

Life at St. Paul's Milngavie

May 2022



Signs of renewal are all around and we are blessed in this area in being close to them. We awake to the sound of birdsong. We do not have to travel far to see lambs in the fields. Flowers are beginning to bloom, and the smell of newly mown grass is in the air. All appropriate to this Season of resurrection and renewal. All much needed in these times of increasing economic hardship, Covid slowly releasing its grip but still with us, reports of increased criminality on the streets of our major cities. This, apart from the continuing shadow of war in Ukraine which seems to deepen with every passing day. Heard on the wireless the other day: 'Putin is not interested in peace. He is only interested in victory.'

Where does Easter fit in to this? We can start with the world in which Jesus' resurrection was experienced. It was in a land under enemy occupation for over a century. It was in a land which was spiritually moribund. It was in a land where the innocent felt the full force of the State's displeasure. Yet in the midst of this Jesus rose from the dead and, as they continued to live in this broken world, His followers continued to preach the hope that flowed from His risen life. Luke tells us that despite the opposition of the religious establishment the apostles continued to teach the people and proclaim 'in Jesus the resurrection of the dead.' (Acts 4: 2).

Holding this faith in the face of grim reality has never been easy. Life is often hard. We see it in others. We experience it in ourselves. Yet as followers of Jesus we are called to proclaim the good and loving purpose of God as it has been revealed in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus. It all comes down to faith in Him. In the end, I cannot produce arguments that will convince. Maybe there was a time when I thought I could. Or rather when I thought I should. And what a waste of time that was! I can only share what I have come to believe. And it is this: God was in Christ, the ultimate outreach to humankind, seeking to bring the world back to Himself. (2 Corinthians 5: 18-19). In Christ He gave us a sign of the renewal He is seeking to bring to humankind and creation. As Paul says, Christ is the 'first-fruits' of the new humanity destined to inhabit the new creation which will be the fulfilment of God's purpose. (1 Corinthians 15: 20-28)

It all comes down to faith. Something that is part of everyday life from the trivial to the monumental. The fan who approaches the stadium and has good reason to believe his team will win. The politician who has good reason to believe his policies will enhance the nation's quality of life. The doctor who has good reason to believe her treatment will improve the health of her patient. Faith is part of being human. This Season is our opportunity to focus on the Person in whom we place our ultimate faith for this life and the world to come.

Praying that the Risen Christ will live within us and amongst us,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Lesley'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

New Members Class

It has been good to hear from people who are interested in becoming members of St Paul's. It is hoped that there will be preparation classes in the not too distant future. It would be helpful to have names and availability so please speak to an elder or contact the minister.

Book Group

The Book Group met recently to discuss our latest read which was Rizzio by Denise Mina. This book is part of a series called In Darkland Tales consisting of three books, two of which have been published with the third being published in the Autumn of this year. They aim to retell dramatic stories from Scottish history. We were divided in the group, with some enjoying the book and others preferring Nigel Tranter's version of the life of Mary Queen of Scots. The book tells, in fairly graphic detail, the murder of Rizzio at the Court of Mary Queen of Scots. We felt the story highlighted the powerlessness of women at that time in history, with Mary taking a back seat to the events playing out before her, even though she was the Queen. This is quite a small book, almost a novella, and we thought it would have lent itself to being expanded, with particular reference to the main characters in the story. Quite different in style from the usual Denise Mina books. Our next meeting is on Tuesday 17 May 2022 when we will be discussing our choice of any book by Donna Leon.

Joyce Clark

Food Hygiene

Following on from the pandemic The Church of Scotland General Trustees are offering free access to the REHIS Introduction to Food Hygiene course by e-learning. The course is interactive and will take approximately 2 hours to complete. There are no tests or exams during or after the course and everyone who completes it will receive an approved REHIS Introduction to Food Hygiene certificate.

This course is suitable for anyone who handles and prepares food and drink and will be especially useful for anyone who bakes at home on behalf of their congregation.

For information on registering for the course please contact **Frances Ireland** (956 1030)

(REHIS – The Royal Environmental Health Institute Of Scotland)

Bible Sunday Thank You

Thank you to everyone who supported this year's Bible Sunday appeal. The total sum donated was £582.00. When Gift Aid has been claimed this will add £111.25 to the total.



Frances Ireland

Safeguarding

Reminder! Any member of the congregation who is registered and no longer wishes to volunteer in any Church organisation please contact me, the Safeguarding Coordinator.

Disclosure Scotland has introduced an on line PVG application process. Any members of the congregation wishing to volunteer in any Church organisation and are not registered for that type of work, have to follow this process.

