



WELLINGTON

R E C O R D

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EDITOR'S COMMENTS



ALISON
WOODROW

Hello all! The Easter 2020 edition of the Wellington Record was picked up from the printers on 24 March, the day they had to close due to the Covid lockdown, which had been announced the night before.

We weren't able to distribute the magazines normally, because of the strict regulations we were operating under, and I remember feeling like there was no point anyway - the articles and information in the magazine would be so out-of-date, as it had been compiled before we had any clue about what our life would look like come Easter. However, we did the best we could with distribution, and I soon saw from the comments received that it had been a welcome piece of normality and a lovely point of contact for many. And when I finally sat down to re-read it myself, I was pleasantly surprised at how apt a lot of it was. As is often the case (and I shouldn't be surprised by this), God, in His full knowledge of what lay ahead, had very definitely kept His hand on the planning and writing of that magazine, and it was still used by Him.

This time, in putting together this lockdown edition of the magazine, I'm more aware of the fact that I have no idea what the world - or indeed our church - will look like by the time you hold it in your hands. I'm writing this in late June; by September, everything will no doubt have changed again, several times over. But I know you'll understand this as you read through, and make any necessary allowances. It's a shorter-than-usual magazine, as obviously the normal activity of the church has, by-and-large, stopped for now. But I hope it gives you a flavour of how the church never really closed throughout this strange time in our history. I want to highlight the hard work that continued, what our leadership team faced as they guided us through a time which no-one was

nor ever could have been prepared for, and what went on behind the scenes to ensure that we still had Sunday services, and prayer meetings, and activities for our children and young people. And we've shared some of the really special ways in which God has been working, both within our church family and in our community, in recent days. God's faithfulness to us throughout everything is very much the common theme running through it all.

So while some of our regular features don't appear in this edition, I hope you enjoy the behind-the-scenes peeks and the insights into what lockdown was like for some of our members, and I pray you are encouraged by the wonderful stories shared here. This has been such a unique experience for everyone, and one we won't forget in a hurry! Hopefully this magazine captures a little snapshot of this period in the history of Wellington Presbyterian Church.

Just a note on the cover photo: early in lockdown, the children of our congregation were set a challenge to make a rainbow (which had become a symbol of solidarity and hope) from things they could find in their house, and send in a photo. The entries were amazing, and you'll see some more later in the magazine. But this one really caught my eye: this was the Connaughty family's contribution, which I think you'll agree is not only original, but required a whole new level of commitment from both kids and parents! I wanted a bright, cheerful cover for this magazine, so thanks to Mark and Katie, and Mya, Seth, Will and Rory, for allowing us to use this ■

In Him,

Alison



If you would like to include photos of your wedding in the church magazine, we'll be happy to print them. Please send via email to the editor: alisonwoodrow1@gmail.com

I have set my rainbow in the clouds,
and it will be the sign of the covenant
between me and the earth.

GENESIS 9:13

A NOTE FROM OUR MINISTER...



REV. ALISTAIR
BATES

As you read this, hopefully we will have rather tentatively emerged from lockdown. Like sheltering in a cave through a storm, many have been shielding from Coronavirus. As the howling winds die down, nervously we speculate as to what damage the storm has done to our way of life.

Corona has claimed lives and sadly some within our own congregation. What was difficult during these times of loss was not just the grief, but the restrictions that intensified it. We could not gather in each others' homes to offer support, the pastor could not call and embrace those broken by loss, mourners could not assemble to offer their condolences. Nevertheless, God in mercy and grace enabled us to find other ways to be a family together.

We used everything at our disposal to stay connected; we shared tears and smiles, reflected on life and prayed together. We read the Scriptures and continued to trust our amazing God, that the weak would find strength, the lonely a friend and the lost a Saviour. For all those who lost someone precious during lockdown we are truly saddened, but the journey that started with texts and telephone calls can now thankfully continue face-to-face.

Of course the church we return to will not be anything like the church we left. As the ministry team prepared that first Sunday to worship, pray and preach from an empty building, we did so in the belief that you were with us. Albeit you may have joined us from the comfort of your own home and with perhaps a cup of coffee

in hand, but you were worshipping God as much then as you will be on your return. Nevertheless, it is important how we return, and we must do so in a positive way. Nothing will be gained by lamenting what we have lost or had to temporarily suspend in order to meet, for that will neither help nor change anything.

The restrictions will be challenging but they are not insurmountable. There are many protocols to navigate before we take our seats on Sundays. As the regulations change perhaps some of those protocols may ease, but the regulations are there not only to keep you safe, but others as well.

However, the challenge brings with it certain opportunities that must not be minimised or overlooked.

Firstly, we must find creative and different ways to worship God. It will remind us again that we do not worship tradition, but the God who makes good traditions possible. Good traditions are not enshrined in history but in hearts – in hearts that are willing to adapt what we have inherited to make it relevant to a new generation and a new set of circumstances. We must find ways to make our worship as meaningful as possible within the guidelines that we have been set. That might require us to step outside the boundaries of what is familiar, but we will do so in faith and in the belief that God will meet us there.

It is exciting – who knows what God will reveal as we step out in faith?

