

Hello folks

2020 is certainly not looking anything like any of us expected. Covid-19 has upended all our lives and the congregation of Blairdaff and Chapel of Garioch are also now in what is known as a 'vacancy', following the retirement of Rev Martyn Sanders.

Of course, the church is not 'vacant', just as it has not truly been 'closed', even if the buildings have not been accessible. The ministry of Christ through the people of Blairdaff and Chapel of Garioch is ongoing.

Having said that, there is no doubt that these are challenging times. We (Mark Paterson and Rhona Cathcart) have been appointed by the Presbytery of Gordon as joint interim moderators. Rhona and Mark are both from Inverurie West Church where Rhona serves as minister and Mark as session clerk. It is our job to help the Blairdaff and Chapel of Garioch session and congregation during this transitional period - both in terms of necessary procedures and in terms of vision and forward planning. During a vacancy the session also traditionally takes on an increased responsibility for pastoral care, alongside your pastoral visitors. As always, of course, we know the congregation will be supporting one another, but it is important if you have any specific concerns that you keep your elders or pastoral assistants informed.

The current circumstances are making everything a little different - including what priorities and procedures are during a vacancy, and how we manage what is generally called pulpit supply. Martyn spent some time with us on Zoom before he left, so we have a bit of an idea of who is currently doing what, how things have been going for you during lockdown, and some of the discussions which the session has had to date about the future.

There are currently no plans to open the buildings for worship in the near future. Until this changes, we encourage members to visit other local congregations online (some links are provided below). We will also be exploring ways in which we can support members of the congregation to provide local worship contributions (written or recorded) for use on social media, on the website, or as part of joint worship with other congregations. Ideas welcome! We look forward to discovering a bit more about what gifts and talents might lie undiscovered.

In the meantime, please feel free to contact either of us if you have any queries. Rhona can be reached on 01467 620285 or r.cathcart@inveruriwestchurch.org Mark can be reached on 01467 625675 or sessionclerk@inveruriwestchurch.org

We look forward to getting to know you all a bit better over the months to come as we explore what God has planned next for Blairdaff and Chapel of Garioch.

Every blessing

Rhona and Mark

There are a number of local parishes offering on-line worship at this time when we need to avoid meeting together because of the risks of COVID-19 infection. Some are live streamed and some can be accessed at any time.

Services from Kemnay Parish Church can be accessed here

<https://kemnayparish.church/wp/>

Services from Inverurie West Kirk can be accessed here

<http://www.inveruriwestchurch.org/westcast.html>

Services from Belhelvie Parish Church can be accessed here

<http://www.belhelviechurch.com/>