



Update Regarding Livestreaming

By Joe Barnard

Technology changes things, and technology accelerates change. Sometimes this brings about improvements; sometimes it leads to less wholesome consequences.

In a world that is constantly innovating, it's important to pause periodically and ask a couple of questions. One is, "Why are we doing what we're doing?"; another is, "What are the consequences of our actions – are they for better or for worse?"

This is one of the many applications of Paul's instruction, "Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind." As Christians, we always need to be led by wisdom, not group-think. Our aspiration must constantly be – individually and collectively – to keep to the narrow path, even if our choices end up being countercultural.

One of the unintended consequences of Covid was that ministry went digital. In some respects, this has been good. Digital ministry has meant that people unable to leave home have been able to view worship services. It has also meant that non-Christians have, in some cases, been able to listen to gospel messages who may not have been ready to attend church in person.

But the move to digital has not been altogether beneficial. It has also fed into the consumeristic mindset that all things ought to be on demand – even public worship. And, in some cases, it has facilitated the decision to sit comfortably at home and watch on a screen what is intended by God to be a public, corporate, and embodied experience. If we are honest, most of us know the difference between viewing a service on a screen and being present in person. At home, we don't always sing; we don't always try to concentrate; and we all too easily indulge the temptation to leave the service playing in the background while we make a cup of tea or scroll WhatsApp.

Believe me: I'm not pointing the finger at anyone but myself.

In view of this, the elders have decided to stop the livestream of the Sunday evening service after Easter weekend. We know that some people will be disappointed by the decision. We are aware that there are a few in the congregation who are unable to be present on Sundays, and we care deeply that they feel loved, remembered, and included in the life of the congregation. We also realise that there are others who struggle to come out when the evenings are dark. This is part of our reason for delaying to make the change until April.

That said, our reasons for stopping the livestream for the evening service are the following.

First, we want to hold firm to the truth that public worship is embodied and communal. The modern world needs to be reminded of this. YouTube and Zoom can never substitute for the unique blessing that happens when Christians gather together *in person* in the name of Christ. This is how Christians





have worshipped for the last two thousand years, and this is how Christians must continue to worship even in a technological age. Virtual presence is not the same as physical presence. This is one of the many implications of the incarnation.

Second, we want to encourage as many as possible to be physically present at the evening service. The truth is that everyone loses out when members choose to be absent from worship. Undoubtedly, there are good reasons why some cannot be present at two services on Sunday. Dark nights and young children are two that come immediately to mind.

But exceptions are exceptions. We must never forget that gathering as a congregation is our best form of pastoral care, discipleship, and evangelism. If we don't have critical mass for the evening service, fellowship wanes, praise suffers, and new visitors leave thinking the church is only half-alive.

For the sake of the mission of the church, let me encourage all members (who are able) to reconsider attending the evening service. The service would be transformed by another 15-20 people committing to being present each week.

Third, in recognition of those unable to be present in person, we are going to continue the livestream of the morning service. We love you, and care deeply about you. We want to make sure that you have an opportunity on Sundays to be included in the worship of the church.

Finally, it should be mentioned that the sermon from the evening service will still be recorded and posted online each week. This will mean that those unable to be present at the evening service will still be able to follow the teaching ministry of the church.

The elders believe that this decision is best for the long-term health of the congregation. It will help us stay united in worship and in mission and will best promote fellowship and witness in the church (c.f. Hebrews 10:24-25).

Meal and Prayer Meeting

This Wednesday, we will be having a meal together before the prayer meeting. Come from 5.45pm, food will be served at 6pm and we'll pray together from 7-8pm. We're looking forward to Sam Orr from Redeemer Church in Colinton joining us to share about the work there.

The Pursuit – Sunday Evening Series

Join us this Sunday evening as Jon Gemmell continues **The Pursuit**, a journey through Ecclesiastes, **starting 6pm**. The Pursuit will help us stop chasing the wind and start fearing the Lord. Which, it turns out, is where real life begins. Come and join us!





Fundraising Quiz – Friday 13th March



FREE
ENTRY!

Ralph Kelly is heading to the Netherlands from 19th March to 21st April to serve with Pioneers. He writes 'I'll be serving in a church setting, as well as in and around the university, though the current aim is just to be helpful wherever possible. I'm excited to be taking this up as not only will I be doing my best to spread the gospel, but also draw me closer to Christ and allow me to depend on him more, as this sort of mission isn't like anything I've ever done before.

In order to fundraise, I will be running my own marathon from my house in Trinity to North Berwick sometime in early March. I'll also be hosting a Quiz Night at Holyrood Church on Friday 13th March, at 7.30pm'. Please come along and support Ralph. If you would like to give, details are [here](#).

His Word in My Hands – Saturday 14th March

Cornhill Scotland invite us to join them for His Word in My Hands - a day to help people to read, understand and teach the Bible. It is open to anyone and will be of benefit to you whether you are a small group leader, Sunday School teacher, student, lay preacher or just someone who wants to know their bible better.

The day will be held on **Saturday 14th March** at The Tron Church, Glasgow. The theme this year will be the Psalms and for more details go [here](#).



Ladies' Brunch – Saturday 21st March

We're looking forward to getting together as women in the church family for brunch on Saturday 21st March. We'll eat together at 10am and then have time in God's word. It's open to all women, so please come and join us even if you're new to Holyrood or have been coming for decades!

We'll finish up by 11.30am and look out for a sign up sheet at the front door over the next couple of Sunday. We're planning bacon rolls so it would be great to have an idea of numbers! Thank you!





East of Scotland Gospel Partnership

It is a joy to be part of the East of Scotland Gospel Partnership and they have recently launched a new website. You can check it out [here!](#)

Church Calendar

For your info and prayers:

- Wednesday: Meal from 5.45pm and Prayer Meeting 7-8pm in the church building. Online prayer meeting option from 7pm. Contact Liz@holyroodchurch.org for more details.
- Thursday: Women's Bible Study from 10.30am-11.30am
- Sunday:
 - Worship Service at 10.30am – Joe Barnard preaching (live streamed)
 - Evening Service at 6pm – Jon Gemmell preaching (live streamed)
- Monday: Baby and Toddler Group from 10am – 11.30am