Secondly, our fellowship will look different, at least in the short term. Much of our Sunday fellowship took place with social rituals that have been suspended. The hug and the handshake are not permitted, the coffee, tea and biscuits have been suspended, and physical distancing has created an invisible barrier of two meters. The challenge and opportunity is that we must find ways for our hearts to do the work rather than our rituals. I believe we can find ways, and the exciting prospect is that it will be God who will provide the solutions, if we trust His wisdom and not our own.

Finally, we are told that our service length must be shorter. I am sure some would welcome the retention of this revision long after the restrictions are lifted! Nevertheless, I believe these temporary restrictions will lead us to our knees but also raise our expectations. The clock does truly not limit God, lots of things can happen in short periods of time. With a simple phrase He raised Lazarus from the dead, in seconds he delivered the Gadarene demonic and in the twinkling of an eye the church will be raptured. So in 45 minutes, can you just imagine what God can do? Why not join us each Sunday and find out!

Behind the scenes of THE LIVESTREAM



DAVID CURRIE

Around the middle of January, David Keys approached me about taking on the role of convenor of the newly formed church IT/Social Media sub-committee. “There shouldn’t be much to it – maybe meeting as a group 3 or 4 times a year” were his reassuring words to me, and so I said I would help. Little did either of us realise what was around the corner and the impact Covid-19 was going to have on our church.

As the idea of a lockdown became more of a reality, I was asked to attend a meeting of the church Covid-19 working group on Wednesday 18 March. At this meeting we discussed how we might broadcast services if lockdown was confirmed. The preference of the group was to stream services live from the church premises. Since I had no experience on the audio-visual aspect of our church services, I arranged to meet with

Tim Agnew, Kenneth Fleming and Jonathan Pope immediately after the working group meeting, as they have been serving in this area for a number of years. When I explained to them that we wanted to live-stream our services, their response was that “we can do it, but it won’t be for this Sunday”. An hour and a half later, with one small piece of equipment Kenneth happened to have at home, we had a test stream up and running on Facebook, and so on Sunday 22 March our first ever live-streamed service was broadcast on YouTube.

After the initial few weeks of finding our feet with livestreaming using the existing church equipment, it was decided that we would try to improve the visual quality of our output. To enable this, we established that we were going to need to use newer cameras. Kenneth and Alistair (Bates) both had higher spec cameras that they were



willing to lend to the team to use. To get the best quality images, we moved the computer from the AV room to the centre section of the main worship area and connected the cameras directly to this. This is how we have been set up since our Good Friday service on 10 April.

In the days leading up to our Sunday services, we prepare any pre-recorded videos that have been sent to us - adding the words to the songs and Bible readings as well as displaying the names of those taking part. We schedule the livestream and post links to it on the church website and Facebook page. On a Sunday morning, we do a test stream before the service to adjust sound levels on the pre-recorded segments, to try to keep them at a similar level to the live elements of the service. We go live around 10.50am with a welcome screen, and then the next hour or so flies by until we breathe a sigh of relief when the broadcast is ended!

We have had a few issues over the weeks, some of which may have been more apparent to those watching than others, but we have come to accept that when running the broadcast live, mishaps and the associated sense of panic come with the territory! A word of thanks to you as a congregation for your understanding and encouragement to us as a team during these past few months. It has been a steep but enjoyable learning curve and

we feel humbled to have been able to serve God in this way.

There have been hundreds of videos recorded by members of our congregation over the past few months to feature in our livestreams, so thank you to everyone who has contributed - it has been great to see familiar faces on screen at a time when we haven't been able to meet in person. A special mention to the worship team for the songs they have recorded and to Steven and Erin McBride for pulling them all together into videos with multiple people on screen at once - I can only imagine the time it takes to put these together, but they have played a huge part in our services.

It would be remiss of me not to publicly express my appreciation to the 3 other guys on the team. Jonathan controls the sound desk and is our equipment expert. Kenneth operates the video cameras and edits a lot of the pre-recorded videos including creating the countdown videos you will have seen each week. Tim pulls everything together in the streaming software, as well as producing and distributing the DVDs and CDs. It has been an absolute pleasure to work alongside each of them, and their commitment, desire to keep improving our production, and willingness to serve has been really encouraging and an example to me. We are blessed to have them as part of our church family.

Above all, I give thanks and praise to God. I have been reminded repeatedly over the past few months of the words of **Deuteronomy 31:8** - *"The Lord himself goes before you and will be with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged"*. This has been so relevant to all aspects of life in these different times. With regards to livestreaming, there have been many times that it has been apparent to me that He has gone before us in what has been new territory for us - from the idea of an IT sub-committee being planted in someone's head before anyone knew what Covid-19 was, to the members of the team coming together so seamlessly. Also, in being able to have a stream up and running in the same evening as it was first mentioned, and on the morning there was no internet in church at 10.25am and we were still able to go live at 11am.

