



Broxburn Parish Church

The Bridge Newsletter Edition 5

FROM THE INTERIM MODERATOR

Rev. Derek Henderson



Dear friends,

As some of you already know, I celebrated a big birthday recently which means that as far as Covid-19 is concerned I am now in the vulnerable group! However, it was good for Margaret and me to get away for a break, even if it was a short one, and to enjoy a change of scene. But I came back to a pile of cards and gifts and so I do want to say a big thank you for the cards and gift which I received from Broxburn Church to mark the occasion. These were very much appreciated. And, yes, I still feel fine!

But I would like to share with you the presents which I received which went from the sublime (a birdwatching holiday) to the ridiculous (a pair of kippers!) This caused a degree of confusion when I was talking to a friend who thought I said a pair of **slippers** and was nonplussed when I confirmed

it was actually **kippers**. One day I may tell you the story behind this gift, but what it said to me was that sometimes we hear what we want to hear - or expect to hear - and we don't really listen to what is actually being said. There are several places in the Bible where Jesus makes this point: ***"they hear what I say, but they don't really listen, and they don't understand."***



Slippers?

This is an important point which speaks to our situation with the pandemic and with the re-opening of the church and halls. It is clear from what has happened around the country that some people may be hearing the message but are not really listening, and don't seem to appreciate or understand the consequences of their actions. So I want to bring you up to date with where we are at Broxburn.

As you will know, the Kirk Session and Congregational Board recently resolved not to re-open the church building for worship services at the present time, but to review the situation at the start of Phase 4 of the Scottish Government's Route Map for coming out of lockdown, and in light of any guidance from the Church of Scotland at that time. A small working group is now working through the Property Check-list and the Risk Assessment which the Church of Scotland requires, so that we are ready to go when the time comes. At the time of writing these documents are nearing completion but some detailed work still requires to be done.

In reaching their decision, the Session and Board had to balance the wish of some to return as quickly as possible against the real reluctance of others to attend such services, especially among those most vulnerable.

To enable services which were safe, a wide range of hygiene and other provisions would need to put in place. Whilst these provisions could be made, they would have a significant impact on what was possible. For example, in order to ensure social distancing in the sanctuary, the capacity would have to be greatly reduced and people would be required to sit where they were placed (seating in the gallery cannot be used); to wear face masks, and not to sing hymns.

“...in order to ensure social distancing in the sanctuary, the capacity would have to be greatly reduced...”

It was concluded that what people miss most at present is the social fellowship at services and the singing of praises to God, neither of which would be possible in services in the form currently permitted. Quite simply,



Kippers?

it would not be the worship experience which many people would wish for. It is worth noting that where larger gatherings have occurred recently and where proper measures have not been observed, there have been localised spikes in cases of coronavirus: this simply underlines how fragile the current situation is. People need to listen carefully to what they are required to do – it is kippers not slippers!

We will of course bring further updates as the situation develops so that we might return to some form of normality as soon as it is safe to do so.

A colleague suggested that verse 24 from Psalm 18 is appropriate for our time and I share it with you:

“So the Lord has rewarded me according to my righteousness, according to the cleanness of my hands in his sight.”

With every blessing,

Derek

Treasurer's Update

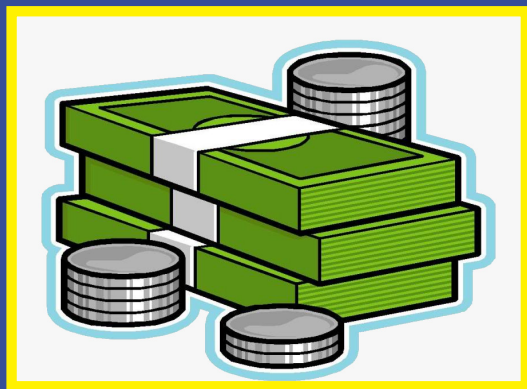


I can hardly believe that it's over five months since we last met for worship! And in all that time, as treasurer, I have been delighted at your ongoing generosity. Whether continuing existing standing orders, setting up new standing orders, depositing money in the Church bank account or sending in cheques, thank you so much for helping to keep our church coffers topped up.

