

Life at St. Paul's Milngavie

November 2020



Dear Friends,

There has been a lot of discussion in the media recently about Christmas and how we are going to spend it. I'm quite sure this has leaked into many a household. If you believe some people, then it will be a Christmas to gladden the heart of Ebenezer Scrooge who had no time for it and could never understand why anyone else would. He memorably stated: 'If I could work my will every idiot who goes about with "Merry Christmas" on his lips should be boiled with his own pudding, and buried with a stake of holly through his heart.'

There is evidence of a different mind among the populace and a pledge to fight back against the prospective gloom. Even now I believe trees, decorations and lights are being brought out, possibly following the principle that it's better to light a candle than curse the darkness.

I hope you will all find ways of making Christmas as meaningful as possible at a family level. The best way to approach Christmas, however, is to remember the truth that lies at its heart. The birth of Jesus was the coming of God into our midst, revealing Himself in a human personality, dealing with the brokenness of the human spirit in His death, and giving us the hope of a New Creation in His resurrection. God is with us, God saves us, God promises us renewal at a personal and cosmic level. If there was ever a time for us to take this message more deeply into ourselves and to make it known it is now. Whatever our circumstances the truth that is celebrated at Christmas stands and it is our calling to make it known.

I remember an old Elvis song entitled *Why Can't Every Day Be Like Christmas?* In a sense, for Christians, every day is Christmas because we are aware that flowing from the birth of Jesus is the peace of forgiveness, the challenge of Christ-like living and the assurance of life in His Eternal Kingdom. With all of this in our hearts there is no need for Christmas or any time of the year to be a disappointment.

Wishing you God's Peace,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, which appears to read 'Ferguson'. The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Worship In St Paul's

At the time of writing the re-opening of St Paul's for worship has yet to take place on 1st November but it is to be hoped that this will be a source of encouragement to members of St Paul's and Baldernock. This does not mean that the recorded services will cease. They will go on for at least as long as we have to live with the restrictions which Covid-19 is placing upon us.

It has been good to know that the services have been a help to many, with the added blessing that non-members have also been logging on. Pray that this will continue and expand. The restrictions which have been frustrating, have nevertheless provided opportunities for the wider spreading of the Gospel through the internet.

Normally we would be preparing for the traditional Saturday Advent services. These will not take place this year but Advent themes will be explored in the morning service and the evening reflection. Details of our Christmas worship will be given in the December Life and on the Church website.

FCB.

St Paul's Parish – Christmas Outreach

The Stewardship Committee are again organising the delivery of a Christmas Card to every family within our Parish boundary.

There are around 1800 households in our Parish and help is required from members of our congregation to fulfil this outreach.

If you have helped in the past and are in a position to help again, please contact either Gordon Fairbrother or Barbara Lawson on email or by phone as shown below. New volunteers are also very welcome to assist and full instructions will be provided.

It is anticipated the Christmas Cards will be available towards the end of November for delivery in early December.

Many thanks,

Gordon Fairbrother H 0141 563 8698 - M 07769 648434

E Mail fairbrothers2@ntlworld.com

Barbara Lawson H 0141 956 5810

E Mail b.lawson67@btinternet.com



Lodging House Mission Christmas Cards



Dear friends,

I'm pleased to advise that our Christmas cards have arrived and do hope that we can rely on your support this year when communications and logistics are particularly difficult.

To help make things a little easier we have adopted an online order facility in addition to our normal way of working.

www.charitycardsonline.com/lhm

Our preference is that you order through LHM as the logistics are easier for us but please use the method which suits you best.

A summary of the alternatives is noted below.

1. Call Helen English on 0141 552 0285 to request a brochure or place an order. Email enquiries@lhm-glasgow.org.uk
2. Write to Lodging House Mission, 35 East Campbell Street, Glasgow, G1 5DT
1. Order online at www.charitycardsonline.com/lhm This link also appears on both Facebook and our web page.

Notes:

1. We are not encouraging office visits this year though exceptions can be made by arrangement.
2. Please order on a sale or return basis, if that is helpful.
3. Cards will be delivered by post or by an LHM member of staff.