There are several more examples I could list - the Lord has been faithful to us and blessed us greatly. Covid-19 has been a challenging time for us as a congregation but we are grateful for the technology and the means to have been able to continue to have His Word reach those in our congregation and beyond. I know people's lives have been impacted and transformed by the message that has been broadcast from Wellington throughout lockdown, and for that all glory and honour belongs to God ■



FACTS & FIGURES AS OF 1ST JULY 2020

 **315**
SUBSCRIBERS

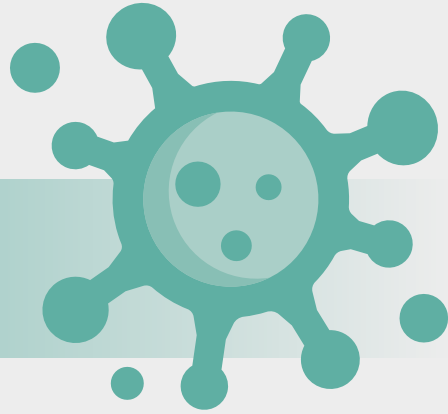
VIEWERS FROM 
UK / IRELAND / USA /
CANADA / INDIA / INDONESIA
/ JAPAN / AUSTRALIA

HIGHEST NUMBER OF
DEVICES WATCHING LIVE:
 **520**

HIGHEST NUMBER OF VIEWS
OF 1 VIDEO:
 **3,188**

TOTAL NUMBER OF VIEWS
OF ALL SERVICES:
 **28,800**

WELLINGTON'S RESPONSE TO COVID



**GORDON
McNAIR**

Chair of Wellington
PC's Covid 19 group

Coronaviruses are a large family of related viruses that can cause illness, from the common cold to more severe disease. December 2019 saw the emergence of a novel coronavirus, Covid 19, and by February 2020 the infection had picked up momentum throughout the world.

By the end of that month there were over 1,100 cases in Italy, and three NI schools, including one in Ballymena, asked pupils who came back from ski trips in Italy to go home from school. The first case in NI was identified on 27 February.

In early March a small Covid group was formed within Wellington to lead on the issue and bring recommendations to session. The membership of the group is flexible to accommodate different areas of discussion and include: Alistair Bates, Geoff Marshall, David Keys, Gordon McNair, Eleanor Dyrsdale, Erin McBride, Peter McClelland, Mervyn Orr, Gareth Williams, Victor McAfee, Adrian Scullion, John Marshall, David Compton and David Currie. Along with many other churches, the decision was taken to suspend shaking of hands on greeting and at closure of our gatherings within the church from Sunday 8 March.

On 11 March the World Health Organisation declared the outbreak to be a pandemic, and on 12 March the UK government moved from phase 1 (containment), to phase 2 (delay the spread).

So that afternoon the Covid group met to look at the areas in the chart below and prepare a presentation for session with recommendations for the safety of church services. A draft plan was also prepared regarding the closing down of organisations in the following two weeks. We were now in a very fast-changing scenario, with the situation in the UK changing each day.



On 16 March the scientists from Imperial College London who were advising the government made a significant change in their predictions, due to the updated data coming in from around the world and in particularly data from Italy. The government then started moving towards lockdown, with full lockdown announced a week later on 23 March. Since then the Covid group has been meeting on regular basis.

As thoughts started turning towards the easing of lockdown, two subgroups were formed to look at different aspects of Wellington reopening, namely the reopening survey for members, and the reopening of the premises. As you can appreciate, the move into lockdown was easy compared to coming out of lockdown. One interesting comment from a consultant sums up the situation: "The major difference with Covid 19 compared to any previous epidemic is that we have an associated infodemic" i.e. information overload, internet, social media, press - all producing so many experts.

As the work intensifies towards reopening, we pray for consistency in the guidance from the government and church governing bodies. We also pray for wisdom, patience and sensitivity to work through the process and are so thankful for the knowledge and skills we have within the congregation.

On my study desk is a plaque given to me years ago by a work friend, with a very relevant verse from **Jeremiah 29:11** – *"For I know the plans I have for you" declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future"* ■



LOCKDOWNLIFE

I asked 6 of our frontline / key workers to talk a little of how their life and work changed once the pandemic hit, and to share how God was working. **Here's what they had to say!**



CHARLENE STEENSON

I work in Antrim Area Hospital as a Patient Flow Co-ordinator and Duty Sister. My role involves allocating patients to beds, as quickly as possible from A&E and other areas, so that their treatment and care can be started as soon as possible, de-escalating A&E, and managing the flow of patients through the hospital. This also includes making sure patients get home safely, as soon as possible, to make sure there is the capacity in the hospital to meet demand. I also coordinate all moves throughout the hospital during the day.

I support staff through the duty sister role at night as the senior nurse on site, giving advice and dealing with staffing issues and problem-solving.

This is a challenging and busy job all year round and we do have seasonal pressures. However, with the pandemic this been made even more challenging. It has been a stressful time. One of the key concerns was that capacity would not meet the demand, and people's needs would not be met. There was the added pressure of giving advice to staff with changing guidelines, and supporting and reassuring them. Each day has been demanding and has been an ever-evolving and changing situation. During this time three things have been brought close to my heart:

1. A true reliance on God. He is control. This time has highlighted to me that so many things are fluid. The certainty of knowing that God is in control has given me great comfort - that is the one simple thing I remind myself. God knows all about this virus and he has a plan. He has a plan for my life and has placed me in situations that clearly were meant to be.

2. The power of Prayer. Prayer has always been important to me: bringing all my fears and worries to God in prayer and praying for wisdom and strength daily to do a good job. I have been greatly encouraged by others praying for me and it has upheld me daily. It is a very special feeling to know you are prayed for and I encourage you to pray for others. God answers prayers.

3. My church family. During this time of virtual church, I have felt so close to everyone. The church service, bible study and prayer meetings have been great, and I have enjoyed getting to know everyone in the daily prayer time. Also, messages and phone calls of encouragement have been wonderful.