In July, our income was boosted by our gift aid tax reclaim of **£2,174**, giving us a total income of **£5,114**. With our expenses at **£4,902**, the tax reclaim helped prevent us going into deficit. Our next tax reclaim will be made sometime in October and is expected to be for a similar amount, depending on the total amount of gift aid donations received between 1st July and 30th September.

At the time of writing, expenses for August look set to outstrip income by more than **£1,200**. I'll provide a more detailed breakdown next time around.

In Edition 3 of our Newsletter I mentioned how to help raise extra money for the Church – at no extra cost to yourself – by doing your online shopping via **easyfundraising.org.uk**. For info, I've just been notified by them that **£21.76** has been raised for Broxburn Parish Church via online shopping up to 30th June so I'm expecting a cheque for this amount to help boost September's income.



I look forward to the time when we can share fellowship together once again; until then, stay safe!

Sue Sneddon

'Jim the Swim' does Virtual Kiltwalk

Jim Anderson is taking part in a sponsored event – the RBS Virtual Kiltwalk – on Friday 11th September to raise funds for Lothian Disability Sport. He will be making his own way around Linlithgow Loch. If anyone would like to sponsor Jim please contact him on: 01506 853363.

Broxburn Parish Church
Sunday Club
HUB

Hello everyone! We hope you all enjoyed your summer holidays and that you are also pleased to be back in school after such a long time. At the moment our church buildings are still closed so we cannot say when we will be able to meet again at the Sunday Club. We are really missing seeing you all and are looking forward to seeing you as soon as we can. We hope you enjoy our short story and that you have fun making the craft activity.

Story

Jesus travelled around telling stories to whoever would listen. He told stories about everyday life. How do you describe something to someone if they do not know what you are talking about?

Imagine trying to describe a dandelion. You could say it is a plant or maybe that it has yellow flowers. Is it like a daffodil? Some people call it a weed! Have a go at describing something you know about. Perhaps a film, a toy or a machine - can your friends guess what you're describing?

Jesus often tried to tell his friends what life would be like if people loved God and loved their neighbours. He said that it would be like a tiny seed that would then grow into a huge bush. He also said it would be like the yeast that makes the dough rise when making bread.

Jesus talked about buried treasure hidden in a field which a man found and then hid again. The man went and sold everything he had and bought the field. He was really happy! Now he owned the field and his treasure was still hidden in the field. Jesus also described it like a net that was pulled ashore by fishermen and was full of all sorts of fish.

Jesus, show us where to go that we might meet the world's needs from the bounty of gifts and talents stored in the treasure chest of the person you have made us to be.

Craft

What you will need: an empty egg box or another box with a lid, various colouring items, glue, stickers, sequins, gems, feathers etc. Make and decorate a Treasure box. What will you put in your box when it is finished? We'd love to see what you make!

Prayer

Help us to see you all around, God:

In our families and friends.

In WhatsApp and Instagram, in Facebook, FaceTime and TikTok.

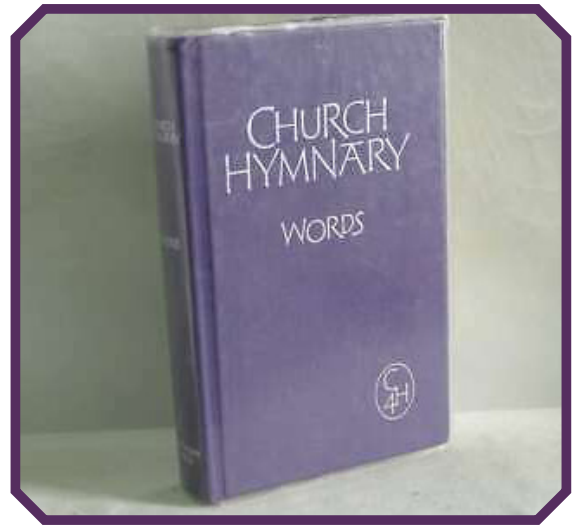
In all the ways we have of connecting, even when we are apart.

May we use all the opportunities we have to spread love and not fear.

To build up and not tear down. To give thanks and celebrate achievement.