For details go to the Safeguarding Website:

(safeguarding@churchofscotland.org.uk)

telephone 0131 240 2256

or contact me, the Safeguarding Co-ordinator, on 0141 384 0274
and elizabethmcewan@gmail.com

St. Paul's Guild

MUSICAL MORNING SATURDAY MAY 14th 11:00

Derek Norval - organ
Rachel Rutherford - clarsach Julian Pombo - guitar

Refreshments from 10:15 Cost: £5 Proceeds to Guild projects



Dear Friends

If you were to come to Japan in late April/early May, one thing you would notice is strings of colourful carp-shaped windsocks blowing in the breeze. You would see small ones flying from apartment windows, larger ones strung up from various public places, and some really long displays straddling a river or lake.

These are 'koinobori', a decoration for Children's Day which is a public holiday in Japan on the 5th of May (5/5). Traditionally it was known as boys' day, with girls' day being the 3rd of March (3/3), but since it became a public holiday it has become Children's Day.

Children's Day in Japan is intended to celebrate all children and seek their happiness, wellbeing and strength. Since carp are able to swim upstream against the current, they became the symbol of children's day, symbolising strength and success.

I find it interesting that the carp is celebrated in Japan for its strength in being able to swim against the current, since Japanese culture values conformity and harmony. Going against the crowd or current in society is not usually something which is celebrated, but rather frowned upon. People are expected to fit in and follow the rest of the group regardless of personal beliefs.

This is one of the obstacles to Japanese people becoming Christians. In a society which is largely Buddhist, Shinto and secular, to decide to believe in Jesus and become part of a church means swimming against the current. It marks you out as different, as not fitting in. This is a particular challenge for people living in more rural areas which tend to be more traditional.

So as I see the carp flags flying I give thanks to God for those Japanese Christians who have taken a stand and decided to swim against the current. Please pray with me for them to have the strength to keep swimming and for many more to have the courage to join them.

Thank you for all your love, prayers and support,

Lorna, Calum and Alistair

St Paul's Church Society Cards

Usual cards found in the usual place. If you don't see a card that you like please let me know and I will make it for you and as usual any personalised cards can be ordered and delivered in a few days.

Toiletries for the QEUH

As we said before we are allocating some card funds to buy toiletries for the QEUH. These toiletries are used for people arriving as an "emergency" to the hospital and have not been able to prepare for their admission. Only this week we heard from one of the nursing staff who told us there has been a sharp intake of homeless people and who again need toiletries.

Toiletries can be left in the Preshal Basket and we will separate them to send to the hospital. Lip balm, toothpaste, toothbrushes and deodorant are most needed but any donation will be gratefully received.

Alex McEwan

Flower Donations - April

Thank you for the Flower Donations given in Memory for the Month of April



S. Speedie

Please address donations to Treasurer, Mrs Barbara Lawson and clearly mark "For The Flower Fund"

Donations can be left in the Flower Guild pigeon hole at the back of the Church, or in the offering plate marked for The Flower Fund

Christian Aid Week 2022 in St. Paul's

Christian Aid Week runs from 15th-21st May. Envelopes will be available from 8th May. If you are unable to pick up an envelope and would like one, please contact Alex on 384 0274 and I will deliver one. Once you have donated, there are several ways to deal with the envelope.



1. Bring it to church on Sunday; boxes will be at both exits.
2. If you are passing the church, put it through the church letter box.
3. In the village you can pop into the shop Ruby Red and leave it there.

Christian Aid is one of the UK's largest aid agencies, carrying out vital work in areas of the world which depend on aid because of disasters, famine, drought or war. This year, once again, there will be no house-to-house collection in Milngavie. Helen Martin, Secretary of the Milngavie Churches Christian Aid Committee says "Although we won't be knocking on doors, there are still lots of ways people can donate to Christian Aid."

For many people it will be easier to donate online, and there are several options for this too! Like last year, we have an e-envelope which you can use to donate – this is the link <https://envelope.christianaid.org.uk/envelope/milngavie?channel=status> Alternatively you can visit the Christian Aid website.

Christian Aid Week runs from 15th-21st May but you can donate at any time until the end of June.

Alex McEwan

Guild News

The AGM at the end of March marked the end of an era for our Guild because it was decided that next session all our meetings will be held in the afternoon. This session our afternoon meetings have had noticeably higher attendances than the evening meetings, so it was felt that we should make this change. We also thanked committee members who are stepping down after great service to the Guild, some after many years. These members are Jean Scott, the Minutes Secretary, and Shuna Anderson, the Roll Keeper, both of whom have been involved for longer than they would like me to say! We are very grateful for their support and experience. Likewise we want to thank Sheila Atkinson, a member of Baldernock, who has been Assistant Treasurer, and Moira McAra from St. Luke's who was Project Partner.

We are delighted to have a full complement of committee members, some with extensive experience and others who are fairly new members. Elizabeth McEwan will be Vice President and Margaret White will be Project Partner; both these ladies have served in several capacities in the past so will be able to keep us right! Other newer members will bring experience from other spheres and we look forward to working together: they are Sandra Angus, Fiona Dorrall, Margaret Stevenson and Marilyn Ure. Margaret Bannatyne from Baldernock is also joining us. Many thanks to everyone for their willingness to be involved.

