

Life at St. Paul's Milngavie

April 2021



Dear friends,

You know what it's like... Someone recommends an author or a particular book and you politely file it away for possible future action. In the case of Todd Billings I am glad I quickly followed up a recommendation from a colleague.

Todd is an American theologian who teaches in a seminary. At the age of 39 he was diagnosed with multiple myeloma. That is relatively young for such a diagnosis and being married with two young children added to the challenge. He has written about his myeloma experience in a remarkable book which, although different from my experience in some ways, has provided many points of contact. What is most valuable is how he seeks to take what he knows about God in Jesus Christ and applies it to what he has gone through in diagnosis, treatment and now remission. The book is called 'Rejoicing In Lament' but it is the subtitle that nails down the substance: 'Wrestling With Incurable Cancer & Life In Christ.' When you are going through an experience like this how do we relate to the God revealed in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus?

This quote is typical of the thinking Todd brings to all the circumstances that might challenge our faith:

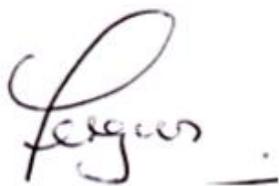
'Many today seek to overcome the shortcomings of the church, to improve its public relationships and its popularity, to "reinvent" the church for a new day. The flaws in the church are deep and real. But in essence, the church is not the church because we believe in positive thinking, imagine a better world, or even because we believe in the importance of faith. The church is the church as a creature of God's Word – a creature that finds its life outside of itself, that does not have faith in faith so much as faith in the God of the covenant promise made known in Christ. From one standpoint, the church is a gathering of sinners who are both old and young, healthy and sick, growing and dying. But, by God's promise, the church is also people who move through birth, health, dying, and even death on a journey of resurrection because they belong to Jesus Christ. For the end of the story of God, and of the church, is not death but resurrection.'

A bit longer than my usual quotes but something for us to reflect upon in this Easter season. People have said to me in the past that maybe life is not going so well for them but when you think of the alternative it's not so bad. In this Easter season we are called to lay hold more firmly on the faith that the alternative is resurrection.

Continued overleaf...

'We believe that Jesus died and rose again and so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him.' (1 Thessalonians 4: 14).

Happy Easter to you all,



Covid-19 Update

Permission was given on 23rd March by the Scottish Government to reopen places of worship under the restrictions currently in place.

Following a successful application to Clyde Presbytery to reopen St Paul's, a joint service with Baldernock, will be held each Sunday morning in St Paul's starting at 10.30am from 4th April. There will be restrictions on the number attending (currently a maximum of 50) and places will have to be reserved in advance. You **must** apply to attend a service by e-mailing st.pauls@btconnect.com or by telephoning the Church Office (956 4405) and leaving your name and telephone number on the answering machine. You can apply from 12 noon on the Sunday prior to the service. The Office is currently closed but your application will be acknowledged and you must not come to Church without a reservation number which will be advised to you by the Thursday evening prior to the Sunday morning service.

As Fergus is shielding, the morning services in St Paul's will be led by:-

4th April Rev John Wilson
11th April Robin Easton
18th April Alex McEwan
25th April Rev Ramsay Shields

The very successful and welcomed recorded services will continue.

The virus continues to be active in the community as you will be aware but we believe that St Paul's can safely meet the principles outlined in current guidance. We are aware that the guidelines can change very quickly and therefore they will be kept under constant review.

You should not attend church if you are unwell or showing symptoms of Covid -19, if you are isolating or living with someone who is isolating or who is unwell or if you are in the extremely vulnerable (extremely high risk) group. Also you should consider carefully before attending if you are in the vulnerable (higher risk) category.

- In coming to Church there should be no car sharing with anyone from another household.
- You must pre-register and have received confirmation before arriving at the Church.
- There will be no specific children's programme.
- The joint services, with Baldernock, will start at 10.30am and last approximately 30 minutes.
- Social distancing rules must be adhered to at all times.
- You must obey stewards' instructions.
- You must wear an appropriate clean face covering at all times, unless exempt.
- You will be required to sanitise your hands.
- After registration, you will be escorted to a seat and must remain there throughout the service.
- Sadly, singing is not allowed and there will be no pew bibles although music will be part of the service.
- The pew cushions have been removed.
- Toilet access will be restricted.
- At the end of the service you must remain in your seat until asked to leave by a steward.
- You should disperse quickly on leaving the building and keep the exit clear.

