



The Manse
12 Middle Road
Saintfield
BT24 7LP
24/06/20

Dear members and friends of Second Saintfield,

I am writing to formally introduce myself to you as your minister and to let you know that I look forward to getting to know you and would like you to feel able to be in touch with me.

I recognise that these current circumstances will make this more difficult and so I want to encourage you and let you know of ways we can keep in contact.

I am very thankful and excited to finally begin my ministry here and wish to assure you of my desire to be your minister and to bring you the fullness of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The members of Session and I are assured of God's timing and we are keen that every step is taken so that my ministry among you be as unhindered as possible. With this in mind, I invite you to get in touch with me so that we might get to know one another, in order that I may better pray for you and be better equipped bring God's word to you, and particularly if you have any pastoral needs or concerns. I would be very happy to meet with you, however, with the continuing restrictions in place, I understand that we will need to take all necessary precautions, and wisdom will need to be exercised as we each discern the most appropriate way to do that. May I suggest three ways in which you can meet with me:

- The first is to arrange for me to come your home. You are welcome to call me or e-mail me to arrange a time that suits best so that I, or your elder and I, can visit you in your home.
- The second is by appointment in the Church halls. The Church halls provide ample space so that social distancing can be maintained, and we arrange by phone or e-mail a time to meet there.
- Finally, you are more than welcome to visit me in the manse. We can either meet outside or inside and you are welcome to pop by informally or by appointment.

Each of these options will depend on the developing guidelines as issued by the Executive and by the Presbyterian Church in Ireland. Moreover, there is always the option to call me on the phone. My mobile number is 07709804748 and my e-mail is john.torrens@btinternet.com.

You may also have heard the latest announcement from the Executive about the re-opening of Church buildings. Our first priority is gathered corporate Worship as God's people and therefore our initial aim will be to open the building for Sunday morning worship only. The Kirk Session have agreed that we will only do this when the criteria set out by the Presbyterian Church of Ireland has been fulfilled, which is unlikely to be before the end of the summer.

We are very mindful of our responsibility to ensure everyone's health and safety, and will use this time to set up a team who will thoroughly investigate all that needs to be done and report back to Session with an timed action plan, prior to commencing services in the church building. If you have any concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me or your elder as we will gladly receive your input on this matter.

We will keep you updated with any plans but in the meantime, please continue to join us for our new weekly services via our website or, if you do not have online access, please contact your elder who will be able to arrange to send you a DVD of the service.

As we commence this new chapter in the life of Second Saintfield, I encourage you to continue to pray for and support the church leaders as decisions are made regarding our future. In his letter to the Corinthians, Paul describes the Church as a body and in times like these we need to work together for the benefit of all and the advancement of Christ's Kingdom in our lives and in Saintfield. Although circumstances may not be ideal, I trust that God will use this time to strengthen His church and at the same time, I long for the day when we can gather to worship our God together as His people.

In Christ,
John Torrens