

In addition to his doctorate from Princeton Theological Seminary, New Jersey, USA, the Moderator Designate holds a degree in Politics and Geography from Strathclyde University in Glasgow and a Bachelor of Divinity from the University of Glasgow. When he is not engaged in ministry in all its permutations, Dr Fair enjoys exploring the great outdoors and is a keen hill walker, mountaineer, camper, football fan and golfer. As a teenager, he had a handicap of two and a favourite family story is the time he forfeited the chance of winning a club championship by walking off three holes early because he feared he would miss a cinema date with his now wife. Golf continued to be a passion into adulthood but a "life changing" accident in August 2017 now means Dr Fair's handicap of eight has slipped. He tripped and fell in the street in Arbroath and broke his left arm which has never properly healed despite three operations. His left hand does not function properly and he is unable to tie his own shoelaces and necktie and relies on a specially adapted car to get around under his own steam. Dr

Fair said: "It has been a huge learning curve and for the first time in my life I have had to ask for help. While I wish this had not happened to me, good things have come from it because when you are dependent on people for help you take on a different view of life. The support I got from my family and the Christian community was phenomenal and I think I am a more rounded person because of that experience. My attitude is 'ok, let's get on with life' and I am not going to let it stop me or define me. I am now learning how to play golf one-handed."

Based on an article from the Church of Scotland website



Parish Press

Special Edition

South Holburn Church

Autumn 2020

From the Manse...

Welcome to this special edition of Parish Press.

Our format looks a little different from the usual magazine, but then these are far from usual times!

The COVID-19 lockdown meant that services at South Holburn Church stopped after Sunday 29th March 2020, as they did in all Churches across Scotland.

How did we react?

Our Sunday services went online, with weekly recordings, initially from the manse, and then with contributions from Bill, our organist, and various different readers. (I offer my deepest thanks to all who have contributed over the months.).

Online services have included communion and special services for Easter, Pentecost and Harvest. We have featured everything from online choirs, to animations, to videos. As you can image, all of this was a steep learning curve. I had never recorded a service or edited video before. And I thank you for your patience with my fumbling efforts over these months.

Alongside our online recorded services, we have joined with Ferryhill and Ruthrieston West Churches in various online activities. Before lockdown started, we had just commenced a series of Lent services based around the "The Greatest Showman" movie and we were able to

complete the series online through the Zoom computer software platform, with members from all three congregations joining in from their living rooms and dining rooms and home offices. We have also carried out a series of services each evening during Holy Week and, recently, have joined together to hold a series of studies together on the book “Grateful” by Diana Butler Bass.

For our South Holburn members we have held a weekly Virtual Vestry, once more hosted on Zoom, every Wednesday, when anyone can drop in for a chat. Additionally, I have been writing weekly devotions which have been emailed to members on our email list and which have also been added to the Church website each week.

The Kirk Session has been very aware that many of our members do not have access online and so have not been able to join the activities listed above. So elders have been phoning members regularly to make sure that all is well. We have also circulated a card to

all our members during lockdown, just to let everyone know that they are not forgotten.

Our community has also not been forgotten. Along with other local Churches, we created a community group, called Riverside COVID-19 Response, and several hundred local folk (most of them not from the Churches) volunteered to help look out for neighbours and folk in our community. One of our joint actions was to deliver a news sheet with details of places to find help and things to do, which went to most of the homes in the area. Currently, as part of our Harvest Thanksgiving, we are again working alongside Ferryhill and Ruthrieston West to collect cans of food for the Instant Neighbour Trust Foodbank, and we have set our aim at 1000 cans!

From the start of September, Churches have been allowed to open again for worship, though with severe restrictions. Numbers able to attend are limited because of social distancing. Those attending

The new service provision was designed by six members of the congregation— three mental health professionals and three people who have struggled with their own mental health.

Dr Fair, who was ordained and inducted into St Andrew’s Parish Church in 1992, said he hoped to highlight addiction and mental health issues during his year in office.

He will be the first Moderator from Arbroath to serve as the Kirk’s ambassador at home and abroad during what will be the 700th anniversary year of the Declaration of Arbroath.

