

Life at St. Paul's Milngavie

April 2020



Dear Friends,

It is with a very heavy heart that I write this letter. I have received an email from the Church of Scotland Covid-19 task group which asks "in the strongest terms" that all gatherings of worship should cease until further notice. This left me with no choice but to ask the Kirk Session to agree to this. Accordingly, our church services have been suspended until further notice and the building closed to all organisations until further notice. We have had to cancel the prayer meeting, the Holy Week services, the Walk of Witness, the school services, and now, even our Sunday worship. These are extreme measures, but these are extreme times and I do not believe that the church should be reckless in the face of this crisis. We have a duty of care to our people.

I have made contingencies for the coming Sundays and to that end, I have organised "closed door" church services for the coming weeks. We shall be recording two services every Sunday for people to access on both the St. Luke's and the St. Paul's websites. These recorded services will be structured as follows:-

Call to worship

Opening Prayer – Adoration, Confession and Thanksgiving

Bible Reading

Sermon

Closing Prayer – Intercession

Benediction.

The sermons recorded will be full sermons as we have on Sundays. I believe that it is essential that our people are provided with Bible teaching at this time. On the St Luke's website, I will continue our series on the Sermon on the Mount from Matthew's Gospel; and on the St. Paul's website, the Rev. John Wilson will start a new series on the "I am" sayings of Jesus, a series that was planned for the evening services at St. Paul's.

These online services can be accessed using the following links:-

www.stlukesmilngavie.co.uk

www.stpaulsmilngavie.org.uk

I am grateful to the members of all three Kirk Sessions in supporting me in what has arguably been the most difficult decision on 30 years of ministry.

I would encourage all of our members to engage with the preaching of God's Word online as we continue to expound it week by week. We have members of both congregations who attend both morning and evening services and they will still have the opportunity of two "diets of worship" online. To those who do not usually attend the evening service, I would encourage you to engage with both services, and I commend both to you. If ever we needed to hear God's Word preached fully, it is now.

During this time of world crisis, there are many implications for our church, not least concerning funerals where sensitive conversations will need to take place ahead of funeral services, and to consider the size of groups gathering for funeral services.

We usually uplift an offering at our Sunday services and the task force is aware that closing down worship services will impact on congregational income. We would ask people to continue to contribute financially to the church as far as possible and encourage the increased use of standing orders as an expression of ongoing stewardship. Full details of this way of giving can be given by our treasurer, Mr Chris Scott.

These difficult days are humbling for us all, and they should certainly humble us before the Lord. We should be crying out to Him, not least to have mercy on our nation and on our world.

With every blessing,
Yours in the Lord Jesus Christ,

Ramsay B. Shields

Flower Donations - April

A big "Thank you" to the Church Members who provide flowers for our services, and to the dedicated flower arranging team.

Donation for this month given in Memory from:

Mrs C Tanner, Mr C Henderson and many thanks to the Women's Guild for their donation



Please write donations to "St Paul's Flowers", and either place in the flower guild pigeon hole at the back of the Church, or send to Mrs M. Thoms, 66 Braeside Ave, Milngavie, G62 6NN.

Coronavirus Self Isolation Help

Hopefully, by now, everyone in Milngavie and Bearsden will have received a leaflet through their door offering help, should you need to self isolate.

The “Bearsden:Milngavie Coronavirus Community Group” was started on Facebook and now has over 1000 members willing to help those in the community who may need shopping/prescriptions collected, or even just a friendly phone call.

Please do not hesitate to get in touch with the people named on the leaflet (there should be 2 or 3 listed). There are lots of sub groups, covering different streets throughout the area so the names to contact on your leaflet, may be different from your friend’s leaflet. This is a genuine offer to help but if you have any hesitations, please send me an email: carla.boyd1@gmail.com or give me a call: 07736775153.

The group is working under the guidance of Police Scotland and East Dunbartonshire Voluntary Association (EDVA) along with recognition from Scottish Government.

