

# ROSEMARY PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Registered Charity in Northern Ireland – NIC 104448

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Dear Friends,

We are living in unparalleled days. It was such a strange feeling gathering the family around the television at 8.30pm on Monday night, to hear what measures the Prime Minister was putting in place to try to deal with the threat of Covid 19. We have been told to stay at home except for specific situations he outlined. I am writing to you to in order that you will be able to take some encouragement from God's word at this time, in particular Hebrews 10:19-25 below.

*'Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus, by the new and living way that he opened for us through the curtain, that is, through his flesh, and since we have a great priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful. And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.'*

The writer to the Hebrews reminds us that during these testing days we can and should have a confident faith. Social distancing is part of our lives now as we hope to reduce the spread of this virus. When it comes to our relationship with God, Jesus has made it possible for us to go straight into the presence of the Living God through faith. Jesus has opened up the way, He's taken away all the barriers so that we can draw near to God with confidence. As a result of Jesus work on the cross we are made clean and nothing can keep us out of God's presence. Let's appreciate God's love for us and spending more time in and enjoying the presence of our Loving Father. Take time to talk to Him about this situation.

The writer also encourages us to hold on tight to our confession of hope. We are told not to let go of this hope, to meditate on it and talk to others about it. Let's not give in to our fears and allow them to dictate what we think, feel, say or do! The Psalmist echoes this when he says, *'Why am I discouraged? Why is my heart so sad? I will put my hope in God! I will praise him again— my Saviour and my God!'* (Psalm 42:5-6)

Peter refers to this hope when he says; *'...he [The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ] has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, who by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time'* (1 Peter 1:3-4).

This hope, given to us through faith in Jesus Christ provides a kept inheritance in heaven and a 'kept by God' protection in our lives. Indeed our hope causes us to believe that when we call out to God He listens and acts, that God is able to work in all our circumstances. Our hope looks to God believing that He is in control of all

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things. Our hope also believes that God is able to work all things together for good for those who love Him and are called according to His purpose. This means that God will enable us to become more like Jesus in our lives.

The writer then challenges us to think of ways in which we might stir one another up to love and good works. This truly is our challenge in these days of the corona virus. These are times when we need each other, we need to stir each other up. We need to let people know that we are thinking about them and praying for them. We want to cheer others on especially those who are vulnerable, those who are working in health care to fight against the impact of the virus (even at risk to themselves) and those who are working in essential services. Jesus too calls us to reach out to those in need and in so doing we are doing it to him. It is so good to hear stories of random acts of kindness, these things stir us all up to love and good works.

How do we apply God's challenge, in verse 25, not to neglect meeting together and still encourage each other. We are still able to communicate to offer support albeit through different means. We all need to find the method which suits us best to contact others, whether it is by phone, text, social media such as Facebook or hand written letters. The important thing is that we stay in touch to inspire each other spiritually and practically.

Let's continue to support each other, praying that we will know God's presence and peace in the days ahead!

Philip McCrea

## **Keeping in touch - using email**

We hope to continue to keep in touch with everyone regularly over the coming weeks and rather than send copies of letters by post it will be easier and less expensive to use email. If you have an email address and are willing to have your letter sent electronically, please indicate this in an email to Liz Eakin ([liz@rosemarypresbyterianchurch.org](mailto:liz@rosemarypresbyterianchurch.org)).

## **A message from the Treasurer**

In recent days as the actions around Coronavirus intensify I have been uplifted by the number of members enquiring how they can make contributions to Rosemary Presbyterian Church. I would suggest these are made on a month by month basis until our normal weekly service resumes and the two options are by post or on line banking.

For FWO and / or other funds of the church - by cheque payable to Rosemary Presbyterian Church and posted to me at 18 Farm Lodge Road, Greenisland, Carrickfergus, BT38 8XH

For FWO only - by bank transfer to 95.01.21 account name Rosemary Presbyterian Church and account number 61034898. As a reference quote your surname + FWO number. For example Eakin No 123. This will assist greatly in identifying the donor for gift aid purposes.

## **Christian Aid**

Christian Aid week which had been scheduled for 10th - 16th May has been cancelled.

## **Service**

PCI Service led by Moderator on PCI Website (Uploaded at 6.00am on Sunday 29<sup>th</sup> March)

## **Effective Communication**

If you know of someone isolated and in need of help to get basic necessities then please let the minister or any of the elders know in order that we can arrange for help to be provided.