

Life at St. Paul's Milngavie

March 2020



Dear Friends,

A few years ago, I had a conversation with a man who claimed that for a while, he floated through life as a “casual agnostic” (he has since been converted and written a Christian book). He confessed not to having a very flattering view of anyone who professed their Christian faith. He could never properly discern whether they deserved his pity or his ridicule. Subsequently, when he came to faith, he realised that it would be somewhat hypocritical if he took umbrage with others who viewed him in the same manner. Since his conversion, he has often wondered if the world sees Christian believers as somewhat odd.

If ever you feel odd as a Christian believer in the world, it might just be that you are in good company. We read in Mark's Gospel at chapter 3 that a crowd said that Jesus was “out of His mind” in verse 21; and that He was “possessed” in v22. In John's Gospel, in chapter 10, many said that Jesus was “possessed by a demon in v20. Consequently, it is no surprise that they treated His disciples with the same contempt. For example, after the apostle Paul gave his testimony to King Agrippa, we read in Acts chapter 26 at verse 24 that he was accused of being “out of his mind”.

Such thoughts were not limited to the First Century. Even a casual browse through the history of the Christian Church, we see countless individuals who have been considered unbalanced because of their allegiance to the Lord Jesus Christ. There are those, for example who gave their lives as martyrs, those who stood in public places to speak passionately of Christ, and those who rejected prestigious and lucrative careers humbly to serve their Saviour in some remote part of the world. Even today, we are accused of using Christianity as some sort of crutch on which we need to lean.

No wonder A Z Tozer once wrote:- “A real Christian is an odd number anyway. He feels supreme love for one whom he has never seen; talks familiarly every day to someone he cannot see; expects to go to heaven on the virtue of another; empties himself in order to be full; admits he is wrong so he can be declared right; goes down in order to get up; is strongest when he is weakest; richest when he is poorest; and happiest when he feels the worst. He dies so he can live; forsakes in order to have; gives away so he can keep; sees the invisible; hears the inaudible, and knows that which passes knowledge.

In truth, the Bible is littered with people that the world would consider odd, none more so than John the Baptist. In Matthew's Gospel, he writes in chapter 3 at verse 4:- "John's clothes were made of camel's hair, and he had a leather belt around his waist." His culinary habits seemed to be odd too. He lived on a smorgasbord of "locusts and wild honey". The Old Testament prophet Elijah was someone else who did not shop at the Hebrew version of Gucci, or splash on Aramaic aftershave when we read in 2 Kings chapter 1 at verse 8 that he was a hairy man, with a wide leather belt.

If our Christian faith makes people think that we are odd, and if it causes the loss of some of our friends, the approval of our family, or the mockery of our workmates, then the tendency for us is often to try to travel the path of least resistance. The truth is that genuine friends will never desert us, regardless of what we believe. On the North-East coast of Scotland (where I ministered for seven years), the blight of exclusive "religion" along that coast brought about havoc in families and communities through control and ostracism for many decades. (The village of Gardenstown had four separate independent Christian meeting places which were all as suspicious of each other as they were the local church). However as with everywhere else, these post-modern times have ushered in the "neo-Christian", anything goes believer.

As a result, it is easy to become embarrassed or "ashamed" of the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. Indeed, many may be reluctant to admit it or even recognise it, as evidenced by the non-committal and apathetic attitude which can so easily characterise the thinking of so many today. It has been referred to as "chameleon religion", as people inadvertently fall into what might be termed "Laodicean lethargy", the lukewarm faith about which we read in Revelation chapter 3. We then become more concerned about protecting our "image" due to fear of what others might think or say, than following the example of Jesus.

In his book "Mere Christianity", C S Lewis writes of Jesus:- "You must make your choice. Either this man was, and is the Son of God, or else a madman or something worse. You can shut Him up for a fool, you can spit at Him and kill Him as a demon; or you can fall at His feet and call Him Lord and God. But let us not come with any of this patronising nonsense about His being a great human teacher. He has not left that open to us. He did not intend to." It seems obvious to me that He was neither a lunatic nor a fiend, and consequently, however strange or terrifying it might seem, I have to accept the view that He was and is God.

So, the next time someone belittles you for being "sad" or "deluded" or even "odd" because you choose to follow Jesus, then rejoice and be encouraged! You are in the best of company.

Yours in the Lord Jesus Christ,

Ramsay B. Shields
Interim Moderator

Dear Friends,

I can hardly believe that it is almost a year since I began my treatment. There have been a few setbacks that have not helped progress but the main part of my treatment, the stem cell transplant, is now behind me. It has been deemed a success and hopefully I can look forward to gathering strength over the next month or so.

My time in hospital was a challenge but the care and reassurance of the medical staff and the knowledge that I was held in prayer by so many people came together as a great source of strength. I am grateful to you all for your kindness to Gabrielle and myself during this time. The blessing of being part of a Christian community has been borne in on us as never before.