On April 25th Iain White gave us a fascinating talk about the inspiration behind and construction of, the Clyde Coastal Path which runs from Wemyss Bay to Milngavie. It has encouraged many of us to explore more of the paths near us.

At the two remaining meetings we will learn about the Upcycling Project at Faifley Parish Church on May 9th, and on May 23rd we have a visit from a representative of one of the Guild Projects. This is 'Chocolate Heaven', a chocolate kitchen on an island in South-East Asia which supports a small workforce and their families. Our final event for this session will be an afternoon tea to mark the Queen's Platinum Jubilee, and it will be held on Monday June 6th.

We have another important event in our calendar, the Musical Morning on Saturday May 14th when Derek Norval, Rachel Rutherford and Julian Pombo will perform for us. The proceeds will go to the two Guild projects we are supporting this year – Chocolate Heaven, mentioned above, and a Christian charity, Home for Good, which encourages people to consider fostering and adoption, with the aim of finding a home for every child who needs one. The concert starts at 11:00 but refreshments will be available from 10:15. The cost is £5. Please come: apart from supporting two very worthwhile causes, you will enjoy a feast of music!

Eleanor Easton

Presbytery Mission Plan

News from the Courts

The Kirk Session at the meeting on 6th April, 2022 agreed to form a new committee, Presbytery Planning Team, to monitor the decisions taken by Clyde Presbytery that directly affect St. Paul's. The team members are to be Brian Adair, Lachie McNeill, Linda Muirhead, Sue Rollings and Marilyn Ure. The following article gives the background to date.

The gospel has always been about loving God and loving neighbour, and the way we do that best is to grow the church. Over centuries the church has evolved, sometimes very slowly, to respond to this call, yet it has always been our focus and raison d'être and has brought life and hope to the world. We willingly continue this legacy. As the church has gone through difficult times in the past, so we find ourselves again today, but we do not lose the vision and call that has sustained the church over the years.

The last two years have been incredibly hard for all us. The COVID pandemic has changed the world around us, it has changed our community, and it has changed each of our lives. It has changed our churches too. Each church in Bearsden & Milngavie has done everything in its power to keep things going and to keep the ship afloat, but it has been a hard graft for all of us – members, office-bearers and ministers alike.

The national Church of Scotland as a whole is struggling too, but these issues are more long-standing than the pandemic and stretch back many years and indeed many decades. The Church has talked about 'radical action' for a number of years and even set out a Radical Action Plan at the General Assembly of 2019 – one which met with almost universal acceptance at that time. Sadly, the pandemic has deepened the need for change and has accelerated the rate at which this change has to happen.

The Church of Scotland as a whole is paying a heavy price for being slow to change in the past. The situation in many congregations appears to be, at least in human terms, terminal. The national church is now having to embrace rapid forced change which is always less than ideal as human nature generally seems hard-wired to defer action until it is almost too late!

The primary challenges facing the Church are threefold, namely: -

Financial. At the General Assembly of 2021, the Assembly Trustees reported on the deeply adverse effect that the COVID-19 pandemic had had on giving in 2020, and this pattern is likely to have continued throughout 2021. Many congregations in our Presbytery and nationally are struggling, and this has an adverse impact on what the church can and cannot do, what it can and cannot finance. As some 87% of the church's annual budget is allocated to the cost of ministerial stipends, sadly something has to give.

Ministry. In addition to the financial pressures facing the church, it is anticipated that there will be a shortfall in the availability of Ministers of Word and Sacrament in the coming years. It has been calculated that in 2020 over 40% of full-time Ministers were over the age of 60, and so the Assembly Trustees are working to a projected figure of 600 ministries by 2025.

Buildings. Our history of division and then reunification in the 19th and 20th centuries means that the church has had too many buildings and congregations for close to a century. The church could cope with this while church going was an established part of most people's lives, but those days have long gone, and indeed the downward trend in membership extends back some 60 years. As a result, the church has too many buildings, many of which are in the wrong places and in a poor state of repair. Accordingly, the General Trustees, who have overall responsibility of the church estate nationally (each individual congregation is responsible locally), have been developing and promoting the vision that the church should have *'well equipped spaces in the right places.'*

Presbytery Mission Plan Act

In light of the above, the General Assembly of 2021 passed the Presbytery Mission Plan Act in recognition of these challenges, and of the need to place mission at the heart of the church's planning for the use of its increasingly limited resources.

