

# Pastoral Letter - April 2022

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Lent has come and gone. The week of the passion, from the triumphal entry of Jesus into Jerusalem through to the Passover meal in the upper room, the arrest, trial and crucifixion of Christ, and then his resurrection on Easter Sunday are now over for another year. Lent prepares Christians for the coming Passion week and Easter weekend, but my hope and prayer is that Easter underpins the whole of your year.

For Easter is the start and celebration of the Christian faith. Without it there is no Christianity. There is no faith. There is no salvation. There is no possibility of a relationship with God without Easter. It's that simple. *'I am the WAY, the TRUTH and the LIFE'* says Jesus (John 14.6), and to demonstrate this He...

... showed the **WAY**. The way is the way of servant life. To be humble and to serve, even for these in positions of power. To serve others sacrificially.

... showed the **TRUTH**. The fulfilment of so many Old Testament prophecies; the teaching of His ministry; and the prophetic words of Revelation given to the Apostle John, these all scream of the truth that is on offer through the Word of God, the risen and ascended Jesus. The truth is that through faith in Jesus you can have a restored and just relationship with God. And finally He...

... showed the **LIFE**. A resurrection life, which is one lived with a new heart. Nicodemus, a Jewish religious leader who sought Jesus out under the cover of darkness because he was a little afraid of being associated with Him, wanted to find the truth to life's big questions. Jesus' answer was that he must be born again. Not understanding what that meant, Jesus explained to Nicodemus that to be born again meant to be born of the Spirit, and that those who would be born of the Spirit would know that *"the Son of Man [Jesus would] be lifted up [crucified], that whoever believes in him may have eternal life. For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes may not perish but may have eternal life."*

This central teaching from Scripture, 'that Jesus, Son of God, died for your sin and mine, and that through his death bought your salvation and eternal life', is the cornerstone of Christian faith and therefore Easter is the cornerstone upon which all Christians live out our year and faith, one Lent and Easter through to the next. So, though the palm crosses may be put up somewhere or away,

though the Easter eggs and bunnies are eaten, for Christians the Easter message still resounds daily in our lives, or at least it should do.

So how is 'Easter' resounding through the life of Gillespie Memorial Church now that we have completed a full year of in-person services, since being allowed to worship again in the sanctuary on Easter Sunday 2021. Remember those days when we had only about 25 chairs in the sanctuary? Well in the past year, while of course still dealing with the effects of the pandemic we have seen a recovery of fellowship each Sunday as people have sought company of others and to bring their worship to God on the Lord's day. We finished our series on Paul's letter to the Romans (started before Covid hit), have delved into other areas including a series on '*Belief, the Golden Rule and first command to love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul and mind*'; a summer series on '*Love*' (1 Corinthians 13.4-8a); and a series on the core commitments to '*Growing Young*' in our church. All these series have been to challenge and grow us in our faith, and I hope to bring others to faith, that same faith I have just written about above. It's a faith found in the cross and the risen Christ that leads to new life born in the Spirit. As I say, Easter resounds through our faith and should through the life of the church on Sundays AND throughout each week.

Of course, there has been some uncertainty about what the future holds. Numbers coming to church have crept back up but some still haven't made it back to communal worship. Finances have been challenging with some loss of income from halls lets, but now groups are back in the halls and it's great to have vibrancy back in the GMC estate. There was some increase to costs due to essential works, and also you might have also wondered what's happening with GMC in the new round of Presbytery planning and its focus on mission? The draft plan has now been published and our Kirk Session meet in a week (as I type this) to discuss the opportunities and challenges before us. But know this, we are God's church and as I've said before, 'He will build His church'.

That said, it takes the people of God to serve the kingdom of God, and we are blessed to have some new folk among us, some desiring to serve and others being blessed by the ministry we offer. Messy Church is newly birthed and I know it will be a blessing to those who attend, those who volunteer to serve this ministry and will overall bless the kingdom of God. Alpha will start in a week or so (again as I type this and not when you read it), but despite my calls for folk to invite friends, family and colleagues the uptake has been low. I wonder why the low uptake? Have folk made invites but been turned down, or are folk scared to say 'come and see' and invite people along? I really don't know, so I ask that you please speak with me and help your minister understand what you desire for

your church. For this is your church and I am the servant of it. I BELIEVE WE ARE CALLED TO SERVE, TO PROCLAIM THE KINGDOM AND TO LOVE ONE ANOTHER, so that the risen life of Christ will not only reign in each one of us, but those we bring into the Kingdom too. We are after all an Easter people.

So, though Easter is over for 2022, the bride of the Risen Jesus, the gathered children of God (the church) live to love and serve the Lord. However you are able, please join us and serve Him too. I pray and hope to see you at our Annual General Meeting (see below) so we can hear your thoughts and answer your questions.

To the glory of God

Your servant in Christ, *Pastor Mike*

*Below are consolidated financial figures for the full year ended 31st December 2021 with 2020 comparison. (join us on 8th May for the AGM)*

	<b>2021</b>	<b>2020</b>
<b>TOTAL INCOME:</b>	<b>£103,149</b>	<b>£131,373</b>
<b><i>Income Breakdown</i></b>		
<i>Free Will Offering Envelopes:</i>	9,265	10,351
<i>Standing Order Offering:</i>	50,705	48,060
<i>Open Plate &amp; Other Offering:</i>	16,191	8,188
<i>Hall Usage Income:</i>	-284	5,820
<i>Other income and gift aid reclaim:</i>	9,719	25,557
<i>Grants</i>	17,553	8,553
<i>Legacy</i>	----	27,844
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURE:</b>	<b>£111,759</b>	<b>£109,581</b>
<b>DEFICIT / SURPLUS:</b>	<b>-£8,610</b>	<b>£ 21,792</b>

**Dates for the diary**

- **Annual Stated Meeting: DATE CHANGE 8th May** - stay on for review of 2021 and for a Q&A on our annual report, and the future at GMC
- **Messy Church on 1st Sunday month at 10am** - this ministry continues to grow. Please support us in your prayer and also if you want to help in any way, speak to Anne or Alan Monk

# 'IMPORTANT STUFF'



**FUN FOR ALL THE FAMILY**  
no need to book just come along!

Songs

Stories

**Messy Church**

GAMES

Crafts

**1st Sunday of the month**  
**10am - 12 noon**

**Gillespie Church Hall**  
**Chapel Street, Dunfermline**

For information call: 01383 621253  
or email: [office@gillespiechurch.org](mailto:office@gillespiechurch.org)

**It's FREE!**



Listen back to sermons and other content from GMC



The GMC Annual Meeting is on Sunday 8th May.  
Stay after worship for food and dialogue about our future mission in Dunfermline

Annual General Meeting – Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> May

Come and contribute to our direction of travel at GMC



The mission of GMC ministry to our church family and our community needs the following:

- **PRAYER:** will you pray for opportunities to change lives for Jesus?
- **PEOPLE:** will you participate by offering some of your time each week or month?
- **POUNDS:** will you make a regular offering to the work of our church?

In need of pastoral support or wish to help or support the work of GMC? contact

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