There will be no tea or coffee after the service.

The above is subject to Government Guidelines and they may change. While we look forward to being with one another again in the Lord's House on the Lord's Day we ask for your support and prayers as we go through the process of opening the Church for worship, albeit in unusual circumstances.

If you have any concerns or questions about the reopening please do not hesitate to contact me.

Graham Mill
Session Clerk

Long Service

The following Elders marked 40 years of service in March 2021:

Brian Adair, Bill Ponton Elizabeth Bragg and David Lawson.

The following Elders marked 30 years at the end of 2020:

Jean MacIntyre, John Macpherson, Sheila Harrison, Rosemary Fraser, Bruce Shearlaw and Maureen Macintyre.

With thanks for passed work in His name and every blessing for the days ahead.

News from Clyde Presbytery

Presbytery approved the appointment of Rev. Dr. Peter McEnhill as Clerk to Clyde Presbytery from January 2021 and this will be funded from central funds, the details of which are still be negotiated.

From September 2021 the next Moderator of Clyde Presbytery will be Rev. Alistair Shaw, Minister of Howwood linked with Johnstone St. Paul's Church. Congregations can now carry out repairs with a value of up to £20,000 including VAT and fees without the approval of Presbytery.

The Mission Committee is longing to engage and enable congregations to explore the landscape of Church post-pandemic, knowing that we will never be back where we were before. We long to enable congregations to pick up the opportunity to discern the Spirit and reimagine who we might be following restrictions: how many lessons must have been learned by us all; how many experiences might we share that give us insight into what it means to be the church today; how many moments over the last year have shaken us and knocked us and called us anew?

To that end, the Mission Committee invites each congregation to look around our congregations and seek people who would be willing to pick up some of the possibilities we have now, and work in partnership with other local congregations in Local Mission Groups. Together this would be a great power of imagination and possibility as experiences and enthusiasm (remember that?) are shared, working alongside each other, shaping resources, ideas, hope, suited to our own local areas and driven by local needs. It is a significant task and needs people who dare to ask questions, try things never done before, are not afraid to fail and support each other across our congregations. If you are interested please contact St. Paul's Office by telephone or email.

Chris Scott retirement as Treasurer

As you know Chris Scott retired as Treasurer on 31st March 2021.

Chris was appointed Treasurer in 2007 and has fulfilled his responsibilities as Treasurer for the last 14 years both ably and with huge commitment (while at the same serving our congregation in many other areas).

In his first year as Treasurer, Chris had to address changes that year in OSCR's requirements regarding the structure of our annual accounts-he got that right and has kept us right ever since.

It is typical of Chris's commitment that we know he will be there to help his successor and our new Finance Assistant as they take on their new roles.

Narrating at length what Chris has given to the office of Treasurer is unnecessary. You are all very well aware of what he has given. On all our behalves I say a simple:-

Thank you Chris, and thanks also to Jean for all the support and encouragement you have given Chris in his work as Treasurer.

Lachie McNeill

Clerk to the Congregational Board

Appointment of Treasurer and Finance Assistant

I am very pleased to report that Barbara Lawson and Jacqueline (Jackie) Pirie have accepted appointment as Treasurer and Finance Assistant respectively with effect from 1st April 2021.

As was said in the article in March *Life* these are important positions that required to be filled in early course. We are blessed that Barbara and Jackie are willing to assume these responsibilities.

Lachie McNeill

Clerk to the Congregational Board

Dumbrock House

We have managed to raise £500 over the Lenten period to give to the Preshal Trust. This has been used for their hot lunches which are being served as a take away every day. I can't thank you enough for your generosity in raising so much money in so short a time by buying the cards (and giving the St. Paul's Society donations to pass onto Preshal). Thank you once again.

Looking for a new project, we came across a boys' home that was just opened in January of this year in Old Mugdock Road in Strathblane. It is run by Cross-Reach in conjunction with the Church of Scotland and homes four boys aged 11,12,13 and 14. All boys are homed there due to trauma suffered in their early years. I am sure you agree that this is a great cause and a great opportunity for us to help an organisation close to our hearts and on our own doorstep.