All three of these have interconnected and have really strengthened my faith during this time. This has been a very difficult time for many people. When I reflect on the past number of months, I have found a renewed reliance on an ever-faithful, loving Father, almighty God who is in Control.

"For I know the plans I have for you" declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future" Jeremiah 29:11



DALE MOORE

I work am a Royal Mail postal worker.

Life as a frontline worker has been good in terms of being able to still meet with people and chat to them, even during shutdown. God has really been working in that I've had far more opportunities to speak with others, and plant the seed. Especially with everything that's been going on - people are afraid. And if they're afraid of this, how are they going to feel when the heavens open and Jesus returns again? I think people are realising that God is there and that they need him. So that's been one big way in which things have changed during all this, and we can really pray that those opportunities will lead to lives being changed.





LOCKDOWNLIFE



**KAREN
McGREGOR**

I am a pharmacist in Cullybackey.

The first impact on us was the panic-buying - from toilet roll to handwash, and thermometers to paracetamol. As cases were confirmed, we saw an unprecedented increased volume of prescriptions. Pharmacies were permitted to close for a time during the day to allow for staff breaks, cleaning and to try to meet demand. Distancing measures were introduced including limiting numbers in-store, and physical barriers between staff and patients. Staff and patients adapted to the new norm - queuing to enter, use of PPE, and gradually prescription volume returned to manageable levels.

For me personally, once pregnant women included in the vulnerable group, I was sent home for 12 weeks. I felt very guilty being at home and unable to lead my team during this time.

Now, though, I've settled into a slower pace of life. Lockdown has stripped everything back - no work, no social meetings, no demands on time. Time instead to focus on the real purpose and priorities in life. God is in control and I learned to put trust in His plans rather than my own - to rely on Him through the uncertainty.

Peace over panic, wisdom over worry, faith over fear.



**DAVID
MARSHALL**

I deliver oil for W R Kennedy & Co who are based at Pennybridge, Ballymena. There have been many challenges during lockdown.

A big change in the work place was no contact with customers both at the point of delivery and payment. I love chatting with people, especially the older generation, many of whom live alone. It was difficult to give a wave through the window, and then move swiftly on!!

Also, as a family we had to make changes. My wife Paula and I were designated as key workers (Paula was redeployed to Antrim Area hospital in her work as a dietician) and this meant our children Elijah and Sarah Grace went to school each day. Thankfully my employer was able to facilitate me to adjust my working hours so that I could collect the children from school.

Like most people, lockdown has caused me to look at how busy I had become and the need to reassess what is important in my life, and how I prioritise.



**AMANDA
McIVOR**

As a serving Police Officer the verse I always cling to is **Micah 6:8** "What does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God."

As the new regulations came into place, our day-to-day work changed drastically; there was a vast drop in the

amount of calls for service and we were now being obliged to enforce these new regulations which we could never have expected.

A different approach had to be taken to most 'normal' encounters we would have with the public. I found that I had to make efforts to engage with people in a different way than usual, for example through more use of Social Media, but it also gave me the opportunity to spend more time on foot and bike patrol.

Crime did not stop when Covid arrived; there have been people who have exploited it and there have been a lot of domestic situations which were no doubt fuelled by the lockdown.

Our corporate strapline is 'Keeping People Safe' and in many ways there have been barriers to how we can do this during this crisis, however I have always considered my work as a way to serve God and I have felt that responsibility now, more than ever.




**LINDSAY
MURRAY**

I am a Music teacher at Slemish College. I teach students from Year 8 right through to Year 14. At the minute, teaching from home is very different to our normal day to day. We try to keep our students engaged through Google classroom but we are also aware that distance learning can be overwhelming at times. It has taken us some time to find that balance but hopefully we are there now.

I think one of the big challenges for me was the week just before lockdown. That period of uncertainty where decisions hadn't been made, the information was changing on a daily basis and there were so many unknowns. Trying to prepare during that time was so difficult. We were fortunate enough to have our Spring Concert on 11 March but had it been a week later, it simply wouldn't have happened. When I think about our Yr14, I am so pleased they got the chance to have their final concert as they have missed out on so much of their last year of school traditions.

I have been in school about once a week as we have children of key workers in. I feel for them, coming into school (in their uniform) but there's no one else around and no friends to chat to etc. It's very quiet. As work has been coming in from students at home I have found that I really miss just being able to speak to them. To tell them how great their work is or just check in on them. We can do all those things over Google classroom but it's not the same as it is in person. Our job is fundamentally based around relationship so that has been hard.

I am also Head of Year 8, so planning for the new Year 8s – the induction activities etc. – had to be done at a distance. We worked hard to make it as effective as possible but aware that it's not what it would usually be. Having said all of this, as a profession, I have seen colleagues adapt and work within the restrictions to give the best to our students.

There are two things I think God has been teaching me during this whole period: that He will never give me more than I can handle, and that despite all the upheaval and disruption, He is peace – I have felt a real sense of peace, which can only come from God.

Helping Hands

IN LOCKDOWN

**ALISON
WOODROW**

The Helping Hands food bank ministry in Wellington was set up under Heather Marshall's direction in Autumn 2019 (see Wellington Record Easter 2020 for more details). And as we've found with many other things in the church, God was preparing us for Covid and the lockdown before we could've even dreamed of it. The foodbank has been such an important part of the church's outreach during this time.