Gratitude should also be expressed to my friend the Rev Ramsay Shields who has worked hard to ensure that the worship and pastoral care of the congregation has been maintained. I know that everything he has given has been deeply appreciated.

If you have been following my blog you will know that this has been a time of renewed discovery of my God as He is revealed in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus. Just this morning I read in Psalm 119: 140: 'Your promises have been thoroughly tested, and your servant loves them.' God never promises us a trouble free life but we are called to believe that nothing will ever separate us from His love and that He is guiding our lives according to His good purpose. There will always be times when we are called to test these promises. Without that experience we can never find them to be true and worthy of our love.

I'm praying that it won't be long until I am back with you and once again preaching that message.

Wishing you all God's Peace,

Fergus

Flower Donations - March

Many thanks to all who contribute towards our Church Flowers.



Donations given in Memory this month, from Mr B Adair, Mrs P Knaggs, Mrs M Whyte.

Please send donations to Mrs Marjorie Thoms, 66 Braeside Ave, G62 6NN or place in the flower guild pigeon hole at the back of the Church. Cheques should be made payable to St Paul's Flowers.



Dear Friends,

It has been great to catch up with many of you during my time back in Scotland, and to serve alongside you in some of the church activities. As always I am very grateful for your support.

I am due to arrive back in Japan on 26th March which is the same day as the start of Olympic Torch Relay. The torch will be taken round all 47 prefectures in Japan before the opening ceremony kicks off the Olympics in Tokyo in late July. We are hoping to raise prayer for each of these prefectures as the torch makes its way round.

Unfortunately the coronavirus is also beginning to spread around various parts of Japan. There have been several cases in Chiba Prefecture where we live, including a teacher at a local school. The Tokyo Marathon at the beginning of March has been closed to general entrants. People are beginning to wonder what effect this might have on the Olympics.

OMF is due to hold its biennial field conference at the end of March, with everyone travelling to Hokkaido where it is being held. We will need to decide nearer the time whether to hold this as planned or whether we need to cancel it. Illnesses, particularly those which are new or unknown, can cause people to be fearful, or even to panic. Shops in Japan have already sold out of masks as people have been panic buying.

A few months ago, Fergus quoted Psalm 112 verse 7 in his blog:

“They will have no fear of bad news; their hearts are steadfast, trusting in the Lord.”

May this be true of the church at this time, whether in China, Japan or Scotland. We do not know what lies ahead, but with God’s help we can be steadfast, and trust in Him.

With love and prayers,

Lorna, Daniel, Matthew, Calum and Alistair

W.F.O. Envelopes

The new W.F.O. Envelopes for the coming year will be available to be distributed with the April edition of Life. I would be most grateful if church visitors could deliver them along with the Life magazines. Many thanks

Jill Wallis

W.F.O. Treasurer

Holy Week Services

The Holy Week services will be in St. Luke's Church this year starting on Monday 6th April at 7.30pm, with the theme "The Servant of the Lord" from Isaiah 52/53. Once again local ministers will be preaching each evening.
See intimation sheets for more information.

World Mission News

Coronavirus news - The Amity Foundation, China

Our partner organisation in China, The Amity Foundation, is helping in the fight against the new coronavirus. Since the outbreak they have raised over 10 million RMB (£1.1 million) for health equipment such as masks and disinfectants that have been sent to Wuhan.



The new worry is the spread of the virus beyond China, with cases being confirmed in a dozen countries across four continents. Schools in Hong Kong have been suspended for 3 weeks to keep children in their homes.

Worldwide prayer campaign begins to end 70-year Korean War

A war erupted on the Korean Peninsula 70 years ago which divided Korea and which has yet to end. So, the world's churches have launched a "70 Days of Prayers - Global Prayer Campaign" for peace.



A global prayer campaign for peace on the Korean Peninsula was announced via live streaming on 6 February at the World Council of Churches (WCC) in Geneva, with similar events the same day in Washington, DC, and earlier in the day in Seoul.

The following will be leading the services at St Paul's (*subject to change*)

Date	Morning 10am	Evening 7pm
8th March	Rev John Wilson	Rev Ramsay Shields (Communion)
15th March	Very Rev John Christie	Rev Ramsay Shields
22nd March	Rev Charles MacKinnon	Rev John Wilson
29th March	Alex McEwan	Rev John Wilson

Lent Services

Our Lent services continue on Saturday mornings at 9.30am in the West Transept. The Services are based on Sinclair Ferguson's book *To Seek and to Serve* which is a travelogue of Luke describing Jesus' encounters with a wide variety of people.

14th March, **The path of Discipleship** which is based on Luke 18: 35-43
The blind beggars led by David White.