To know you, God of the old and the young, bringing us together to love one another through this time and forever. Amen.

Hymns Quiz



Answers to the quiz from the last edition

1. Praise indeed (for my watercolours?) **How great Thou art**
2. Wait - don't go! **Abide with me**
3. Can you go and have a look for me? **Be Thou my vision**
4. Create a passage for the required solitude
Make me a channel of your peace
5. BA initially made me a divine promise **Blessed Assurance**
6. Hit the fellow, using coronets and diadems?
Crown him with many crowns
7. Everyone who lives here **All people that on Earth do dwell**
8. It arrived early but wasn't in one piece **Morning has broken**
9. Wouldn't it be great to have a choir of many hundreds?
O for a thousand tongues to sing
10. Psalm 23 in other words **The King of love my shepherd is**
11. Playing musical statues but personally, it sounds fishy
Be still, my soul
12. Ice Band Tan (*anagram*) **And can it be**
13. This may have been asked by Noah when the flood subsided
Who put the colours in the rainbow?
14. Listen to the spirited announcers chorus **Hark! the herald angels sing**
15. Gentle obedience along with sovereignty **Meekness and majesty**

Congratulations if you got all 15. Hallelujah!

HIDDEN BOOKS OF THE BIBLE (again!)

2 of the books were not highlighted in the last edition. Here are all 16.

I once made a **remark** about the hidden books of the Bible (merely by a **fluke**). It kept people **looking so** hard for the **facts** and for others it was a **revelation**. Some were in a **jam, especially** since the names of the books were not capitalized, but the **truth** finally struck home to **numbers** of readers. To others it was a real **job**. We want it to be **a most** fascinating few moments for you.

Yes, there will be some really easy ones to spot. Others may require **judges** to help them. I will quickly admit **it usually** takes a minister to find one of them, and there will be loud **lamentations** when it is found. A little lady says **she brews** a cup of tea so she can concentrate better. See how well you can **compete**. Relax now!

Books of the Bible grid

How well do you know the books of the Bible? If you answer the questions below, the answers can be fitted into the grid, overlapping each answer by 1 letter. To make it a bit trickier, every second answer is fitted in back-to-front. The last letter of the first answer will be the first letter of the 2nd answer written backwards, and the last letter of the 2nd answer as written into the grid will be the first letter of the 3rd answer etc. (**Example:** 8th book of the Old Testament = Ruth; 23rd book of the Old testament = Isaiah). These would be written in the grid as RUTH**H**IASI where H is the overlapping letter. Why not give it a go? A few random letters have been inserted to help.

		A							
						H			
				E					
H									
									I

**Answers in
next edition**

Starting at the top left and working clockwise, insert the answers to the following clues:

4th book in the Old Testament; 13/14th books in the Old Testament; 7/8th books in the New Testament; 17th book in the New Testament; 13/14th books in the New Testament; 20th book in the Old Testament; 21/22nd books in the New Testament; 17th book in the Old Testament; 2nd book in the Old Testament; 11th book in the New Testament; 19th book in the Old Testament; 1st book in the Old Testament; 9th book in the New Testament; 10th book in the New Testament.

How well do we respond to a challenge? The answer we give will, no doubt, depend on many different factors. Whatever our answer, we know that our response is strengthened when it is made in the company of others. Our response to the challenge of living out our calling as a member of the body of Christ is one that depends, in principle, on our response being a shared one. Living out our calling, in response to the mercy of God, lies at the heart of what it is to worship. Within the body of Christ, we have shared gifts and a shared identity. (*Romans 12: 1-8*) At the same time, living out that calling in these strange and challenging times is by no means easy. We do so in the assurance that we are not alone and acknowledging our continuing dependence on the mercy of God.

