



The Steeple Church

January 2020

a church at the heart of the city . . .



. . . with the city at its heart

The Steeple Church: Dundee (Church of Scotland)
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Registered Scottish Charity SC 014314

Dear friends

I want to begin to wish you all a 'Happy New Year' and pray that you will enjoy both its promise and fulfilment. My highlight of last year was my son Daniel's wedding to Emilie in July while the downside was the 'septis' infections after my cancer operation in August. I still struggle to manage energies and don't expect to be fully fit until Easter. Even for the two weeks I'm teaching in the Netherlands in January, I will be based in a seminary where I have a room and time to rest.

Last year brought its share of political turmoil and personal sadnesses. Someone might even say: "There's got to be more to life than this!" Do you recall how life used to be reckoned as 'seven score year and ten'. The use of 'three score' as a name for sixty has long since died out but goes back to 1388 in John Wyclif's translation of the Bible: Leviticus 12. This is enforced by Psalm 90: 10 which says: "The length of our days is seventy years – or eighty, if we have the strength, yet their span is but trouble and sorrow."

For many people, once the body is up, that's it and there is no more. But for followers of Jesus, we have the light of Christ, even on the most difficult and depressing of days. And this life is just the beginning of eternal life. For every believer in Christ, there is definitely more than this! There will be hardly time to investigate all the wonders of the world. For the day when we leave this world, we've will have only just begun. John Newton's hymn puts it like this: "When we've been there ten thousand years, Bright shining as the sun, We've no less days to sing God's praise Than when we'd first begun." We will be lost in wonder and amazement, and, I believe, that we will have that time to look into the universe and the history of our planet.

Thinking about the next three months, on the first Sunday in February I will ask the congregation for permission for the Steeple to move to the unitary constitution. The elders and trustees have worked hard to find a better way to make decisions and policy. More members will be involved by being on a team of their choice. If agreed, the change should take place in April.

This Easter will be slightly earlier this year in the first-half of April. Sunday morning services will focus on “Myths about Christianity” following last year’s series in Mid-Week services. This year we have a new series on “The Ten Commandments” on Wednesday lunchtimes. Why not join us at 12.30? Our refurbished organ is making a difference and we look to celebrate this with a special concert.

Your friend and pastor,
Robert Calvert

CONGREGATIONAL DIARY

JANUARY

19 Sunday	10.30	Worship, "Defending the Faith", Rev. Jim Robertson
22 Wednesday	12.30	Mid-Week: service "You Shall Not Take My Name In Vain"
26 Sunday	10.30	Worship, "Science Versus Faith", Communion
28 Tuesday	19.00	Café Night
29 Wednesday	12.30	Mid-Week service: "Remember The Sabbath Day"

FEBRUARY

02 Sunday	10.30	Worship, "The Bible is Unreliable", Congregational Meeting
05 Wednesday	12.30	Mid-Week service: "Honour Your Father and Mother"
09 Sunday	10.30	Worship, "Christianity is Just a Crutch"
11 Tuesday	19.00	Café Night
12 Wednesday	12.30	Mid-Week service: "You Shall Not Murder"
16 Sunday	10.30	Worship, "Religion is Just Social Conditioning"
19 Wednesday	12.30	Mid-Week service: "You Shall Not Commit Adultery"
23 Sunday	10.30	Worship, "Christianity Stifles Freedom", Communion
25 Tuesday	19.00	Café Night
26 Wednesday	12.30	Mid-Week service: "You Shall Not Steal"

MARCH

01 Sunday	10.30	Worship, "Suffering Proves there's no God"
04 Wednesday	12.30	Mid-Week service: "You Shall Not Bear False Witness"
08 Sunday	10.30	Worship, "All Religions are the Same"
10 Tuesday	19.00	Café Night
11 Wednesday	12.30	Mid-Week service: "You Shall Not Covet"
15 Sunday	10.30	Worship, "Christianity is Irrelevant"
16 Monday	19.30	Finance Committee
18 Wednesday	10.30	Mid-Week service
22 Sunday	10.30	Worship, "Christianity Doesn't Work", Communion
24 Tuesday	19.00	Café Night

REGULAR EVENTS ...

On Mondays and Fridays The Steeple Church is **open from 12noon - 4pm**. Come for coffee/tea and a chat! There are also places to reflect and pray and find out what is available in Dundee.

Steeple Men meet weekly on a Thursday morning 10am - 12noon. We play pool and other games as well as chat over hot drinks. If you would appreciate company you are welcome to join us.

Family Playgroup continues on the first and third Saturday morning each month 10am - 12noon at The Steeple.

CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

On Sunday 2nd February, immediately after the Morning Service, the members and adherents of The Steeple Church will be invited to vote on whether to move from our current Constitution (known as a Model Deed Constitution) to a 'Unitary Constitution'. Please make every effort to be there to help our congregation make this important decision.

It used to be that every Church of Scotland congregation was encouraged to have a way of working using a Kirk Session and a Congregational Board. This was called the Model Deed of Constitution. The Steeple Church has operated with the Model Constitution for many years. Recognising that this organisational model was no longer optimal for many congregations, a different model was introduced at the General Assembly in 2003. Under this new Unitary Constitution, everything is governed by a single group, the Kirk Session. While it remains up to each congregation to discern the best way of managing themselves, the central Church of Scotland has been strongly encouraging congregations to consider moving to the Unitary Constitution.

A Frequently Asked Questions sheet about the Unitary Constitution is available at church or on the **Constitution** page of the church website.

FINANCE UPDATE

Congregational Giving January to November.