Thankfully, we were able to stay open throughout the lockdown crisis, to provide food to those who were isolated

THE FOODBANK HAS BEEN SUCH AN IMPORTANT PART OF THE CHURCH'S OUTREACH DURING THIS TIME.

and in need, while working within the appropriate guidelines. The group of recipients grew - where before we had mainly been focussing on needs in the community as we were made aware of them, when lockdown happened, we added to the list many people connected to our church who were shielding or unable to leave their homes.

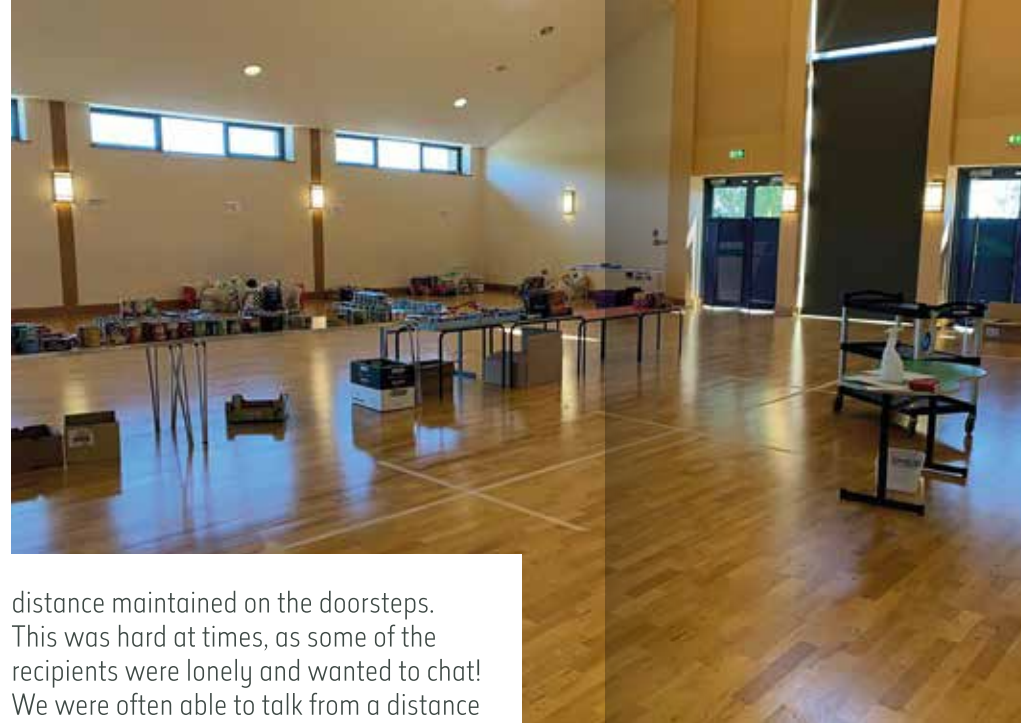
Every weekday, between 10-12, the church was open - for both receiving donations, and sending out food bags.

Church members and friends, and even some local businesses, donated groceries to keep things going. Donations at this time were left at the side door, and from there the items were taken into the hall, to designated quarantine zones for 72 hours.

Others prepared frozen meals and baked fresh bread to go out with the deliveries.

The hall was set up with long tables holding all the groceries and supplies, as well as bags, paper towels and hand sanitiser etc., for the volunteers. The floor was marked with tape to allow them to work safely and with social distancing.

Several helpers sorted out meals and grocery items, and packed them into bags with address labels, which then were collected and delivered by volunteers. The deliveries were also done within the guidelines provided. Gloves and hand sanitiser were used as appropriate, and



distance maintained on the doorsteps. This was hard at times, as some of the recipients were lonely and wanted to chat! We were often able to talk from a distance and hopefully even that was a bright spot in their day. (My little two-year-old daughter came with me, and she waved at them all from the car, like she was the queen, and I think many enjoyed that too!)

As of 7 July, a total of 2405 meals and 407 food parcels had been distributed since lockdown began in late March. Alongside that, there were also a couple of opportunities to help people in very real need, usually in terms of furnishings for emergency accommodation, in conjunction with the church's Re-Story furniture ministry. A message would be sent out on the team's WhatsApp group, as well as a few other church WhatsApp groups, and usually very quickly the necessary items had been sourced and someone designated to do the delivery. It was a wonderful example of God's love

in action through people's willingness and eagerness to serve in whatever way they could. The first such case happened towards the start, when we were in full lockdown and many of us felt anxious and uncertain, and it was just amazing to see how people put those fears aside in order to meet a need.

We are so grateful to all who donated grocery items and more during this time, and to everyone on the team who sorted and delivered. It was a happy bunch, and we never ran out of the necessary food or help. Heather has done an amazing job at keeping it all running throughout, with her seemingly endless energy, and it's been a privilege to see how this ministry has unfolded under the most unexpected and tricky of circumstances.



In a lovely and unexpected gesture, the Mayor of Mid and East Antrim, Councillor Peter Johnston, visited the church on 9 July to present 3 Volunteer Recognition Certificates - one to Wellington Presbyterian, one to Helping Hands, and one to Re-Story - in recognition of the work done during the Covid-19 crisis. Alderman Tommy Nicholl and Councillor Beth Adger, both members of our church, had nominated the ministries for this award, and were also in attendance.