We pray:

**Living God, whose name is mercy,
We acknowledge that we live in dependence on your mercy.
Hold us, and all whom you call,
In your gentle keeping.
Lord, in your mercy,
Hear our prayer.**

**Living God, through whom we receive mercy,
We respond to your gracious gift
And offer our lives into your service and the service of others.
Accept us as we are and embrace us in your love.
Lord, in your mercy,
Hear our prayer.**

**Living God, as the one who inspires mercy,
Make us ever merciful to others.
As we respond to the challenge of these times,
May we live out our calling ever conscious of the body of Christ.
Lord, in your mercy,
Hear our prayer.**

**Living God, who wills to be merciful to all,
Renew our calling to worship you.
In the place where we are, whether in shared company or in
our own company,
Receive our worship through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Lord, in your mercy,
Hear our prayer.**

**Living God, whose name is mercy,
May your name be known throughout the world.
As those who have received mercy,
May your name be known in the place where we are.
Lord, in your mercy,
Hear our prayer. Amen.**

The Covid impact on Church

As all the behind-the-scenes work continues to get us ready for a return to our Church buildings, it is important to recognise that, to comply with all necessary guidelines, any return will look - and feel - completely different. Derek has already highlighted in his article the need for social distancing, having to wear masks, having to sit in allocated seats and not being allowed to sing.

Another key difference will be our need to collect everyone's name and contact details to allow us to comply with the Scottish Government's Test and Protect requirements. If any of you have, in recent weeks, gone to a restaurant or café for lunch or dinner, or gone to a coffee shop to meet up with friends in a socially distanced way, you'll already have been asked for this contact info. The reason we need to collect this information is in case someone who attends Church subsequently takes ill with Covid. The NHS tracing team will track that person's movements and, via the Church of Scotland's Data Protection Officer, will pick up details of all other attendees at Church at the same time and then contact those individuals to ask them to self-isolate. This process is intended to minimise the risk of any localised spikes of infection and is in everyone's best interests.



As with collection of all other data, we will need to comply with data protection principles, and keep this information securely. We also need to make sure it is destroyed after 28 days maximum. Our processes for handling this aspect are being finalised and more information will be provided when we are ready to re-open for worship.

With numbers being severely restricted because of social distancing, we may need to consider introducing some form of pre-service booking in a way that allows everyone who wants to attend to apply. This will also allow us to make sure we have enough allocated seats available. This appears to be the 'new normal' for attending for worship. We are not allowed to exceed the maximum number allowed, calculated to meet social-distancing requirements, and that number will vary depending on whether we have family groups who can sit together or individuals who have to sit on their own. The days of sitting with friends to share fellowship are, unfortunately, on hold for now.

