

Life at St. Paul's Milngavie

June 2022



Dear Friends,

Gabrielle and I have very much appreciated the expressions of goodwill from many of you since I announced my intention to retire. We have appreciated your support and prayers over the years and it's encouraging to know that this will be sustained as we face the challenge of leaving and settling in another community.

One question on many lips has been: 'What are you going to do with all your books?' Well, that has not been fully worked out at the time of writing, but it is undoubtedly a chore I cannot ignore for much longer. The problem with folk like me is that quite a lot of our book accumulation over the years has been aspirational rather than realistic. You buy a book in case it goes out of print. You buy a book because it deals with something you should know about. You buy a book knowing you won't crack it open in the short-term but one of those days . . . Maybe you are not guilty of any of this. But at least you can be sympathetic.

The result is there is a substantial amount of stuff that never gets read and possibly never will be. Just the other day I came across Henri Nouwen's *The Return Of The Prodigal Son*. It was published in 1992 and more than likely I bought it close to that date. Nouwen was appreciated by many Christians as a devotional writer, and this is an extended meditation on a painting by Rembrandt which had a profound effect upon him. It depicts the reconciliation of the lost son with the forgiving father in Luke 15: 11-13.

For some reason I never got round to reading it although it is regarded as one of Nouwen's best. I'm happy to say, however, that that is currently being rectified and is proving to be a great blessing. You know a book is making an impact when you feel you are keeping company with the author, hearing a voice beneath the text. It may have lain for thirty years unread, but it is now living in the moment. Did it find its way into my study for this moment?

Continued overleaf...

The books of the Bible are much older, and some are better known to us than others. Perhaps some have in a sense been sealed to us. But we should never lose the faith that the Holy Spirit is the inspirer of the Scriptures and is seeking to reveal God and His love for each one of us. To open a book of the Bible is to seek the company of God, to know Him and to know His ways. To open a book of the Bible is to experience the love that Jesus spoke of in the story of the forgiving father. Love which inspired a seventeenth century artist, a twentieth century writer, and a twenty-first century Presbyterian minister approaching retirement. That's how it works. We don't call it the living Word for nothing. Maybe unread but always waiting the moment of revelation.

Praying a peaceful and refreshing Summer for you and yours,

Fergus.

KEEP THE DATES FREE! THE HOLIDAY FELLOWSHIP IS READY TO TRAVEL IN 2023.

Anne Ritchie is working with Brightwater Holidays to organise a trip to North Yorkshire from 18th-22nd MAY, 2023. We shall be based in Harrogate and shall spend three days visiting the RHS Harlow Carr garden, travel on the North Yorkshire Moor Railway, finishing in Whitby, where we shall see the new Endeavour Experience, a replica of Captain Cook's ship and undertake an excursion to Ripon, followed by a visit to NT Newby Hall. On the journey South we shall view Sizergh Castle and on the journey home Alnwick Castle and Garden. The trip is open to the congregation, their relatives and their friends. More details will follow.

Flower Donations - May

Thank you for the Flower Donations given in Memory for the Month of May.



E. A. Whyte
I. More

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'

Forty Years of Parish Ministry

On Sunday 8th May, 2022 a special service was held to mark the Rev Fergus Buchanan's 40 years as a parish minister in the Church of Scotland.

The congregation was joined by members of Baldernock Parish Church for the service led by the Rev Dr David Graham, Minister at The Abbey Church in North Berwick. David was an Assistant Minister in St Paul's in the early 1990's and took part in a special 150th anniversary Thanksgiving Service on 12th May, 1991 to mark the 150 years of Milngavie Parish Church.

Fergus was Ordained in Glasgow Cathedral on 5th May 1982 and served there as Assistant Minister under the Rev William Morris. On 1st June 1983 he was called to his first charge, Ardeer in Ayrshire.

Fergus came to Milngavie in 1988 and was inducted into St Paul's on 12th April where he remains to this day.