The food bank is now returning to a more normal state, but will keep trying to meet the needs of the vulnerable and needy in our community, reaching out to them in Jesus' name. Thank you to the church family for all your support ■



This image is a screenshot from the church quiz that took place on 29th May. Despite being in lockdown, members of the church, along with their friends and family, gathered on the online platform 'Zoom' for an evening of fun.

The event was hosted by Jonny McKeown with around 40 different teams taking part.





PETER
McCLELLAND

I read a quote recently that said, 'If the plan fails, change the plan - but never the goal'. When I read it I was prompted to reflect on how we have approached our youth ministry over the last few months. For all of us, our normal routine and way of life has been turned upside down.

As many of you will know, the heart behind our youth ministry in church is to see young people Come follow Jesus, Grow as disciples of Jesus, and Go to share Jesus with others. That has been

our goal over the last few years. Over the last few months we have had to change the plan, but our goal remains the same.

At the end of March, we as a youth team found ourselves in a position we never thought we would be in. All youth organisations had to close with immediate effect. My first thoughts and feelings were of sadness, worry and heartache. We had no idea what church, never mind youth, would look like, or how long it would be before we could join together again. After coming to terms with this abrupt change to life in general, some of us began making plans for how we could continue to engage with our young people and strive towards our goal. So here's what some of our youth activities have looked like during lockdown...

YOUTH ^{IN} LOCKDOWN



One of the great things about trying to engage with young people in lockdown, was that they were already proficient in using technology and social media. Therefore we, as a team, decided the best way for us to stay connected with our young people was through Facebook, Instagram and online conference calls.

Every Sunday morning our Collective Bible Class leaders have continued their classes using group video calls. Since the beginning of lockdown around 25 young

people have been joining together in 3 groups to open the word of God and study it together on Sunday mornings. It has been so encouraging to see many of our young people still hungry to explore God's word despite not being able to meet face to face.

Although Collective on a Sunday morning has continued using a fairly normal structure, Sunday nights have had to take a slightly different approach. The team have been using a combination of Instagram Live and Zoom every Sunday at 8pm to stay in touch with those from Youth Fellowship. Across the weeks we have done Q&A sessions, talks, interviews, a joint night with 1st Ahoghill YF, prayer nights, a night on mental health, small groups, a family night and more. This has allowed us as a team to not only stay connected with the young people but also to encourage them in their faith.

Youth club has been somewhat harder to do. The team have been staying connected with each other, praying for all of the young people and they have been sending some encouraging videos to the families of the young people.

As you know GB and BB were finishing the week that lockdown began and they were unable to have their displays. The leaders have already started to make plans for when things begin to get back to 'normal' and they have been faithfully praying for all the young people and their families.



Through the use of social media we have also implemented several new ideas to engage young people through the week. Every Monday, Wednesday and Friday a small written devotion has gone up on Instagram for the young people to read.



These were written by several members of the team and have covered the whole of 1 Peter, 2 Peter and Galatians. On Tuesday and Thursday mornings at 11am I 'went live' on Instagram and Facebook to share some thoughts on a Psalm and prayer points for the day. On Tuesdays and Thursdays we have been running seminars on Zoom which have consisted of teaching and discussion. In these seminars we have covered topics such as, Faith in University and School, The Trinity, Worship, Prayer, Illustrated Faith and more. On Thursdays I would also interview a different leader live on Instagram and the young people would be able to send in their questions for that leader to answer.

One of the most encouraging things we started was a post that would go up on Instagram called 'Friday Fave'. Every Friday a young person would share their favourite verse or worship song and a short explanation as to why it was their favourite. We have been blown away each week as we've read through what the young people have shared and how God has been working in their lives.

Over the course of the summer we will be thinking through and planning for when we are able to get our youth organisations up and going again. Please pray for wisdom and discernment as we do that and for safety as we begin to return ■

WELLY KIDS



AMY McCLELLAND



LEANNE RUSSELL

On Sunday 22 March I stood up at the front of the church to deliver the children's address. I was totally prepared and had everything I needed, except the children! It was a surreal experience; but little did we know that was just the beginning of a very exciting journey!

Our Welly kids have been absolutely amazing throughout this entire lockdown period and they have taught us so much and encouraged us in so many different ways by how they've engaged with all the kids' activities.

I set the children a challenge in my talk that Sunday – to be kind and helpful to their family and to let us know how they were fulfilling it in their homes. This began a series of weekly challenges which included creating rainbows, Easter art and crafts, making shakers to thank the NHS, writing thank you poems and cards and a big 'Welly Treehouse Quiz' which the boys and girls were amazing at!



As the children completed each challenge, we were able to watch their new friend 'Ben' climbing up another rung of the ladder and eventually into the 'Welly Treehouse'. We celebrated this each Friday on Facebook Live, where we were able to guess what might've been inside. We soon found out that there were two bags of shiny gold coins inside and just a few days later the boys and girls all received one of these gold coins in the post as a special reminder of all the fun we had during lockdown!

CONTINUED...

During our Friday sessions we also joined in 2 live prayer challenges where the children had to look for various shapes and colours in their house and then we used each object to pray for a group of people in the world. It was really special being able to pray together even though we were all in our own homes.