If you haven’t received a leaflet, please let me know and I’ll inform the group that your street may still require volunteers.

Carla MacAllister



Thank you all for your continued support over the past months. There are still good supplies at the depot in Gateshead from where I get all my stock, and being the ‘Fair Trader’ I get free delivery of all orders over £50 which come directly to my house. If you so wish to, you can browse their website for anything you need and phone or email your order to me.

I still have a good stock of the following in my Traidcraft cupboard: Tea, coffee, rice, cocoa, honey, chocolate, milk chocolate Easter eggs, strawberry jam, **hand-wash**, **toilet rolls**, kitchen rolls, paper tissues (small). (Oh yes and socks !!).

Other items can be ordered as needed, things like pasta, mueslis, cleaning products etc. I invite you to browse the website.
<https://www.traidcraftshop.co.uk/>

Thank you,
Rosemary Fraser.
956 3222

Stated Annual Meeting

Although we were unable to hold the meeting on 18th March due to the spread of the coronavirus, the annual accounts for the year ended 31st December, 2019 had previously been approved by the charity Trustees and the Budget for 2020 had been prepared and approved by the Congregational Board.

The number of communicants on the roll as at 31st December 2019 was 693. At 31st December 2018 the number was 809. During 2019, 104 members were removed from the roll and there were 19 deaths. 7 new members joined by certificate. There were 3 baptisms and 25 funerals. The number of children involved in the life of the congregation was 134. There were 91 elders of which 46 were male and 45 were female. There were 16 elected members of the Congregational Board of which 6 were male and 10 were female. The usual number of worshippers was approximately 240.

The following elected members of the Board were due to retire at the Stated Annual Meeting and are willing to continue on the Board if so elected:- Jill Foggo, Christine Inglis, Roy Prentice and Jacqueline Sillars. Paul McCreadie has decided not to seek re-election and will be thanked for his contribution to the Board in the past three years. The following members over 18 years of age, are willing to stand for election to the Board and will be co-opted to serve for three years at the next Board meeting:-

	<u>Proposed</u>	<u>Seconded</u>
Sheila Prentice	Graham Mill	Ken MacIver
Roy Sutherland	Robin Easton	Arthur Wylie
Jennifer Turner	Graham Mill	Ken MacIver

There remains 3 vacancies to serve until March 2022 and it is hoped to co-opt members during the year.

The following is the review of the year that was to be given at the meeting by the Session Clerk Graham Mill.

2019 had been a challenging year for St. Paul's. Our minister, Fergus Buchanan, commenced his treatment for melanoma in February and remains off work and away from the congregation he loves. Our thoughts and prayers are with Fergus, Gabrielle and their family especially as they face the unknown implications of the coronavirus.

As a congregation we are greatly indebted to Ramsay Shields who took on the role of Interim Moderator at St. Paul's and Baldernock. This has been a considerable increase in his workload while continuing to serve his own Congregation at St. Luke's. David White also took on extra preaching and pastoral visits during the year for which we are grateful and I take this opportunity to thank David for his contribution to the life and work of St. Paul's and his support to Fergus and Ramsay during his time with us. David retired at the end of February 2020 and we wish him and his wife a long and happy retirement.

We also have to thank the many preachers who so willingly come forward to lead our Sunday morning services. In particular the Clerk of Dumbarton Presbytery The Very Rev. John C. Christie for his support and concern for the Congregation as well as Fergus and Ramsay. We should also thank the Rev. John Wilson for his preaching and support.

The biggest thanks is to you, all the members, for ensuring the life of the congregation has continued in these challenging times. Thanks also to our dedicated employees, Derek, Hugh, Aileen and Sandra who willingly contribute so much to the life and smooth running of St. Paul's.