Dr Fair said he is excited and a bit daunted about becoming Moderator and his one regret is that his beloved parents, Ena and Bill, who were born and bred in the Church, did not live long enough to see him take up the 12-month role.

“I am really excited about the future of the Church and quite frankly, if I solely focused on statistics that suggested terminal decline I would have quit the ministry years ago,” he added.

“It is at a key crossroads and we are letting go of some of what has been and embracing what is to come. I am looking forward to getting out and about and being alongside folk in the local church and hope to be an encouraging voice to help prepare all of us for what God has in store. There is a wonderful opportunity for the Church right now to rediscover its meaning and purpose for the people of Scotland and beyond in the here and now. I am totally fired up as a minister and as Moderator, I want to communicate that excitement and positivity.”

Dr Fair, who spent a year as a youth minister in Bermuda before swapping the island for Arbroath, said claims that the Kirk is in its “death throes are well wide of the mark”.

“As I travel round the country even now, I see green shoots of growth and live in hope for what is going to come,” he added. “What we will see emerge will be fresh and new and to quote a phrase, God is not finished with Scotland or His Church.”



Meet the Moderator

A minister who set up a mental health support service following the suicide of Frightened Rabbit frontman Scott Hutchinson was chosen to be the Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland.

Rev Dr Martin Fair, who became moderator in May, said he was left “devastated” after the singer of one of his favourite bands took his own life and decided he could no longer stand idly by and do nothing.

The 55-year-old, minister of St Andrews Parish Church in Arbroath, Angus, oversaw the rollout of three services delivered by the congregation’s social action project, Havilah, earlier this year.

Dr Fair said faith groups and other bodies have an “obligation” to fill gaps in public provision because the level of statutory support for drug addiction and mental health in Scotland is “desperately short” of what is needed.

He said too many vulnerable people were being failed and politicians must redouble their efforts to address the crisis. Dr Fair and his congregation set up Havilah in 2006 and paid staff and volunteers have helped around 1,000 people to date. Open five days a week, it used to predominately help addicts but services have been broadened with the introduction of a community choir, a therapeutic garden and a drop-in service.

must sit two metres apart and wear masks throughout the service. That means at South Holburn, we are limited to around 30 people attending a service along with worship leaders and duty elders. Members will all have received an update of how to book a place for a service and details of future services are indicated elsewhere in this magazine.

COVID-19 has changed our society (and continues to do as a second wave of the virus now seems to be spreading) and caused a great deal of pain, suffering and hardship.

But alongside that difficulty, it has been fascinating to see how we have been able to adapt and change. That is also true of the Church. Before this virus many would have said it was impossible for the Church to change. That the way we have always done things is the way we will always do things. But during these months that has proved not to be the case. Across Scotland, the Church has found new ways of worshipping, new ways of supporting members, new ways of leading and new ways of being the Church in the

community. At the start of October, the General Assembly (delayed from earlier in the year) met in a special session with very few folk in the Assembly Hall, but over 700 delegates joining online. Reports were presented, full discussion was carried out and votes were taken. At the end of October our own Kirk Session at South Holburn will hold our first Kirk Session meeting via Zoom (though all our elders – including those unable to attend the meeting - will receive a written report of the decisions to be made and asked to vote via email or phone call).

So as a Church we can change, and we can adapt. And that is heartening to know, as the Church must relearn how to communicate our message and our mission in our society today in order to reverse the current decline which all Churches are experiencing.

But there is a balance to be struck. I have been very aware throughout this pandemic that so many of our members are not able to access what we have been providing for the

Church. Online services and Zoom meetings are not for everyone. Many people are not comfortable with the technology or do not have the facility to make use of these modern means of communication. I won't lie, I have had sleepless nights wondering how we can share our worship and our Church family life with all of those who are not online. Whatever we do as a Church, we cannot leave behind those who do not access the Internet. The Church has always been about relationships. Our relationship with God and our relationship to each other as the Church family. Those relationships develop through being together, talking together, sharing together. Whatever we do as a Church we cannot forget that part of our DNA. I am always open to ideas in how we can share with each other. So, if there is anything you need from the Church,



please, please get in touch. And we will find a way to meet that need. COVID has taught us that we can creatively find a way.

