



# THE STEEPLE CHURCH

A church at the heart of the city with the city at its heart

*February*  
2021

During this period of lockdown when we are not permitted to meet in our church building, we meet together on Sunday mornings at 10.30am using Zoom.

After the service we go into small breakout rooms to chat and share news with one another.

If you would like to be sent the Zoom link each week, please contact the church office.

A recording of the service is put on YouTube on Sunday afternoon

Many of our other weekly church gatherings continue using Zoom - see the back page for details.

Please contact the church office if you would like more details about any of our events.

Items for the April magazine should be sent to the church office by the end of March



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Registered Scottish Charity SC 014314

Dear friends

In this newsletter I warmly welcome the Rev. Emma McDonald as interim-moderator. Dundee Presbytery has given us permission to recruit a new minister and we are delighted that Emma has begun to work with us. As you know, I'm retiring on health grounds and my last Sunday will be 11th April. It has been an unexpected joy to be your minister and I really did not expect to be leaving the Steeple after only seven years. Though we will miss you, Lesley-Ann and I are thankful to have found a cottage in north-west Fife, near Gateside, only 30 minutes from Dundee.

The events of the past twelve months have been quite unprecedented. But unlike some churches recently reported in the media, it is important that we listen to and respect the advice of our government and medical leaders. It would be no different in war-time and that is how we must view this. The last few weeks have been difficult for us with the loss of much-loved friends of the Steeple. I know that it is challenging to be vigilant and take every precaution as we hear the vaccine is being rolled out.

It seems strange to ask you to observe Lent and make further sacrifices. For Lent is that period when we try to identify with Jesus in the forty days before he went to the cross. I want to recommend a brand new 40-day experience called "The Lent Encounter" that has been developed by the Bible Society. It is free to sign up and you will receive a daily email with bible verses, inspiring images, video reflections and practical challenges. <https://www.biblesociety.org.uk/explore-the-bible/the-lent-encounter>

The first Sunday in Lent is 23 February.

It seems we enjoy seeing faces without masks and singing out with muted voices at the Sunday zoom services. Please let your friends and neighbours know how they can join us at 10.30 am. It is really not that complicated. With my brother's help, my mum has even joined us! We are also glad to welcome Nicola Montgomery who is training to be a 'reader'. You will be seeing her regularly on Sunday mornings leading up to Easter.

Your friend and minister,

Robert Calvert



## *From our Interim Moderator ...*

Greetings, please let me introduce myself. My name is Emma McDonald and I have been the minister of St David's High Kirk for just over 2 years. I have been asked to be the Interim Moderator for The Steeple Church during the upcoming vacancy process, which I am pleased to help with. I look forward to accompanying you all on this journey of vacancy. I would be happy to answer any questions that may occur going forward and if I don't know the answer to any of your questions I will find someone who does and get the answer to you.

Prior to coming to Dundee I was the Associate Minister of Granton Parish Church in Edinburgh for 2 years and have been minister in parishes in West Lothian and Fife. I am passionate about showing God's love in a practical way by working in partnership alongside community groups.

I come originally from a small village just outside Dumbarton and am naturally chatty and have a dreadful sense of humour. You have been warned ☹️. Prior to ministry I was a police officer in Strathclyde for a little over 9 years and I have also trained as a teacher of RME. I have two boys, one in S2, one in P7 and a very noisy small dog who thinks he is a lot larger than he is. Please when we get back to church, come and speak with me if I am about or in the meantime please feel free to get in touch. My number is 01382 322955.

Wishing You God's blessing  
Emma

In 2020 we started the year with a budget based on income from congregational giving and regular hall lets. This all changed when lockdown arrived as it meant no Sunday worship and no hall lets. Fortunately, the commitment of the Steeple people meant that over the whole year congregational giving was only down about 4% compared to 2019. However, there have been no hall lets from March 2020 so difficult decisions had to be made to reduce expenditure.

The result of considerably reduced income in 2020 meant there was a deficit of approximately £25,000 for the whole year. While there were reserves to cover this as a one off the deficit cannot be repeated so measures are in place to reduce expenditure in 2021.