Particular thanks to Chris and the finance team and to the many people who put in considerable hours voluntarily, to keep the Congregation running. From finance, insurance, fabric, furnishings, communications, health & safety, food hygiene, safeguarding, data protection, the roll, *Life* magazine and many others these contributions are often unseen but essential, to keep St. Paul's running smoothly and legally.

Once again, a highlight of the year was the Holiday Club *Pyramid Rock* in August. The Club was so brilliantly led by Hazel Buchan and the excellent team who helped in this outreach to young people and their families in our community. Lorna Ferguson is due to return to Japan later this month and it has been good to have her with us and to learn of the work being undertaken in that country to advance Christ's kingdom.

Our own organisations continue but once again several are struggling to find leaders. To those who have stepped forward our grateful thanks and to all who have given of their time, talents or money to St. Paul's in the past year, thank you.

The General Assembly of the Church of Scotland in May, 2019 approved a Radical Action Plan which envisages considerable changes in all areas of governance of the Church, including the reduction in the number of Presbyteries from 42 to around 12. As a Congregation we have faced a number of special challenges in the past year and with the current rapid spread of the coronavirus throughout the world, we do not know what lies ahead but we can be sure the Lord will be with His people.

Church of Scotland News

Christians in Scotland asked to join in prayer on Sundays at 7pm

Last Sunday, thousands of Christians across Scotland answered the call to pray at the same time in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Following positive feedback from last week's prayer initiative, a further letter has been signed by 14 Christian organisations across the country, including the Church of Scotland.

The letter states: "We pray in solidarity with those across Britain and Ireland and in solidarity with those across the world who face the challenge that the Covid-19 pandemic brings."

Joint prayer from Christians in Scotland:

*We turn to you, our Father, for we need your help.
Lord Jesus, as you have promised, be with us, whatever lies ahead,
Strengthen us, Holy Spirit, as we face this together.*

*We pray for our world and our country,
as coronavirus threatens our lives and our livelihood, leaving many in lockdown,
while key workers continue, despite the risk.*

*We pray for government leaders at Westminster and Holyrood,
responding to medical and scientific advice,
making tough decisions for the wellbeing of all.*

*We pray for all who serve on the frontline in the NHS and in social care;
facing increasing numbers, overstretched resources
and distressing human need.*

*Bless those who are ill, those who are alone and afraid,
those exhausted looking after their family, those worried for the vulnerable,
those fearful for their finances, those shut in to their fears.*

*Thank you for those who have returned from retirement to help,
or joined the volunteer army.
Thank you for those working:
to manufacture needed resources,
to find a vaccine,
to keep in contact with the isolated,
to encourage others at this time.*

*Have mercy on us, O Lord.
Give us faith, hope and love and hear our prayers,
in Jesus' name. Amen.*

Book Group



This time we are going classical and reading *Persuasion* by Jane Austen. From our discussion in the group it was obvious that you were either a fan of Jane Austen or you were not. The story revolves round Anne Elliot who 8 years before the story begins was betrothed to a naval officer, Frederick Wentworth. She is persuaded by her family friend, Lady Russell, to break off the engagement which Anne still regrets doing. When Frederick Wentworth returns from sea a wealthy and successful Captain, he finds Anne's family on the brink of financial ruin and his own sister resident in Kellynch Hall, the Elliot estate. The social manners and conventions of the time are well portrayed in all of her novels where status is everything. Instead of reading the book, some of the group watched the DVD, twice! We had a good ranging discussion which ended with the question "Are you persuaded by other people?"

Jane Austen's works of romantic fiction set amongst the landed gentry earned her a place as one of the most widely read English authors. Her biting social commentary highlights the importance of marriage to women to secure social standing.

We will be hopefully meeting in June and discussing *Holdings* by Graham Norton.

Joyce Clark

Christian Aid Week

We received instructions from the Christian Aid headquarters.

As a precaution around any transmission of the COVID-19 virus increase they are now advising against delivery and collection of envelopes. Naturally this is due to the possibility of surface transmission of the virus and the requirement to keep movements outside of the home to a minimum.

