



Chalmers Memorial Church March Update 2021

Dear Friends,

Fred Rogers, perhaps better known as Mister Rogers, was an American children's TV presenter. His programme, *Mister Rogers Neighbourhood*, ran on US Television from 1968 to 2001. A recent 2019 film, starring Tom Hanks as Fred Rogers, tells some of his story including his encounter, and friendship, with a world weary journalist by the name of Lloyd Vogel (whose character was based on a real life journalist that Rogers knew).

Rogers was famous for his patience and kindness. He had the ability to see the best in everyone and, despite Vogel's best attempt to find otherwise, it seems Rogers was like that both on and off screen – sympathetic, a good listener, affirming. Vogel, who has a habit of falling out with just about everyone, cannot see how someone could possibly maintain that level of calmness in their life.

However, one day, in the Tom Hanks film, Vogel meets Rogers in a café for what was to be a life changing conversation. As they sup coffee together Rogers asks Vogel to pause with him for a moment.

"Would you do something with me, Lloyd?" asks Rogers, *"It's an exercise I like to do sometimes. We'll just take a minute and think about all the people who loved us into being."*

Lloyd responds, *"I can't do that". "Oh, they will come to you. Just one minute of silence"*. As they pause in silence the whole restaurant stills. Silence descends. After a minute Rogers breaks the silence saying to Vogel, *"Thank you for doing that with me. I feel so much better"*.

I watched the film of which I write, (it's called *"A beautiful day in the Neighbourhood"*) just a few days ago. Nothing much happens in it. It's more about their growing of a relationship than a complicated plot line.

That film has also made me think, especially about what Rogers might have meant when he spoke of bringing to mind the people who *"loved us into being"*, all the people who were part of what now makes us who we are, the people who've loved us and cared for us.

Perhaps, I wonder, during this last year you've felt supported by the love of others and will know how special that love can be.

Perhaps, too, that phrase *"being loved into being"* has something to tell us about Easter and its message too.

"For God so loved the world (loved it into being!!!) that he gave his only Son that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life" (John 3: 16).

May the love that is Easter – the love that loved us into being – be with you and yours at this Holy Season.

Your friend and Minister, Robin Allison (Rev)

Crafters News

After delivering over 700 stars and angels at Christmas to both the congregation and those in the community who had served us during the pandemic, we continue to make the church's presence known this Easter.

Almost 200 knitted or crocheted hearts will be hung in open places locally where people walk. An attached label, from Chalmers Church, will ask people to take one home with them to remind them of the love of God at this Easter time.



Gift Aid

We have received **£6,271.25** from HMRC for the six month period ending 31st December 2020. This payment is slightly less than that received for 2019 but given the difficult circumstances the congregation has responded magnificently. Thank you to everyone who has contributed to this amount.

If you pay income tax and have not joined the Gift Aid Scheme please give it consideration as it allows us to claim money back from the Inland Revenue at no extra cost to you. Please contact me if you need any more information.

John Murdoch

Easter 2021

The weekly podcasts will continue for the foreseeable future, even if (and when) we re-open for worship. These can be accessed via:

<https://chalmersmemorialchurch2020.podbean.com/>

or phoning (01875) 444 495.

In addition to the above we are glad to announce that we will be hosting a series of: **Holy Week Services 2021**

When – Monday 29th March to Good Friday 2nd April at 7pm each night

How? – We will be using Zoom. See link below.

Who will lead them? – Mainly, they will be led by the Clergy of Chalmers Memorial Church, Cockenzie Old Parish and Cockenzie Methodist Church.

Please note – on Maundy Thursday we will share Holy Communion and on Good Friday our service will be a service of readings and prayers involving members from all local churches. There will be some music and hymns at each nightly service too. All are very welcome!!!

<https://zoom.us/j/93659084673?pwd=bUFyMXNITW9nL2lvQzFjaDhiM2Vndz09>

Meeting ID: 936 5908 4673

Passcode: 236557

Dial in 0131 460 1196 and enter Meeting ID and Passcode when prompted.

Cockenzie and Port Seton Churches Together

Once again Easter in our churches will be different this year, but the Churches Together group were keen to make sure that we produced an Easter card to be distributed to every home in the village. As we could not be certain of what arrangements there may be for worship together, the card takes the form of an Easter message, and points of contact for each of the churches. Along with the cards, you will also receive a bookmark, bearing a biblical text or similar message. Thanks are expressed to all involved in this.

George Smith

Fabric

Between winter and lockdown very little has happened during the past few months other than ensuring the buildings are still wind, water tight and not suffering neglect. There are a number of maintenance items outstanding at the Church and the manse which will be attended to as soon as possible. I have now found a contractor to check the lightning conductor and hopefully that will have been done by now. Following the recent stormy conditions the weathervane has a distinct tilt. Potentially this could be expensive to fix as scaffolding will probably be required but it might be possible to make an Insurance claim.

With spring around the corner the gardeners will soon be starting work. Help is always required and if you could spare a few hours now and again please contact me or Elizabeth Glover.

John Murdoch

SESSION SECTION

Things have been quiet for the Kirk Session – as everywhere – since our last ‘Section’, with only one meeting in January, where we made sure things were ticking over in our new state of lockdown. Ongoing work of some Committees and Groups indicated careful attention continuing – as possible – with issues of finance, building maintenance and pastoral care in particular.

Thanks are again due to the minister, who since the new year has developed another new way to worship. The service Podcasts, now also being delivered live on Zoom, have been much appreciated by those choosing to attend.

This year in particular, we wish you a hopeful Easter time, with its promise of new life.

Mary Gordon, Session Clerk

Finance Report

Another financial year has come to an end, one which has been very different to any other. Despite the restrictions which we have all faced, being unable to meet for worship and other regular activities, we are pleased that the final figures are better than we could have expected. Below is a brief summary with some comments on them. Should you wish a copy of the full report and accounts, please contact the Session Clerk.

Receipts & Payments Accounts – year ended 31st December 2020:

	2020	2019
Total Receipts	£90,131	£111,736
Total Payments	£92,918	£121,998
Excess Receipts over Payments	- £2,787	-£10,262

Notes on Receipts – Weekly offerings of £53k were down by £1.8k on the previous year, a really encouraging situation considering the pandemic. Our open plate receipts of £4.6k were down by £2.5k, reflecting the impact of our buildings being closed. Our other income, from Welcome Wednesday and other regular activities, was also down by £5.7k due to the same reason. We were delighted to receive a further legacy receipt of £7.2k from the estate of Mr R Watters.

Notes on Payments – We continued to maintain our fabric at a cost this year of £14k. With the building closure, our heating and lighting costs were down by £3.9k.

Fund balances at the year-end were £55.2k, and investments held at 121 totalled £45.7k.

We are again extremely grateful for the ongoing commitment of the congregation for making their regular weekly or monthly giving by various means. God has been so gracious to us during these difficult times, and we offer our praise and thanksgiving to Him.

Ian Bulloch, Treasurer



Please recycle this newsletter and care for the earth as God intended.