



5th August 2020

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

Greetings to you all.

It is August and we have been travelling together, yet apart, for some five months through this time of Coronavirus affecting the way we live. Sadly, the virus is not fully under control, and it continues to have a way of causing confusion and challenge for all of us. We read of churches that have opened and have then had to close, and others that are not planning to re-open their doors before Advent. We are all too aware that this is a stressful time as we seek to re-emerge from lockdown safely after 1st September. Your prayers and patience are truly appreciated.

In this Circuit, each church is looking at the risk assessment guidelines that need to be followed. An action plan to meet the needs is then required and approved by each church's Church Council. It is not expected that all churches in the Forth Valley Circuit will open during September, as the guidelines for both buildings and persons would make this challenging.

Worship and inspirational material will continue in both written and online forms for a while yet. It is very likely that there will be some form of online worship when being together physically can happen. I am encouraged to see that some of our congregations are already embracing the use of online worship and meetings. I am truly grateful to all of you who are continuing to share and encourage one another by phone or letter.

Many of us have already experienced how different life is on the high street and in shops – numbers restricted, sanitising protocols, directions to follow, etc. It is indeed good to see how positive people are about seeking to make things work for when we are able to meet in church again.

The good news is that through all times of challenge, God is with us. I love the fitting words of this assurance Psalm 71 as written in Carla Grosch-Miller's book, "Psalms Redux".

Rescue, Refuge, Rock, Reviver

Rescue

To You, I call trusting your ear is tuned to all You love.
Your firm hand pulls me out of crashing waves.

Refuge

In You, I hide seeking the repose I find nowhere else.
Your strong silence anchors me in storming seas.

Rock

On You, I stand finding my feet on terra-firma.
Your clear horizon orients me to renewing hope.

Reviver

In You, I breathe fresh, crisp air tinged with incense.
Your siren song calls forth my echoing praise.
Let all the generations know, hope and trust.

May God, Rescuer, Refuge, Rock and Reviver bless and guide us as we journey on – together, but apart.

Grace and peace.

Eddie

