingdom Come Prayer Journal* to use during the period from 13th to 23rd May. Our prayer is that you will find this a helpful and blessed experience.

Children and youth work

The first Zoom Sunday Club was held on 24th May 2020. A year on, we have met 50 times and counting... Throughout the year we have had a pool of 18 children – from Teviot Sunday School, St Mary's Junior Church and some from Megamix. Some have only been a few times, others are regular attenders. Although Zoom is not ideal for this kind of work, it has

meant that we have been able to keep in touch with families and continue with some form of Christian education.

Our weekly programme usually includes an opening and closing prayer, song, game, DVD Bible story and craft with a 'Snack & chat' time at the end. The team – Sheila, Anne, Donna, Marjorie and Angela – take turns in preparing and delivering craft materials and other items needed for each session. Cupcakes were included in the deliveries for our Christmas party and Easter celebration! Over the next few weeks we will be exploring the story of Joseph. We hope and pray that it won't be long now before we can meet again in person.

Sheila

A small group of young teens have been meeting weekly since last June. Although it is challenging to engage using Zoom, the technology has meant that our two Teviot young people have been joined by two others who have a long history with us at holiday club. One of those is from Jedburgh. When possible we have been using video-based material that is professionally produced. Our current series is by Scripture Union Ireland and is an 8 week course looking at why it is we should seriously consider following Jesus.

Jo

Lee family update

Sam and Ruth and their five children, Mark, Paul, Lisa, Johannes and Anneke, who work in South East Asia, are in a process of transition as they prepare for their home assignment (or, as it used to be called, furlough!) in the Netherlands. Ruth writes:

Even though our flights are not until July 1st, we are well and truly in transition. Every day, we are thinking about the changes ahead and practical steps that need to be taken both here and in the Netherlands. We have been making lists, sorting through things, enrolling the kids in Dutch schools, and taking the kids (and ourselves) through the mixed feelings of leaving here and adjusting there. What a comfort to know the reality of God's peace in the midst of change.

Pray for God's hand to be on the continuing work in the place where they serve as they step back for a year, and for his blessing on them in their transition to the Netherlands and during their time there. Pray especially for the children's education including Mark and Paul beginning at university.

The psalmist says, "The Lord will watch over your coming and going both now and forevermore" (Psalm 121:8)

Finance reports

St Mary's & Old Parish Church

The final accounts for the year to 31st December 2020 showed an excess of Payments over Receipts of £4,925—income suffered with the disruption to live services for much of the year. This was particularly marked in freewill offerings, but many thanks to those of you who have continued to support the work of the Church by paying your offerings by cheque, standing orders or bank transfer.

In the current year offerings are slightly up on the same period last year, but I would urge all of you to consider your contributions to the Church. For instance you may wish to review the level of your standing order if you have not done so for a year or two.

Teviot & Roberton Parish Church

Our accounts for 2020 have been examined, and show a small, and understandable, deficit on the year of £1,868. Although our outgoings were reduced, so too was our income in that, for example, no money was received from the groups which would, in normal times, have been using the premises.

I must thank all those members and supporters who have been making regular payments through online banking or by direct debits. Many, many more of you than before are

now using these methods. This has however focused my attention on Gift Aid declarations. It would be really good if everyone who completed such declarations in the dim and distant past could once again complete such a form. If other donors have not given us such declarations, could I urge you to do so if you are a taxpayer as this brings us an additional amount equal to about one quarter of your annual donations, at no cost to yourselves. This would make myself and our Gift Aid Convenor Angela Blake feel so much more comfortable! Please contact me to talk this over or to request a form for completion.

Details of the treasurers are:-

St Mary's & Old Parish Church:

James Peat, 31 Weensland Road,
Hawick,
TD9 9NW

Tel: 01450 374741

Email: jpeat@live.co.uk

Hawick Teviot & Roberton Parish Church:

Ron Smith, Ellistrin, The Courtyard,
Westcote, Hawick, TD9 8SX

Tel: 01450 379973 or 07774113066

Email: rhs@ellistrin.com

Bethany Christian Trust

A thank you and update from Ruth Longmuir of Bethany Christian Trust

A big thank you to Hawick Teviot & Roberton and Hawick St Mary's & Old Parish for your support of the Welcome Centre this winter. Having grown up in Hawick and been a member at St Mary's & Old, I was delighted to hear that you had so generously donated to our work supporting people who are homeless in Edinburgh. Thank you so much from me, from the team at Bethany Christian Trust and also on behalf of our guests who you are helping through your donations.

The Welcome Centre was open for 30 weeks (5th October to 3rd May) and we had over 850 different individuals stay in that time. On average guests stay for eight nights before moving on to more suitable accommodation. Some people stay longer to allow more support to be put in place or if their situations need more in depth investigations. Where an outcome is known, over 90% of stays result in a person going to accommodation.