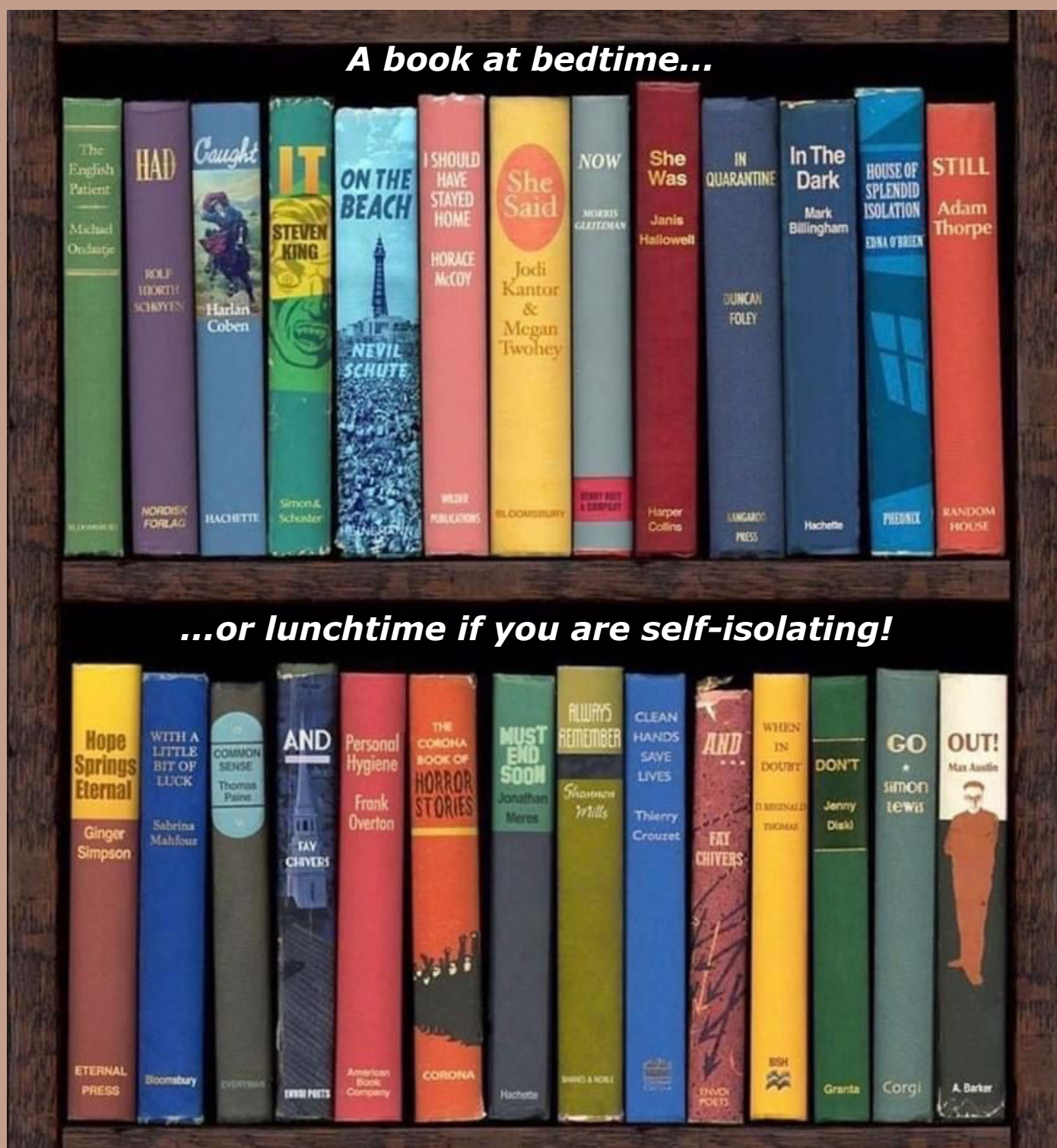
We live in strange times indeed...

Midweek services are back - with a difference!

We have recently introduced a Zoom service at midday on a Wednesday. Using Zoom means that you don't have to have the internet to join - you can dial in on your landline telephone. As well as a short service there is an opportunity for a catch up chat afterwards.

If you've not used Zoom before, don't worry, as step by step instructions will be sent to you as well as the code and password. If you would like to watch or listen, contact me on: **07833 701274**, and I'll be very happy to send you the instructions and codes.

Anne Gunn, Session Clerk



○ ○ ○ **POINTS to PONDER** ○ ○ ○

Introduction: In recent months I have been considering the early part of Matthew's gospel and would like to share this passage with you as we start to come out of lockdown.

Text: *"These twelve Jesus sent out, instructing them, "Go nowhere among the Gentiles and enter no town of the Samaritans, but go rather to the lost sheep of Israel." (Matthew 10: 5-6)*

Points to Ponder: This instruction of Jesus seems so surprising that some people believed that these words were put into Jesus' mouth, by those who wanted to keep the Gospel for the Jews. Because they are so unlike the mind of Jesus, it is also claimed that no one could have invented them. Jesus must have said it, so there must be some explanation.

This instruction fulfils God's promise that Israel will be the tool which brings blessing to the whole world. But we can also say that it was not a permanent instruction. In the last chapter of his Gospel, Matthew records Jesus' final instruction to his disciples: *"Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit..."*

Perhaps Jesus was wanting to give the Jews, God's special people, the first chance to respond to the Gospel. He might also have been wanting to start the disciples off with a less difficult task – going to Galilee, an area and a people with which they were already familiar. Good leaders will limit their objectives according to the resources available.

There's a message here for the Church and for us as individuals. As we look around our parish, our country and our world, we can see so many things crying out to be done. The temptation can be to try to do everything at once, so that we end up doing none of them very well. The same can be true of our personal lives. As we come out of lockdown, it feels like a new beginning. We are told that things will be different. How true will that be for the Church and for you and me?