In line with UK Government guidance Christian Aid are discouraging the running of all public events up until the end of June. At the moment this is only a postponement and we may introduce something later in the year

Guild News

At our last meeting in February, we were pleased to welcome three of our Elders – Mairi McCreddie, John Macpherson and Colin Robertson who joined us to hear about the Mission Aviation Fellowship (MAF) from our speaker, Stan Paliwoda. Founded in 1945, the MAF's aim is to alleviate pain and suffering, reaching places which are inaccessible by road. Through a powerful video and slide presentation, Stan described how the MAF works with 2,000 charities in 30 countries distributing medical and humanitarian supplies as well as transporting specialist teams and patients. Although the 2-seater Cessna is a small aircraft, Stan explained that it can carry vaccinations for 60,000 people. Focussing his presentation on Liberia as an example of the valuable work undertaken, it was clear that the pilots encounter hazardous conditions in their every-day missions and the wonderful work that MAF does, for example, evacuating children from war-torn Sudan was truly amazing.

At our first meeting in March, Dr Megan Kasten from Glasgow University spoke to us about Scotland's medieval stones. Using examples from all over Scotland as well as speaking specifically about the Govan Stones, Megan showed us similarities and differences in the patterns on the stones. Megan told us that during the early medieval period, Govan was an important ecclesiastical centre on the River Clyde. There are thirty-one early medieval carved stones housed in Govan Old Parish Church, including one sarcophagus, four crosses, five hogbacks, and twenty-one recumbent gravestones; all of these date to sometime between the mid-9th and the 11th century. The stones vary in condition depending on multiple factors, including whether they were reused in later centuries and where they were located in the churchyard. Megan's presentation was particularly interesting because of the techniques that she uses in her research, for example three-dimensional imaging technologies and Reflectance Transformation Imaging (RTI) which enable reconstruction of the stones and identification of worn decoration that is no longer easily seen. It was fascinating to see her images of the stones as they turned around in her PowerPoint presentation and to hear about the discoveries that had been made through technology.

On 9th March, we enjoyed giving our brains a bit of an outing as we tried to answer the questions in our Scottish quiz. New facts were learned and there was much laughter in the very competitive teams, culminating in two teams gaining first place overall!

It was lovely to see so many people at our Coffee Morning on 14th March. Pounds and pennies were spent at the stalls and pounds and ounces were gained eating the delicious home baking! Many thanks to everyone who contributed goods and baking, and to everyone who came along to make the Coffee Morning such a success.

Unfortunately, our final three meetings of this session had to be cancelled because of the current pandemic situation. We are hoping that the planned fish & chip supper on 30th March will now take place in the new session.

Summer Outing

Due to the current pandemic situation the committee has decided that the planned outing to St. Andrews on 4th May should be postponed. The outing is now hopefully going to take place early in September. If you have paid for the outing it will be assumed that you will wish to go on the later date, if you prefer to get a refund please contact Kate (telephone 563 9904 or email kseller@dircon.co.uk) who will organise it. If you wish to go, but haven't yet informed Kate please do so asap. Kate will be in touch, in July, with all members who are planning to go, with an update on the new date and plans for the outing.

We look forward to welcoming you to any or all of our meetings after the summer when we meet up again on Monday nights at 7.30pm in the Large Hall.

Website

www.stpaulsmilngavie.org.uk

Please note that the main form of communication with members will be through the website.

We are aware that not everyone has access to the internet and would ask that those that do, pass on any relevant information.

Your District Elder or Church Visitor should be contacted if you have any concerns, require help or someone to talk to.

Although the weekly Prayer meeting cannot be held in St. Paul's, we hope that as many as possible will set aside time around 8pm on a Thursday evening so that we can pray together. Prayer notes will be available each week on the website for guidance.