There will be a time when this virus is defeated. When we no longer have to isolate from one another, when we can get closer than 2 metres to one another, when we can greet each other with a handshake or a hug. When that day comes, we will rejoice. But we will not forget the creativity and innovation that COVID-19 has brought out of the Church. That

creativity and those new ways of being the Church can and will be a blessing that lead us into the future, caring for all our members and all our community.

Keep safe everyone.

David

the cost of COVID-19 on our healthcare system and patients. People beyond my pay grade and expertise are grappling with this - a job I am very glad I am not doing - there is no easy answer. I've heard comments such as 'when are the GP's working again' - I can assure you that they were very much in the frontline during COVID-19 and never stopped working - 'it's just like the flu and more people die of that' - not true and hard for staff to hear when they have seen patients die of COVID-19 on a daily basis - 'we should all just get it and we will be immune' - except that some will die if they 'just get it' and our hospitals will once again be overwhelmed as beds fill up and 'does anyone actually know of anyone who died of COVID-19' implying that the pandemic has been over exaggerated.

These continue to be testing times for everyone, worldwide, but I am immensely proud of working in NHS and the committed, caring and dedicated staff including managers (who tend to get a bad press) that I have the pleasure of working with. It has

coped under unprecedented circumstances and pressure and I am particularly appreciative and grateful to the acute psychology team.

Fiona

Prayers & Punchlines

*May we find our way back to you,
O God.
May we walk the path,
Talk the story,
Believe the truth,
Know the moment,
Find the purpose,
Trust the word,
Call to you,
Follow your footsteps,
Love your people.*

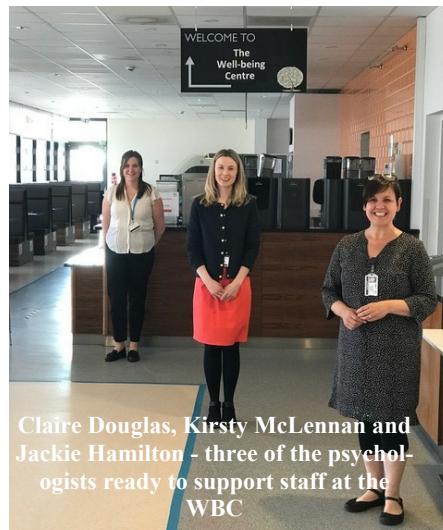
God with us,
Hear our fears and needs,
Hold our hand as You walk beside us
Advise, encourage, guide us,
Amen

*From the Church of Scotland
Facebook Page*

providing this support and they did a magnificent job.

When things began to be less intense for all staff the realisation that we were not going to back to 'business as usual' has been equally difficult. As staff have had time to reflect feelings of being overwhelmed, fatigued and for some verging on burn out are being acknowledged. Everyone went above and beyond and it was wonderful to know that the public were behind us and supportive although for most a sense of unease that we were not doing enough or 'just doing our jobs'. One of my most vivid memories is of driving home from work on a Thursday evening around 830 and being caught up in the lorry cavalcade that had just driven round ARI hooting loudly in support - I literally felt the vibration in my chest as I got caught between two lorries. At the end of August we were 'stood down' and could go back to our day jobs (albeit in a very different way and with some significant catching up) but with the caveat that a second wave is expected.

There does seem to be a slight shift now and the NHS appears to be criticised as it struggles to prepare for the anticipated second wave (which is likely to coincide with our usual peak time of winter flu) and as it comes to terms with working in new ways with PPE and social distancing (wards have had to be reconfigured to allow 2 metres distancing therefore reducing bed space). Sadly we do have



Claire Douglas, Kirsty McLennan and Jackie Hamilton - three of the psychologists ready to support staff at the WBC

longer waiting times for non urgent patients and a health debt (the health cost of not doing what we normally do due to COVID-19). We are acutely aware and saddened by this and trying our best to mitigate

South Holburn Guild

The Guild session 2019/2020 cannot resume for now, due to the current health regulations set by the government. Pam and I sincerely hope that all Guild members and their families are keeping well.

We look forward to meeting up with you all in the near future. Guild Summer Lunch refunds will be paid to members as soon as restrictions allow.



