

Life at St. Paul's Milngavie

January 2021



Dear Friends,

Rowan Williams, former Archbishop of Canterbury, writes this in a published meditation:

'The poet W.H. Auden once wrote that it was easy enough to say 'I will love you forever'; the difficult thing was to say (and mean) 'I will love you at 4.15 next Thursday. How do we go on loving, making the love real in every moment, when moods and circumstances change our feelings or sap our energy?'

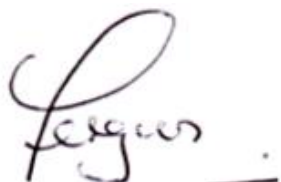
2020 has been a demanding experience for us all at many different levels. At this point the draining of our inner resources has become not just a personal matter but a national concern. Whether it's people just feeling 'fed up' or others with more acute challenges we have all felt the need for psychological and spiritual boost. If I say in the words of one of my favourite Sunday School choruses: 'Read your Bible, pray every day/And you'll grow, grow, grow' – then the response might be 'Well he would say that wouldn't he!'. And I know that that might come over as more than a little glib. But where else do we find contact with our God who has been revealed in the life of Jesus but in the Bible? And how else can we keep company with Him but in prayer?

Those practices are often represented as self-indulgent and leading to self-righteousness. That can happen. But as we call to mind the spiritual experiences of men and women in Scripture and in the history of the Church this always leads to a deeper commitment to serve God in sharing His Word and supporting those in need. It has been heart-warming for me to hear of the many ways Christian folk have continued to do this throughout the pandemic, facing the circumstances presented to us and responding in word and deed whenever encouragement or practical help has been required.

It's my prayer in this moment that this will continue as we move into 2021. There is much that is uncertain and which might cause us to fear. However Jesus has promised His Spirit who brings life to the discouraged and disheartened. In His ministry He shows how we can continue to be faithful witnesses even in the most distressing of circumstances. Knowing that His disciples would betray, deny and abandon Him He kept them close. Nailed to a cross he promised salvation to a dying thief and made provision for His mother's future care. His love did not depend on circumstances or the worthiness of men and women. His love was in the constant dynamism of His being which was not denied even by death.

There is truth in the oft-heard Covid Mantra: 'Nothing will ever be the same.' That can be both exciting and alarming. But however we are feeling Jesus promises are before us which speak of His love and give us strength to love. Hope will never be denied if we hold this in our hearts as we go forward.

Praying you and yours will know God's Peace in 2021,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Gordon Fairbrother', with a horizontal line extending to the right from the end of the signature.

Thank You

The stewardship committee would like to express our thanks to all the volunteers in the congregation, who gave so willingly of their time and talents in the run up to Christmas. Your work was particularly appreciated this year given the many issues everyone is facing as a result of Covid-19.

As a result, around 1800 households in our Parish received a Christmas Card with a message from our minister and advice as to how to access our services online over the Christmas Season.

Thanks again to the volunteers, who hopefully also benefited from the considerable exercise of climbing stairs, walking the streets and getting to know all the nooks and crannies of our Parish.

Gordon Fairbrother
Stewardship Convener

Noah's Ark at St Paul's

Members of the congregation will know that since March, it has not been possible to operate our Mother and Toddler group, called Noah's Ark, as a result of the restrictions. Firstly, I would like to ask everyone to remember all our volunteers, who provide such a wonderful service to all our youngsters and their carers, in their prayers.

Secondly, I think it would be lovely if, as a congregation, while not necessarily knowing the children personally, we should pray for their well-being and safety in these difficult times, not forgetting those who bring the children to us. Thank you in anticipation.

Finally, I wish everyone a Happy New Year and hope and pray that it can only be better than 2020. Please all take care and stay safe.

With Blessings to all,

Jackie Sillars.

Bible Class News

You may have seen the Bible Class production in the online service of 20th December. I just wanted to give you a bit of background on the production. The narrations were all written and performed as a collaboration between the leaders and the young people. The drawings were all done by Cathy Simmons and two of her friends from school.

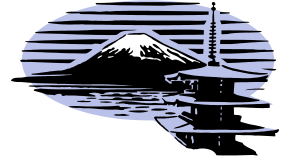
I wanted to thank all the young folks involved for all of their efforts. Credit goes to:

Aedan Stark – introduction
Andy Whitelaw – Zechariah
Kiron Dutton – Joseph
Chloe Adair – Young Shepherd
Ruairidh McCreadie - Shepherd

Cathy Simmons – Gabriel
Eilidh Shaw – Mary
Ellie Adair – Inn Keeper
Abigail Bates – Herod
Sam Foggo – Magi

If you haven't seen it already, you can catch it on the Church You Tube Channel

Japan Jottings



Dear Friends,

Happy New Year! I hope you had a blessed, if different, Christmas celebration this year. I was grateful to have Matthew and Calum here and be able to Zoom Daniel in from London.