We do recognise the communication difficulties this year but hope that we can rely on the great support you have given in previous years.

With best wishes.

Helen English (nee Hart).

Advent

The traditional Saturday morning advent services will not take place this year. The new Sunday evening "*reflections*" available on line (see the website) will be advent based from the end of November.

Moderator Designate

The former Scottish Liberal Democrat leader Rt Hon Lord Wallace of Tankerness QC (Jim Wallace) has been named as the next moderator of the Church of Scotland. Ordained as an elder in what was St Bernard's Church in Stockbridge, Edinburgh in 1981, he has been a member of the Session of St Magnus Cathedral, Kirkwall since 1990. Lord Wallace will take over from the Right Reverend Dr Martin Fair in May next year.

As his appointment was announced, Lord Wallace warned that Church elders will increasingly have to lead services as the Kirk struggles with a shortage of ministers. The challenges arise from fewer people entering the ministry, as many current ministers get closer to retirement and there is almost certainly over-provision of buildings. Normal service just isn't possible. The expectation therefore will be that more responsibility will fall on the shoulders of elders and congregation members- providing leadership in times of change, conducting services, more pastoral care and in the outreach work of the Church. As a result of Covid-19 lockdown measures, many services have moved online to reach those unable to attend due to social distancing restrictions and although some congregations are returning to traditional services, online services are creating a level of interest that we cannot afford to lose, so it might be necessary to cater for different needs in the future.

We in St Paul's are fortunate that there are a large number of members actively involved in the work of the Church locally and nationally. With an ageing congregation there is always a need for more people to be involved be it in our own congregation, in the community, in Presbytery and the national Church. If you are interested or would like to know more contact the Clerk to the Congregational Board or the Session Clerk.

Thursday Prayer Evening

Remember 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 are available each week on the website for guidance.

Covid-19 Update

The Covid-19 team formed in July to review the various versions and amendments of the Church of Scotland guidance as well as the Scottish Government guidance reported to the Kirk Session Committee on 15th October that the reopening of the Church Buildings Checklist and a Covid-19 Risk Assessment had been completed. The committee reviewed the documents and agreed to apply to Clyde Presbytery to reopen St Paul's for worship from 1st November. Permission to reopen under the restrictions currently in place from the Scottish Government and the Church of Scotland office was given on 17th October.

A joint service with Baldernock, will be held each Sunday morning in St Paul's starting at 10.30am from 1st November. 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. Guidelines for those attending the services were advised in October *Life* and were included in the letter to members dated 20th October. If you have not received a copy of the letter or notification from your district elder please contact the Session Clerk.

Communication

Not all members are able to access the internet and a limited number of DVD copies of the recorded services are available through Chris Scott. *Life* magazine continues to be published on the web site and if you are aware of anyone who would welcome a paper copy please contact the Session Clerk. The current situation has resulted in a number of new initiatives and we hope you will be able to join the Sunday morning Zoom sessions and encourage others who are able, to also join. Various Bible study groups take place regularly as well as a book group. New ideas and suggestions always welcome.

Denis Duncan Lecture

The Revd. Dr. Denis Duncan was a Scottish minister who had a huge influence on the healing ministry. To commemorate his life, the Guild of Health and St Raphael hold an annual lecture in his name to explore all aspects of healing, health and wellbeing for Christians and churches.

This year's Denis Duncan Lecture will be on the evening of Monday 16th November, from 7pm – 9pm. This free event is online and the speaker will be Ruth Harvey, Leader of the Iona Community. The title for the lecture is "*Where healing and reconciliation meet*". We will also hear from Gillian Straine, Director of the Guild of Health & St. Raphael, as she shares about their new initiative "Healthy Healing Hubs". The Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, Martin Fair, will form part of the panel to answer any questions following the lecture.

To register, please follow this link –

<https://denis-duncan-lecture-2020.eventbrite.co.uk/>

Zoom Cuppa and Chat – every Sunday at the new time of 11.30am

It has been wonderful to be able to reinstate the after-service coffee and chat through the wonderful world of Zoom!