We are looking forward to a time when the building can reopen for worship but in the meantime there continue to be ongoing costs. Therefore, if your contribution to the work of the Steeple is normally given by envelope or in cash at Sunday worship it would be helpful if you contact the Treasurer and arrange to give by other means.

Bob Potter (Finance Team Leader)



**From Nicola Montgomery ....** I'm really delighted to have the opportunity to do part of my final placement as a Reader at the Steeple, alongside a placement at Fintry. (Readers lead services, except for communion, baptisms and marriages, do other church work and can be locums.) I've done placements at Downfield Mains, Broughty Ferry New Kirk, and the Carse (Longforgan and beyond). It is one of the

advantages of lockdown that I can now contribute to a recorded service at Fintry and be with you in a live zoom service too on Sunday morning. I do hope I have the chance to meet more of you on zoom, but in due course in person and actually at the Steeple too. I'm really grateful to Robert for giving me so much time and many opportunities to learn and grow.

I was born in Forfar. I worked there in a children's home before I moved to Dundee when I married Alistair, now a retired GP. We've not had children ourselves, but have loads of nephews and nieces. My journey to Readership began my first term at Durham University. I 'accidentally' went to a Christian talk about hope, not realising it was Christian, or I wouldn't have gone. I had given up with the church and Christianity. I came out having given my life to Jesus and with an everlasting hope! It was wonderful. I really had found Jesus, or he'd found me. Jesus has continued to surprise me, including giving me the chance to do a degree in theology at Bible College (ICC), learn Hebrew and Greek and then do a Master's in Biblical Interpretation and now calling me to be a Reader. As I've got out of the boat he's been there keeping me on top of the water, or not letting me sink much....

I also enjoy cycling, working out with kettlebells, rock climbing, and getting outside - gardening (chopping things down especially), walking, and swimming outside. I have been amazed and inspired by Katy E-S and Leslie-Ann's Broughty beach swims and hope to take a dip sometime with them, even it is just dipping my toes to start with! I've been on some short term missions to Israel; I loved telling people about Jesus, and it was great relaxing with the team - including 'pillow' fights with big cushions we found. I've also had opportunities to share the Gospel as part of a street witnessing team and more recently through organising carol services in London and Edinburgh for my old school. To my horror God asked me to do the reflection at one of them. I was terrified, but trusted him anyway and he was totally faithful. I ended up doing quite a few more and now training as a Reader. I'm not sure how this is going to work out, but leaning on the Lord is the way to go.





## *From the Parish Nurses...*

Thank you to our Steeple family for your love and prayer support throughout this pandemic, as we continue to serve those in great need in our city.

It was great to be back in the Steeple and able to serve hot food to folk between September and Christmas, and to have the **Dental van** back to give vital

treatments. We were able to serve a very **modified Christmas lunch** to our folk in mid-December; they really enjoyed turkey broth, followed by 'sticky sausages' and apple crumble. Tesco Riverside made generous donations, as well as a friend of our work who gave toiletries, gloves etc and chocolate selection boxes, all of which gifts were truly welcome. It was hard work getting all that food served, and our **volunteers are stars**, as always, and included several of the **Eagles Wings team!**



As you'll appreciate we are **back outdoors again**.

On Mondays we are at the back door of The Steeple, giving out bags of food, plus teas and coffees, with the help of the 'Eagles'. The Dental van team is back too on Mondays, and also offering Covid testing to non-symptomatic people. We aren't giving out hot food because it would encourage folk to hang around in that small area for too long (hoping for second helpings). We **will re-open as soon as allowed, have no doubt!** We have been so grateful to our Volunteers who came back to help over the autumn, because we needed a big team to cover all **covid-safety procedures** correctly.



Tuesdays to Thursdays we are back **'on the streets' too, at Eagles Wings** in Douglas Street. This weather since Christmas has been mixed but generally **pretty cold**. We're able to give out teas and coffees now at Eagles too and our folk are really appreciative of the wee bit of warmth from that.

