

Minister's Musings

As a tenor in the choir of my home church I remember singing the anthem, 'Lead me, Lord' by S.S. Wesley. I imagine many of you remember hearing this song in Belmont years ago; you may even have sung it yourself. The words of this anthem are taken from Psalm 5:8 and Psalm 4:8, which in the Authorised Version read: 'Lead me, O LORD, in thy righteousness; make thy way straight before my face ... for thou, LORD, only makest me dwell in safety.' I can think of no better words to sing to ourselves in these difficult days. Why not sing them when you are washing the dishes, working in the garden, driving to work, or walking the dog? In these days many of us feel lost and disoriented; many of us feel unsafe; many of us don't know what the future holds. This is true not just for individuals, but even congregations.

The Lord has promised that he will give grace to the humble, that he will respond to those who come in their brokenness, and with their fears to him, that he will guide us when we ask him. The first step, as we know, is taken when we make our way home to the Waiting Father, in repentance and through faith in His Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. If God makes the way back to himself clear (through Christ), he will surely make the way ahead clear (through his Word and Spirit). If the Lord grants us spiritual safety in Christ; he will surely give us a sense of safety as we make our way through life. So, let us sing: 'Lead me, Lord.'

Rev. Nigel Craig

Kirk Session Update

Thanks to those who have attended, and the Welcome Team for facilitating, our return to worship services in the sanctuary following lockdown. The task group continues to monitor the external factors that could affect the running of services as the cases on infections continues to rise sharply in the community. We are pleased to inform you that we are in the middle of an audio visual upgrade that should allow us to live stream and record our services in future as social distancing measures thus a limited capacity are likely to be in place for some time. Our aim is to allow as many people as possible to access our services in a way they will find it most accessible.

We wish to pass on our congratulations to Chris Barron, our pastoral assistant, who has received a call to Whitehead Congregational Church to be their minister. I'm sure I speak for everyone when I say we wish him well and all of God's blessings in this next chapter. We are glad that Chris has agreed to continue his pastoral work with us, reducing his hours down to 5 hours per week.

Having received an update from the Congregational Committee with respect to the boilers (more information under Committee report), that is - the progress made to date, and a likely resolution date being mid to late November - **the Kirk Session has made the difficult decision to close the sanctuary following the service on the 18th October.**

A decision such as this is not taken lightly, however when we looked at the big picture, the current restrictions required to safely facilitate members to attend each week, the requirement to have a warm

environment and for the general comfort of those attending there seemed to be little other options. All other options including alternative heating measures and alternative venues were explored. Therefore following the service on Sunday 18th, we will revert to having services online on YouTube, and on our telephone ministry line, Speak O Lord.

We have no specific date for reopening yet, as I said we anticipate it to be mid to late November - once this has been confirmed we will communicate this date as we did throughout the initial lockdown via email or through your elder. If you didn't receive emails throughout the lockdown but do have access to email please pass your email address onto either your elder or ali in the office.

Chris Steele
Clerk of Session

Congregational Committee - Repairs to church property

Earlier this year the committee discovered two items that required immediate attention.

1. Damp and unsafe floor in the Creche and surrounding area.
2. Main boilers leaking.

Crèche Area

The committee became aware of a weak floor and dampness in the Creche and on the walls at this end of the building. We immediately engaged an expert who recommended immediate further examination. He discovered extensive Dry Rot and as a result we had the area stripped, resulting in the discovery of water entering the building through the

exterior walls and through parts of the coping on the roof. In order to stop the dry rot spreading into the main hall, contractors were tasked to treat the fungus. Further examination revealed that the drains outside this area were blocked and broken causing water to enter the undercroft area and penetrate the walls. Instructions have also been issued to have the necessary work done to seal the building from ingress of water from above and below. The building will then have to dry out for some time before any refurbishment can take place. The cost of this initial work is £45,000 plus consultancy costs.

Main Boilers

The main boilers started to leak, and an examination revealed that they either needed extensive repair or replacement. All options and costs were explored and it was decided as a matter of urgency to repair the boilers and put in some additional water filtration equipment to protect them. The necessary contract has been issued and the work commenced. The main parts have been ordered from Italy and it is presently estimated that the work will be completed by the middle of November. The cost of this work is £27,480.

Appeal

The above works are essential, and the committee had no choice but to have these undertaken as a matter of urgency. Our next consideration is how we meet these costs and those going forward, when we come to reinstate the Creche area.