We have been blessed to have online services with Fergus, but we had really been missing the fellowship we have with our church family. What a blessing it is to have this available to us when we can't meet in person. Generally about 40 people/families come along! We split into 'rooms' of about 5 people to make it easier to chat. Then halfway through we swap rooms so that we can see more folk. It has been great to see everyone chatting and catching up.

So, if you haven't managed to join us yet, why not give it a try. We can send you an invitation via email and you just click on the link to enter the meeting. You can use a computer, mobile phone, or tablet to join, but if you don't have any of these you can join by phone. You can find our phone numbers in the church directory, or email the church office and they will put you in touch with one of us. If you're not sure how to use Zoom we can talk you through this. We would love to see you if you can manage to come along.

Nimmi Whitelaw, Janice Maclean, Mairi McCreadie, Sue Rollings



Dear Friends,

I am writing this Life article from the Prefecture of Aomori, at the far north of Honshu island. It is an area of spectacular beauty, especially in the autumn when the colours are stunning. In particular this area is famous for apples. Around 50% of the apples grown in Japan come from Aomori. Trees are laden with hundreds of apples, most of them as big as your hand. There are also walnut, persimmon and Japanese pear trees, as well as grapes and various berries. It truly is a fruitful area.

However, it is also an area which is very challenging for the church. There are few Christians and very few churches. When OMF started work in Japan in the early 1950s, they surveyed the country to see where there were the fewest Christians and missionaries. One of those places was Aomori. Since those days, several small churches have been planted but there is much still to be done.

I am staying at one of those OMF churches. It used to be an apple warehouse but the missionary has converted it into a church. They hold a variety of classes as ways to connect with the community and share the good news about Jesus. On Friday evening 5 young people came from an English café. After eating delicious homemade donuts, and answering some quiz questions in English, they looked at the story of the woman at the well in John's Gospel. For most of them this was the first time they had ever read the story.

On Monday I will visit a Christian campsite, run by an OMF family. They have a vision to reach the next generation for Jesus, so hold summer and winter camps, as well as a variety of more regular events.

Please pray for areas of Japan like Aomori, where there are so few Christians. We long that one day we will see it not only being known for the fruit of apples, but also for the fruit of the Gospel.

With love and prayers,

Lorna, Daniel, Matthew, Calum and Alistair

World Mission News

Kirk pledges £40,000 in wake of deadly explosion in Beirut



The Church of Scotland has pledged £40,000 to help rebuild the Lebanese capital, Beirut, following a devastating explosion which killed more than 200 people.

The money - partly drawn from restricted funds used to support overseas work - has been given to Near East School of Theology and the National Evangelical Synod of Syria and Lebanon.

It will be used to assist people left homeless or injured in the blast on 4th August and to repair badly damaged buildings used by the Kirk's two partner organisations.

Black Lives Matter and Climate Justice



The General Assembly hall may have looked a little different this year, but the debates were as lively, and the decisions that came from it were as challenging as ever. Very Rev Dr Susan Brown, convener of the Faith Impact Forum, a merger of the Church and Society Council and World Mission Council, brought the topics of racial justice and climate change to the attention of the Assembly.

The Assembly reaffirmed that black lives matter and racism is a sin. Commissioners also backed calls for a report to a future meeting on racial justice and the legacy of slavery and the Church of Scotland. As part of this work, they approved a proposal to consult widely with people of colour in the Church of Scotland and with majority black churches in Scotland.

Commissioners also instructed the Faith Impact Forum to work with others to develop a strategy for the Church to transition both locally and nationally to net zero carbon emissions by 2030.

World Mission Cont.

Evictions resuming for people who have been refused asylum

Thousands of people across the UK are facing street homelessness as the UK Government's ban on evictions from asylum accommodation for people refused asylum has suddenly come to an end. We need you to take action to tell the Home Secretary that making anyone homeless during a deadly pandemic is reckless and irresponsible.