Right at the end of the year there was HUGE EXCITEMENT as the **Dundee Recovery Road Map was launched as a mobile app** for Android devices. It's now also accessible on apple devices Stefan and Rachel have worked so very hard to achieve this – we are so proud of them, and so thankful to have this reliable and up-to-date resource becoming so accessible to our folk and to so many services throughout the city. Enquiries are coming in **from all around the country from people who want to have a recovery road map for their area**. We don't feel 'precious' about ownership – we want people who need support to be able to access helpful resources when they need them, and be blessed. This work has also received **support from the Scottish Police Violence Reduction Unit**, as the app will help to keep people out of trouble.

Some **really important news** for all, for your prayers too. After some months of thinking about changes, **Rachel** has been successful in getting a post as an NHS Custody Suite Nurse with Tayside Police at Bell Street. Rachel has found having two posts quite exhausting at times, because she **absolutely gives her all** to both. She also has home commitments too. So this is a new direction for her. I cannot possibly say how much **we are going to miss her** – it will be really hard for our team



and Volunteers to think of work without her. She'll still maybe meet some of our folk in her new work, but she will have a rather different role and ethos there. Rachel is going to continue to manage and update the work relating the Dundee Recovery Road Map in a volunteering Parish Nurse capacity, because it is something she has pioneered and is so closely involved with. Her new post commences on 1<sup>st</sup> March.

But good news for us has also come in January in the form of a substantial grant towards our general and salary expenses, phased over the next three years, from the **Joseph Rank Trust**. Other funding applications are in the pipeline, so please keep praying they'll be fruitful. Our team is also very grateful for the gift from The Steeple congregation through their Advent Offering in 2020.

Rachel, Kirsty and Barbara

# WHAT'S BEEN HAPPENING AT CONNECTIONS CAFÉ?

If you missed the two interviews about Connections Café and the October holiday events during the Sunday services at the end of November, you will be able to see them again on the new Connections Café website which you can access at <https://www.connectionscafedundee.com>. In particular, check out this link, <https://www.connectionscafedundee.com/april-2020> and this link, <https://www.facebook.com/ccdundee> to see what we've been doing since we began in February 2018.

Please check out the website and let me know if there is anything that isn't working or if you have suggestions to improve it. Katy Emslie-Smith wondered whether, in time, it would be an idea to create a logo for the front page. She says, "This can be a good process for distilling down who we are and what we do". Would anyone be interested in creating a logo?

The English language support provided by Connections Café continues to expand. We now have 8 volunteers with a wide range of expertise (from specialist to amateur) supporting 16 refugees in the Connections Café community. The demand is increasing and if you would like to help, please get in touch to find out more. You don't have to be a specialist!

We heard last week that our recent funding application has been successful and we have been awarded just under £5 K from Foundation Scotland and the Corra Foundation to support refugee families during what continues to be a difficult time. Sarah Emslie-Smith will once again be responsible for coordinating the various aspects of the projects which will be developed by a planning group involving our refugee friends, students and service providers in Dundee. We will be working in partnership with [Sandy Greene of ScrapAntics](#) and, will, if lockdown restrictions allow, make use of the [Siobhan Trust Community Garden](#) at Barns of Wedderburn. Our association with the Siobhan Trust and the Community Garden offers exciting possibilities in the future to benefit not only the refugee community, but also the Hot Chocolate and Parish Nursing communities.

We hope that the Covid restrictions will have eased from April onwards but our experience of chasing the changing Covid restrictions last Autumn means that we are prepared to be nimble in our planning! We will keep you posted about opportunities for you to be involved if you wish.

Since December we have been delighted to welcome a student volunteer from Dundee University to each Monday morning Zoom Café. These students are part of a new group called [STAR](#) (Student Action for Refugees). They are a stimulating addition to the old faces and add to Sarah's young face and the faces of the three St Andrews' students who have been regular helpers for over a year.

