

Church of Scotland: Orphir and Stenness Parish

Interim Moderator: Rev June Freeth 721449

Locum Minister Rev Martin Prentice **Session Clerk:** Nicol Sclater 811242

Intimations

- If you, or someone you are in contact with, would like to access pastoral care by telephone please contact Olivia Tait 811392, Carol Mainland 873596, Nicol Sclater 811242 or Martin Prentice 851139.

Easter Sunday

Easter Sunday, the climax of the week we call Holy Week, marks the event that is central, fundamental, to Christianity. On Easter Sunday we celebrate the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Over the centuries people have debated, and will continue to debate, about what happened that first Easter weekend. We cannot know. What we do know is that something so astounding happened that a bunch of terrified men and women, cowering behind locked doors, fearing that they would be next to be subjected to the hideous obscenity of death by crucifixion, were transformed into an ever-growing fellowship of courageous witnesses boldly proclaiming Jesus Christ crucified and risen.

Something so outstanding, so unprecedented, happened between that Friday evening and that Sunday morning that nearly 2000 years later we are still talking about it and honouring the name of Jesus of Nazareth. Something so extraordinary, so life-changing, took place, that the lives of millions of people have been totally changed, and continue to be changed.

This is where it all began. The centrepiece of our belief. It used to be that, on Easter Sunday, our churches were filled to overflowing, but no longer. Long before the restrictions imposed by Coronavirus, many people have found other things to do in that week, and on that day. In many places Holy Week services, even Maundy Thursday and Good Friday, have been abandoned for lack of support. Maybe it is understandable that folk choose the opportunity of the Easter Holiday Weekend to relax after the rigours of the winter, or join the traffic jams on the roads to the coast. This year we are in lockdown: travel forbidden; churches closed.

At this time, when so many anxious people in our country and in the world are staying indoors, fearful of contracting and spreading the virus, it is surely the more important to hold on to the promise of Easter Sunday. Christianity is not about arguing about Jesus or speculating about events 2000 years ago. It is about meeting him, about embracing the values he came to personify. About living our lives in the reality of the risen Christ.

Alleluia! The Lord is risen! He is risen indeed. Alleluia!

Keep safe. Easter Blessings to you all.
Martin.

Prayer:

God of Mercy,
be with those tens of thousands of people who have contracted the coronavirus around the world. Comfort those whose loved ones have died. Bring peace to those who live with uncertainty after possible exposure to the virus. Give patience to those who are quarantined and unable to move freely in their communities.

Wise and Faithful Guide, watch over and protect other people from catching this deadly virus. Especially strengthen and protect those who are risking their own lives to care for sick patients.

May we all be filled with compassion for those who are suffering.
In Jesus' name, Amen.