



# St Andrew's Church Brussels

## Report to Presbytery, October 2020

As we have all experienced, across the whole Presbytery, Covid-19 has impacted hugely on the life and witness of the church and this is also true at St Andrew's Brussels.

Early February saw the induction of the Minister, Rev Eric Foggitt and he conducted just a handful of services before the lockdown hit. Thanks to the expertise of a small group of members, we were able to start online services immediately, on 15th March. These services are a sort of "Home Church" as they include videos of members reading, praying and singing at home - a return, indeed, to the early days of the church in **Acts of the Apostles**.



*Rt Rev Martin Fair in our on-line  
service on 17 May*

In addition to our own members we have been grateful for the participation of others and were greatly honoured when the Rt Rev Martin Fair took part in our service on 17 May the day after he was installed as Moderator. The great benefit of these services has been that we have seen each other "at home" and thus kept in touch, and people who had no previous experience in taking part in services were able to do so. That in itself bodes well for the future.

We have found, in common with other churches, that our "reach" has extended far beyond Brussels and Belgium - to the UK, Africa, the US and even New Zealand. We have re-gained contact with members who had stopped attending due to distance, incapacity or for other reasons.

But fellowship has been considerably impacted: elderly and vulnerable members have often been stuck at home; others have fewer hours to work and lower pay; others again juggle child care with work from home.

When the Covid-19 situation brightened a little in the summer, we decided to

hold two services in July, which involved a considerable amount of preparation to ensure safety and to abide by Belgian rules. By the time we had hoped to re-start in September, the infection rates had risen and it was clearly not the right time to begin again and (in early October) we have not yet done so.

But the Covid-19 crisis has brought its positives: several dozen people have found that they can indeed participate in worship; hundreds of pastoral phone calls from elders in the recently-formed district or area groups have been much appreciated, sometimes by members whom we had not seen in church for years; some members have enthusiastically welcomed others to their homes for informal fellowship; and Zoom has become for us - as for so many around the world - a vital means of contact for the Kirk Session, the Women's Fellowship, 20s-30s Group and others.

Finally, four St Andrews members have taken the first steps towards training to become OLMs or Readers.



St. Andrew's Church  
Brussels  
4 October 2020