We are considering all our options and we urgently appeal to the congregation to donate to the church building fund to help in meeting these costs.

We ask you to consider either or both of the following ways to help us.

1) Make a donation to the maintenance fund via our treasurer. (Details from Ali in the Office)

2) Make an interest free loan (details again from Ali in the office on how to arrange this).

Please give this your urgent consideration. Thank you, in advance.

Ken Porter
Acting Congregational Committee
Secretary



Harvest at Belmont in partnership with The Larder Foodbank

Many thanks to all Belmont members who contribute to our Larder Foodbank appeals through the year. Your generosity is appreciated and making a difference in your local community.

We have decided that, this year, rather than decorating our Sanctuary for Harvest with donated gifts we will instead ask for donations to be brought to Church for The Larder Foodbank.

We shall be celebrating Harvest on Sunday 11th October and we would ask that items be brought to Church for The Larder on this Sunday and indeed the Sunday after (18th).

Donation "bins" for The Larder will be situated in the outer vestibule of the Church.

If you are unable to attend Church on either the 11th or 18th October and would still like to donate to this appeal we can accommodate you too!

Each weekday, from Monday 12th October until Friday 16th October between 9 am and 12 noon I will have the donation "bins" situated at the doors to the Link Vestibule for members to drive up and pop in any items they wish to donate.

We would be very grateful for anything you can donate to The Larder. Very many thanks and keep safe

Ali Boyd
Facilities Ministry Co-Ordinator

Youth Ministry Update

We have entered into a whole new way of engaging and working alongside each other. In light of this there are a lot of new policies in place by Presbyterian Church in Ireland and YoungLife International, these will change how we facilitate youth ministry in Belmont. Upon recommendation of PCI and Belmont Kirk Session, we hope to take a blended approach of small face to face meetings and online support.

One to One Support

Our short term plan is to focus our time and attention on meeting young people one to one or in very small groups (2 young people and one leader) in coffee shops. Carl McManus is available to meet with male students and I am available (15 hours a week) to meet with female students. Please do get in touch with one of us if your young person would be interested in this type of support. For many this has been an extremely difficult

time with increasing levels of anxiety, we would be honoured to support your young person as we navigate this new normal together.

Rachel- belmontyfm@gmail.com / 07879 057604

Carl- cmcmanus@ylinternational.org / 07752 053733

YoungLife

YoungLife Clubs in Ireland remain on hold and a start date is yet to be determined. We will update you as soon as more information is available. As lockdown restrictions started to lift in June, we noticed a dip in participation via Zoom. We would really value feedback from families as to whether it would be beneficial to resume YoungLife via Zoom in the coming months. We will be having ongoing discussions about potential social events off site and eventually being able to meet in Belmont Church halls once again.

Soul Sisters

Covid Government Restrictions are changing at a fast pace which has had an impact on how Soul Sisters can engage with one another. We have had one group meeting in Tim Horton's in September but sadly the rule of six has changed to six people from two households which prevents us from meeting in a coffee shop on Wednesday nights. It is hoped that we could continue to share this time together via Zoom.

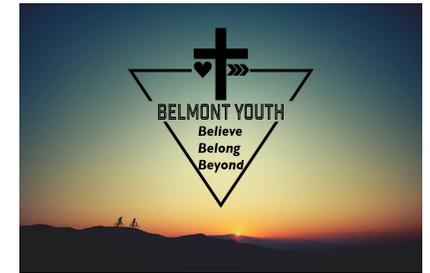
Looking to the Future

At this stage we are remaining flexible in our approach to youth ministry and responding to needs as quickly as we can.

We are hopeful that we could resume programmes in 2021 with Covid secure measures in place. I would ask that we continue to pray for our young people and families as they continue to learn how to live and worship God in our new normal.

Grace & Peace,

Rachel Jackson
Youth and Family Ministry Co-Ordinator



Gardening Maintenance Team

The grounds maintenance team consisting of four, have been maintaining and developing the church grounds. With a full team we normally meet for 3 hours one morning a week. I would ask for your assistance for whatever time you can give. This can be at your discretion, when we can allocate a task and provide the necessary equipment, or you can join us on the morning we meet. In the present economic climate, we cannot afford to incur additional expense to employ outside contractors to undertake this work.

Please contact Alan Campbell on 02890654990 or 07720548048 if you can help

Alan Campbell on behalf of the team, and
Congregational Committee Chairman