A few of us from the Steeple and one person from St Peter's had a meeting with the students on the 14<sup>th</sup> December in order to get to know one another and talk about Connections Café and the opportunities to become involved. We also agreed to arrange one or two joint meetings with the Steeple Environment Action group facilitated by Mark Parsons, and have two meetings planned. The first is on Monday 1<sup>st</sup> March when Dr Rana Abu-Mounes, a post-doctoral researcher at the [Centre for Muslim-Christian Studies](#) in Oxford will lead a conversation on the future impact of water scarcity. The second meeting will be on Monday 12<sup>th</sup> April when Milli Crouch, the student volunteer co-ordinator for STAR, studying Politics and History, will lead a conversation on Climate and Migration. These meetings are open to everyone and will be advertised on the Steeple FB page. Please put the dates in your diary if you're interested. We all have much to learn by connecting to and engaging with young people – or at least I have – and we hope this is the beginning of more interaction between students and the Steeple.

Raghad Haddad's concert on the 23<sup>rd</sup> January was accessed by approximately 55 computers. Raghad is a Syrian professional viola player who fled from the war in Syria 5 years ago. In between sharing her story of leaving Syria and facing the challenges of making a new life in the UK, she played a variety of beautiful traditional pieces. The evening ended with her 'Prayer for Syria' which you can listen to [here](#). You can learn more about her from a Guardian interview with her [here](#).

So there! There's a lot happening and many new opportunities on the horizon, so it's good to remind ourselves - in the words of the Message - "If God doesn't build the house, the builders only build shacks" (Psalm 127:1). As the life and work of Connections Café unfolds at a rapid pace, please join us in prayer for discernment and direction, so that as a church family we together build a missional community, which is pleasing to God.

The Connections Café Team  
February 2021



## *Looking for a new way to mark the season of Lent?*

This year, you can join The Lent Encounter. It's a completely free 40-day journey to help you connect more with the Bible and the life of Jesus – AND you don't have to give up chocolate!

Sign up today and you'll receive one email from us every day during Lent. These will include Bible verses, beautiful and inspiring images (created especially for you to save as your device screensaver), video reflections and practical challenges.

The Lent Encounter follows the narrative of Andrew Ollerton's new book 'The Bible, a story that makes sense of life'. Many of the themes we explore on our journey through Lent, can also be found in this book!

You don't need the book to get the full Lent Encounter experience, but if you'd like it, you can get it for £9.99 (including postage and packing) when you sign up for The Lent Encounter.

<https://www.biblesociety.org.uk/explore-the-bible/the-lent-encounter>

The Scottish Bible Society has produced  
An Outdoor Lent and Easter Resource

## Wonder Walks

Take time this Lent and Easter to go outside and spend time with God:

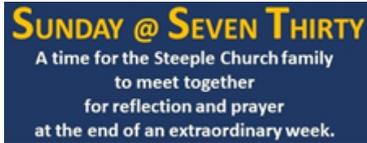
*Wonder Walks* is a walking route map with a big difference – it doesn't matter where you go! Download one of our eight maps and take it with you when you go out for a walk. On each map you will find something to read from the Gospel of Mark, questions to think about, games to play, and ideas to pray about. You don't need to prepare anything in advance, just download your map and head off for your weekly **Wonder Walk!**

<https://scottish.bible/wonderwalks/>



We meet on Sundays at 10.30am via Zoom for services. After the service we meet in small groups to chat. A recording of the service is available later on our YouTube channel

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC3No73xjivpUfQwdw1vbj2g>



Every Sunday evening at 7.30 pm, we meet to pray together, using Zoom.



Folk are also meeting to keep in touch and to chat via Zoom, at our regular Thursday Coffee Morning (10.30am) and Tuesday Afternoon Tea Break times (3pm).

The Zoom links for the above events remain the same each week. Please contact the church office if you need the links.



Several of our Home Groups are also using Zoom to continue meeting for bible study and fellowship. If you would be interested in joining one of these, please let Robert or the Office know and we can put you in touch.

The Steeple Men Group on Thursday mornings and the Connections Café to support those new to Dundee with learning English are using Zoom. John Clark would be happy to tell you more about these:  
[johndrummondclark@gmail.com](mailto:johndrummondclark@gmail.com)



There is a private Facebook and WhatsApp Groups for the Steeple family so that folk can easily and quickly inform others in the Steeple community of any prayer requests or practical needs, in particular if they become unwell or are needing to self-isolate.

If you are interested in any of these opportunities but don't know how to access them, please contact the Church Office.

The Steeple Church: Dundee (Church of Scotland)

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