Take care and keep safe,
Regards to all from
Mary and Pam x x

South Holburn Church Services

Our next worship services in the Church sanctuary will be on:

Sunday, 8th November (Remembrance Sunday)

(booking available from 2nd November – 5th November)

Sunday, 29th November (Advent Sunday)

(booking available from 23rd November – 26th November)

If you wish to attend one of these services, please phone the booking number 07726 867138.

Weekly online services are always available on the church website:

www.southholburn.org

To Everything there is a Season... (Ecclesiastes 3:1)

Greetings, South Holburn church family! I am so happy to join you for the next year as our family prepares for ministry in the Church of Scotland. Just six months ago we were sitting at home in New Jersey (not far from Philadelphia) wondering what our new ministry would be like, where we would live and how God would bring it all together. That was a time of great uncertainty for us as not only were we moving to another country, but the world was in the midst of lockdown due to COVID-19. Looking back, we see how God has provided what we needed: visas, university placements, an amazing church to serve, and a home. Seasons of growth and change require risk and a willingness to step out into the unknown.

Early in our marriage Joe and I faced many such seasons! In

1993, Joe and I celebrated our second wedding anniversary while living in Scotland and serving with Scripture Union on a gap year in Fife. A few years later, after studying for the ministry back in the US, we found ourselves in Scotland again...this time I was working on my PhD at St. Andrews and working at Hope Park as Assistant Pastor. Soon after returning to the US, I was ordained as a Presbyterian minister. That was definitely a season of growth! Yet nothing could prepare us for when our children Anna, Josh and John



have a free snack, read some literature on managing stress and informally have a chat with one of the psychologists. We also provided more formal one-to-one sessions where we provided psychological first aid to staff members. We also had psychologists linked in directly with teams for example porters, domestics, palliative care teams and wards including COVID, non-COVID and Cardiac intensive care, A & E, the COVID wards, medical and surgical wards at RACH and the non-COVID wards. We had staff who used the phone lines which could be utilised when staff were at home. When the WBC opened psychology staff were working 7am - 7pm every day of the week until we worked out when the need was and eventually reducing to 10 - 4 as the first phase abated. We prepared many hand outs for staff for example "How to explain to children about COVID-19" and did Webinars (a presentation over the internet) to some teams on how to manage stress and anxiety. We were also mindful that we had newly graduated medics and nurses. During the peak of the first

wave (who knows what awaits us during the second wave) 1000 members of staff came thought the WBC and we provided over 300 one-to-one sessions with staff members. The response from staff was overwhelming positive. Many frontline staff were struggling with fears that they might get COVID-19 and spread it to family members, struggling to explain to worried children who thought 'Mummy might die of COVID-19', worried about being redeployed to an area they were unfamiliar with (such as intensive care) and often feeling deskilled, worried for the patients they were not seeing that were on their case load, overwhelmed by see very ill patients in large numbers of a condition they knew little about and feeling sometimes helpless, angry and/or upset that they could not support families in the way they normally do when someone is dying, worries about the effectiveness of PPE and if we would run out (we ran low but not out). These are just some of the themes. Of course part of my job was also to support the psychologist who were

significantly throughout NHS Scotland. Urgent patients were always seen but many routine operations and treatments were put on hold so that clinicians could be redeployed to treat COVID-19 patients and to free up bed space. Of course an important factor in this too was that we did not want to admit non-COVID-19 patients into ARI, if this could be avoided, for fear that infection might spread. Particular consideration had to be given to those on immune suppressed treatments such as those undergoing chemotherapy.

ARI went through a large remobilisation where wards were moved and reconfigured with different 'zones' to avoid non-COVID and COVID patients mixing especially when being transported through the hospital. You may have visited ARI and experienced some of these changes - including using personal protection equipment (PPE). As you can image this was a very challenging time for all staff and patients. A training programme for the use of PPE was rolled out very quickly - bearing in mind there

are 7,000 staff members on the hospital site. We never ran out of PPE at the hospital site which is testament to the hard work of the PPE and infection control team.