The General Assembly reduced the ministries allocation for every presbytery. Clyde Presbytery was allocated **40** ministries (parish ministers and other appointments paid through the national Church) – down from 59 at present. The Presbytery must now prepare a Presbytery Mission Plan based on this figure by the end of 2022, to be implemented by the end of 2025 as far as possible. In preparing its plan, Clyde Presbytery must demonstrably prioritise mission and the plan must also be approved by the national Church.

The **'Five Marks of Mission'** are to be at the heart of the plan and these recognise that the mission of the Church is the mission of Christ.

The five 'Marks of Mission' are: -

1. To proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom
2. To teach, baptise and nurture new believers
3. To respond to human need by loving service
4. To seek to transform unjust structures of society, to challenge violence of every kind and pursue peace and reconciliation
5. To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the life of the earth

Cont. overleaf...

Local situation

These are difficult times for the whole Church of Scotland, and while in the past the Milngavie churches have been largely insulated from this, those days have passed. In relative terms within the Church of Scotland St Paul's are comparatively healthy, and wealthy. Milngavie currently has 4 congregations and 3 full-time ministers. Given the reductions across the whole Presbytery, it is very likely that there will be a reduction in Milngavie. It is likely that a reduction in buildings will be required, and a national buildings audit is currently being undertaken.

The congregations in Bearsden & Milngavie have already begun discussing what shape the church locally might be going forward, but we also very much recognise that the church belongs to the members and to our respective communities. As such, any decisions about the future direction of churches and ministry in Bearsden & Milngavie need to be taken with regard to that context. The Very Rev. John Christie, who was Moderator of the General Assembly in 2010, has been approached to help our congregations to navigate the way forward and he has graciously agreed to journey with us through these difficult times. We will endeavour to keep you appraised in the coming months.

Reading the grand sweep of the Bible this is clearly a time where we should be trusting God more, and not less. A moment to accept that we never know what is coming around the next corner on the road of our life but God in His goodness does. Let these words from 1 Corinthians 10 v13 be something to hold on to in the year ahead,

"No test or temptation that comes your way is beyond the course of what others have had to face. All you need to remember is that God will never let you down; he'll never let you be pushed past your limit; he'll always be there to help you come through it."

Throughout the history of the Church, denominations and movements have come and gone. There are no guarantees, no Bible promises that say the Church of Scotland in particular has a right to exist.

We have not as a denomination managed to pass on to our "children" a version of Christian faith that is vibrant and relevant to their lives today. This is part of the reason why so many Churches have so few people from younger generations. We also live in an age where commitment to organisations and institutions is dwindling and Church is no longer at the centre of a community but rather much more on the margins. But this – the church on the margins – is so often when she has been at her vibrant best down through history. It starts in the book of Acts and it carries on throughout the next two thousand years. We need to trust that God still has a purpose for us locally and nationally.

Graham Mill on behalf of the Presbytery Planning Team.

World Mission News

Moderator signs statement from Churches' Commission for Migrants in Europe on Europe's response to refugees

The Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, Lord Jim Wallace, has added his signature to a statement released from the Churches' Commission for Migrants in Europe, which addresses Europe's response to refugees fleeing the war in Ukraine.

The statement addresses the concerns of discriminatory treatment of non-Ukrainians and minority ethnic people in this context and the more general question that the generosity shown in recent weeks often has not been extended to those fleeing from elsewhere.

Reflecting on why church leaders requested such a statement, and what lies at the heart of some of their different inputs, Dr Torsten Moritz, general secretary at the Churches' Commission for Migrants in Europe adds, "Our Christian faith is extremely clear about the hospitality to the 'stranger' or the alien – so exactly towards the person who seems to be different from us. International law also is very clear on the equal treatment irrespective of ethnic background, colour of skin, religion or belief." (more can be read at: <https://www.oikoumene.org/news/>)

Lord Wallace added his signature to that of another 30 leaders of Christian churches and organisations across Europe prior to Easter, declaring: "As you did it to one of the least of these... you did it to me. – Matthew 25:40 – ALL refugees welcome."

Myanmar Civil War continues

Recently our colleagues in the Presbyterian Church in Myanmar wrote to us about further attacks by the military in the ongoing civil war. The family of Elder Van Khaw Tiam, a finance officer in their General Assembly Office, was seriously injured when Hmuntha village was bombed. Further to this, a youth member of the Church, Abednego, who had joined the People's Defence Force, was shot and killed.

In the next village of Sekthan, 50 villagers, including many church members, were gathering for a funeral when they were arrested. Another church member, Mrs Darchhingpuii, was injured by a bomb in Tahan. Later, the local militia opened fire on the police station in Tahan.

Please pray for the grieving families, for those who are injured and detained.

INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

Copy Date

The copy date for the June issue is Wednesday **25th** May.

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

Date	Flower Deliveries
1st May	S. Anderson A. Gillies
8th May	P. Barlow S. Robertson
15th May	M. Conway K. Edwards
22nd May	A. Galloway L. Cowie
29th May	F. Ireland