Having a safe place to stay during the Covid-19 crisis is essential if we are to protect ourselves and others. The Government has been clear; to stop the spread of the virus, we must all follow the public health guidelines. Yet thousands of people with negative asylum decisions are being sent eviction notices in the next few weeks that will force them into street homelessness just as the UK faces a second wave of Covid-19.

Evictions have not yet started in Scotland but there are plans to start them in the future. This decision would particularly affect Glasgow which hosts the vast majority of asylum seekers in Scotland. In fact, Glasgow has more asylum seekers than any other local authority area in the whole of the UK; at the end of June 2019 more than 4,000 people seeking asylum were living in Glasgow.

Prayer for flood-affected people in Pibor, South Sudan

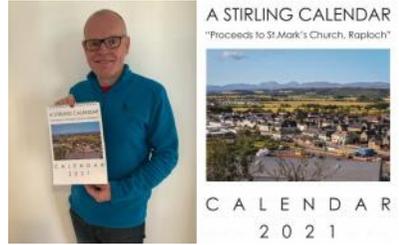
Rev Orozu Daky, Deputy General Secretary of the Presbyterian Church of South Sudan and Sudan (PCOSS), has written to ask for our prayers for the people of Pibor.



Having recently suffered a number of attacks from various youth armies, the area has now been badly flooded. People are not only traumatised by the war but are now trying to salvage the little they have from the floods. Rev Orozu writes: "The whole area is sinking and there is no evacuation plan from either the Government or the humanitarian agencies. Your prayers are needed for this situation."

Stirling church raises thousands with stunning calendar

Rev Barry Hughes, who is the minister of St Mark's in the Raploch area of the city, had the idea after taking some photos of local landmarks during lockdown.



He said: "It's gone a bit bonkers. Various people suggested it after I got a camera for Christmas. The manse overlooks the Wallace Monument so I've got a good view where I am."

Orders for the calendar, which is priced at £5, have now flooded in, including from as far away as America and Canada, so another 400 copies are now being printed.



"I've been sharing photographs that I took during lockdown on local Facebook groups. I thought I'll print 100 and see if they'd sell - and they have with another 350 orders now in."

Raploch is a traditional, tight knit community and it's something that people have really bought into.

The school have asked me to bring some in for people to buy too.

A few generous people have offered to cover publication prices, so anything we sell can go back to St Mark's."

Members of the congregation are supporting the effort by helping to process hundreds of orders.

The image for April is of Stirling Castle. Copyright of Barry Hughes

For your very own copy of the 2021 Raploch Calendar please contact Rev Barry Hughes. <https://www.churchofscotland.org.uk/news-and-events/news/2020/>

Church of Scotland welcomes Nuclear Ban Treaty

The Church has consistently opposed the possession, use or threat to use nuclear weapons for over 30 years and has explicitly backed the Nuclear Ban Treaty. It has also called on the UK Government to disarm its nuclear weapons and to support the Treaty process.



The 50th state to ratify the Nuclear Ban Treaty was Honduras. It will come into force after a period of 90 days.

Commenting on the news, the Very Rev Dr Susan Brown, Convener of the Faith Impact Forum of the Church of Scotland, said:

“This is an important moment in the history of nuclear disarmament. I would like to thank everybody in the Church of Scotland who has worked and prayed for this moment to come, and to say we now need to work to get every other country – including our own – to scrap nuclear weapons.

“This year we marked the 75th anniversary of the Hiroshima and Nagasaki nuclear attacks, a reminder of the devastating effects these weapons can have on human life and all of God’s creation.

“The only way to ensure they are never used again is to put them beyond use; we create peace through growing love, building relationships and showing compassion. Relying on the prospect of utter destruction does not lead to peace, but rather it intensifies the threat of war in our world.”

The Church of Scotland is a member of the World Council of Churches, an international partner of ICAN - the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons. ICAN has been a driving force behind the development of the Nuclear Ban Treaty, and won the Nobel Peace Prize in 2017.

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Copy Date

The copy date for the December issue is Wednesday 25th November via email.

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