Fergus is a man of the people. Writing in 1991 in the history of St Paul's, he quotes from Acts 5: 12-15 and adds "*This is evangelism at its best when our lives confirm the message we preach. Let this be our earnest prayer for St Paul's as we seek to proclaim the Gospel in our own generation and to generations to come*". What an example he has set to us in the past 34 years.

Approachable and concerned for his congregation he does not stop there. Over the years he has reached out to the community in many ways, some of which are only known to a few.

He was a founding member of the Association of Milngavie Churches which was formed "*to act as a witness to the Unity of Christ among the Churches in Milngavie*." Never has that been more important.

The vacancy committee in 1988 were impressed by his powerful preaching and vitality. Who can argue with that, his preaching over Easter weekend was as powerful as many of us have heard.

Fergus was presented with a Bible to mark the occasion and Gabrielle received some flowers.

After the Service tea, coffee and cake were served in the hall.

GUILD NEWS

The highlight of the session was our Musical Morning on Saturday May 14th. It was well attended and the audience included a good number of visitors. Many people enjoyed refreshments in the Large Hall before the musical programme began. We were reminded of the last such event in St. Paul's before Covid struck, which was our Guild Coffee Morning in March 2020.

We had been promised a feast of music and were not disappointed. Derek Norval's choice of music ranged from well-loved classics such as Stanley's Trumpet Voluntary and the finale of the organ symphony by Saint-Saens to some soulful, poignant Ukrainian pieces. The might of the organ and the skill of the organist were evident, and one understood again why the organ is sometimes called the King of Instruments.

On her clarsach Rachel Rutherford played traditional Scottish pieces such as Logan Water and Mary Mack – where she also delighted us with her singing – and the beautiful Canon in D by Pachelbel. With her husband, Julian Pombo, she performed some of her own compositions, showing the versatility of her instrument and the range of her talent. Julian's main instrument in our programme was the guitar but he also demonstrated his multi-faceted talent by playing the flute; his music originated in such diverse countries as Argentina, Ireland and Turkey and showcased the different styles of the instrument. It was interesting to note that some very young members of the audience sat spellbound throughout, such was the power of the music and the skill of the musicians!

We are indebted to all of our performers for their time and talent, and are exceedingly grateful to have such expertise in the congregation. We also want to thank everyone who came to the concert and helped us raise the magnificent total of £1100 which will go to the two Guild projects which we are supporting this year.

After Easter this session we organised three additional meetings because we had to cancel all meetings in January. The first was described in the May edition of 'Life at St. Paul's'. The second was an account of the work being carried out each Tuesday at Faifley Parish Church where donated items of every description are given to people who are really struggling. It is humbling to see the gratitude of recipients, and the sterling work of the helpers; it is also shocking that such poverty exists so near at hand.

At the last meeting of the session we welcomed a representative of one of our projects, Chocolate Heaven, which is a small chocolate-making factory on an island in south-east Asia. The employment provided, plays an important role in the island's economy and is increasingly crucial for all the families involved. Our speaker also shared the vision for evangelism on the island.

We are looking forward to marking the Queen's Platinum Jubilee with an Afternoon Tea at the holiday weekend. It should be a memorable end to a memorable year and we want to thank all our members who have supported the Guild in various ways throughout the session. We look forward to welcoming everyone back in October, and also to seeing new members join us too.

Eleanor Easton

BOOK GROUP

We were all asked to choose a book by Donna Leon featuring her Venetian detective, Commissario Guido Brunetti. She has written 31 books so there was plenty of choice! Her first book was *Death at la Fenice* published in 1992. Commissario Brunetti is basically an honest man whose first love is his family. The crimes involved are typical of big city issues such as corruption in government and destruction of the environment but a murder or two is usually added. The books are full of attention to detail and for the two members of the group who had visited Venice, they vividly portrayed the city and brought back lots of memories.

