

Church of Scotland: Orphir and Stenness Parish

Interim Moderator: Rev June Freeth 721449

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

Intimations

- For the time being, Orphir and Stenness kirk will not be open for Sunday worship.
- 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.

As this year slips past, many of the events and occasions that we associate with this season are cancelled, or pushed into the background. Remembrance Day parades, harvest-homes, concerts, sporting events, including the Ba, are all gone. Even the shenanigans of the USA Presidential Election and the kerfuffle about Brexit are overshadowed by the Pandemic and its implications for us all. Thus far, we are getting off fairly lightly in Orkney, but we all have concerns for relatives and friends elsewhere. We don't yet know what restrictions will be in place here, but we can be sure that Christmas and New Year will be different in many ways. Even in 'ordinary' years, these special times can be even more difficult for people who are housebound, or on their own, or missing someone who was very special.

There is a glimmer of light at the end of the proverbial tunnel. There is real hope for vaccine production, but even so, it will take a while to produce, and administer, and to take effect. In the meantime, there are things that we can, and must, do. We have to keep ourselves safe, and if that means keeping to official restrictions and guidance, then we have to do it. We can be sure that, behind the personalities on our television screens, some of the best brains in the country, indeed in the world, are doing their utmost to develop vaccines and medicines and other measures to control and eventually eliminate this dreadful disease.

In our own place and time, we need to keep the faith, even if it seems too much or too hard, and we need to look out for one another, especially for those who are particularly vulnerable.

May you stay safe in the way of Christ, and may you know the hope of Christ in all your concerns.
Every blessing.
Martin.

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A Book Excerpt on Faith:

Sooner or later, we must face facts: There are some rocks we can't lift. They are too heavy for us. Human beings cannot supply all our own needs. We must turn, sometimes, to a power beyond our own.

Well, how do we know there is a power beyond our own? We don't. We don't know much of anything. We have no proof of anything in the Bible, or of anything else the church has taught. We don't know the things of faith. We believe them. To believe is to follow, to order our lives in trust. To live in trust.

And so we believe in God, because we have no other help but God. If we are to lift anything at all, we must call on God for help, for the time quickly comes when we are taxed beyond our strength. Then we must ask for more, or do without. Of course, we can do without. We can remain addicted. We can remain in a paralyzing state of anger. We can remain in a state of shame. We don't have to give the heavy load of our sorrows to God. We can hang onto it. We can just stand there, allowing ourselves to be crushed by its weight. We can do that.

But we don't have to.

- *Barbara Cawthorne Crafton, Episcopal priest and author.*

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