21st March, **Friends and Enemies** which is based on Luke 22: 1-6
The betrayers led by Ken Macdonald.

28th March, **Towards the Cross** based on Luke 23: 1-5 & 13-25
The trapped politician led by Stephen Thoms.

4th April, **The Final Destination** which is based on Luke 23: 50-56
The good man led by Robin Easton.

All are welcome to attend these short 30 minute services.

Christian Aid Lenten Lunch - 22nd March (Mothering Sunday)

The usual Lenten lunch will be straight after the Sunday Service on Sunday 22nd March. There will be a delicious choice of soups along with a choice of cheese or plain rolls. St. Paul's has a great reputation in Milngavie for the support that we get on this day and it is a great opportunity to celebrate our Mothers young and old.

Thank You From Myeloma UK

Dear St. Paul's Parish Church Congregation,

Thank you for raising a fantastic £1,760 in support of Myeloma UK through donations given at the Coffee Fellowship that you hold after service on Sundays. We truly appreciate your continued dedication and hard work that made this happen.

At Myeloma UK patients come first in everything we do. Your generous support will not only help us to continue providing essential information and support for myeloma patients, family and carers, it will contribute to our work in improving standards of treatment and care through research, education and awareness raising.

Funds given to Myeloma UK are efficiently and effectively invested in:

- Supporting patients and their families through their myeloma diagnosis
- Funding world-leading genetics research to develop and discover new tailored treatments
- Funding our ground-breaking Clinical Trial Network that provides patients access to promising new treatments
- Providing resources and tailored information for doctors, nurses and other clinicians to ensure patients receive the best treatment and care
- Working in partnership with decision-makers to ensure the speedy approval of effective new treatments and the delivery of innovative policy solutions to benefit the myeloma community

We don't receive any government funding and rely almost entirely on voluntary donations and fundraising activities to support our work. Put simply, we could not do what we do without the kindness, dedication and generosity of supporters like you.

Thank you again from everyone at Myeloma UK.

Best wishes

Georgie Shepherd
Fundraising Assistant

Guild News

At our last meeting in January, we all enjoyed a lovely spread at our afternoon tea and then Duncan McEwan treated us to a wonderful photographic presentation, entitled A Taste of Scotland. Duncan's images depicting reflections, shadows and different surfaces certainly showcased how lovely our country is and we agreed wholeheartedly with Robert Burns:

*From scenes like these, old Scotia's grandeur springs
That makes her lov'd at home, rever'd abroad.. (The Cotter's Saturday Night)*

Duncan is a very talented photographer and his images of our beautiful Scottish mountains, lochs and coastlines throughout the seasons proved to be the perfect way in which to relax after our afternoon tea! Thanks to everyone who made this afternoon such a pleasure and particular thanks to the ladies in the kitchen who always work so hard and make everything run so smoothly!

At our first meeting in February, Rachel Rutherford spoke to us about the Scottish Harp and through slides and tunes, told us a little of the history and folklore relating to this *Tree of Strings*. In describing different aspects of the harp, Rachel played some lovely tunes for us and we all thoroughly enjoyed her enthusiasm and skill in playing this complicated instrument! Bringing her talk to an end, Rachel taught us a tongue-twisting Scottish folk song and it certainly proved a challenge to sing it along with her!

On 10th February, we were delighted that the Men's Association was able to join us when we heard about the Boys' Brigade from Jim McVean who told us of its origins, purpose and plans for the future. Founded in 1883 by Sir William Alexander Smith, it was interesting to hear that the red cross, to signify the Christian element of the organisation on the BB badge, was only added in 1917. Jim explained that the BB is active in around 68 countries and in Scotland, the BB is active in almost every Church of Scotland Presbytery. Through encouraging young people to experience new challenges and have fun, the BB helps them to develop important life skills as well as the opportunity to develop a personal faith through Bible Study and the understanding of Christian values.

It was certainly a dark and stormy night when Gordon Foster from Decorative Arts visited us at our meeting on 17th February but we were delighted to be there and to hear a little about how, from an early age, he had first gained an appreciation and love of antiques. Gordon was a pleasure to listen to, showing us Scottish examples of glass, silver, books and other collectables as well as recounting fascinating stories of how he had obtained them and information about their creators. Several members had brought along some treasures and it was very interesting to hear about these from Gordon. As Gordon mentioned, whether something is left to us or acquired, it is the story that is important, rather than the value of an item. Gordon's love of antiques was clear to us all as he spoke eloquently and enthusiastically, giving us a glimpse of years gone by.

Our speaker at our last meeting in February is Stan Paliwoda who will be telling us about the Mission Aviation Fellowship.