Graham Mill
Session Clerk

News from the Courts

(Please note, future meeting dates mentioned, are subject to change)

The Congregational Board met on 26th February. Mr Lachlan McNeill was appointed as Clerk to the Congregational Board.

Finance

The Treasurer advised that the Ministries & Mission allocation for 2020 had been set at £115,966 and the Presbytery dues at £1,345.21. The Budget for 2020 was tabled and it was agreed to submit it to the Stated Annual Meeting (SAM) for approval by the congregation.

The meeting of the Trustees of St. Paul's Parish Church would be held on Wednesday 4th March 2020. When the Trustees' Report and Accounts for the year ended 31st December 2019 had been approved by the Trustees they would be signed by the examiner. After the SAM where the accounts would be presented to the congregation, the Treasurer would forward copies to Church of Scotland and Dumbarton Presbytery along with a copy of the Budget. The Treasurer explained that further changes had had to be made to the format of the annual Accounts to meet OSCR requirements. The Board agreed to purchase 32 copies per month of Life & Work.

Fabric & Furnishings

Several small items were reported and actioned.

Health & Safety

The sanctuary evacuation procedure was re-circulated to the congregation with the intimation sheet on Sunday 9th February 2020 and after the morning service on Sunday 16th February 2020 the Health and Safety Committee undertook a walk-round inspection of the premises.

Food Hygiene Report

The Environmental Health Committee had prepared updated Food Hygiene Guidelines dated January 2020 which had been issued to relevant Organisations. A copy of the Guidelines was available in the kitchen along with the Temperature Recording Charts.

The Board were reminded of the following meetings:-

The Trustees meeting Wednesday 4th March 2020 at 7pm in the Jubilee Hall
The Stated Annual Meeting Wednesday 18th March 2020 at 7.30pm in the Large Hall; and

The next meeting of the Board would take place on Wednesday 25th March 2020 at 7.30pm in the Centenary Room.

The Kirk Session met on 4th March.

A report was noted on the Kirk Sessions Conference held at St. Luke's on Wednesday 19th February which was attended by the Elders from St. Paul's, Baldernock and St. Luke's. Various points were raised and the views of the Kirk Session of St. Paul's would be forwarded to the Presbytery Clerk.

The Kirk Session noted that Presbytery agreed unanimously on the Draft Act and Basis Plan of Union between the Presbytery of Dumbarton and Greenock and Paisley and the Presbytery Clerk was instructed to transmit this information to the Principal Clerk in order that the 2020 General Assembly may pass the legislation necessary to effect the Union. The new name, if approved, will be Clyde Presbytery and the Union will take place on 1st September, 2020. The Kirk Session appointed Mrs. Jean Scott to represent it in the Presbytery of Dumbarton and its Successor for the year until 30th June 2021 and re-appoint Mrs. Elizabeth McEwan as Safeguarding Co-ordinator.

Reports were received from the Pastoral and Communications committee, the Youth & Education committee and the Home Mission committee. A report from the Stewardship committee will be circulated next month. A Safeguarding training session will be held for volunteers in Cairns Church on 12th March and for members of the Kirk Session in St Paul's on 20th April. A report was received from the Trustees of the Boys' Brigade Hall. The Christian Aid Lenten Lunch will be held on Sunday 22nd March and Christian aid week will begin on Sunday 10th May.

Scottish Bible Society

Thank you to everyone who supported this year's Bible Sunday Appeal. The total sum donated was £886.50. When Gift Aid has been reclaimed this should increase the total to £1,056.50.



Frances Ireland

A Message from the Rev. Dr David White

Dear Graham,

Please express my sincere thanks to the Congregation for their very generous gift and for their kindness, support and encouragement during my time at St. Paul's. I consider my time with you to have been a very special blessing. May God be with you all until we sit together at Jesus feet.

Yours sincerely,

David White

Copy Date

The copy date for the May issue is Wednesday 22nd April via email.

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