We have a variety of specialist support services who visit the Welcome Centre to provide support and advice to guests including medical services, City of Edinburgh council staff, homelessness and housing advice services, housing lawyers and services that provide employment and benefits support. These partner services help to link our guests into support that they may not have accessed otherwise.

We aim to show God’s love to our guests by treating them with kindness, something that some people have sadly not experienced in their lives before. We try to show people that they are valued by spending time with them and doing all we can to get them the help that they need. On leaving the Welcome Centre, a guest recently stated that he had been on five star holidays in the past but his stay at the Welcome Centre had been better than that!



As the pandemic continues, it is good to be able to offer people somewhere safe to stay where they can follow the Government guidance to “stay home”. The ensuite rooms at the Welcome Centre mean that people can maintain distance from each other and I’m pleased to say that we have not had any positive Covid cases amongst our guests. Staff have all now been offered the vaccine and we hope that our guests soon will too.

To finish, I want to tell you about a guest who we’ll call Gary. Gary had served in the army and suffers with PTSD as a result. A recent event

had triggered his PTSD and his drinking had spiralled out of control. At the Welcome Centre, he was often under the influence and was admitted to A&E on a regular basis due to his drinking—often when members of the public found him lying in the street. Through building up a relationship with him, the staff were able to gain his trust and support him to manage his drinking in a safe way. He has been referred for an inpatient detox to come off alcohol completely but in the meantime, he was able to move from drinking spirits to drinking beer to safely reduce his alcohol intake. Staff at the Welcome Centre constantly encouraged Gary in his progress, telling him how well he was doing and how proud of him they were. They liaised with his Housing First worker who was also supporting Gary. When his drinking was under control, Gary was able to make decisions about his future accommodation options and he was delighted with the opportunity to



Haymarket Hub Hotel where the Welcome Centre is located

move to supported accommodation. There, it is hoped that he will be able to continue on the positive journey he has started on, until he is allocated a tenancy of his own through Housing First.

Regular Zoom Meetings

Lent Gatherings (see separate article)

Sundays at 7pm on Zoom from 21st February to 21st March. Contact Alistair on acook@churchofscotland.org.uk

Sunday Club

Sundays at 4.30pm. For primary aged children. Contact Sheila on sheilamcook@btinternet.com

Prayer meeting

Thursday evenings at 7pm. Contact Alistair on acook@churchofscotland.org.uk

Wednesday Bible class

For S1 – S3. Wednesdays at 4.45pm. Contact Jo on joannemaybury@me.com

Bible Fellowship

Meetings are monthly on Tuesdays at 7pm: 11th May and 8th June on Zoom for now. Contact Carol Peat cspeat@live.co.uk for further details.

Discipleship Explored

Coming meetings are at on Sunday: 16th May at 7pm, 30th May at 3pm, 27th June at 3pm and on Zoom for now. Contact Alistair for further details.

Communion

We plan to gather round the Lord's Table on Sunday 30th May at St Mary's at 10am in-person and at Teviot at 11am in-person and live-streamed.

Those who are in the church for the service will be provided with a small piece of bread and an individual communion glass, ready for when we come to communion. Those who are joining in online will need to have ready beforehand a small piece of bread and a small glass of wine or grape juice. At the appropriate time during the service, I will invite us all to eat and drink together.

We will also share in Communion at Robertson Kirk on Sunday 20th June at 3pm in person only. Each person will once again be provided with a small piece of bread and an individual communion glass, ready for communion.

Upcoming services



All services at Teviot are live-streamed at <https://teviot.online.church>
For booking to attend in person see the contact details below.

Date	Service	St Mary's	Teviot	Roberton	Theme
9 May	Morning worship	10am	11am		Matthew 7:7-12 <i>The giving Father</i>
16 May	Morning worship (Ascension Day 13.5.21)	10am	11am		Acts 1:1-14 Matthew 14:22-32
23 May	Morning worship Pentecost	10am	11am		Acts 2:1-13 John 14:15-27
30 May	Morning worship Communion	10am	11am		Matthew 7:13-14 <i>Two ways</i>
6 June	Morning worship	11am	10am		Matthew 7:15-20 <i>Two teachers</i>
13 June	Morning worship	11am	10am		Matthew 7:21-23 <i>Two pleas</i>
20 June	Morning worship	11am	10am	3pm Communion	Matthew 7:24-29 <i>Two builders</i>
27 June	Morning worship	11am	10am		

To book for Roberton or Teviot: Pat Sutherland 01450 375150
rasutherland@tiscali.co.uk

To book for St Mary's: Carol Peat on 01450 374741 smop2020@outlook.com