The Acute Psychology Team were asked to consider how we could support staff at ARI, the Sick Children's Hospital and the Maternity Hospital during the pandemic and came up with a three pronged approach: the establishment of a Well Being Centre (WBC) in the old 'cairn gorm' cafe space (which was closed during the acute stages of COVID-19), embedding psychologists in teams/wards for support and the establishment of a telephone line for support. All of these were set up within two weeks (a truly amazing feat and testament to the commitment and dedication of the acute psychology team). The Resilience Hub was also set up by our colleagues in Mental Health and Learning Disabilities for the public and other staff members. The WBC provided a quite calm area where staff could relax (many areas had no or very limited staff room space now),

were born two years later! Becoming parents of triplets brought a whole new meaning to the word "change"! As our children grew, we served in several congregations in rural, suburban, and urban communities. We had an insatiable desire to see our family serve Jesus wherever the Lord planted us! One season of change brought the death of a dear friend who lived in Aberdeen. This season moved us to step out beyond our comfort zones and reconnected us with our 2nd home, Scotland. As a result we felt God calling us to return to Scotland that summer for an extended one month ministry trip.

Fast forward another four years when our three (Anna, Josh and John) were heading into high school, and it was coming up on our 25th wedding anniversary. What better place to celebrate than in Scotland doing what we love best: ministry! We connected to a lovely group of folks at a church

in the Borders who invited us to be part of their annual holiday club. For four summers we served on that team and enjoyed the fellowship that makes up a mission. The trio were student leaders and made friends with the local teens, who they still keep in touch with today.

During that time, we learned that ministers were in short supply in Scotland. God began to speak to us about coming here permanently to be a part of the Church of Scotland. We had hoped to move sooner, but God delayed the timing so that Lydia could join our family. What a season of change that was...our oldest children were 16 and this precious one entered into our home and turned it lovingly upside down!!

As you can imagine, making such a huge move, with a big family, was a long journey taking at least three years of prayer and exploration. In some ways this move went all the way back to our first gap year in Scotland, back in 1993.

The NHS and COVID-19

God had indeed planted these ideas, which became dreams, and they have now blossomed into reality.

Catherine Marshall was a favorite author of mine when I was at university. She was married to Peter Marshall, the Scottish Presbyterian minister from Coatbridge who went on to become Chaplain of the US Senate. I remember reading of her deep conviction that God plants dreams in our hearts that come to fruition in the perfect season. We must be patient to wait for God's timing. Psalm 27:14 exhorts us in the same way: "Wait for the Lord; be strong, and let your heart take courage; wait for the Lord!"

Friends, perhaps you find yourself in a season of waiting or wondering as well. Where is God leading you next? What will God do with the church in this difficult time? In this season we wait, but we also see the dreams God is planting and bringing to fruition.

Seasons of waiting and struggle can be the richest times of spiritual growth. I pray for South Holburn that this season will be one of growth, revitalization, and new birth. I see the signs of it already, and I look forward to watching how God will unfold this time in all of our lives.

Please feel free to email me so we can set up a pastoral phone call or meeting in person when that becomes possible (jpizzuto-pomaco@churchofscotland.org.uk). I look forward to getting to know each of you and walking with you through this next season!

Warmly,
Rev. Julia

My experience of working for the NHS during COVID-19

By Fiona Woodhead

I write this with some trepidation as, by the time this is published, who knows where Grampian will be regarding COVID-19. The world indeed is in a very different place from where anyone could have imagined.

As many of you are aware I work in ARI as a clinical neuropsychologist where, ordinarily, I provide a service to patients who have neurological conditions. What I do and how I do it has however inevitably changed since March 2020. In January/February senior managers in ARI had been given the mandate to prepare for a pending pandemic and in early March all departments were told to plan - which is clearly very difficult to do when you really don't know what is coming. We had been given 'best worst case scenarios' (I

won't give you the details as it's pretty grim) which thankfully, it transpires, we did not reach - what we had to cope with was bad enough. In essence our department reviewed every open patient case and prioritised them into two categories: requires continued treatment and can



Fiona and Jackie Hamilton at the entrance of the well-being centre

be put 'on hold' until we know what the future holds. We also divided cases into those that required face-to-face or could be seen through 'Near Me'. Some of you may have come across this but it's the NHS apparatus for seeing patients virtually (a bit like facetime but with better security). We had already been using 'Near Me' for some patients however during COVID-19 this has been rolled out much more