Although everybody enjoyed the books they read, nobody was happy with the way they ended, mainly because you are left to draw your own conclusions as to what happened next. Despite this reservation, we would read more of Donna Leon and her Venetian detective. These are the books we read:

Death at la Fenice (2 people)

Trace Elements (2 people)

Temptation of Forgiveness

Acqua Alta

About Face

Death in a Strange Country.

Our next meeting is on Tuesday 5th July 2022 when we will be discussing *Consider the Lilies* by Iain Crichton Smith.

Joyce Clark

Japan Jottings



Dear Friends,

Matthew came to Japan recently and we went for a week's holiday to an area on the other side of the country called Hokuriku. It is a beautiful region with mountains up to 10,000 feet coming down to the Sea of Japan. Since this area was not bombed in the war there are also more historic buildings remaining than in other places.

One interesting place was a temple nicknamed "ninja temple". It was founded in the 1600s and got its nickname from the fact that it has many hidden entrances, rooms and trapdoors to trick the enemy. There is also a rumour that there is a secret passageway from the temple well to a nearby castle, though strangely no one has checked it out.

Wherever you go in Japan, there are Buddhist Temples and Shinto Shrines. You will see people offering prayers, making offerings, or buying and writing on prayer tablets. However, if you ask people what they believe, many cannot answer. This is because in Japan religion is seen largely as something you do at particular times or locations, rather than what you believe. So it can be difficult to explain that the Bible talks about what we believe leading to what we do.

However, there are ways some of the Japanese practices can be a bridge for explaining the gospel. For example, at Shinto shrines there is a large gate called a torii at the entrance, which separates the secular from the sacred. When entering a shrine, you will see a purification font called a *temizuya* with cool, flowing water. Here people wash their mouths and hands to purify themselves before entering the shrine.

In some ways this is similar to the situation in the Old Testament. God gave the Jewish people various rules about how to purify themselves on different occasions, and even stricter rules for the priests who had to keep themselves ceremonially clean.

The good news is that now we don't need to perform ritual purification rites or try to purify ourselves. Jesus has done that for us by His death on the cross. As Paul writes in the first half of Romans 3:22, "This righteousness is given through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe." Please pray for missionaries and Japanese Christians as they seek to share this amazing news with people in Japan.

*With love and prayers,
Lorna, Daniel, Matthew, Calum and Alistair*

World Mission

Partner News

Our mission partner, Rev Muriel Pearson, has taken up the post of Associate Minister at St Andrew's Jerusalem and Tiberias Church of Scotland, a move which had been delayed by six months due to Covid-19 regulations and visa restrictions. With her, Muriel takes two chairs that were part of a COP26 art exhibition created by visual artists Gardner & Gardner in Glasgow which have been shipped to the Holy Land to help bring people together in the name of peace.

"I was struck that amid the exhibition of chairs, jumbled and precariously balanced, symbolising unequal power relationships among individuals, communities and nations, two sat face to face at speaking distance, creating the space to listen," Muriel said.

"Peace with justice seems a long way off but there are people of peace working selflessly for it and I hope, by just being there, to support this work."

You can keep up to date with Muriel's ministry in the Middle East on our <https://www.churchofscotland.org.uk/connect/international-work-and-global-partnerships/>

Prayer request for Myanmar

We know the supply of wheat, sunflower oil and fertiliser is being affected by the war in Ukraine. Similarly, as troubles continue in Myanmar, farmers face huge problems in getting their harvest to market as fighting wreaks havoc with their livelihood. Many farmers in villages across the country have been forced to flee to escape the junta troops. While the farmers want to sell their harvest before they leave, merchants and brokers will not go to the village because of a lack of security.

Pray for justice and peace for all in Myanmar and remember the Presbyterian Church in Myanmar as it continues to minister in the most challenging of circumstances.

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Copy Dates

THERE WILL BE NO JULY EDITION OF 'LIFE'

The copy date for the August issue is Wednesday **27th July**.

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

Date	Flower Deliveries
5th June	A. McNellan K. Hagart
12th June	J. Mill
19th June	A. McLeod
26th June	S. Anderson A. Gillies