Prayer: Living God, we thank you that your love includes people of every race and nation and that your Kingdom is for all. You have called us to share in your transforming work. Guide us to find the areas where you want us to serve. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Action: Use this time to think about what we do as a Church and how we are involved as individuals, in work, church, community and family.

- **Will it be back to 'business as usual'?**
- **Will it mean taking on additional tasks?**
- **Will it involve starting new activities?**
- **Will it mean giving up some of the things we have always done, in order to make space for new opportunities?**

Ponder these questions, and as answers become clear to you, take them to God in prayer.

As Children See It... (part 2)

Children were asked questions about the Old and New Testaments. The following statements about the Bible were written by children. They come from a Caithness school test. The answers have not been retouched or corrected and incorrect spelling has been left in. Pay special attention to the wording and spelling. If you know the bible, even a little, hopefully you'll find their answers hilarious!

13. Solomon, one of Davids sons, had 300 wives and 700 porcupines.

14. When Mary heard she was the mother of Jesus, she sang the magna carta.

15. When the three wise guys from the east side arrived they found Jesus in the manager.

16. Jesus was born because Mary had an immaculate contraption.

17. St. John the blacksmith dumped water on his head.

18. Jesus enunciated the golden rule, which says to do unto others before they do one to you. He also explained a man doth not live by sweat alone.

19. Christians have only one spouse. This is called monotony.

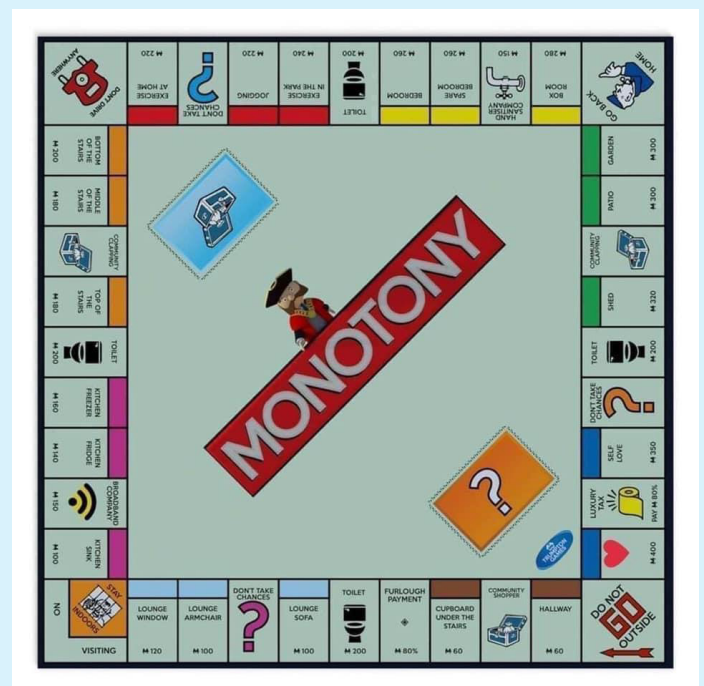
20. It was a miricle when Jesus rose from the dead and managed to get the tombstone off the entrance.

21. The people who followed the lord were called the 12 decibels.

22. The epistels were the wives of the apostles.

23. One of the oppossums was St. Matthew who was also a taximan.

24. St. Paul cavorted to Christianity, he preached holy acrimony, which is another name for marraige.





Task Group members:

Rev. Derek Henderson
Anne Gunn
Andy Carter
David McWilliams
Sue Sneddon
Hugh Brown

Although we are still not able to meet together for worship, we are all members of our church family. So if we can help you in any way, or you have a Prayer Request, or perhaps you just need a listening ear, please telephone: **07934 073349**. Calls will of course be treated confidentially.

Church and Manse grounds

Thank you to Liam Sneddon who has voluntarily taken on the task of mowing the Church and Manse grass. This is no small task, when everything is growing so fast. You're doing a great job Liam!

Thanks also to Sandra Stirling who has replanted the two pots at the front door, which are looking lovely.

Broxburn Parish Church of Scotland
broxburnparishchurch.org.uk

Scottish Charity Number: SC 017180

FRIENDLY ○ FAMILY ○ FELLOWSHIP