We recognise the importance of Scripture memory, aware of our responsibility to teach God's Word to the children in our church family. This forms the basis of our children's organisations, where leaders regularly communicate and explain Bible verses creatively – one notable example is the use of a leaf blower to teach a memory verse at Holiday Bible Club!

Although we haven't had the chance to meet face-to-face with the children, we wanted to ensure the children were still committing the Bible to memory, so we posted a memory verse song every couple of weeks. We look forward to singing these new songs together when we're able to meet up again!

It has been amazing to worship together with our families on Sunday mornings through our online services. Each week a different family led us in our children's worship song and it was so lovely to see lots of friendly faces!




Faith and Eve Moore



Grace McNeill

PLEASE DO GO AND CHECK OUT OUR 'WELLINGTON KIDS' FACEBOOK PAGE TO SEE ALL OUR AMAZING ARTWORK AND WHAT EXACTLY WE GOT UP TO DURING LOCKDOWN 2020!




Daniel & Erin Currie



As the children would usually go to Totzone/ The Well after the kids' song, we wanted to make sure there were resources to keep children engaged rather than them being tempted to wander off to play in a different room! Each week we created a number of activity sheets, colouring pages and craft ideas to suit children of all ages. It is our prayer that these have been beneficial to the children and that God has used them to speak into their hearts and minds; that they might grow in their knowledge of Him and His Word.

Give thanks to God for our amazing Welly Kids and pray that they would look back on this time and remember how loved and valued they are by their church family and by our great big God!

CHILDREN'S DAY 2020



AMY McCLELLAND

Sunday 14 June 2020 was our annual Children's Day and what a special service it was! We think Wellington should have had shares in Kleenex by the end of it!



ERIN McBRIDE

Once again, our amazing Welly Kids stepped up to the challenge and absolutely blew us away with their talent, enthusiasm and desire to worship God even in the most unusual circumstances. Those moments when they all appeared on screen together, worshipping with their whole hearts and singing the words, "God is for me, who can be against me?" and "God, You're so good" were moments that will stay with us and them forever.

We want to give a huge big thank you to the children for being stars, the grown-ups for helping with practicing and recording, and the technical team for putting it all together.

Children's Day 2020 will certainly be a very special memory for us all!

'So just like the stars won't forget how to shine / Don't forget to remember that all of the time / God's light will guide you wherever you go / And you're loved from the top of your head to your toes.'

If you didn't see this special service, or if this has just made you want to watch it all again, then please search for "Wellington Presbyterian Church - Children's Day" on YouTube ■



KIDS' PAGE

Book Review

Professor Bumblebrain's Bonkers Book on... Bible Heroes
by Andy Robb

I really love the Professor Bumblebrain series, as the books are funny and straightforward. I especially enjoyed the book on Bible Heroes. In this book, Professor Bumblebrain is hosting an Awards Ceremony where he presents awards to various Biblical Characters. While doing this, he tells us about the extraordinary things they did.

I would recommend this to anyone who wants a fun and lively book that will teach them more about Bible Characters.

Daniel Russell
aged 10



During the time we were apart, we were so thankful for our church. Thankful for our church family and that we were able to stay in touch. Thankful that we were able to still "meet" in the ways that we did. And we're very thankful to be able to meet together again now, even though it's a bit different than before.



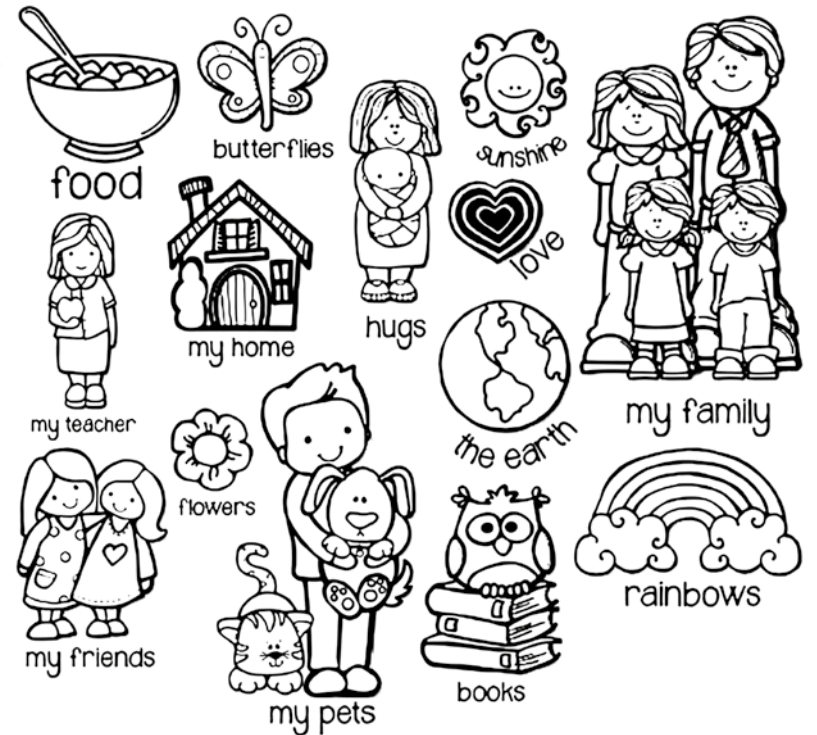
Competition time!