Our programme for March is as follows:

2nd March: Megan Kasten – Scotland's Medieval Stones

9th March: Linda & Des Nicholl – Walking with Yaks in the Himalayas

14th March (Saturday, 10:00 – 12:00): Coffee Morning*

16th March: Zoe Anderson – International Justice Mission, Human Trafficking

23rd March: Clydebank Choir

30th March: AGM, Fish Supper + Sing-a-long.

We look forward to welcoming you to any or all of our meetings!

***Guild Coffee Morning**

The Coffee Morning will be held on Saturday 14th March 10am-12noon. There will be stalls for home baking and books/DVDs. Any donations of baking, books or DVDs (please note, there will be no bric-a-brac stall) can be handed into the Large Hall on Friday 13th March between 3pm and 4pm or on Saturday morning. Tickets (£2.50 for adults and £1.00 for children) are available from members of the Committee or just come along and pay at the door.

Stated Annual Meeting

The Stated Annual Meeting will be held in the Large Hall on Wednesday 18th March at 7.30pm for the purpose of electing members to the Congregational Board. At this meeting a statement of accounts for the year ended 31st December, 2019 will be submitted.

All members of the Congregation are encouraged to attend.

News from the Courts

To make the congregation aware of the “behind the scenes” of the Church, this “News From The Courts” section will appear in the magazine, containing information from Board/Session meetings which may be of interest to the congregation.

Congregational Board

At the meeting on 28th January the resignation of Mrs Helen Arnold as Clerk to the Board was noted and Helen was thanked for her time as Clerk.

The Treasurer, Chris Scott, tabled the expenditure since the previous meeting and spoke of the quarterly and annual accounts to 31st December, 2019. Subject to the external examination, the accounts for the year, show a small deficit and a small reduction in income. The reserves continue to be healthy. The Accounts will be presented to the Trustees on Wednesday 4th March and to the Congregation at the Stated Annual Meeting on Wednesday 18th March. The annual audit of the Church Organisations’ Accounts took place on Wednesday 8th January. The Finance Committee carried out the audit and all of the organisations’ accounts were approved. Thanks were given to the organisation treasurers for the work that they do.

Roy Prentice updated the Board on a number of minor ongoing fabric matters. Under *furnishings* it was noted that a number of chairs in the halls were worn and it was agreed to investigate suitable replacements.

The Board agreed to circulate the evacuation procedure for the Sanctuary on Sunday 16th February.

The regulations for working in the kitchen will be updated and re-issued. Information on allergens will be prepared suitable for display to users.

The Board noted that the Church records had been passed by the Presbytery of Dumbarton following their inspection in January. All concerned were thanked for their work.

The next meeting will be on Wednesday 26th February.

Kirk Session

The Kirk Session met on Wednesday 5th February.

The Christmas Services were reviewed and it was noted that the 7pm Family Service had been particularly well attended. Thanks were expressed to all concerned.

The new moderator of Dumbarton Presbytery Rev Maggie McArthur, had been installed the previous evening in Cardross Parish Church. The Business Committees of Dumbarton Presbytery and Greenock & Paisley Presbytery had met jointly and were proceeding towards a union in September.

The Church records had been passed by the Presbytery of Dumbarton following their inspection in January. All concerned were thanked for their work.

The Stewardship Committee had discussed the role of the Church Visitor and sought clarification, noting a number of current Visitors were covering several Districts.

The Kirk Session noted that the Very Rev John Christie, Clerk to Dumbarton Presbytery, had offered to facilitate a meeting between the Kirk Sessions of St. Paul's, Baldernock and St Luke's regarding the on-going worship arrangements, and agreed to such a meeting.

A letter of resignation had been received from the Rev Dr David White with effect from the end of February.

The next meeting will be on Wednesday 4th March following the Trustees Meeting.



Christian Aid Week (Week commencing Sunday 10th May)

In St. Paul's we have a great support network of volunteers who deliver and or collect Christian Aid envelopes. Look out for the sheets at the back of the church asking for your name and your time to deliver and collect. As we did last year we will be concentrating on locations within Milngavie that show their usual support for Christian Aid. The sign up sheets will be available during the first week of April.

Alex McEwan

Christian Aid Convenor

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Copy Dates

The copy date for the April issue is Wednesday **25th** March for e-mails and Sunday **22nd** March if using the church pigeon hole.

Please send any articles to st.paulslifemagazine@gmail.com

Date	Flower Deliveries	Crèche Rota	Vestibule Rota
1st March	S. Anderson L. Cowie	Sillars MacKinnon	Team 10 S. Harrison
8th March	M. Conway K. Edwards	Chapman MacAllister	Team 3 R. Fraser (EC)
15th March	A. Galloway	Berry Tracey	Team 4 I MacCalman
22nd March	A. Gillies R. Cameron	Wallis MacKinnon	Team 5 M. McDowell
29th March	F. Ireland A. McNellan	Wilson Sillars	Team 6 J. Scott