Please check with the church website and our facebook page for a new set of scripture cards released this week at 6 for £5

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/215902452833468/>

Christian Aid Week 10th -16th May 2021

There will be a more detailed article in next month's magazine detailing an opportunity to give to Christian Aid this year by Internet, by telephone or by texting. As expected there will be no door to door collections again this year.



Funds being raised this year are for Climate Crisis Kenya and further info will appear on their website www.christianaid.org.uk

Men's Association

As I prepare this Article for our Life Magazine, I'm so very conscious that the first Lockdown was exactly one year ago and for all St Paul's members, life and Church life took on a whole different meaning. I do not think any of us would have believed that restrictions such as were and still are imposed, could or would have lasted and impinged on our freedoms in the way that these did. Hopefully, as Easter approaches, and we celebrate our risen Lord, maybe the new beginning which was his resurrection, will also be our new beginning both in terms of the pandemic and our Christian faith. May God bless us all. The Men's Association has not met at all during the last 12 months, but I'm aware of a number of social calls (properly socially distanced!) having been made by our members to others, by letters, cards, telephone and the new magical contact - Zoom!

It is not yet clear if we will be able to resume physical meetings in October which is when we normally have commenced meetings, but I undertake to keep all members advised of our intentions.

The Association and all members of St Paul's would like to offer our thoughts and prayers to Marjory and Angus Kennedy at this difficult time in the life of Angus. God be with you.

Brian Adair.

Community Sponsorship -welcoming a refugee family into your community

Ever wondered what you could do to help refugees escape the misery of a refugee camp? The Community Sponsorship scheme was set up by the UK government in 2016, to encourage communities to play a part in responding to the refugee crisis.

The scheme allows local people to take the initiative in helping to resettle a refugee family in their local area. Crucially it gives families fleeing persecution and war a safe and legal route to the UK.

We're a group of people living in East Dunbartonshire and we want to find out if there are others who would join with us to form a community sponsorship group, and help a refugee family find a new home here.

If you are interested please get in touch with us by telephone (01419564202) or by email(elsa.hamilton@outlook.com).

We do not yet have a website and are using private numbers and addresses at this exploratory stage.



Dear Friends,

Happy Easter!

It's great to see that St. Paul's will be able to have some people attending services in person from Easter Sunday. In the Tokyo area, our State of Emergency was lifted on 22nd March, so the over-75s are now able to attend church in person again. Even though we remain masked and socially distanced, it was lovely to see everyone. It was a reminder of the importance of all ages in the church family.

Even though COVID cases are rising again, and the vaccine rollout hasn't really started here yet, the Olympic Torch Relay started on 25th March. The torch is scheduled to journey through all 47 prefectures of Japan and 23 wards of Tokyo and is being marked by tight COVID-19 prevention measures. The torch will pass through the hands of 10,000 people across the nation and is said to pass within 1 hour's journey of 98% of the people in Japan.

The relay's concept is "Hope lights our way". The initial idea was to show the recovery which has been made in the area of the Triple Disaster (the earthquake, tsunami and nuclear disaster in 2011) over the last 10 years, although many local people feel that progress on the recovery is slow. Now it is being expanded to include hope for a light at the end of the tunnel in the time of the pandemic.

Hope is something that everyone needs. As Christians, our faith is based on hope. As it says in Hebrews 11:1, "Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see." As we celebrate Easter, we remember that our hope is based on the facts of Jesus' death and resurrection and the promise of eternal life for all who believe in Him. God Himself is a God of hope, and wants us to abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit (Romans 15:13).

In the midst of these very challenging times, I pray that each of you will abound in hope. Please pray too that many more people in Japan will come to know the hope that we have in Jesus, and that this true hope will indeed light their way.

With love and prayers,

Lorna, Daniel, Matthew, Calum and Alistair

Church Of Scotland News

Moderator to follow in the footsteps of Celtic saints this Holy Week

Starting on Monday 29th March, the walk will include some sites which have been used in Christian worship for more than 1,000 years. Dr Fair plans to provide updates on the Moderator's Facebook page as he goes, which will allow for people to join in with the journey.

