Hullo everyone,

As I prepare to have two weeks off, I wanted to thank you for all your support and concern for me over the past couple of months as well as and your patience and perseverance with the technology that has been challenging for most of us. I feel quite proud of us all; both for our tolerance of the many mistakes, as well as what we have managed between us!! It has been interesting to experience how it has helped us to keep a sense of community and spiritual support. It remains to be seen how much of this we might continue in the future and in what way.

Particular thanks to Alistair, Mairi and Robin for their time and help with the practicalities of both Zoom and the music, and Elizabeth’s help on Sunday mornings. In the background I would also like to acknowledge my brother Tim, who has rescued and set me on the right path a number of times. With his help this past weekend, I have at last mastered setting up a local phone-line on which I am able to put a recorded message, which I hope will be particularly useful for those who have not been able to join us on Sundays.

The number is 0131 378 7974. If you phone this number a recorded voice will answer at first saying Hullo, this is Drylaw Parish Church, please wait a moment. There will then be a short pause and then you will then here my voice with a recorded prayer and reflection. It is now working for people to use and, on my return, I can get some feedback and decide whether people would like a whole Sunday service recorded in this way or, similar to what is there now, a shorter recording with a prayer and reflection.

People may be wondering about the next steps in terms of opening up the church building. Asking around there has not been much strong feeling about opening up the sanctuary for prayer; peoples’ concern has been rather about when some form of Sunday worship might resume. The most important point at this stage, for you and others to know, is that there are rigorous new requirements in terms of being ‘COVID aware’ and procedures and instructions are in place from the Church of Scotland regarding opening up church buildings - things like who can go where, when, and how. To this end the Presbytery of Edinburgh have ordered signage and hand sanitizers for all churches and these all need to be in place, and approved, before the building can be opened up for more people to enter. I am very grateful to Amanda, and Scott Lawson and Elizabeth Martin for their support in this process and decision-making, and their holding this process while I am away. At the time of writing I can let you know that Amanda and myself are in regular communication with both Rainbow Daycare and the Action Group regarding their potential return to use the building for their clients on a reduced basis. If there are concerns and questions about this process, please do get in touch by email or phone to myself or to Amanda.

I feel that as a church community we have been very blessed in that very few of us, or our direct relatives, have had to deal with either the illness of the pandemic, or the economic hardship. However many in our community may have, and as time moves on it is important for us to be aware of those around us. Please do let me know of any needs that you see surfacing. It is part of our mission to be attentive to the needs of those around us and to respond as we can. Rainbow Daycare intends to continue the informal Food bank they have been running as the economic hardship is likely to affect more people over the summer period.

As I am fortunate enough to take a break, I also very much hope that all of you find some way to find rest and refreshment this summer. This pandemic causes us all to ponder what matters most in life and what really helps us. I pray for us all that our faith is a strong thread holding us; and that we have the courage in the coming months to consider what changes are being planted in our church life and in our connections with the community around. It seems to me we are indeed being called into a transition. I end with a quote that was sent to me earlier this week.

Wishing you all blessings and peace

*Jenny*

**“The more you praise and celebrate your life,**

**the more there is in life**

**to celebrate”**

Oprah Winfrey