4 years ago David was waiting to receive his stem cell transplant in the hope of putting his lymphoma into remission. I recently reread something he wrote at that time and thought I would share some of it with you in the hope that it might be helpful as we look out on this new year which contains much uncertainty.

“Most of us probably live our lives with a reasonable degree of predictability. We make plans and generally they come to pass. Tomorrow will come, next week will come and while we know that things can change suddenly, generally life moves on with some measure of certainty.

What happens though when that certainty is taken away? What if you don't know what's going to happen? What if there are questions but no answers - or at least no answers that are very definitive? Not easy if you're the kind of person who likes certainty, who makes plans and who wants to know what's going to come next. For the last months we've lived with that uncertainty - life is in limbo!

So how do you deal with that and live in limbo? One way is just to let go and accept that however much we might like to be in control of our lives and know with some certainty what's going to happen, that will not be the case. You need to take a day at a time knowing tomorrow might bring different news which may even just add to the uncertainty! All of that is easier said than done.

There is something else though and that is learning more and more to trust the One who does know the beginning from the end and who knows exactly what is happening and what will happen. Maybe one of the purposes of this whole time is simply that as a family we might learn that valuable lesson even more. There is a great verse in Proverbs which says - ‘Many are the plans in a man’s heart, but it is the Lord’s purpose that prevails’. Sometimes it is like opening both hands to God, one crying to him with our heart’s desires and the other saying ‘may your will be done’. And in the midst of it all trusting in our unchangeable and faithful God is the only place to go if we want real certainty. ‘Faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see’. As a follower of Jesus, there may well be many things in our lives we don't understand or for which there don't seem to be answers but as we lift our eyes to our God and fix our eyes on the unseen things, we find a certainty which will never fail us.”

I pray that we will all be able to fix our eyes on Jesus as we enter this new year.

With love and prayers,

Lorna, Daniel, Matthew, Calum and Alistair

World Mission News

Cuts to the International Aid Budget "short-sighted" and must be reconsidered

The Church has hit out at a UK Government decision to cut the international aid budget from 0.7% of gross national income to 0.5%. It has been reported that the move means a reduction in more than £4 billion a year.

Very Rev Dr Susan Brown, convener of the Faith Impact Forum, said: "The decision to slash the aid budget will do irreparable harm to our partners around the world, who themselves are braced for the economic shock of the pandemic. Cutting this work is short-sighted and tarnishes the UK's international reputation.

"In times of global need, it is those with the broadest shoulders that need to support others. International development is not about charity, it is essential to the delivery of the vision of a Global Britain as foreign aid supports UK priorities.

"We ask MPs of all parties to urge the UK Government to reconsider, for the sake of humanity and because of what this decision says about what kind of country we aspire to be."

You can help by writing to your MP and asking them if they can speak, and vote, against the proposed cuts to UK Aid. [Read more](#)

Urgent prayer alert for Ethiopia

The All Africa Conference of Churches, a partner of the Church of Scotland, has issued a prayer alert for Ethiopia.

A conflict between the government of Ethiopia and forces in its northern Tigray region has thrown the country into turmoil. This has resulted in hundreds of deaths and thousands fleeing over the border to Sudan. The conflict started on 4th November, when Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed ordered a military offensive against regional forces in Tigray. He said he did so in response to an attack on a military base housing government troops in Tigray. The escalation came after months of feuding between Mr Abiy's government and leaders of Tigray's dominant political party. [Read more](#)

Christmas Dingbats

Avid readers of St. Paul's Life magazine (and I trust that means the whole congregation!) may well remember during the first full lockdown that the Adair families were joined by the Knaggs and Pirie families via Zoom to enjoy family quizzes which caused great hilarity for all and some good and poor scoring from teams. (My lips are sealed unless a large amount of cash is deposited in my account!)

Boxing Day seemed like an ideal day to have a Christmas Quiz, again by Zoom, to comply with the rules and, as you would expect the compiler felt that a round of Dingbats would be well received. To remind everyone, you see what you see and have to say what you see! This set of Dingbats is attached and the solutions are on the last page of the magazine.

The Adair families along with the Knaggs and Pirie families hope that everyone had a safe and happy Christmas and wish everyone a better 2021 than the year we have all just experienced.

With Christ's Blessings,

Brian Adair

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Copy Date

The copy date for the February issue is Wednesday 24th January via email.

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

Answers to Dingbats

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|-------------------------|------------------------|
| 1. Back Door | 7. Man over board |
| 2. Uphill Struggle | 8. Double Decker Bus |
| 3. High IQ | 9. Frilly underwear |
| 4. Bad spell of weather | 10. Archbishop |
| 5. Children in Need | 11. The price is right |
| 6. Read all about it | 12. All over the world |