

Good morning from a sunny Aberdeenshire!

The birds are singing, the daffodils are bobbing in the breeze, the lambs are bleating in the field next door and Spring is here!

We are now entering the fourth week of lockdown, and the fifth Sunday without us meeting together physically in church. I know that for many this is a period of worry, loneliness and more isolation than they have ever been used too. But the news coming out this morning is that things may start to ease during May, I pray it may be so. However, despite all the fears and problems that exist at the moment, and there are many, there are many other things that should encourage us and give us hope.

During this time when human activity has reduced considerably there have been some amazing stories of nature 'breathing again'. The people of Venice can now see fish and crabs in the clear waters of the canals, Swans are gliding where the boats used to churn up the waters. Dolphins have been seen in the ports of Sardinia, when before the cruise ships would have kept them away. Bears and bobcats and coyotes are reclaiming the deserted Yosemite National Park. The majestic peaks of the Himalayas are now visible for the first time in 30 years from parts of India. Wild goats are roaming the streets of Ladudno, and wild flowers are blooming in abundance on roadside verges as no grass cutting has taken place, and I wonder how the seals are doing at Newburgh?

When we are once again allowed to travel and go about I wonder what delights of nature will be waiting to greet us!

The other encouragement is the impact that the online presence of the church is having. Some rural ministers, who would normally see only 30 or 40 people in church on a Sunday morning, are now getting hundreds of viewings of online services. The minister of the parish of West Kintyre and Gigha has told that he has an average attendance of 74 people over 3 churches on a Sunday morning, but 1054 people have viewed one of his services online! Even this simple reflection that I send out each week is increasing in distribution as people share it with others, and others ask to be added to the email list. If everyone that I send it to reads it, then this week it will reach around 100 people.

So, lots to be hopeful about this week. Creation continues to show God's glory in amazing ways. God's church is growing - each home is becoming a church where God is worshipped in very personal ways. We have a wonderful Creator God in whom we can trust!

Finally, on a different issue - [Pocket Prayer Crosses](#) - if you have been knitting these then I am ready to start collecting them. If you email me your address, I will do a collection tomorrow morning. Just leave the knitting in a bag on your doorstep and I will pick it up. Many, many thanks for all who have been able to knit some. We will use them in many different ways.

Keep safe
Blessings
Valerie