Total to 30/11/2019	Total to 30/11/18	Percentage Change
£90,727	£88,675	+2.3

Our congregation continue to be generous givers and the increase from last year is slightly above inflation. In addition to financial support many people give of their time to help with hall lets. In the current year hall lets income is predicted to be in the region of £50,000. We fund the caretaker post from hall lets income and in addition it has funded a contribution of £5,000 to Parish Nursing. Expenditure in the current year is broadly in line with our budget although we have seen a significant increase in the cost of electricity in the current year. There have also been unanticipated costs for the lift but a new contract has been arranged which should make future costs more manageable.

During 2019 we have been looking at costs for maintaining the building and contents over future years. Both the Building Management Committee and Finance Committee have been involved in this process and during 2020 a specific plan for a long term programme of replacements will be drawn up.

FROM THE PARISH NURSES

It will not have escaped anyone's notice that drug-related deaths are higher in Dundee than anywhere else in the UK and Europe. While experts ponder on the reasons underlying the appalling statistics, we are very involved in practical ways, because we know many of the people who have died, and their partners and loved ones who struggle with grief and stigma. We have been working very hard to develop strong and positive working relationships with the NHS Integrated Substance Misuse Service, having made a lot of contributions to the Dundee Drugs Commission. We were recently visited by the Scottish Gov Drugs Task Force, who said they left feeling inspired by what they saw and heard during their visit to a busy drop-in session. The big challenges are still the lack of any residential rehabilitation facility in Tayside, and the time it takes for people to start on a treatment plan to stop opiate use. But things are changing and we have seen some excellent practice very recently. Please keep praying for all staff working on the frontline in NHS services, Homeless Outreach Team, and those who support our work, like Housing, Food Banks, Welfare Benefits and money advisers.

Our Christmas dinner, run in partnership with Eagles Wings on Dec 16th was fabulous. We had the amazing privilege of having Dean Banks and his two restaurant chefs preparing, cooking and serving lunch to approximately 165 people. The sanctuary was packed full, with extra tables up on the stage area. About 26 volunteers help to host and serve at tables. We are also grateful to Malmaison Hotel for again supplying delicious turkey roulade, all cooked and ready to serve. Ashley Main provided beautiful and thoughtful gift bags to each and every person who came – she fundraises right through the year for this and other Christmas events. And Red Pepper loaned us crockery and cutlery for the day. Dean and his team excelled, of course, and there was not a crumb left of his amazing Sticky Toffee Pudding or a drop of the toffee sauce and Crème Anglaise.

Of course, without all the volunteers, our regular volunteers plus many others, who welcomed, hosted, served, did teas and coffees, washed dishes and moved furniture, it could never have happened. I'm grateful to Kirsty, who was 'Operations Manager' and kept all the volunteers informed, organised and happy all day (including her parents). Our regular volunteers support us all year round, unstintingly, and we are so grateful to all of them and publicly thank them for their continuing loving support.

Please keep on praying for us, for protection for us and all the folk who need to use the services we provide and for the organisations with whom we work. Pray that we may see changes in services that will result in lives saved, and that we can bring God alongside people because He is the one who can make the real life-changing changes in their lives.

Rachel, Kirsty and Barbara

MISSION AT THE HEART OF THE CITY

It has been almost two years since I began to work for the Steeple as a community engagement worker, and it has been interesting to reflect on how the role has developed over that time.

Because the Steeple has a very privileged geographical location right in the heart of the city, a great many opportunities for mission literally walk through our doors each week! These visitors come in for many reasons – as tourists, spiritual seekers, through curiosity (“I saw the doors were open!”) or because of some kind of need – and it is important to welcome every one and make them feel at home. Working primarily through the Family Playgroup, Open Fridays and with the Parish Nurses’ Girl Power support group, I am constantly amazed by the number and variety of people that we encounter on a regular basis. Many are unchurched – or perhaps even ‘de-churched’ – and a formal ‘religious’ environment can therefore be seen as intimidating or even unwelcome, so providing an alternative experience is often a first step to sharing the gospel. Many of the parents who come along to the Playgroup, for example, are simply looking for somewhere to entertain their children and enjoy some more grown up conversation at the weekends. However as that particular expression of the Steeple’s community develops and grows, I find myself having more and more ‘faith conversations’ with some of those parents.

Meaningful relationships can really only develop over time, as regular visitors to the Steeple increasingly recognize a consistency in their welcome and a willingness to be involved in their lives. Very often that can be as mundane as having a cup of coffee together, or offering companionship and a listening ear, prayer for a particular situation, help to meet a physical need or sometimes signposting people on to an organisation that is better able to help them. A typical Steeple week - if there is such a thing! – might therefore include a rowdy game of dominoes, providing a hot drink and a bit of time out to people who need to beg on the streets, accompanying someone with learning difficulties to the dentist, telling stories to a group of pre-schoolers, or listening to a bereaved parent talk about their child’s suicide.

Although I rarely attend the Steeple’s Sunday services (being married to the minister of another church) it is clear that this is just one reflection of the Steeple congregation’s much wider ministry to Dundee. It is really encouraging to see the different outreaches that take place in and around this building during the week, the way in which so many ‘Steeple people’ give their time and gifts to resource them, and the many lives that are being impacted as a result. And I am reminded that, as a community worker, I am part of the Steeple’s community of faith.

Fiona Dixon (Community Engagement Worker)

CHURCH OFFICE

The Church Administrator can be contacted by e-mail office@thesteeplechurch.org.uk or messages left on the church answerphone (01382 200031).

Please note that items for the Sunday noticesheet or projection should be submitted by 1pm on Thursday

Helen Fettes deals with all enquiries about hall bookings— she can be contacted by e-mail info@thesteeple.org.uk or 01382 843069

MAGAZINE DEADLINE



Items for the **January 2020** issue of the Newsletter should be given to Brenda Elwell-Sutton or sent to the church office by **Sunday 16 February**

The Newsletter will be available early March.

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