He said: "Pilgrimage is something that Christians have done forever - for centuries. In uncertain times it's good to remember that we are part of a much longer, bigger story and it takes us along paths where Christians walked long before we showed up. Jesus says 'come follow me' and that by definition means to go somewhere. Walking symbolises that we are called to be pilgrims, to be disciples and by definition that means we are going somewhere - Jesus is always leading us, ahead of us and we follow."

The route will start and finish at Arbroath Abbey, which was first used as a place of worship in the 12th century, and each day Dr Fair will cover around 15 miles on foot.

"You begin to think 'I wonder what it has seen in 900 years'. We think the last year has been all consuming, but what has happened in all those years? There's been wars, the Black Death and all kinds of things. When we go to ancient places we're reminded that we are part of a much bigger story, and that what we are enduring at the moment is a kind of passing phase but the long story is still there.

On the first day I'll be going to Aberlemno, which has standing stones of Celtic origins dating back to between 500AD and 800AD. It's this reminder that the story is long before we were here and that will continue after we are here."

For those who may feel unable to physically take part in a pilgrimage, Dr Fair is keen that they feel able to join via him.

The early morning devotions at 8am in Holy Week, which will be on the Church of Scotland's online channels.

More information can be found: <https://www.churchofscotland.org.uk/news-and-events/news/2021/moderator-to-follow-in-the-footsteps-of-celtic-saints-this-holy-week>

World Mission

Champion for Asylum Seekers and Refugees Retires

Christine Murray, project manager of the St Rollox community outreach project in Glasgow has retired from her role after 19 years. She has helped thousands of people forced to flee for their lives from some of the most dangerous places on earth.

For 19 years Christine has been “the voice for the voiceless”, supporting asylum seekers and refugees seeking sanctuary in Glasgow from war-torn countries like Kosovo, Bosnia, Afghanistan and Iraq.

Christine says "Christianity teaches us to welcome the stranger and that is what we do."

You can find out more here:

https://www.churchofscotland.org.uk/news-and-events/news/2021/end-of-an-era-as-voice-of-the-voiceless-in-glasgow-retires?utm_source=Master&utm_campaign=bfe9f24f14-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2020_02_07_04_54_COPY_10&utm_medium=email&utm_

Zakarpattia region enters "red" zone

Our friends in our partner church in Ukraine, the Reformed Church in Carpatho-Ukraine, have alerted us to the situation in the Zakarpattia region and ask us to keep them in our prayers.

On 8th March, the Zakarpattia region moved to the "red" level of epidemic danger. One of the imminent issues is the lack of oxygen facilities for the sickest patients. Prime Minister Denys Shmygal claimed that the third wave of the coronavirus pandemic has begun in Ukraine. In the earlier days of the pandemic, our friends in Ukraine shared the difficulty of communal worship during lockdown as internet access is not widespread throughout the population. This makes any lockdown much more difficult for people.

Korea Peace Treaty campaign

One of the long-standing demands of the National Council of Churches of Korea's Peace Treaty campaign has been an end to the annual United States-South Korea military exercises.

As these exercises resume this week Rev Dr Lee Hong Jung, General Secretary, said: "The peace process on the Korean Peninsula is incompatible with the US-South Korean joint military exercises. While boasting the strongest military power and state-of-the-art military equipment, we cannot build mutual trust in building peace on the Korean Peninsula by practicing scenarios like Operation Plan 5015 that specifies pre-emptive attacks on, and occupation of, North Korea."

The Church of Scotland continues to communicate our support for the National Council of Churches of Korea on seeking peace for the Korean Peninsula.

Situation in Myanmar

Security forces in Myanmar have unleashed another wave of lethal violence against peaceful protesters. Almost 200 people have been killed since the coup d'état on 1st February. State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, President U Win Myint, Vice-President U Henry Van Thio (a devout Christian and the first non-Buddhist to hold the office of the Vice President of Myanmar) are among more than 2,100 people detained by the military junta.

In a Zoom call with international partners last week, leaders of the Presbyterian Church in Myanmar asked for prayer that the hearts and minds of the military leaders would be changed, that justice and peace would be restored and the will of the people, as expressed in the November general election, would be respected.

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Copy Date

The copy date for the May issue is Wednesday 28th April via email.

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

Happy Easter!