To be in with a chance of winning the book that Daniel recommends, ask your adult to send me an email with the answer to this question (alisonwoodrow1@gmail.com):

Q: what date did Wellington open its doors for a church service for the first time after lockdown?

I am thankful

Colour all the things you are thankful for:



W
A
S

BEHOLD THE LAMB OF GOD



Andrew Peterson (Centricity Music)

This album was originally released in 2004, just 4 years after the first Behold the Lamb of God tour. In 2019, after nearly 20 years of the music evolving, Andrew and 30 musicians decided to re-record it in just 2 days, to make it sound more like what they do on tour every year in December.

While technically a Christmas album, this is not like every other. Our ears are not graced with the sounds of sleigh bells and traditional carols; instead it is the sound of Nashville, with Christmas story lyrics. Andrew loves to tell a story through song, and that is exactly what this album does. It tells the story of Jesus in the way that the Bible tells it - Andrew himself has said "I began to realise the Bible was one big unified story and Jesus was the centre of the whole thing. I remember thinking 'wait, Jesus a part of the Old Testament?' I figured if I didn't know, lots of other people probably didn't know either".

The album begins by telling us to 'Gather round, ye children come, listen to the old, old story', reminding us to listen to what God is teaching us through his word. The tracks then travel through the Old Testament into the New Testament, telling the story of Jesus. There is even a song based on the genealogy in Matthew 1, which I just love.

I cannot read that genealogy now without singing it in my head! The last track, 'The Theme of my Song', ties all the songs into one piece, with powerful words reminding us that all glory belongs to Jesus, the Son of God and the Son of Man. It has a reprise consisting of these lyrics: 'Sing out with joy for the brave little boy who was God, but made himself nothing'. Therefore, when we worship in song, we are to sing about all that Jesus has done for us and give him the glory.

For me, what makes this album is the way we are made to think about Christmas: it tells the story but in a new and refreshing way. And it isn't an album just for Christmas, but all year round, because, as Andrew says, it is "a poignant representation of the gospel story" and we need reminding of this gospel story not just at Christmas.

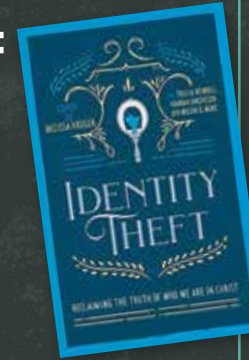
Hannah Houston



IDENTITY THEFT: RECLAIMING THE TRUTH OF WHO WE ARE IN CHRIST



Melissa Kruger (The Gospel Coalition)



What is my identity? Who am I? These are questions we may have all thought about before. Is our identity dependent on the job we do, on our marital status, on whether or not we have children, on our personality, or even on who our friends and family are?

This Bible study by The Gospel Coalition seeks to cover the bigger question - who does the Bible tell me I am in Christ? Some examples of the topics explored, through Bible study, are:

(I am...) Free / Made in God's Image / Beloved / Saint / Beautiful / Citizen

Each chapter is written by a different author - such as Melissa Kruger and Jen Wilkin, all of whom provide personal stories, wisdom and perspective into these different aspects of our identity.

Each thought-provoking topic really gets you thinking, not about who you are, but about who God wants you to be.

It's not about self, it's about HIM.

Laura Mark

CONSIDERING GRACE



Gladys Ganiel and Jamie Yohanis (Merrion Press)

Considering Grace records the deeply moving stories of 120 ordinary people's experiences of the Troubles, exploring how faith shaped their responses to violence and its aftermath. It is the product of a great deal of hard work carried out under the "Dealing with the Past Project Task Group" which was established after the 2016 General Assembly to manage the project, "How did Presbyterians respond to the Troubles?"

It is the first book to capture such a full range of experiences of the Troubles for people from a Protestant background. It includes the perspectives of people from border counties and features some leading public figures.

This is a very thought provoking and challenging account of the impact of the Troubles on Presbyterians from all walks of life, it provides an open, passionate, and sometimes critical account of how PCI met the challenges of the Troubles. A very worthwhile read.

Gordon McNair



RAISE YOUR VOICE



We're a church that loves to sing – even when apart! And we're grateful to the music team for regularly introducing us to wonderful new songs. It's incredible that nowadays we can access such a wealth of musical theology so easily, allowing us to use what other Christians have written to help us in our worship.

With this in mind, we've pulled together a list of songs which we've been learning or are planning to learn in the coming months, as well as ministry songs which have been a blessing in recent services. We would love you to listen to them – both to help us learn them as a church, but also so that they can minister to you and encourage you in your own quiet times.

To make things extra easy, we've compiled playlists on Spotify and YouTube. Simply search for:

WELLINGTON PC SEPTEMBER 2020

Christ Church Choir

- Waymaker

Cody Carnes

- The Blessing

Cory Ashbury

- Christ Be Magnified

Ellie Holcomb

- Red Sea Road
- Don't Forget to Remember

Elevation Worship

- There is a King
- Graves Into Gardens

Natalie Grant

- Praise You In This Storm

Keith & Kristyn Getty, Stuart Townend

- Forever Jesus

Shane & Shane, Davy Flowers

- Sing to Jesus





“For I am convinced that neither death nor life,
neither angels nor demons, neither the present
nor the future, nor any powers, neither height
nor depth, nor anything else in all creation,
will be able to separate us from the love of
God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

ROMANS 8:38-39

www.wellingtonpc.co.uk

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